



4 MAY 2022

**PRESS STATEMENT ON THE COI REPORT**  
**FROM MINISTER FOR THE OVESEAS TERRITORIES**  
**THE RT HON. AMANDA MILLING**

I appreciate that recent events in the British Virgin Islands with the arrest of Premier Fahie have been shocking and concerning for everybody. The Commission of Inquiry Report has also raised very serious concerns about the failures of governance and dishonesty by elected officials. This is a challenging time for the people of the British Virgin Islands.

I have spent the last few days listening to how you feel about the events. We discussed the recommendations from the Report. And I heard what you think is needed - which is putting the best interests of the people of the BVI at the heart of any future decisions. Events are moving quickly and I would like to provide a short update on my trip and outline what will happen next.

Let's be clear - the Report highlighted significant concerns around corruption, transparency and accountability. There is no getting away from this. Like many people have told me. This isn't a question of whether something should be done. It is a question of what is done. Action is needed now to: strengthen the foundations of the Territory; deliver a better public service; maintain a strong and resilient economy; and create better opportunities for the people of the BVI. This is what I heard you want during my visit.



Over the last few days I have met with a range of people across the BVI including:

- Acting Premier Hon Natalio Wheatley;
- All party leaders and all members of the House of Assembly;
- Business and tourism leaders;
- Some of the most experienced political and public service figures;
- Representatives from the financial sector;
- Church leaders, and;
- Representatives of community groups.

My meetings have helped me gain a greater insight and understanding of the significant challenges facing BVI. Discussions with elected officials have been cordial but frank. They acknowledged the scale of the issue and that the road ahead will be challenging. But we all agreed that it is a necessary journey.

During my discussions with community and religious leaders, I heard about the impact corruption has had on the community here. I sought their views on what would be best for the people of the BVI. Everyone I have met have agreed that there needs to be significant changes in the BVI to improve governance.

There is an urgent need to fix the systems, processes, laws and norms to ensure that money spent by the government – your money – is better spent on roads, education, hospitals and better public services and not misused as the COI has found.

We now have the opportunity to do this. To build a government that delivers for its people in a fair, transparent, and accountable way.



As I return to the UK I have a lot to consider. I will share the feedback from the range of individuals and groups I have met with the Foreign Secretary, and we will discuss what steps to take next.

I will also speak to Governor Rankin and Acting Premier Hon Natalio Wheatley on how to tackle the issues which are holding back the development of the BVI.

This must happen quickly. The people of the BVI deserve no less. You deserve a government which works in everyone's interests, not just those of a few.

A system which promotes and protects, not divides and instils fear.

A future which is bright, not overcast by the dark shadows of crime and corruption.

I am committed to delivering this in the interests of the people of the BVI.

Thank you.