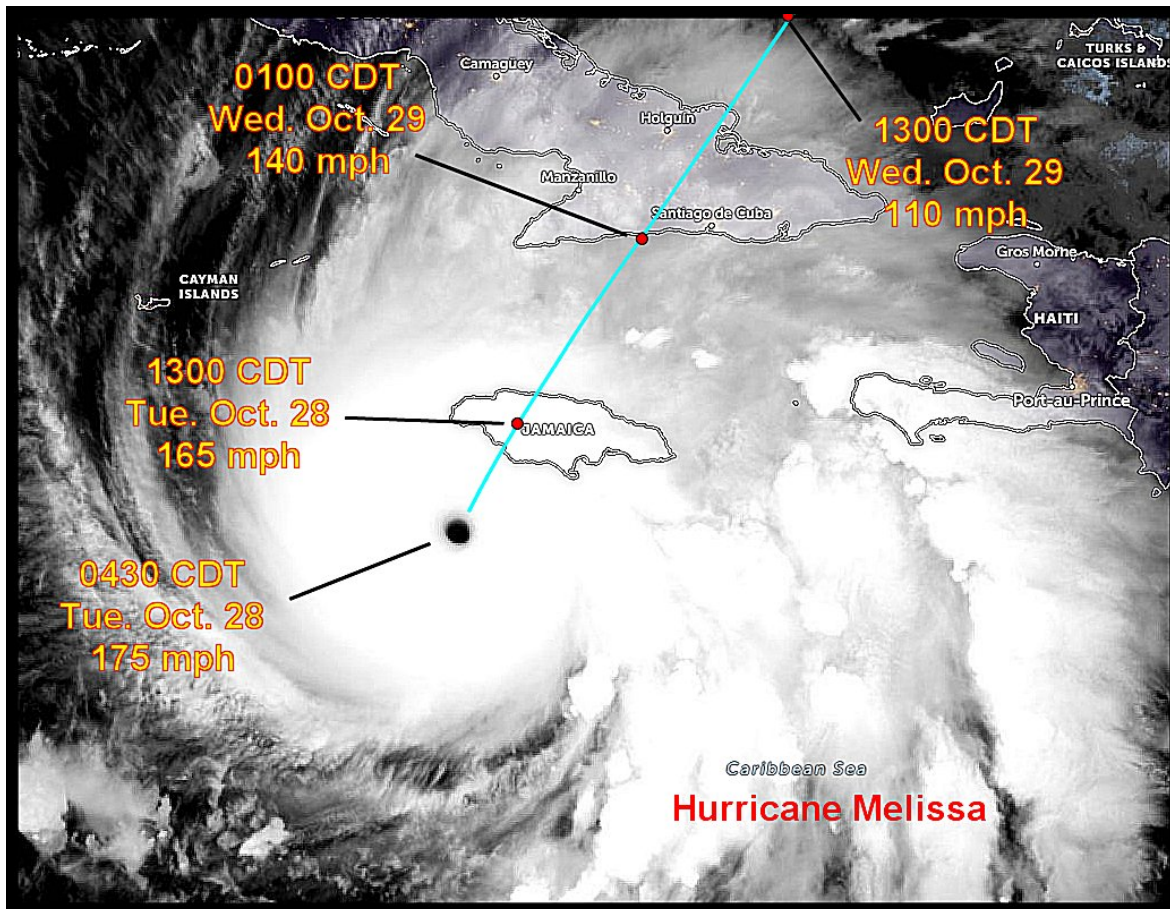


Hurricane Melissa Begins To Pound Jamaica; Cuba Next

By Drew Lerner

Kansas City, October 28 (World Weather Inc.) – Hurricane Melissa intensified to 175 mph late Monday and has remained extremely intense overnight. The storm continues to move much too slowly to avoid the worst conditions over Jamaica and the island is bracing for catastrophic damage from this super intense storm. At one point Monday, Hurricane Hunters were unable to penetrate the storm because of its extreme turbulence.

The storm was moving north northeasterly at only 5 mph will reach the southern coast of Jamaica around mid- to late morning today producing wind speeds at a devastating sustained rate of 165 mph with gusts approaching 190 mph. Such wind speeds and accompanying intense rain and flooding will cause catastrophic damage and possible loss of life. Eastern Cuba will also be impacted tonight and Wednesday with a sustained wind speed of 140 mph at the time of landfall west of Santiago de Cuba.

