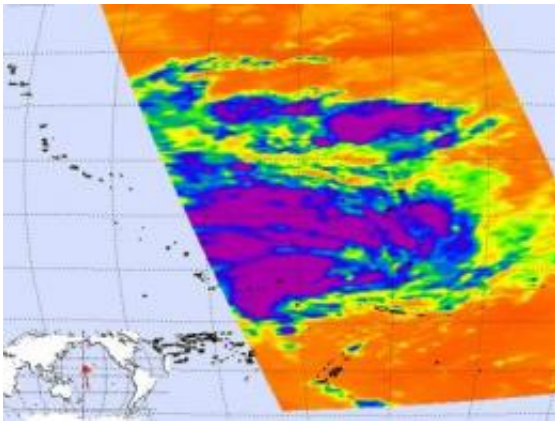


Tropical Storm Tomas calls for alerts in south Pacific

March 11 2010



This infrared image of Tropical Storm Tomas from NASA's Aqua satellite was captured on March 11 at 0105 UTC (March 10 at 8:05 p.m. ET) and shows some high, cold thunderstorms around the center of this large storm. Credit: NASA/JPL, Ed Olsen

System 97P was looking pretty impressive on NASA satellite imagery early today, March 11, and by 10 a.m. ET, it strengthened into Tropical Storm Tomas.

Forecasters at the Fiji Meteorological Service (FMS) have posted a tropical cyclone alert for the South Pacific islands of Wallis and Futuna on March 11 at 05:53 UTC (12:53 a.m. ET). The FMS has also designated the storm as "[Tropical Depression](#) 14F."

The Territory of the Wallis and Futuna Islands is a Polynesian French island territory in the South Pacific between Fiji and Samoa. It consists of three main volcanic tropical islands and several islets.

At 1500 UTC (10 a.m. ET) Tropical Storm Tomas was located near 11.0 South latitude and 175.5 West longitude about 340 miles northwest of Pago Pago. It was moving west near 8 mph (7 knots). Tomas' [maximum sustained winds](#) were estimated near 39 mph (35 knots) and it was generating waves up to 11 feet high.

Tomas appears to continue strengthening, as bands of thunderstorms continue to wrap around the storm's low level center. NASA's Aqua infrared satellite imagery from the Atmospheric Infrared Sounder (AIRS) instrument confirm some deep convection (rapidly rising air that creates the thunderstorms that power [tropical cyclones](#)). The [infrared image](#) of Tomas captured on March 11 at 0105 UTC (Mar. 10 at 8:05 p.m. ET) showed some high, cold thunderstorms around the center of this large storm.

As the storm continues to intensify and move southwest, residents of the Wallis and Futuna Islands should pay close attention to their local forecasts. It is expected to become a cyclone in the next day or two.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

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