

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bret 'a Little Stronger' and Bends South, Potentially Sparing USVI and PR; Windward Islands Under Storm Watch

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Tropical Storm Bret has gathered strength and is set to bring potentially hazardous weather to the Windward Islands, according to the latest information at 5:00 a.m. from the National Weather Service.

The system, whose track is now even further south of the Lesser Antilles, is forecast to impact the Leeward Islands, including Barbados, Dominica, Martinique, and St. Lucia, which are now under a storm watch. This means that tropical storm conditions, including high winds and heavy rainfall, could impact these areas within the next 48 hours.

The storm now boasts maximum sustained winds of approximately 60 mph with higher gusts, and is moving west, or 280 degrees, at a pace of 16 mph (26 km/h). The minimum central pressure is reported to be 1001 mb (29.56 inches).

People residing in other parts of the Lesser Antilles are advised to monitor Bret's progress, as additional watches or warnings are likely to be issued today. "The current track has the system moving south of the local islands across the Caribbean Sea by Friday into Saturday as a Tropical Storm," said Lee Ann Inglés-Serrano, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Puerto Rico.

On its current forecast track, Bret's center is expected to move across parts of the Lesser Antilles on Thursday afternoon and into Thursday night. It's then predicted to traverse the eastern Caribbean Sea on Friday. There may be a further increase in strength before Bret reaches the Caribbean Sea, where tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 60 miles (95 km) from the storm's center.

Land hazards include potentially significant rainfall through Saturday, with storm total rainfall amounts ranging from 3 to 6 inches. Maximum rainfall may reach up to 10 inches in some parts of the Lesser Antilles, from Guadeloupe south to Grenada, including Barbados. This heavy rainfall could lead to flash flooding, particularly in areas of higher terrain, and isolated urban flooding is also a possibility.

With Tropical Storm Bret set to affect large areas, residents in the potential path of the storm are urged to take necessary precautions and stay informed about the latest developments.