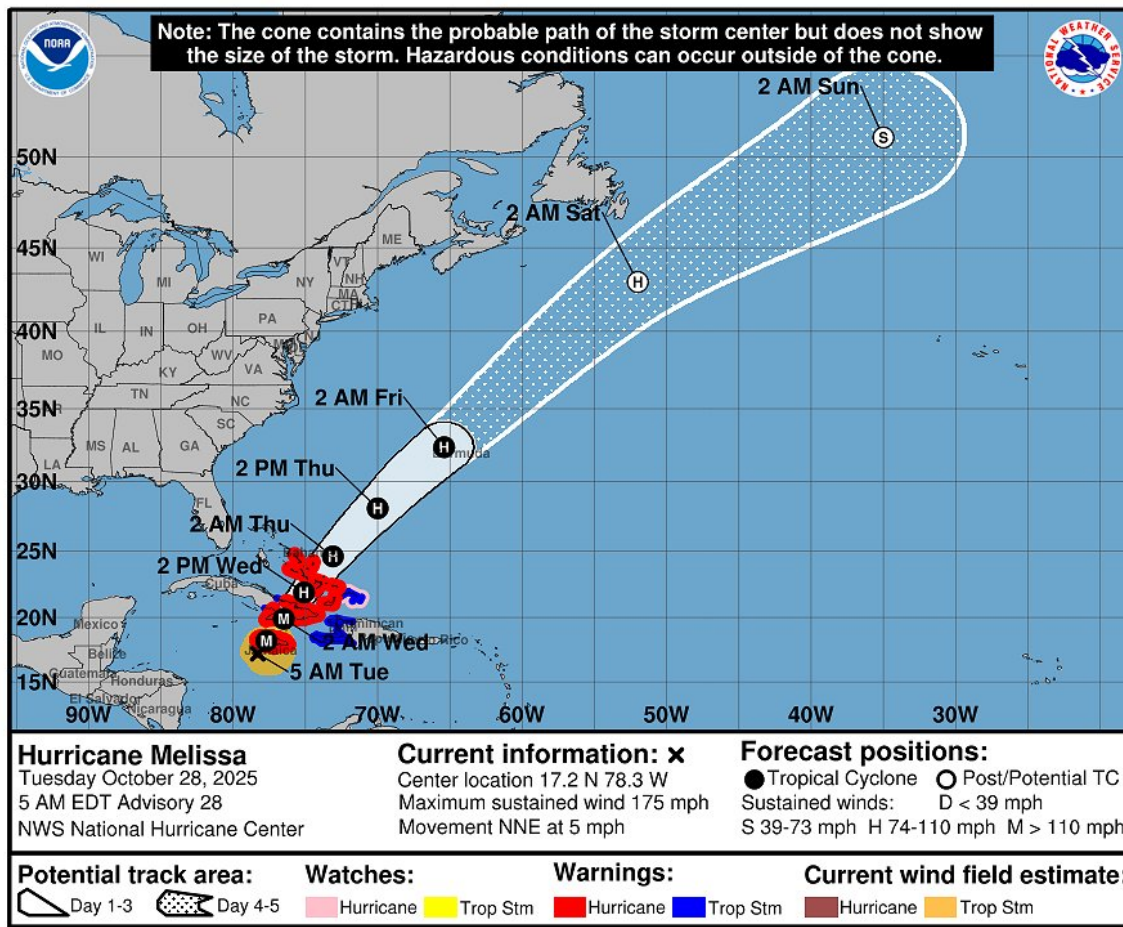


At 0430 CDT, the center of the Category 5 Hurricane Melissa was located just 57 miles from the south coast of Jamaica and hurricane force wind will likely begin in the next few hours. The center of the storm was more precisely located near 17.2 north latitude and 78.3 west longitude or 115 miles west southwest of Kingston, Jamaica and 290 miles from Guantanamo, Cuba. Hurricane force wind (greater than 74 mph) was occurring out 30 miles

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from the center of the storm while speeds of tropical storm force (39-73 mph) were occurring out 195 miles from the center of the storm.

The storm's small size will help spare some areas from complete devastation; however, the system is moving slowly enough that the torrential rain, flooding and potential landslides will cause serious damage over a large region. Rainfall of 15-30 inches will fall across Jamaica over the next two days and similar amounts are expected in eastern Cuba tonight and Wednesday ending early Thursday. Wind speeds during the storm center's passage over the heart of interior western and some central Jamaica locations will vary from 80 to 130 mph with the southwest and south-central parts of the island seeing speeds reaching over 160 mph. Interior eastern Cuba's wind speeds will vary from 80-110 mph with eastern portions of the southern coast seeing some speeds of 110 to 140 mph depending on how much impact the terrain of Jamaica has on the storm's structure.



