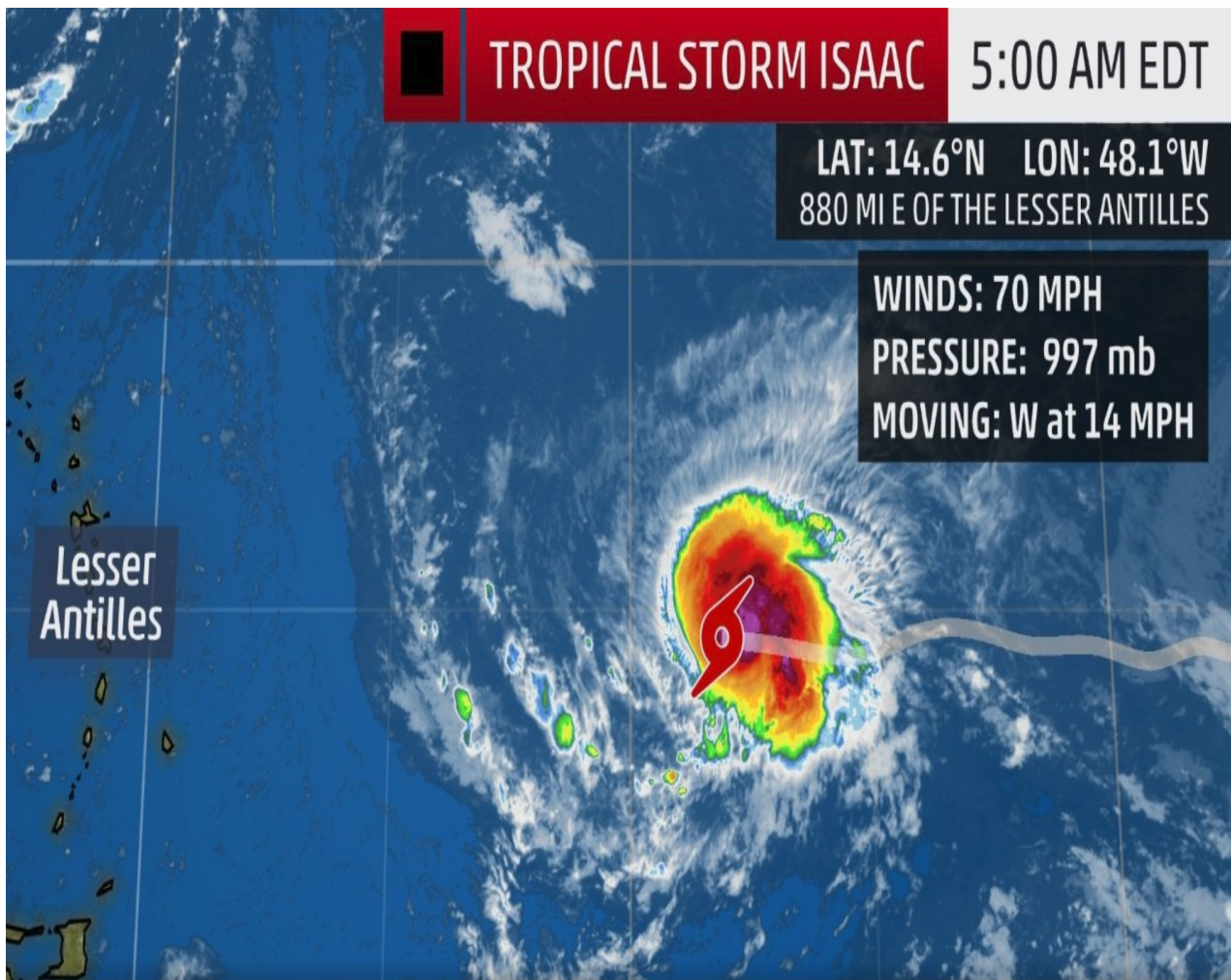


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Isaac Degrades To Tropical Storm; Helene's Forecast Sends It Away From Caribbean

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Isaac has lost some steam on its way to the Lesser Antilles, but the weather system is expected to remain "a strong tropical storm" as it gets closer to landfall, the National Hurricane Center (N.H.C.) said in its 5:00 a.m. advisory.

Hurricane Helene has increased in strength with speeds of 110 miles per hour, but the storm is expected to move northwest and away from the Caribbean islands.

Governor Kenneth Mapp has called a 10:00 a.m. press conference for Tuesday at Government House on St. Croix, to address the territory relative to Tropical Storm Isaac and the government's preparedness efforts. An important announcement regarding the

University of the Virgin Islands will also be made today at the press conference, Government House said.

Tropical Storm Isaac

According to N.H.C., at 5:00 a.m. today the center of Tropical Storm Isaac was located near latitude 14.6 North, longitude 48.1 West. Isaac is moving toward the west near 14 mph (22 km/h). This general motion is expected to continue through the end of the week. On the forecast track, Isaac should move across the Lesser Antilles and into the eastern Caribbean Sea on Thursday.

Maximum sustained winds remain near 70 mph (110 km/h) with higher gusts. Little change in strength is forecast during the next few days, but Isaac is forecast to be at or near hurricane strength as it approaches the Lesser Antilles.

Tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 45 miles (75 km) from the center. The estimated minimum central pressure is 997 mb (29.44 inches).

Hurricane Helene

The center of Hurricane Helene was located near latitude 16.0 North, longitude 33.6 West. Helene is moving toward the west-northwest near 14 mph (22 km/h), and this motion is expected to continue with a decrease in forward speed through tonight. A turn toward the northwest and then north-northwest is forecast on Wednesday and Thursday.

Maximum sustained winds are near 110 mph (175 km/h) with higher gusts. Some strengthening is possible during the next 12 hours, but a gradual weakening trend is expected after that time.

Hurricane-force winds extend outward up to 35 miles (55 km) from the center and tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 115 miles (185 km).

The estimated minimum central pressure is 968 mb (28.59 inches).