

Written questions, answers and statements

[UK Parliament](#) > [Business](#) > [Written questions, answers and statements](#) > [Find written statements](#) > HCWS81

FCDO update

Statement made on 8 June 2022

Statement UIN HCWS81

Statement made by



Elizabeth Truss

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

Conservative

South West Norfolk

 Commons

Statement

On 18 January 2021 (Hansard, HCWS716, column 32WS), The House was informed that the then Governor of the British Virgin Islands (BVI) had launched a Commission of Inquiry (COI) into claims that corruption, abuse of position and serious impropriety had taken place in public office in recent years.

On 4 April, the BVI Governor received the Report of the independent Commissioner, the Right Hon. Sir Gary Hickinbottom. The Governor announced that publication would follow in June after discussions between BVI political leaders and the UK Government on the Report's findings and recommendations. However, the arrest by US authorities on 28 April of the then Premier of BVI, Andrew Fahie, led to the Governor publishing the Report the following day.

The Report is a thorough, evidence-based assessment of the state of governance in the BVI. The Commissioner has identified serious impropriety and gross failures of governance by elected officials through several administrations is highly likely to have taken place. I have today placed copies of the Report in the Libraries of both Houses.

The Report makes 48 recommendations to address underlying issues including urgent reforms, investigations and medium-term measures. These will help deliver the deep change, which the people of the BVI deserve.

The Commissioner made a further recommendation, assessing that elected officials in the BVI would not deliver the essential reforms required, he reluctantly concluded that the only way to ensure required change would be for a temporary suspension of those parts of the Constitution by which areas of government are assigned to elected representatives, and the assumption of related powers by the Governor.

Since the Commissioner delivered his report there have been a number of significant developments, not least with the removal of Andrew Fahie as Premier through a vote of no confidence and the creation of the new Government of National Unity (GNU). The Governor has also ordered a number of criminal investigations, as recommended in the COI Report.

The UK and the Governor have worked with the GNU since its formation to turn its public commitments to reform into a strong implementation plan with a strict and comprehensive set of milestones that need to be met. If they are, it will protect against corruption and ensure the return of good governance.

I believe, in the first instance, the new government should have an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to reform through the implementation of the 48 COI recommendations and the further measures they have proposed.

The Governor and UK Government will monitor implementation and assess progress quarterly. Each BVI Government ministry and department will also provide a monthly report. The detailed implementation plan will be published by the GNU in due course.

If it becomes clear that this approach is not delivering the reform the people of the BVI want and deserve we will take action. This may require the swift implementation of the final Report recommendation.

In order to be able to do so quickly if required, the UK Government has submitted an Order in Council to the Privy Council that would allow this administration to be introduced. The Order will be laid in Parliament, but not brought in to force. Should it prove necessary to do so, I will instruct the Governor to make a proclamation in the BVI Gazette appointing a day that the Order will come into force.

The people of the BVI want and deserve change and have made their desire for better governance clear. Elected officials know this. We want to support the new government in making this change and allow them the opportunity to reform. The Order in Council will provide the people of the BVI with complete reassurance that change will happen.

We have a duty to protect the people of BVI from corruption, criminality and poor governance. We will stand by them.

Statement from

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office



Linked statements

This statement has also been made in the House of Lords

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office



FCDO update



[Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon](#)

Minister for South and Central Asia, North Africa, United Nations and the Commonwealth

Conservative, Life peer

Statement made 8 June 2022

HLWS80

Lords