

Image not found or type unknown

BVI Resident Quarantined as Officials Seek To Determine Whether Illness is Coronavirus

Health / **Published On February 28, 2020 04:30 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **February 28, 2020**

Image not found or type unknown



The Terrance B. Lettsome International Airport on Beef Island, British Virgin Islands By. ANGELA BURNS/VI CONSORTIUM

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS — The Government of the British Virgin Islands on Thursday pulled together a hastily organized press conference to take control of a narrative that had already engulfed social media claiming that a resident of the territory had been infected with the coronavirus.

"First of all, we do not have a confirmed case of the coronavirus in the BVI," BVI Premier Andrew Fahie said during the press conference held at the House of Assembly. "We have a case in terms of a person who had entered the BVI that was coming from away [and who] showed

some symptoms that created concerns. And since then, the person has been tested and quarantined."

Mr. Fahie said test samples were sent off island to Trinidad and results would be forthcoming in a few days. "All the tests have not returned as yet because they are still two or three days off before the final results come. But we can say it is most unlikely, but we cannot confirm 100 percent," he said.

The individual under quarantine is staying at their home, Mr. Fahie said. It was not clear who was monitoring this person and what are the protocols of the government's quarantine action. Mr. Fahie said the individual is a British native who had arrived on the island via aircraft with five other non-nationals. It remains unclear who the quarantined person was in contact with before being quarantined, and an investigation is currently underway. Once identified, those persons along with the five non-national will be assessed, Mr. Fahie said. The news was first reported by BVI News.

"We want the people of the Virgin Islands to know that we continue to exercise all options to ensure the safety of the people of the Virgin Islands as much as possible," the BVI premier said.

The BVI is a stone's throw away from the U.S. Virgin Islands, and daily commerce between St. Thomas and Tortola has been for decades a boon for the U.S. and British territories.

U.S. Virgin Islands health officials said recently [they have been monitoring the coronavirus](#) since December 2019, when it was first discovered in Wuhan, China.

"While there are no reported cases in the Caribbean region, including the United States Virgin Islands, Health Department officials remain vigilant by actively monitoring the situation and encourage residents and visitors to do the same and to follow its guidelines," the department said.

D.O.H.'s Epidemiology Division, led by Territorial Epidemiologist Dr. Esther Ellis, is monitoring the coronavirus outbreak closely, conducting surveillance, and will assist with laboratory testing and contact tracing as needed to quickly contain any possible cases," according to the department.

D.O.H. said it has shared guidance based on the public health response from the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) and has provided training to staff at the Juan F. Luis Hospital and the Schneider Regional Medical Center. The health department said it will be providing in-person training to all clinics across the territory. A timeline was not given.