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Gonzalo Projected to Become Hurricane Today; Hurricane Watch Issued for Barbados

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The fast-developing weather system that started taking form over the weekend is expected to become a hurricane today, according to the National Hurricane Center (N.H.C.).

A Hurricane Watch is in effect for Barbados, N.H.C. said.

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 Windward Islands should monitor the progress of this system. Additional watches or warnings will likely be required for some of these islands later today.

According to N.H.C.'s 5:00 a.m. advisory, the center of Tropical Storm Gonzalo was located near latitude 10.0 North, longitude 47.0 West. Gonzalo is moving toward the west near 12 mph (19 km/h). A general westward motion at a faster forward speed is expected followed by a turn toward the west-northwest on Saturday. On the forecast track, the center of Gonzalo would approach the Windward Islands late Friday and Saturday.

Maximum sustained winds have increased to near 65 mph (100 km/h) with higher gusts. Further strengthening is forecast during the next couple of days, and Gonzalo is expected to become a hurricane later today.

Tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 35 miles (55 km) from the center.

The estimated minimum central pressure is 997 mb (29.44 inches).

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