



The Ministry Of Infrastructure & Transport

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MEDIA RELEASE No.9

3pm Saturday 20th February 2016

SEVERE TROPICAL CYCLONE – WINSTON (CAT5)

Severe Tropical Cyclone Winston continues to move westward as a Category 5 system and expected to further intensify. It was located between Koro Island and Vanua-Levu at midday today. Destructive winds have started to affect parts of the country and are expected to spread to the other parts of the country later today. As such, the following warnings remain current:

A ***Hurricane Warning*** remains in force for Vanua-Levu, Taveuni and nearby smaller islands, Northern half of Viti-Levu, Ovalau, Gau, Batiki, Nairai, Koro, Vanuabalavu, Yacata, Mago, Cicia, Tuvuca, Nayau and Vanuavatu.

A ***Storm Warning*** remains in force for Lakeba, Oneata, Moce, Komo, Namuka, Ogea, Moala, Southern half of Viti Levu, Yasawa and Mamanuca Group.

A ***Gale Warning*** remains in force for the rest of Fiji.

A ***Damaging Heavy Swell Warning*** remains in force for low lying coastal areas of Fiji.

A ***Heavy Rain Warning*** remains in force for Fiji.

At 1pm today, Severe Tropical Cyclone Winston (917hPa) Category 5 was located near 17.1 degree South latitude and 179.7 degree East longitude or about 50km southwest of Taveuni or about 175km northeast of Suva at 1pm today. It is currently moving west at 25km/hr (about 14knots). Close to its centre, the cyclone is estimated to have average winds of 230 km/hr (about 125 knots) with momentary gusts up to 325 km/hr (about 175 knots).

On its projected track, Severe TC Winston is expected to maintain its Category 5 intensity and anticipated to take a southward turn when located west of Nadi on Monday. It is forecasted to continue moving westward and lie about 65km southeast of Yasawa-i-Rara or about 80km northeast of Nadi at 1am tomorrow and about 140km west-northwest of Yasawa-i-Rara or about 100km west-northwest of Nadi at 1pm tomorrow.

Very Destructive winds may begin several hours before the cyclone centre passes over head or nearby.

For Vanua-Levu, Taveuni and nearby smaller islands, Northern half of Viti-Levu, Ovalau, Gau, Batiki, Nairai, Koro, Vanuabalavu, Yacata, Mago, Cicia, Tuvuca, Nayau and Vanuavatu: Expect Destructive hurricane force winds with average speeds of 220km/hr and momentary gusts to 315km/hr. Heavy rain and squally thunderstorms. Damaging heavy swells. Flooding including sea flooding of low lying coastal areas.

For Lakeba, Oneata, Moce, Komo, Namuka, Ogea, Moala, Southern half of Viti Levu, Yasawa and Mamanuca Group: Expect Storm force winds with average speed of 110km/hr and momentary gusts of 155km/hr. Heavy rain and squally thunderstorms. Damaging heavy swells. Flooding including sea flooding of low-lying coastal areas.

For the rest of Fiji: Expect Damaging gale force winds with average speeds of 85km/hr and momentary gusts to 120km/hr. Periods of heavy rain and squally thunderstorms. Damaging heavy swells. Flooding including sea flooding of low-lying coastal areas.

The following information is especially for the Mariners:

Expect winds of hurricane force and phenomenal seas within 25 nautical miles of centre. Storm force winds and very high seas out to about 50 nautical miles of centre. Gale force winds and high seas within 100 nautical miles of centre.

For Rotuma: A south to southwest wind flow prevail over Rotuma.

Cloudy periods with brief showers. Moderate south to southwest winds. Moderate seas.

