

Severe Weather Advisory for the Caribbean and Florida

Hurricane Irma

Issued on Monday, 04 September 2017 at 18:20 local time.

Headline

Major Hurricane Irma is expected to affect parts of the Caribbean from Wednesday, then possibly Florida from Sunday.

Impacts

Destructive winds, dangerous sea heights, storm surge, flooding rains and enhanced landslide risk. This leading to a risk of fatalities and significant impacts to local infrastructure and transport links.

Discussion

Hurricane Irma remains a Category 3 Hurricane and was located 970km west of Antigua, moving WSW at 12 knots and with 1 minute sustained winds of 105 kt (120mph).

Irma has strengthened through Monday and will continue to strengthen it tracks westwards across warmer waters towards the northern Leeward Islands tonight and tomorrow (Tuesday).

There is confidence that Irma to pass very close to or across the northern most Leeward Islands (Antigua and Barbuda, St Kitts and Nevis and Anguilla) during Wednesday. By this time Hurricane Irma is expected to be a Category 4 storm with 1 minute maximum sustained winds 120kt (140mph).

Irma is then expected to track west or west-northwest, passing very close to or across the British Virgin Islands, and across or just north of Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic and Haiti through Wednesday night and Thursday. This track will likely take Irma just south of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Irma is then likely to pass just north or across Cuba and the southern Bahamas during Friday and Saturday.

From Sunday there is increasing uncertainty in how quickly Irma (probably still a category 4 hurricane) turn north. A quick northward turn would take Irma across the Bahamas, with a slower northward turn tracking Irma across Florida.

All islands in the path of Irma are at risk of severe hurricane impacts (see Main Hazards section), with the greatest risk of fatalities and infrastructure damage likely to be to Dominican Republic and Haiti due to the poorer resilience of these nations.

This forecast may be amended at any time

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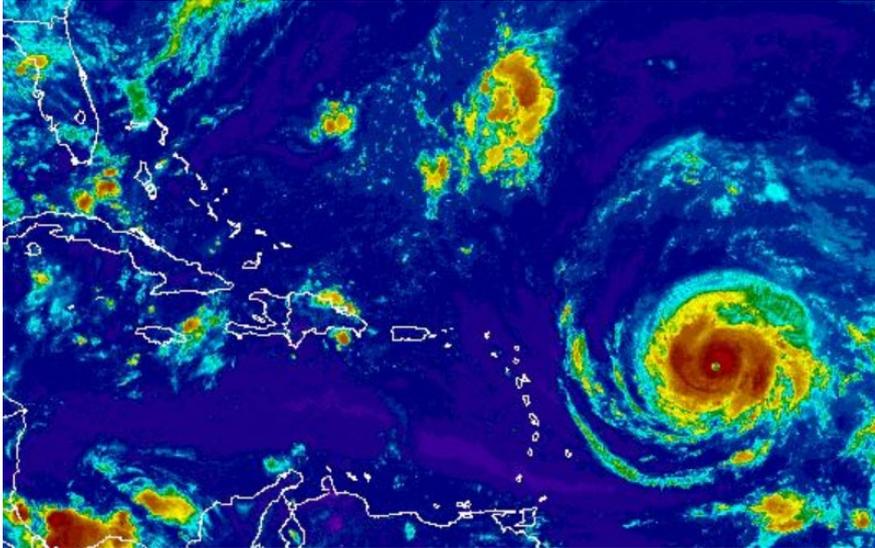


Figure 1: 04/1345 UTC colour enhanced satellite image

Note the development of a clear eye on Irma through Monday showing continued development of this major hurricane.

