

Hurricane Joaquin moving slowly northwestward, batters the Central Bahamas

NASSAU, BAHAMAS, October 2, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Hurricane Joaquin continues its path over the Central Bahamas today as an extremely dangerous Category 4 hurricane. The Central Bahamas will continue to experience hurricane force winds of up to 130 mph with higher gusts. Heavy rainfall could result in life threatening flash floods over the Central and Southeast Bahamas through today. A very dangerous and life threatening storm surge will raise water levels by as much as 6 to 12 feet above normal tide levels in the Central Bahamas.



A Hurricane Warning is in effect for the Central Bahamas and the Northwestern Bahamas including: the Abacos, the Berry Islands, Eleuthera, Grand Bahama, New Providence, and Acklins, Crooked Island, and Mayaguana in the Southeast Bahamas.

A Hurricane Warning means that hurricane conditions are expected within in the warning area within 36 hours. A Hurricane Watch is in effect for Bimini and Andros Island. A Hurricane Watch means that hurricane conditions are expected somewhere within the warning area within 48 hours.

A Tropical Storm Warning is in effect for the remainder of the Southeast Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos islands. A Tropical Storm Warning means that tropical storm conditions are expected in the warning area within 36 hours.

At 5am EDT, the center of Hurricane Joaquin was located near Latitude 23.3 degrees north and Longitude 74.7 degrees west or about 20 miles Northeast of Clarence Town, Long Island, 50 miles South-Southwest of San Salvador, 25 miles South-Southeast of Rum Cay, 77 miles Southeast of San Salvador, 25 miles South-Southeast of the Bight, Cat Island, and 206 miles Southeast of New Providence.

Hurricane Joaquin is drifting toward the Northwest near 3 MPH. A faster northward motion is expected to begin later today, followed by a turn toward the northeast and an increase in forward speed tonight and Saturday. Some fluctuations in intensity are possible during the next 24 hours. Slow weakening is expected to begin on Saturday.

On its present track, the center of the hurricane will move over or near Rum Cay and between Cat Island and San Salvador today. Residents in Long Island, Cat Island, Rum Cay and San Salvador will experience Hurricane force winds today. Meanwhile residents in Exuma and Eleuthera should experience Tropical Storm force winds today and tonight. Residents in Acklins and Crooked Island could experience gradual improvement throughout today. Hurricane force winds extend outward up to 50 miles from the center and Tropical Storm force winds extend outward up to 205 miles from the center.

Again, residents in the Warning Areas should have completed preparations for the impact of Joaquin, which includes severe flooding.

Small craft operators throughout The Bahamas should remain in port as large swells and battering waves will affect the Bahamas during the next few days.

All hotels and resorts throughout The Islands Of The Bahamas have activated their hurricane programs and are taking all necessary precautions to protect visitors and residents, as safety remains the highest priority.

Two international flights from Miami and flights from elsewhere in the Caribbean have been cancelled due to Hurricane Joaquin. These include American Airlines flights 4422 and 4232 from Miami, Inter Caribbean flight 272/273, and Caribbean Airlines flight 414/415. Delta, JetBlue, British Airways, Air Canada, WestJet and Cubana have not cancelled and will arrive at their scheduled times.

Bahamasair, Sky Bahamas, Leair and Southern Air have cancelled all flights to the Central and Southern Bahamas due to the hurricane. Pineapple Air and Southern Air have cancelled all morning flights and will continue to monitor the weather before making decisions about afternoon flights.

As a result of the Hurricane Warning, cruise lines have been rerouting. These include:

Carnival Sensation: Carnival Sensation's three-night Bahamas cruise -- which departed October 1 -- will visit Freeport instead of Nassau on October 2.

Norwegian Getaway: On October 2, Norwegian Getaway will skip Nassau for a sea day before returning to Miami Saturday morning.

Royal Princess: Royal Princess will skip the line's private island on September 30 and October 2.

Disney Magic: Disney Magic has been forced to skip its scheduled visits to Castaway Cay and Nassau. The ship's new itinerary is Key West on October 1, Cozumel on October 2 and a sea day on October 3.

Disney Dream: Disney Dream will replace its October 2 call at Nassau with a sea day. As of now, it will visit Castaway Cay on October 3 as scheduled.

Disney Fantasy: Disney Dream -- which is approaching the end of a weeklong Eastern Caribbean cruise -- will skip Castaway Cay on October 2 before returning to Port Canaveral on Saturday.

The Islands Of The Bahamas will be releasing updates on tracking of Hurricane Joaquin, but we encourage everyone to access the National Hurricane Center and The Weather Channel for latest updates. For more information on Hurricane Joaquin and The Islands Of The Bahamas, travel professionals and consumers are advised to access the following:

The National Hurricane Center at nhc.noaa.gov

The Weather Channel at www.weather.com

The next update will be issued at noon today EDT.

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