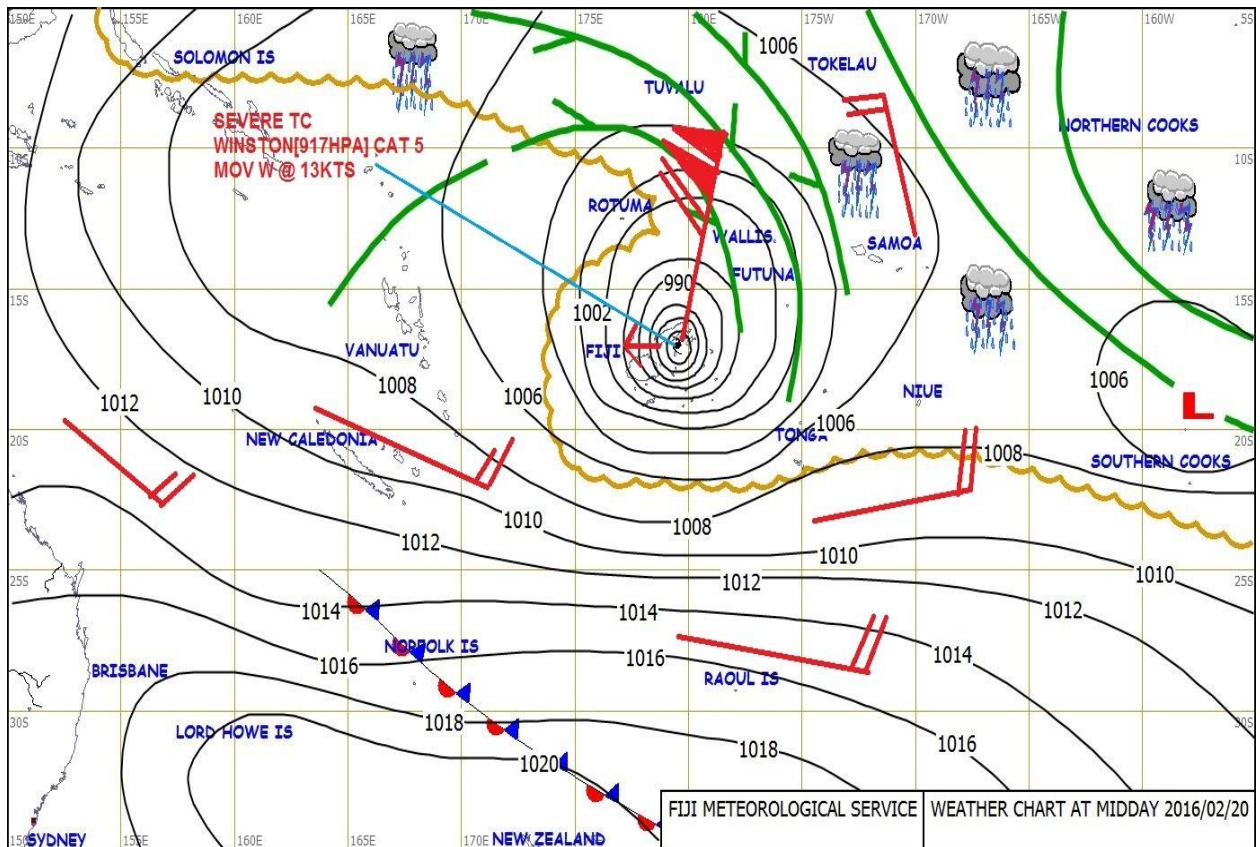


Figure 1: Mean Sea-Level Pressure chart issued from RSMC Nadi at 12 noon on Saturday 20th February, 2016.

