

Statement from GOVERNOR JOHN RANKIN

Extension of Commission of Inquiry

I wanted to update you on the Commission of Inquiry, launched by my predecessor because of increasing concerns about poor governance, and possible corruption, abuse of office or other serious dishonesty within the British Virgin Islands.

I have taken the decision to allow a 6 month extension to the Commission.

Since 19 January the Commission of Inquiry, led by Sir Gary Hickinbottom, has been working diligently and thoroughly through a number of areas of Governance identified by the Commissioner as of interest to the scope of the Inquiry.

When first established, the Commission was scheduled to report to me by 19 July 2021. However, the Commissioner was clear in his statement of 2 June that the time allocated would be insufficient and that he would be requesting an extension.

The Col is looking into a substantial amount of information. The Attorney General's office has set up the Inquiry Response Unit (IRU) to support Ministries and to provide responses to all requests for information. Sir Geoffrey Cox, on behalf of the Attorney General, clearly set out the challenges the IRU faces in providing documentation, and these issues have created delay in the progress of the COI.

The current Covid 19 outbreak, the curfew order and the encouragement to stay at home makes all of our current ways of working difficult. It is important that the Commission can continue to operate safely within Covid 19 guidelines, even if it means that in person hearings may not always be possible.

Therefore, I have today informed the Premier and Members of Cabinet that in discussion with the Commissioner, Sir Gary Hickinbottom, I have granted a six month extension to the Col. A new instrument will be issued.

Good Governance is paramount to the success of any country and I remain committed to supporting both the Col and the elected Government in achieving this for the British Virgin Islands.



Governor John Rankin CMG