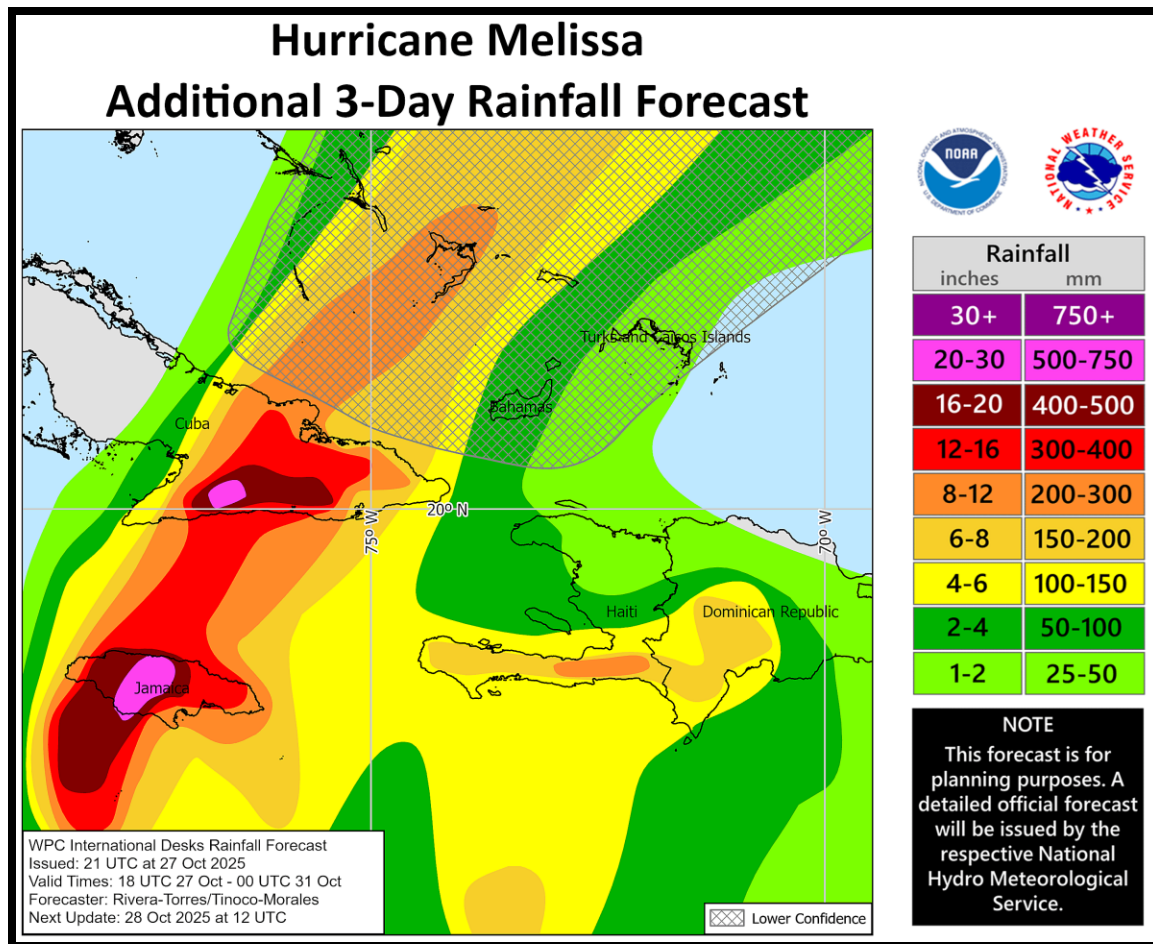
Jamaica may not have a huge agriculture footprint on the world, but the potential loss of life and commerce as well agriculture for local use will be horrific. As noted last week and again Monday by World Weather Inc., there may be a big need for international aid following the storm. Widespread power outages are likely and getting food and other services into the island may be difficult for a few days following the storm. The safest place to be on the island today will be the easternmost parts where the damaging wind and flooding rainfall are unlikely to be as extreme as they will be over central and western areas.

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Eastern Cuba will also be impacted with devastating wind and flooding rain. Considerable property damage is likely there like over Jamaica; though, the peak wind speeds will not be quite as extreme. Landfall is expected tonight and it will move across most of the island before Wednesday morning is over. Melissa's forward speed will increase as it moves from Jamaica to the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands. **Coffee is produced in eastern Cuba and it may be seriously damaged by storm along with many other crops in the region.** Rainfall in eastern Cuba will range from 10 to 25 inches with sustained wind speeds varying from 80 to 115 mph away from the southeast coast which may see speeds over 140 mph.

Portions of Hispaniola will also get some additional rain over the next two days with rainfall of 3.00 to more than 8.00 inches possible which is in addition to that which has already occurred in recent days.

Melissa will accelerate after moving across Jamaica and that acceleration to the northeast will occur more significantly after moving across Cuba. Once the storm clears Cuba it may impact Bermuda Thursday night and Friday, although the system will still be weakening and will likely lose its tropical characteristics as it passes by. The United States will not be impacted by this storm.



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