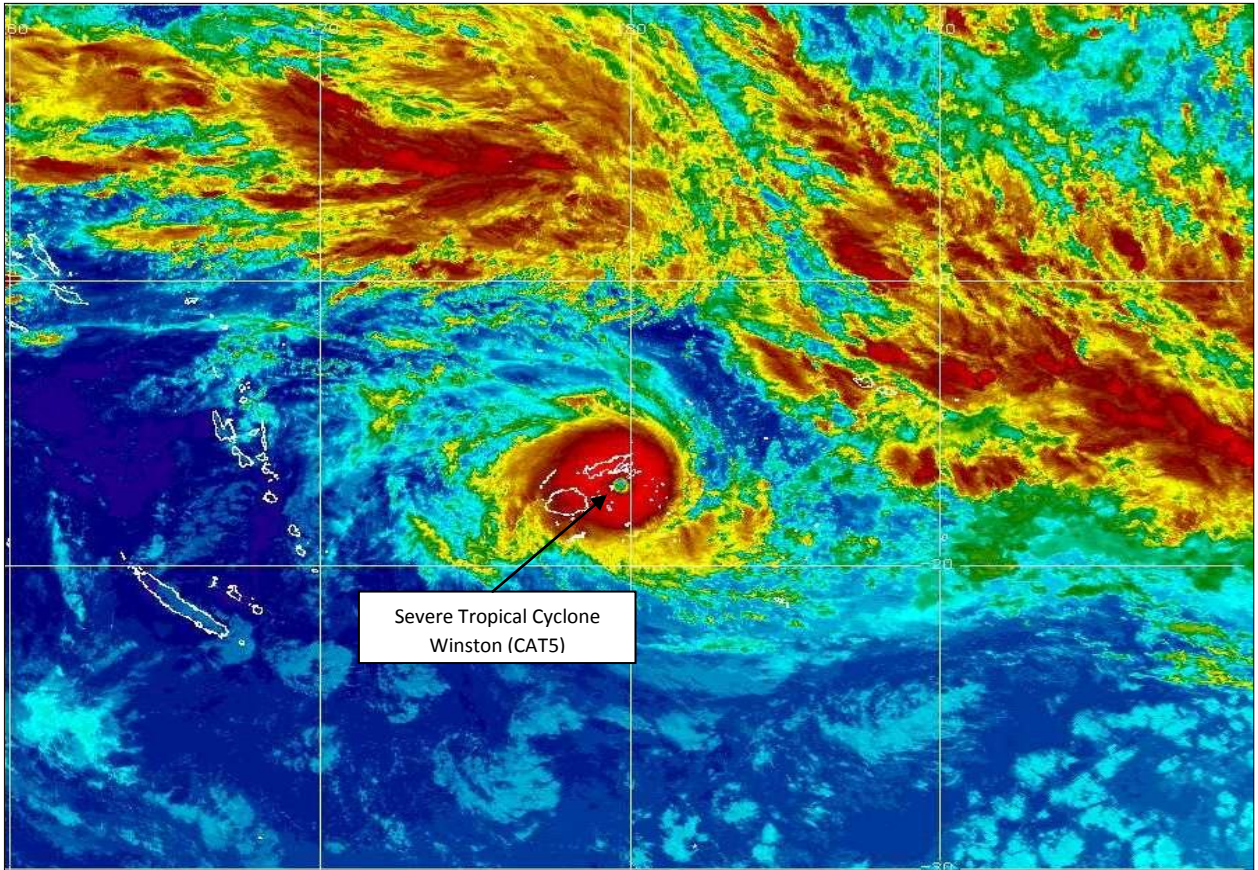


Figure 2: Colourised Infrared satellite imagery at 1:30pm on Saturday 20th February, 2016. (The darker red is indicative of areas of heavy rainfall in a rain band).

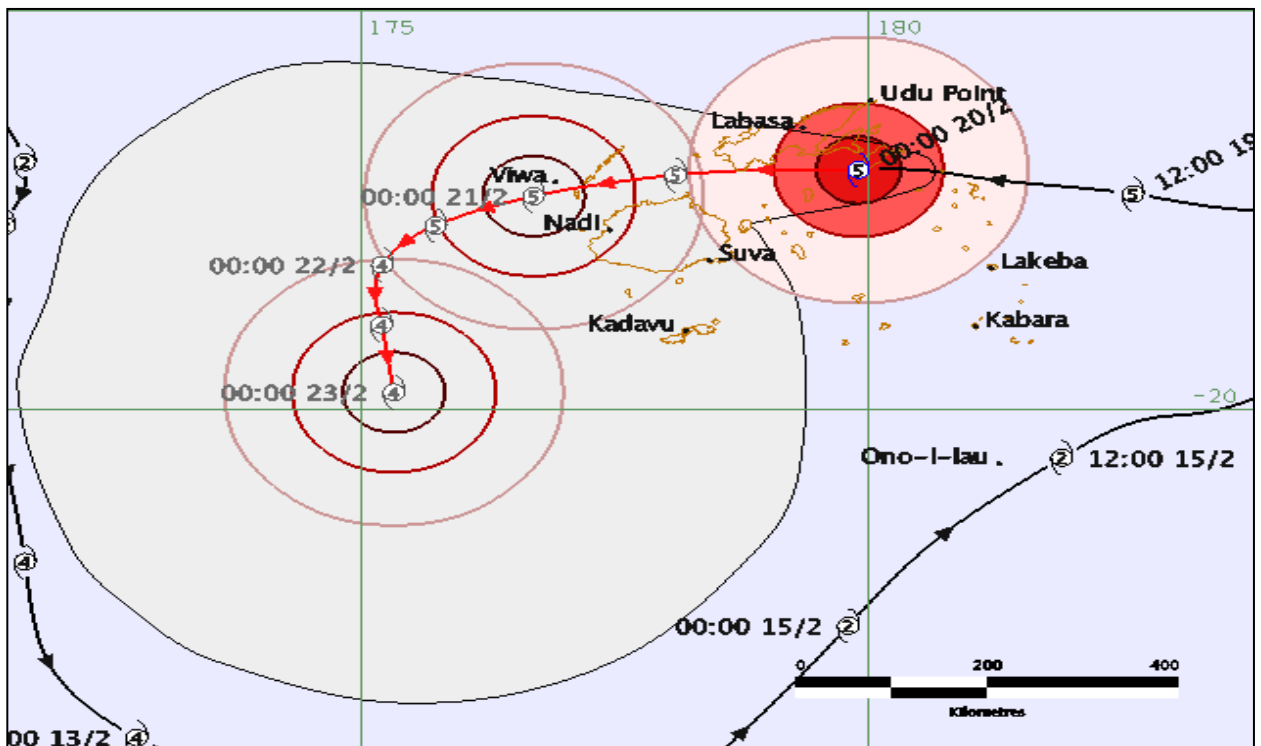


Figure 3: Tropical Cyclone Winston Forecast Track Map issued from RSMC Nadi at 1:00pm on Saturday 20th February, 2016.

