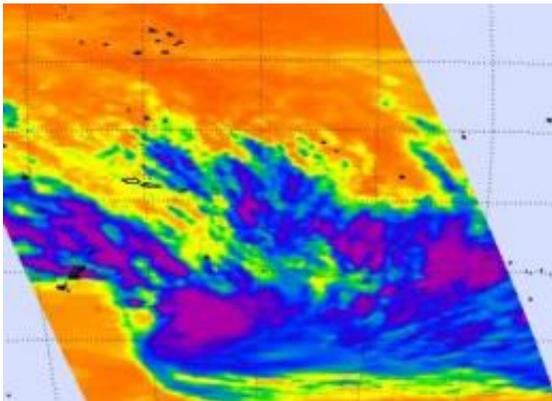


# NASA's Aqua satellite sees small new tropical storm near Tonga

February 6 2012

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NASA's Aqua satellite captured this image of Tropical Storm 11P, on Feb. 6, 2012 at 0053 UTC. AIRS infrared data from Aqua showed strong thunderstorms with the highest, coldest cloud tops circling the center (purple). Credit: Credit: NASA/JPL, Ed Olsen

Tropical Storm 11P has formed in the South Pacific Ocean, and NASA's Aqua satellite captured an infrared image of its cloud temperatures, revealing power in the cyclone.

NASA's Atmospheric Infrared Sounder (AIRS) instrument that flies aboard the Aqua satellite passed over the newest tropical storm in the South Pacific, Tropical Storm 11P, on February 6, 2012 at 0053 UTC (Feb. 5 at 7:53 p.m. EST). AIRS infrared data showed strong thunderstorms with the highest, coldest [cloud tops](#) circling the center.

The cloud top temperatures were colder than -63 Fahrenheit (-52.7 Celsius), indicating that some of the thunderstorms were strong. The AIRS data also showed that the storm is small, about 120 nautical miles (138 miles/222 km) in diameter, and there are bands of thunderstorms wrapping into the center of circulation.

On February 6, 2012 at 1500 UTC (10 a.m. EST), Tropical Storm 11P had [maximum sustained winds](#) near 35 knots (40.2 mph/64.8 kph). It was about 400 nautical miles (460 miles/~741 km) east of Nadi, Fiji, centered near 18.8 South latitude and 174.5 West longitude. It was moving quickly at 21 knots (~24 mph/~39 kph) to the east-southeast.

Tropical Storm 11P is approaching the main island of Tonga late on February 6. Tonga is a state and an archipelago made up of 176 islands, fifty-two of which are inhabited. It is expected to pass northeast of the main island, Tongatapu.

The Joint [Typhoon Warning Center](#) expects Tropical Storm 11P (TS11P) to speed up to the east-southeast to as fast as 30 knots (34.5 mph/55.5 kph). By February 7, TS11P is expected to encounter wind shear and cooler [sea surface temperatures](#), two factors that will weaken it quickly. Forecasters expect that by February 9, the tropical storm will be a remnant low pressure area.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

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