

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Irma Pounds St. Martin, Anguilla; Slamming USVI Now

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The extremely dangerous core of Category 5 Hurricane Irma will move over portions of the Virgin Islands very soon, pass near or just north of Puerto Rico this afternoon or tonight, pass near or just north of the coast of the Dominican Republic Thursday, and be near the Turks and Caicos and southeastern Bahamas late Thursday, the National Hurricane Center announced in its 11:00 a.m. advisory.

The eye of Irma was located near latitude 18.2 North, longitude 64.0 West. Irma is moving toward the west-northwest near 16 mph (26 km/h), and this general motion is expected to continue for the next couple of days.

The storm ravaged through St. Martin and Anguilla, leaving homes without roofs, vehicles destroyed, and the St. Martin airport with immense damage (see feature collage).

Maximum sustained winds are near 185 mph (295 km/h) with higher gusts. Irma is a 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 50 miles (85 km) from the center and tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 185 miles (295 km). The estimated minimum central pressure is 918 mb (27.11 inches).

Hurricane Irma has been described as “potentially catastrophic,” with winds of 185 miles per hour, placing the storm among the strongest to ever develop in the Atlantic Ocean. The strongest hurricane on record is 2015’s Hurricane Patricia, with maximum sustained winds of 215 miles per hour.

Caribbean residents hustled on Tuesday to get out of possible flood zones, stock up on essential foods, shutter their homes and brace for what is projected to remain a very powerful hurricane for days to come.

A hurricane warning has been issued for the north coast of Haiti from the northern border with the Dominican Republic to Le Mole St. Nicholas. A tropical storm warning has been issued for the coast of Haiti from south of Le Mole St. Nicholas to Port-Au-Prince. The government of France has discontinued all warnings for Guadeloupe.

The government of Antigua has discontinued all warnings for Antigua, Barbuda, St. Kitts, Nevis, and Montserrat.

A hurricane warning remains in effect for:

* Anguilla * Saba, St. Eustatius, and Sint Maarten * Saint Martin and Saint Barthelemy * British Virgin Islands * U.S. Virgin Islands * Puerto Rico, Vieques, and Culebra * 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 * Southeastern Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands. * Cuba from Matanzas province eastward to Guantanamo province * Central Bahamas

A Tropical Storm Warning is in effect for... * Dominican Republic from south of Cabo Engano westward to the southern border with Haiti * Haiti from south of Le Mole St. Nicholas to Port-Au-Prince