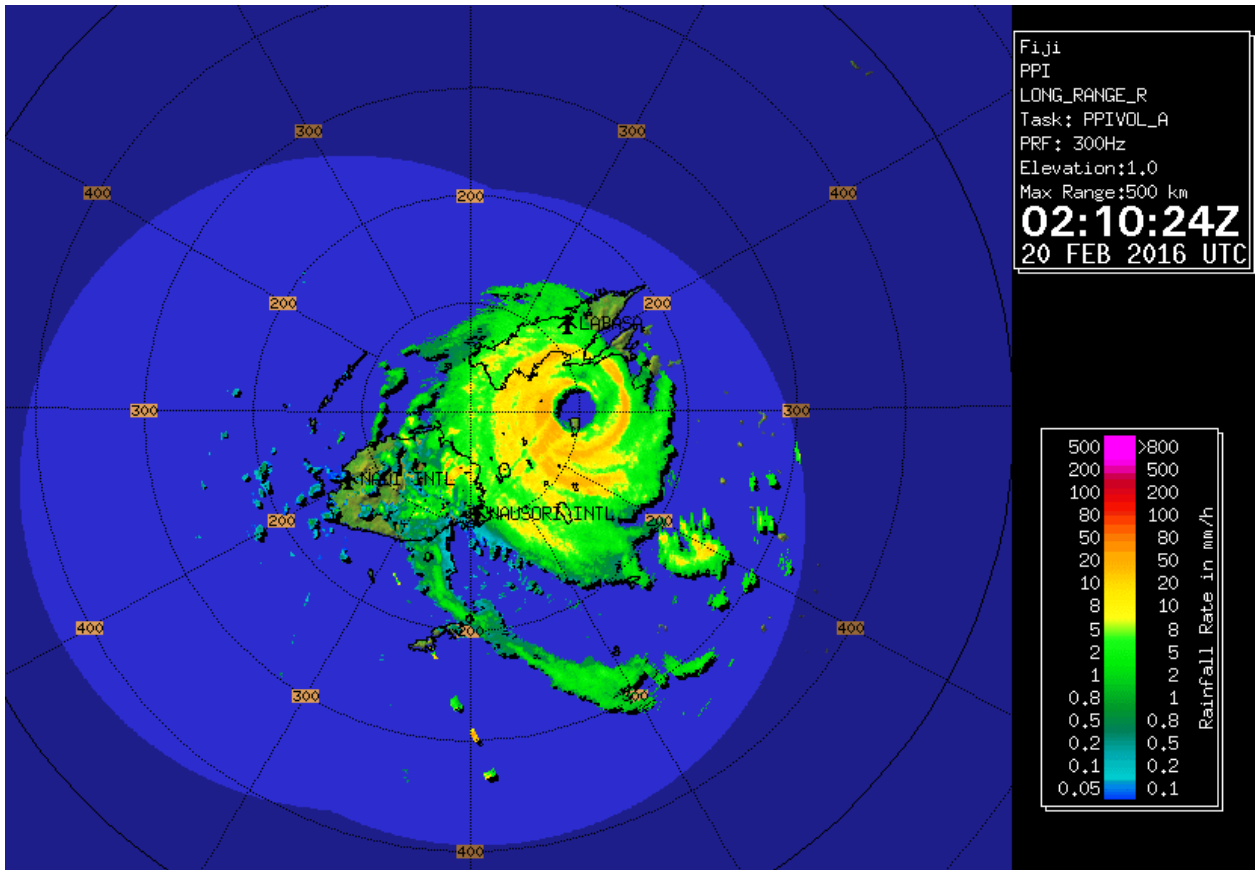


Fig 4: Radar Image at 02.10pm on Saturday 20th February, 2016.

