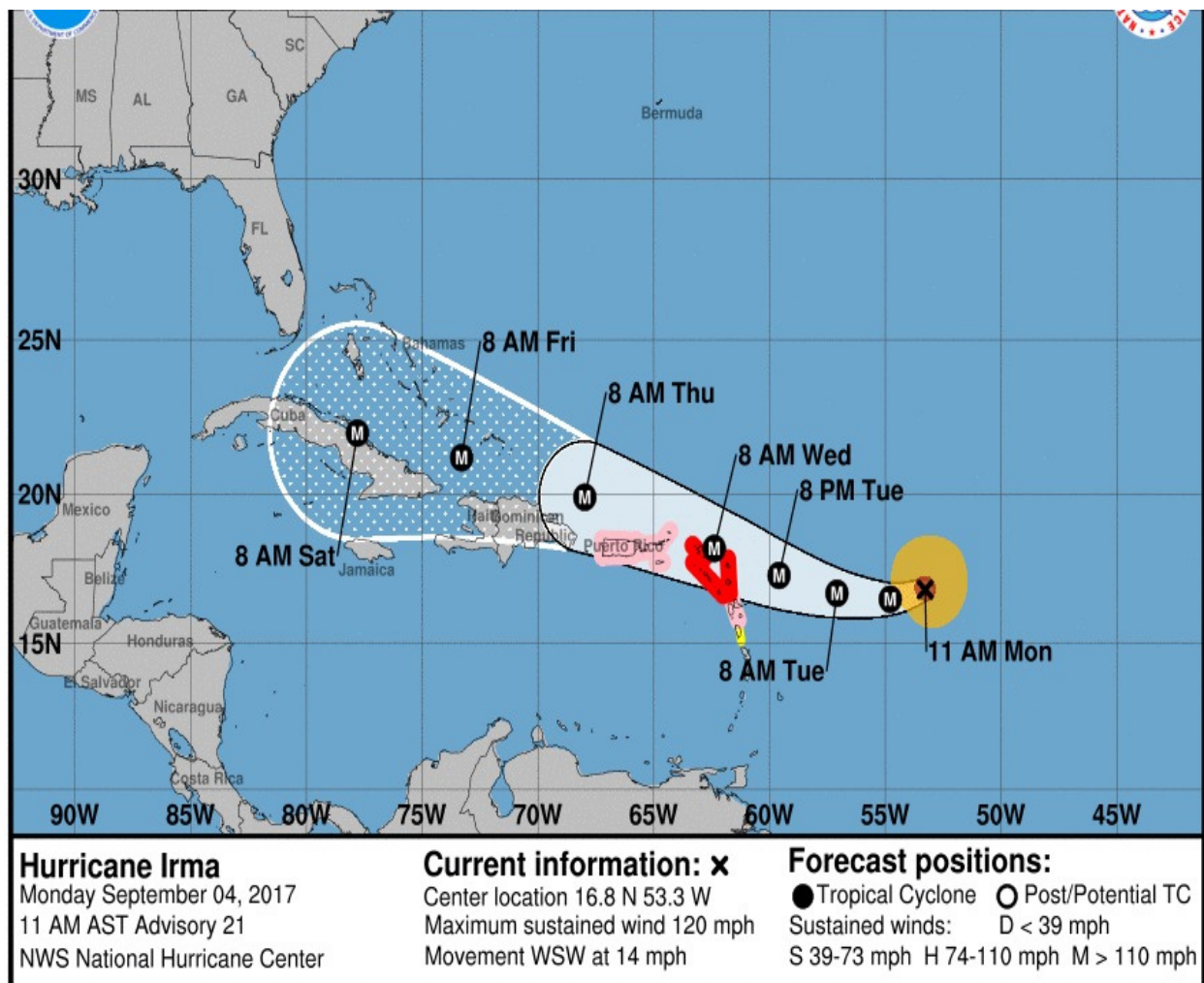


The Virgin Islands Consortium

A Hurricane Watch Has Been Issued For U.S. Virgin Islands; Hurricane Warnings Issued For 8 Islands As Irma Strengthens To 120 MPH Hurricane

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Staff **September 04, 2017**



The National Hurricane Center at 11:00 a.m. today issued hurricane watches for the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Vieques and Culebra, as Hurricane Irma continues its west-southwest track towards the Leeward Islands. The storm has strengthened into a 120 mile-per-hour hurricane, with additional strengthening forecast today and into Tuesday.

Irma is expected to reach the northern Leeward Islands -- which includes the USVI and PR -- as a category 4 storm late Tuesday.

Meanwhile, hurricane warnings were issued for 8 Caribbean islands, including Antigua and Barbuda, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Anguilla, Saba, St. Eustatius, Saint Martin, and Saint Barthelemy.

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A hurricane watch was issued for the British Virgin Islands by the government of Antigua; a hurricane watch was issued for the island of Dominica by the government of Barbados; a hurricane watch was issued for Guadeloupe by the government of France.

According to the National Hurricane Center, a hurricane warning means that hurricane conditions are expected somewhere within the warning area. A warning is typically issued 36 hours before the anticipated first occurrence of tropical-storm-force winds, conditions that make outside preparations difficult or dangerous. Preparations to protect life and property should be rushed to completion.

A hurricane watch means that hurricane conditions are possible within the watch area. A watch is typically issued 48 hours before the anticipated first occurrence of tropical-storm-force winds, conditions that make outside preparations difficult or dangerous.

Interests in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the southeastern Bahamas should monitor the progress of Irma, N.H.C. says.

At 11:00 a.m. today, the eye of Hurricane Irma was located near latitude 16.8 North, longitude 53.3 West. Irma is moving toward the west-southwest near 14 mph (22 km/h). A turn toward the west is expected later today, followed by a west-northwestward turn late Tuesday. On the forecast track, the center of Irma will move near or over portions of the northern Leeward Islands Tuesday night and early Wednesday.

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. Additional strengthening is forecast through Tuesday night.

Hurricane-force winds extend outward up to 35 miles (55 km) from the center and tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 140 miles (220 km). The estimated minimum central pressure based on data from a NOAA Hurricane Hunter aircraft is 944 mb (27.88 inches).