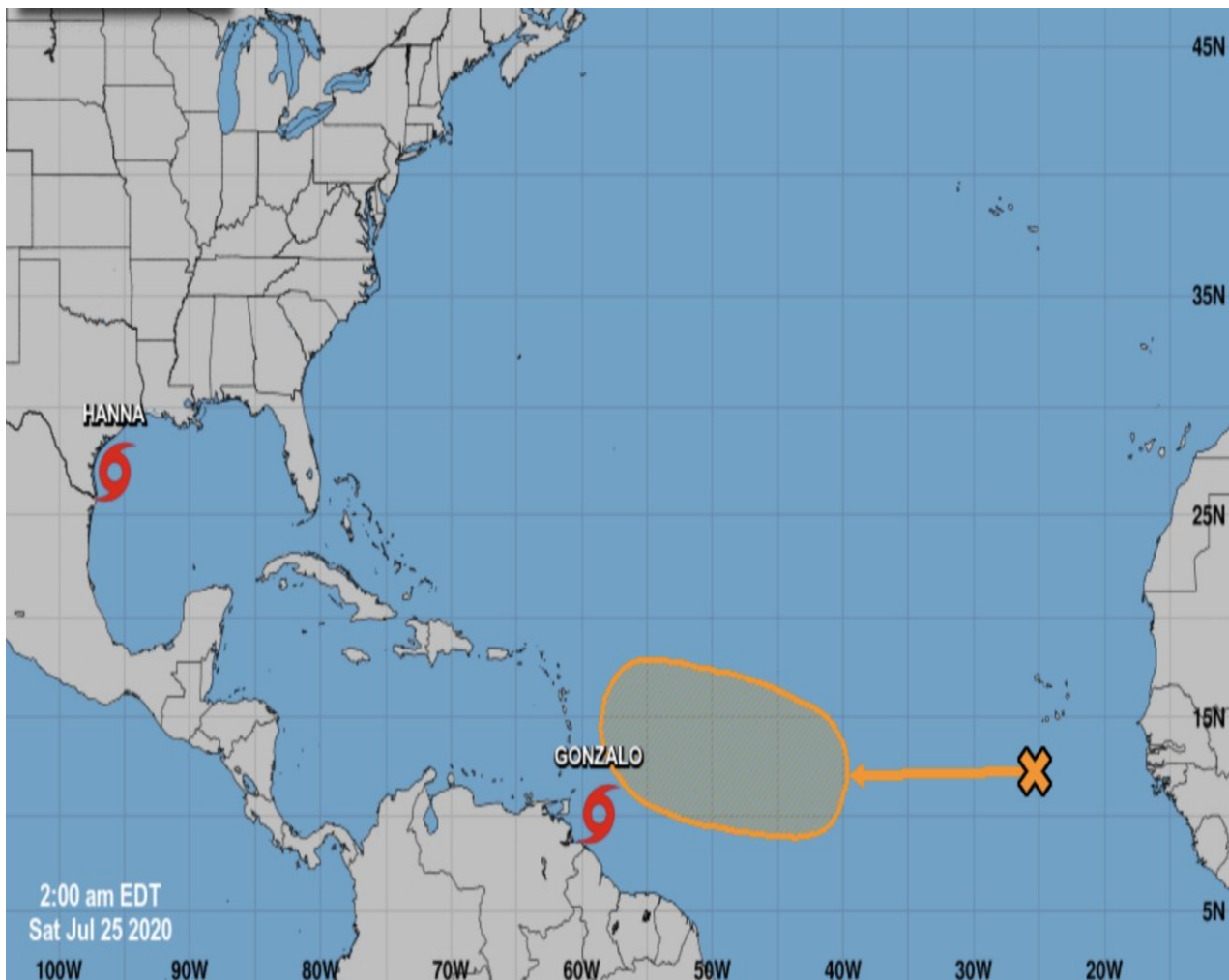


The Virgin Islands Consortium

USVI, Other Leeward Islands Appear to be in Current Path of Developing System

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While Tropical Storm Gonzalo is expected to bring strong winds and rain to portions of the southern Windward Islands beginning today, the system will pass well south of the Leeward Islands, which includes the U.S. Virgin Islands.

But there's a new system taking form a few hundred miles south of the Cabo Verde Islands which is expected to move westward over the next several days. According to the National Hurricane Center, the system could become a tropical depression early next week when it arrives to the western Atlantic.

The new system's path, according to N.H.C. projections, is expected to tilt north and threaten a number of Caribbean islands, including the Leeward Islands, among them the USVI. N.H.C. said this morning that the storm has a 50 percent chance of developing into a depression. Weather conditions from there will determine further development.

Tropical Storm Gonzalo

At 5:00 a.m. today, the center of Tropical Storm Gonzalo was located near latitude 10.1 North, longitude 58.7 West, according to N.H.C. Gonzalo is moving toward the west near 18 mph (30 km/h). A general westward to west-northwestward motion is expected for the next couple of days. On the forecast track, Gonzalo will move across the southern Windward Islands this afternoon or evening and over the southeastern Caribbean Sea on Sunday.

Maximum sustained winds are near 40 mph (65 km/h) with higher gusts. Little change in strength is expected before Gonzalo reaches the southern Windward Islands later today. Weakening is expected after Gonzalo moves over the southeastern Caribbean Sea, and the system is forecast to dissipate by Sunday night or Monday.

Tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 25 miles (35 km) from the center. The estimated minimum central pressure is 1009 mb (29.80 inches).

Tropical storm warnings are in effect for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada and its dependencies, and Tobago. A Tropical Storm Warning means that tropical storm conditions are expected somewhere within the warning area, in this case within the next 24 hours.