

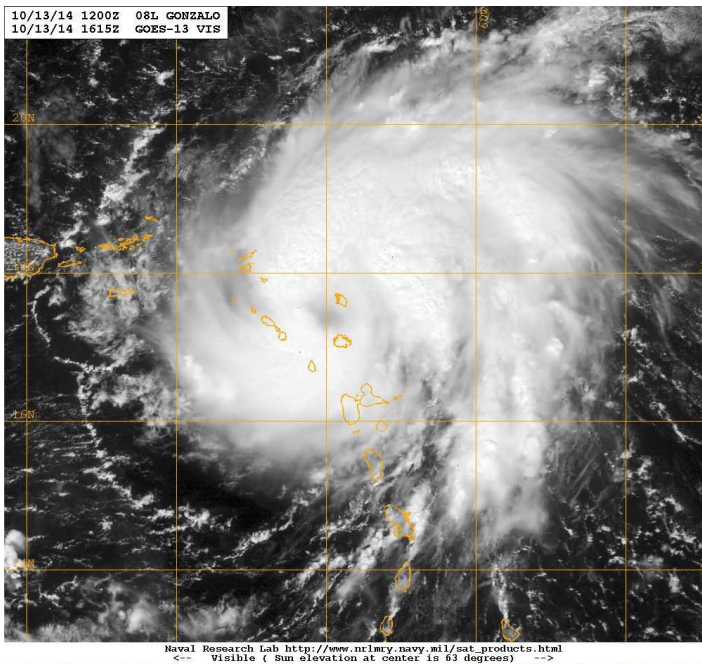


PRESS RELEASE

Hurricane Season 2015 Starts Officially

In accordance with studies by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) the upcoming hurricane season will see the development of about 6 to 10 named storms, 3 to 6 hurricanes and between 0 and 2 major hurricanes over the Atlantic Basin (North Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico). Therefore this year, like last year (eight storms and six hurricanes) will have below average activity. The average over the period 1981-2010 is 12 storms per year, of which 6.5 develop into a hurricane and two into major hurricane (category 3 to 5).

Despite these expectations, the Meteorological Department Curaçao continues to emphasize that one should prepare against the possible effects of a tropical storm or hurricane. Experience shows that it should take only one tropical storm or hurricane to pass, to make this a devastating season for a particular community. Recent examples are Hurricane *Fay* and Hurricane *Gonzalo*, which caused damage last year.



Hurricane *Gonzalo* hit St. Maarten on October 13, 2014. This system became a hurricane just before the center reached the SSS Islands that Monday afternoon and evening. *Gonzalo* claimed two lives on the French side of the island. After this *Gonzalo* became a major hurricane and moved a few days later over Bermuda, less than a week after Hurricane *Fay* also hit this island. Both *Fay* and *Gonzalo* caused a lot of damage in Bermuda but, thanks to the good preparation and related actions, no human lives were lost.






Although this season also seems to be rather quiet, one must still prepare the same as for any other hurricane season. People must consider the effects that tropical storms or hurricanes entail, such as **very strong winds, very rough and high seas** on the coast and **heavy and prolonged rainfall**, which can cause flooding.

Satellite image of *Gonzalo*, while this system was intensifying as it approached the SSS Islands on October 13, 2014.

Measures you can take are listed in a handy brochure, which was issued by the Meteorological Department Curaçao (MDC) and that can be downloaded from our website at http://www.meteo.cw/Data_www/pdf/pub/Hur_en_final.pdf. In addition the UTS phone book in Curaçao contains a lot of information about measures that can be taken in the event of a hurricane threat. Moreover, you also can check out a web site of the Government, <http://www.kalamidat.cw> for more information. On Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba the local emergency response organizations can be approached for more information on this subject.

As usual, the MDC in cooperation with the U.S. National Hurricane Center, will monitor all tropical storms and hurricanes that are a threat to its area of responsibility (Curaçao, Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba). If necessary, the MDC will start issuing Tropical Cyclone Bulletins (TCBs) 72 hours before a possible threat. These messages have a color code, in order to illustrate the level of seriousness of the threat. New this year is the Code **Pink**, which was introduced to eliminate the misunderstandings that

arose when the color **Orange** was used in the past for both the watch and the advisory phases. Code Orange now only remains valid for the Watch phase and Code Pink now will apply to the Advisory stage. For more details see the corresponding illustration below.

| TROPICAL CYCLONE BULLETINS | HAZARDS |
|---|---|
|  Information TCB --- <i>Be Alert!</i> --- TC poses a threat to the community in the upcoming 48 to 72 hours. | Storm Surge & Breaking Swells - storm surge is water that is pushed toward the shore by the forces of the winds swirling around the storm. Furthermore, swells breaking near shore in shallow waters can cause hazardous seas. |
|  Watch TCB --- <i>Prepare yourself!</i> --- TC wind conditions are expected in the next 48 hours. | Winds, Gusts and Squalls - hurricanes are known for their damaging sustained winds, but can also produce short, rapid bursts in wind speeds. i.e. gusts and also longer periods of increased wind speed (squalls) associated with the spiral bands around the hurricane. |
|  Advisory TCB --- <i>Protect yourself!</i> --- TC-winds do not pose a threat, but heavy rainfall or rough seas do, within the next 24 hours. | Heavy Rainfall - tropical cyclones can also cause torrential rains, which can lead to flash flooding. Slow moving tropical storms can cause more damage due to flooding than a more powerful fast moving hurricane. |
|  Warning TCB --- <i>Protect yourself!</i> --- TC wind conditions are expected in the next 36 hours. | |
|  Strike TCB --- <i>Seek cover!</i> --- TC wind conditions are expected in the next 6 hours. | |

The names that were reserved for tropical storms and hurricanes this year are: *Ana, Bill, Claudette, Danny, Erika, Fred, Grace, Henri, Ida, Joaquin, Kate, Larry, Mindy, Nicholas, Odette, Peter, Rose, Sam, Teresa, Victor* and *Wanda*. Tropical Storm *Ana* formed earlier in May and reached, while weakening, the southeastern United States.

The MDC recommends everyone, even though a quiet season is expected, to be prepared. As already indicated, it takes only one tropical storm or hurricane to reach our islands, to make this a devastating season for the community.