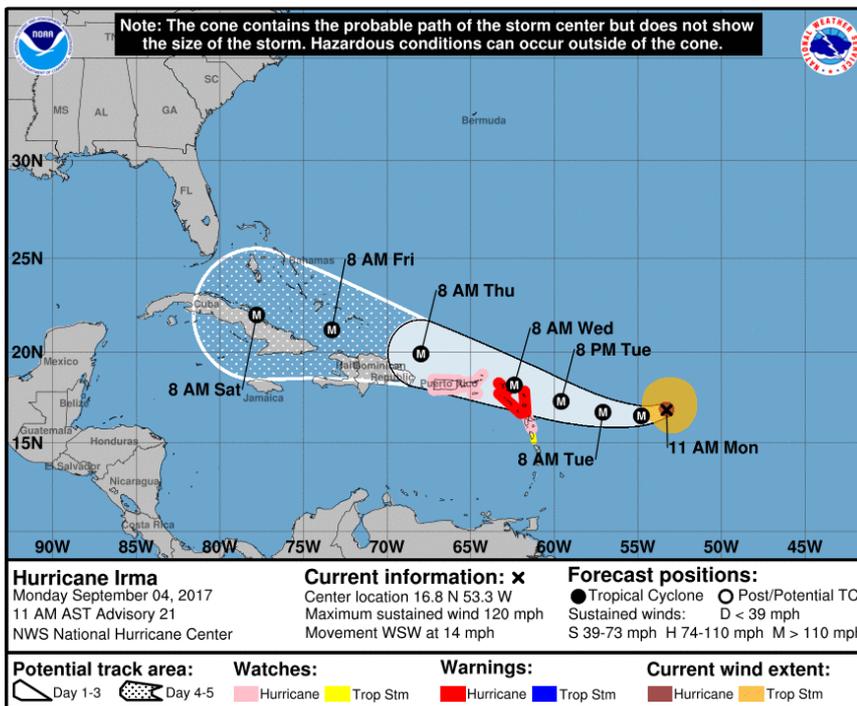


Figure 2: 04/1500 UTC official forecast track for Hurricane Irma from the National Hurricane Centre. Times on the graphic are in AST (UTC-4).

Note the Hurricane Warning now in force for the northern Leeward Islands and Hurricane Watch now out for Puerto Rico.

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ECMWF EPS: Forecast tropical storm tracks for IRMA from 00UTC 04/09/2017

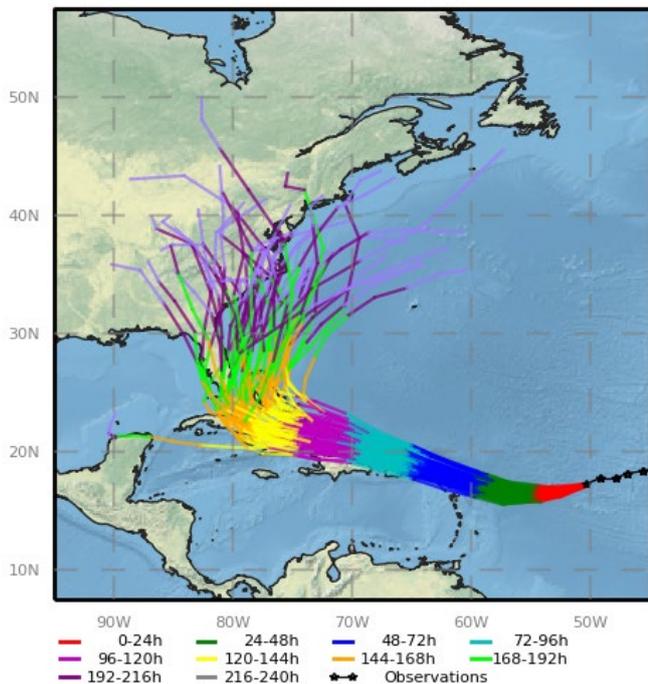


Figure 3: ECMWF ensemble for Hurricane Irma showing the spread of solutions for the track over the next 10 days.

Note the decreasing confidence in track as Irma tracks north towards the SE of the USA later in the weekend.

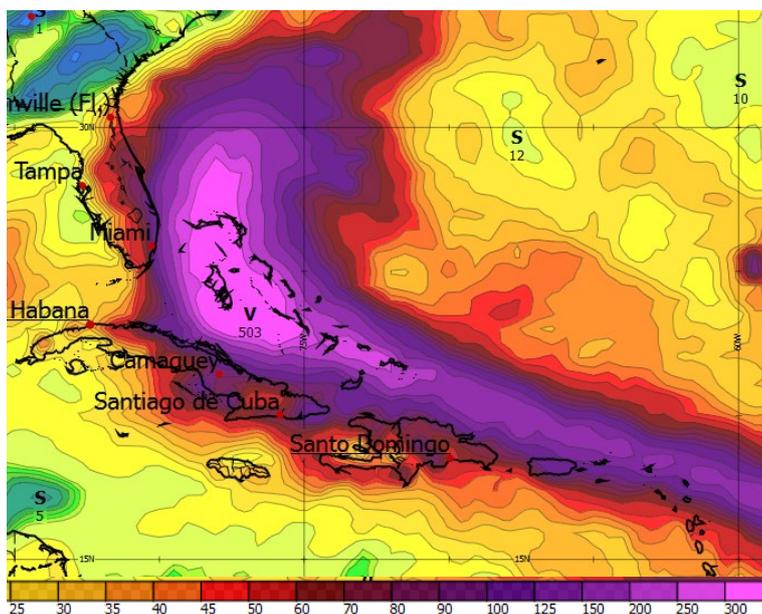


Figure 4: Accumulated precipitation in mm from the ECMWF Global Model up to next Monday.

Note the risk of at least 150 millimeters (which will fall in 24 hours) along the track of Irma. This will result in a high risk of flash flooding and enhanced risk of landslides, especially considering the mountainous terrain of these Caribbean Islands.

Sources

NHC, UK Met Office, ECMWF, NCEP.

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