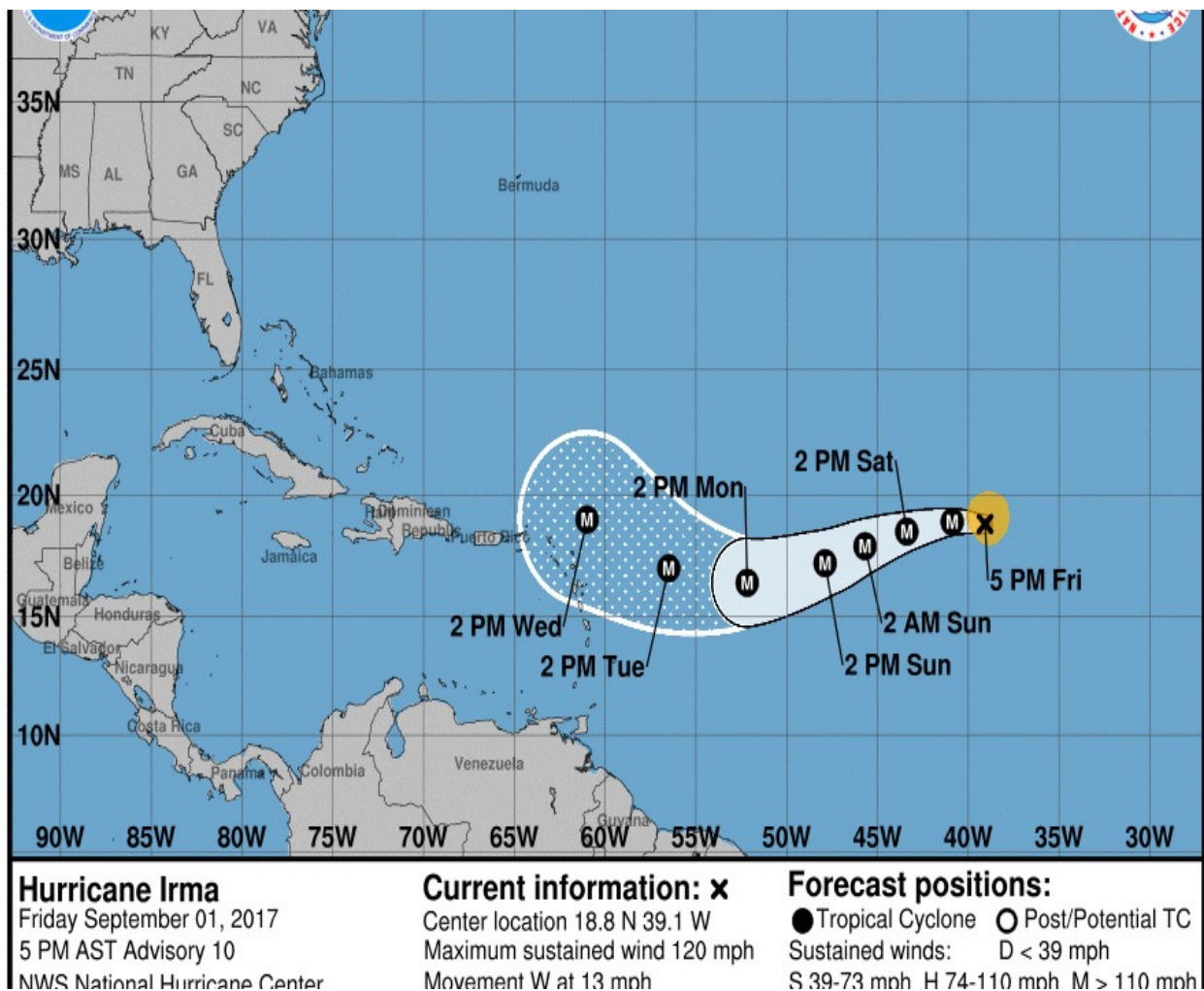


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Irma Swings West In Latest Forecast, West-Southwest Turn Expected Saturday; USVI Remains At Risk

Weather Updates / **Published On September 01, 2017 10:40 PM /**

Staff **September 01, 2017**



Hurricane Irma, which temporarily lost some steam and was downgraded to a category 2 storm, regained its strength on Friday as it intensified in the central Atlantic and roared back to a category 3 hurricane, according to the National Hurricane Center. Irma continues to move towards the Leeward Islands, among them the U.S Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

The storm is expected to arrive to the Leeward Islands next week, though how near the Virgin Islands it will pass is still too early to predict.

According to the National Hurricane Center, at 5:00 p.m. today, the center of Hurricane Irma was located near latitude 18.8 North, longitude 39.1 West. Irma is moving toward the west near 13 mph (20 km/h). A turn toward the west-southwest is expected tomorrow.

Maximum sustained winds are near 120 mph (195 km/h) with higher gusts. Irma is a category 3 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. Fluctuations in strength, up or down, are possible during the next few days, but Irma is expected to remain a powerful hurricane through the weekend.

Hurricane-force winds extend outward up to 25 miles (35 km) from the center and tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 105 miles (165 km). The estimated minimum central pressure is 964 mb (28.47 inches).

VITEMA Director Mona Barnes on Thursday encouraged the Virgin Islands community to closely monitor weather reports on Hurricane Irma, and to be ready in the event the territory is placed under a hurricane watch or warning.

“Although there is still uncertainty with the track of Hurricane Irma, now is the time to make sure you are ready,” Ms. Barnes said Thursday. “Don’t wait for a hurricane watch or warning to prepare. Stock up on emergency supplies now, make sure everyone in your home knows what to do in an emergency and stay informed about the weather.”

“We have been fortunate in the past few years. The territory has been spared from the type of devastation we have seen in Houston over the past several days. But we cannot afford to be complacent,” Ms. Barnes concluded.