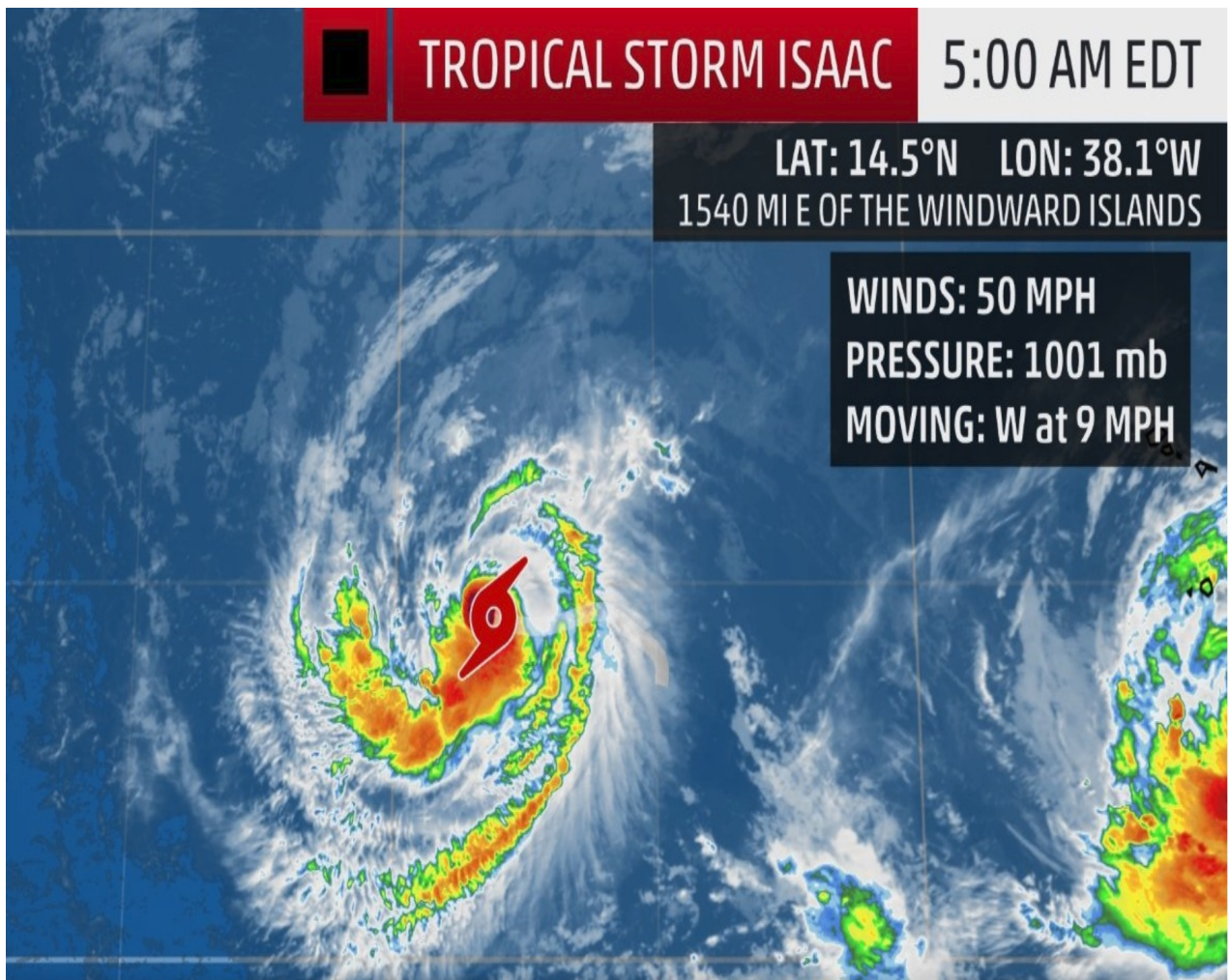


The Virgin Islands Consortium

VITEMA Provides List Of Hurricane Shelters Territory-Wide As Isaac And Helene Strengthens

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As Tropical Storms Isaac and Helene continue to strengthen in the Atlantic, the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) on Saturday provided a list of locations designated as hurricane shelters territory-wide.

Here's the list:

St. Croix: St. Croix Educational Complex, Claude O. Markoe Elementary School, Department of Human Services Frederiksted Head Start, Central High School, DC Canegata Complex.

St. Thomas: Lockhart Elementary School, Charlotte Amalie High School Auditorium, Bertha B. Boschulte School and Knud Hansen Complex (STRIVE).

St. John: Julius Sprauve School.

V.I.T.E.M.A. said it will determine which shelter locations will be open to the public.

Tropical Storms Isaac & Helene

Helene is expected to gain hurricane strength on Sunday, while Isaac is projected to become a hurricane on Monday. The National Hurricane Center (N.H.C.) has Isaac passing just south of the U.S. Virgin Islands next weekend, while Helene's projected path takes it north into the open sea.

But the storms' paths could change, so the public is being urged to closely monitor them. Isaac, for example, was originally forecast to head north and stay away from the islands. However, the storm has the Leeward islands in its sights.

According to N.H.C.'s 5:00 a.m. advisory, the center of Tropical Storm Isaac was located near latitude 14.5 North, longitude 38.1 West. Isaac is moving toward the west near 9 mph (15 km/h). A westward motion with an increase in forward speed is expected during the next few days.

N.H.C. said the storm's maximum sustained winds remain near 50 mph (85 km/h) with higher gusts. Strengthening is forecast during the next few days, and Isaac is expected to become a hurricane by Monday.

Isaac's tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 60 miles (95 km) from the center. The estimated minimum central pressure is 1001 mb (29.56 inches).

As for Helene, N.H.C. said the storm's center at 5:00 a.m. this morning was located near latitude 13.2 North, longitude 24.0 West. Helene is moving toward the west near 14 mph (22 km/h), and this motion is expected to continue through today. A turn toward the west-northwest is forecast to occur by Monday.

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

Tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 80 miles (130 km) from the center. The estimated minimum central pressure is 997 mb (29.44 inches).