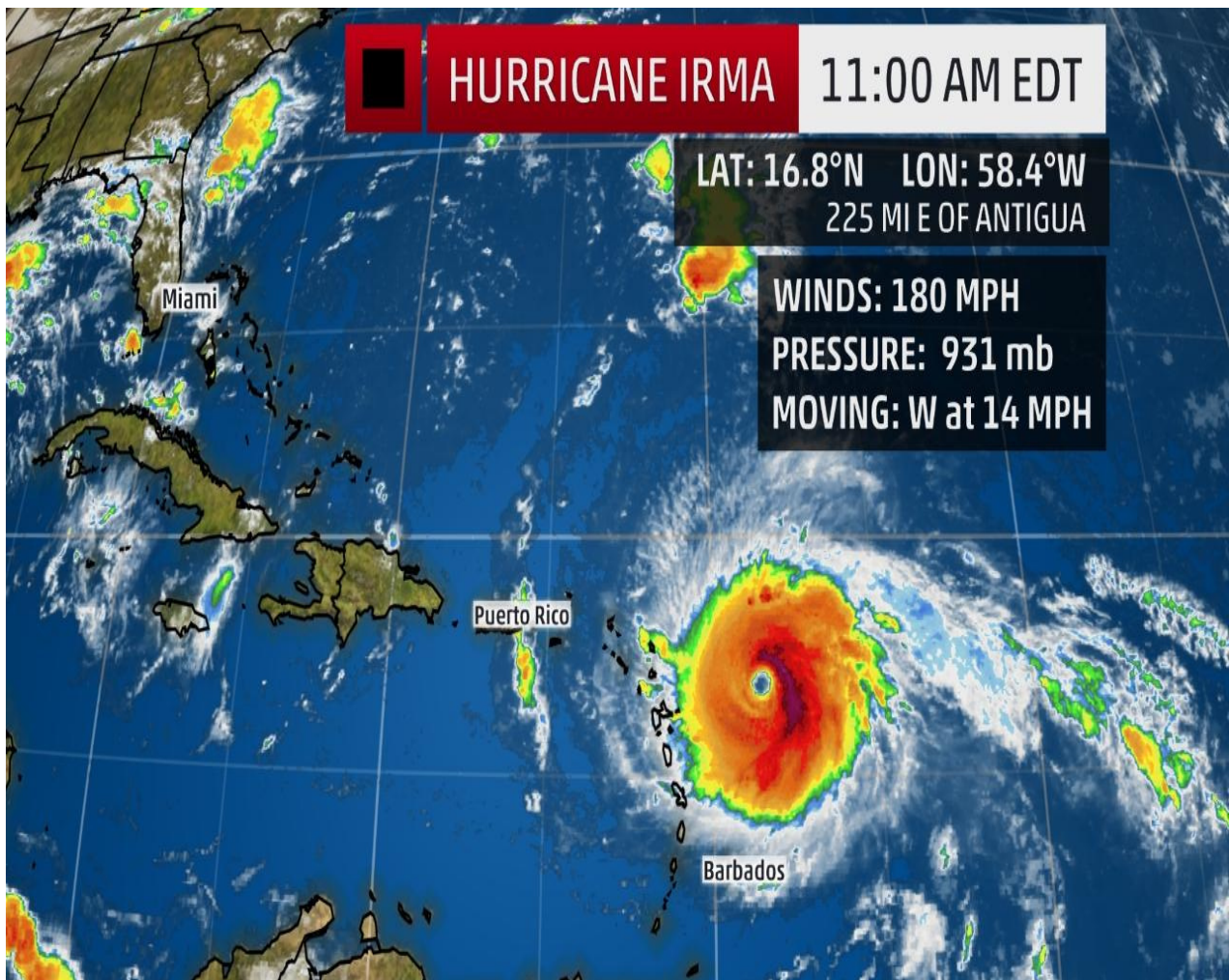


The Virgin Islands Consortium

USVI, Other Leeward Islands Brace For Impact As 180 Mile-Per-Hour Hurricane Irma Approaches

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Staff **September 05, 2017**



The National Hurricane Center (N.H.C.), at 11:00 a.m. described Hurricane Irma, which is barreling its way to the Leeward Islands, as "potentially catastrophic," with winds of 180 miles per hour, placing the hurricane among the strongest to ever develop. The strongest hurricane on record is 2015's Hurricane Patricia, with maximum sustained winds of 215 miles per hour.

According to N.H.C., the eye of Hurricane Irma was located near latitude 16.8 North, longitude 58.4 West. Irma is moving toward the west near 14 mph (22 km/h), and this general motion is expected to continue today, followed by a turn toward the west-northwest tonight. On the forecast track, the extremely dangerous core of Irma is forecast

to move over portions of the northern Leeward Islands tonight and early Wednesday.

Reports from an Air Force Hurricane Hunter aircraft indicate that the maximum sustained winds are near 180 mph (285 km/h) with higher gusts. Irma is an extremely dangerous category 5 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. Some fluctuations in intensity are likely during the next day or two, but Irma is forecast to remain a powerful category 4 or 5 hurricane during the next couple of days.

Hurricane-force winds extend outward up to 60 miles (95 km) from the center and tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 160 miles (260 km). The latest minimum central pressure reported by reconnaissance aircraft is 931 mb (27.50 inches).

WATCHES AND WARNINGS ----- CHANGES WITH THIS ADVISORY:

The government of the Bahamas has issued a Hurricane Watch for the Turks and Caicos Islands and the southeastern Bahamas, including the Acklins, Crooked Island, Long Cay, the Inaguas, Mayaguana, and the Ragged Islands.

A Hurricane Watch has been issued for the north coast of Haiti from the border of the Dominican Republic westward to Le Mole St. Nicholas. A Tropical Storm Watch has been issued from south of Le Mole St. Nicholas to Port-Au-Prince.

Summary of hurricane watches and warnings:

A Hurricane Warning is in effect for... * Antigua, Barbuda, Anguilla, Montserrat, St. Kitts, and Nevis * Saba, St. Eustatius, and Sint Maarten * Saint Martin and Saint Barthelemy * British Virgin Islands * U.S. Virgin Islands * Puerto Rico, Vieques, and Culebra

A Hurricane Watch is in effect for... * Guadeloupe * Dominican Republic from Cabo Engano to the northern border with Haiti * Haiti from the northern border with the Dominican Republic to Le Mole St. Nicholas * Turks and Caicos Islands * Southeastern Bahamas

A Tropical Storm Warning is in effect for... * Guadeloupe * Dominica

A Tropical Storm Watch is in effect for... * Dominican Republic from south of Cabo Engano to Isla Saona * Haiti from south of Le Mole St. Nicholas to Port-Au-Prince

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. In this case, for some of easternmost islands, the hurricane conditions are expected within the next 12 to 24 hours. Preparations to protect life and property should be rushed to completion.

A Tropical Storm Warning means that tropical storm conditions are expected somewhere within the warning area in this case within 36 hours.

A Tropical Storm Watch means that tropical storm conditions are possible within the watch area, generally within 48 hours.

Interests elsewhere in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, as well as Cuba, the central and northwestern Bahamas, and Florida should monitor the progress of Irma.

For storm information specific to your area in the United States, including possible inland watches and warnings, please monitor products issued by your local National Weather Service forecast office. For storm information specific to your area outside the United States, please monitor products issued by your national meteorological service.

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