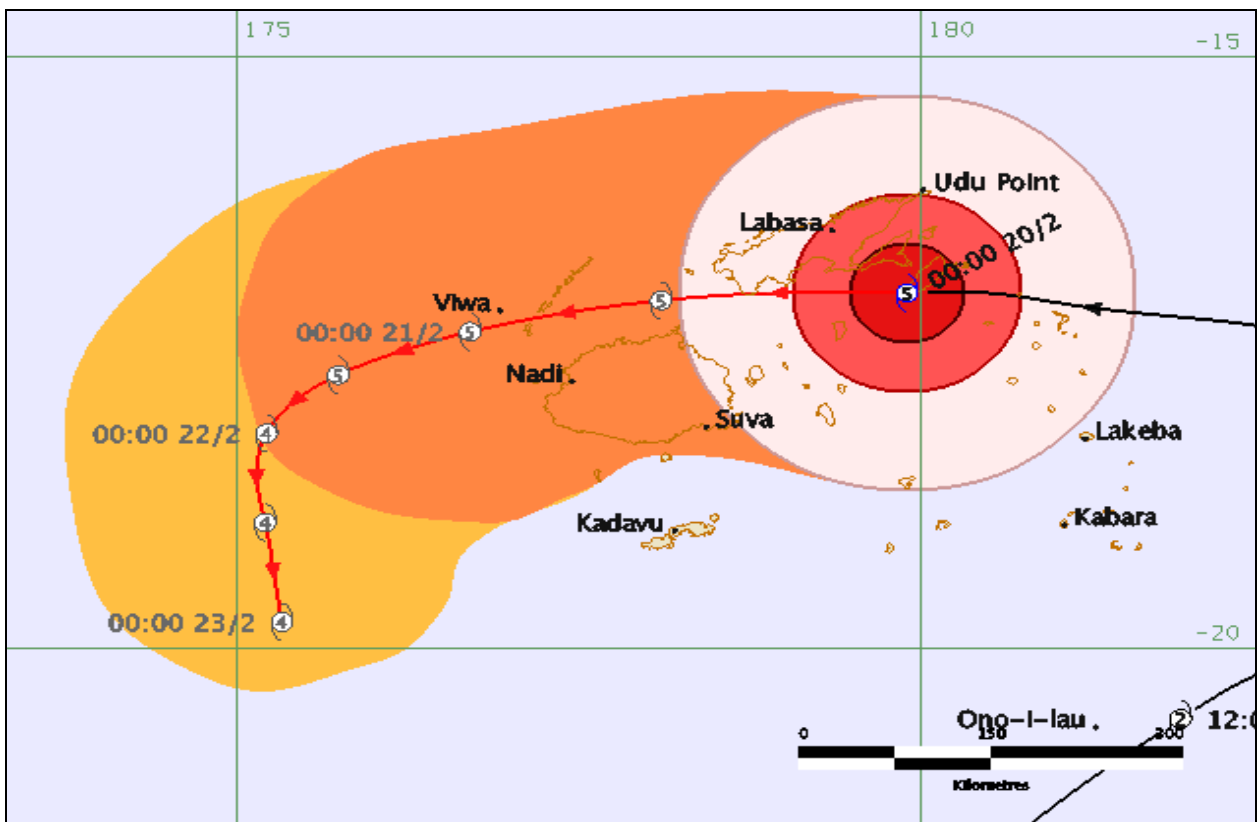


Figure 5: Severe Tropical Cyclone Winston Threat Map issues by RSMC, Nadi at 1:00pm on Saturday 20th February, 2016.

The river levels are increasing in the Rewa and Navua Catchments while flood alert has been issued for areas downstream from Dewala station. Other rivers are normal at the moment and are being monitored in anticipation of heavy rain associated with TC Winston to spread over the country.

River Catchments	Status
Labasa	Increasing (Alert issued)
Rewa	Increasing
Navua	Increasing
Rakiraki	Normal
Nadi	Normal
Ba	Normal
Sigatoka	Normal

Table 1: River level status at 2.00pm on Saturday 20th February, 2016.

Location	Wind Direction (Degrees)	10 Minute Average Maximum Wind Speed (Knots)	Maximum Gusts (Knots)
Vanuabalavu	SE	125	165
Koro Island	SW	53	75
Udu Point	NW	35	46
Nabouwalu	SW	30	50
Ono-i-Lau	SE	26	40
Lakeba	SE	20	32
Labasa	NW	20	40

Table 2: The 10 minute average maximum winds reported in the last 24 hour.

It is advisable that people are to remain prepared for destructive hurricane force winds, heavy rain with a possibility of major rivers overflowing banks. All communities are advised to keep updated with the latest weather bulletins and listen to radio for the updated information, take alerts and warnings seriously.

For more details and the latest on weather, please contact the Tropical Cyclone Warning Centre on 6736006, 9905376 or visit the Fiji Meteorological Service's website, www.met.gov.fj

ENDS.



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 for Permanent Secretary Infrastructure & Transport