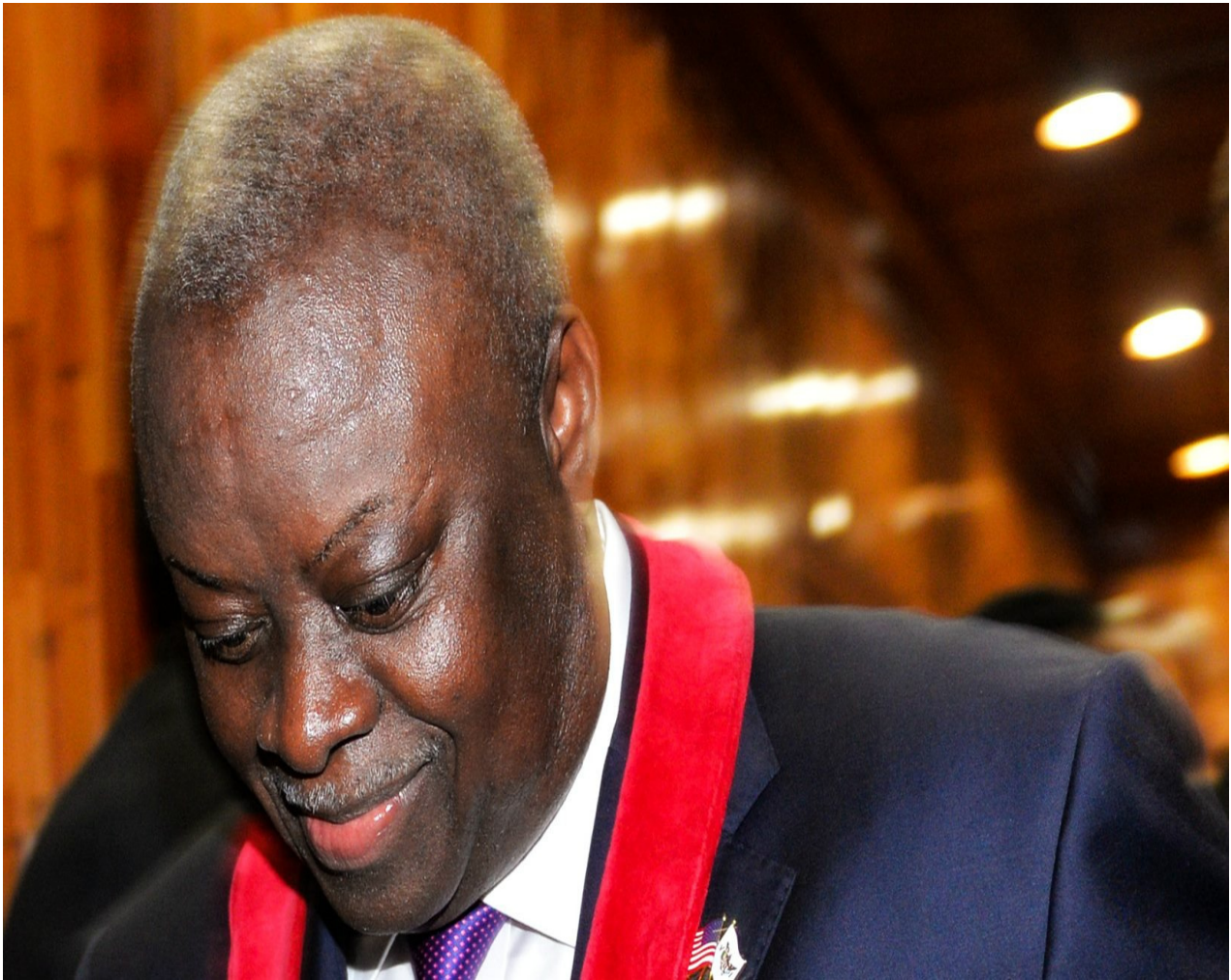


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Pays \$12,500 For Monthly Home Rental On St. Thomas

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The Government of the Virgin Islands has been paying \$12,500 per month for the St. Thomas rental home in which Governor Kenneth Mapp resides. The price is well over \$8,000 more than the amount the governor's spokesperson, Kimberly Jones, reportedly told a local newspaper.

Mapp made the revelation Thursday at a press conference at Government House on St. Croix while referencing the erroneous information from his press office that the government's tab had been \$4,000 per month for the rental.

As a prelude to explaining the reason behind the decision to rent a home in St. Thomas for \$12,500, the governor said, "You can't rent a home in St. Thomas for \$4,000."

Mapp also made known that while on St. Croix he stays at his private residence, which, he says, needs no "paving, fencing, or guard houses; my home is very secure."

The governor said he would not be spending "any public money on any private property owned by me," and that his St. Thomas rental is contracted for a six-month lease with an option to renew for an additional six months.

You can't rent a home in St. Thomas for \$4,000 -- *Governor Kenneth Mapp*

"It isn't just renting a home," he said, "it is renting a home for the security apparatuses in place."

In light of the revelation, *VI Consortium* asked the governor why had he chosen not to reside in the official governor's residence in Catherineberg, St. Thomas.



I believe that most people

Villa Catherineberg was

part of the holdings of The West Indian Company Limited, the oldest established company in the Virgin Islands and a subsidiary of The East Asiatic Company Limited of Copenhagen. WICO was sold to the Government of the Virgin Islands in the early 1990s and the building is now dubbed, "The Governor's Mansion." Prior to that it was the home of the president of The West Indian Company Limited who was also the V.I. Consul General of Denmark.

Mapp went on to offer an explanation as to why he thought the 'Governor's Mansion' was unlivable, but was careful to add that the home could one day be "remediated."

"This is a conversation that we're going to have with the Legislature and the community -- housing for the governor and the lieutenant governor," he said, adding, "And the reality is, we take these older structures, do not maintain them, you lock them up and really don't use them, they deteriorate very fast. And when they deteriorate very fast, you can't live in them."

"Catherineberg can be remediated so that at some point, I guess, I can live there. But it is not now at that stage. And you may recall the last administration made a decision not to do any remediation at Catherineberg for a number of reasons, and to use their private residence [instead]," Mapp said.

The governor was referring to former Governor de Jongh who spent \$500,000 of tax payers' money to outfit his private home with security features, including fencing and surveillance cameras.

Mapp continued, "And so, on top of what was needed, at the time the last administration came into office, and the last eight years, I don't need to say much more than that. But the Organic Act says the Governor shall reside in the capital -- in St. Thomas. And so the seat of government is there, and I have to go there very often and I'm happy to go, and I have to work and stay there."

Mapp said he considered hotel lodging rather than a rental property.

"We looked at maybe just staying in a hotel, but the intrusion of security staff and what that brings. I recently hosted the assistant secretary of Interior, I've hosted Congress folks already, [and] doing that in a hotel wasn't functional," he explained.

The governor said his team's only option was "to find someplace where the governor can reside and he can perform his duties in a residence, and so that's why the rental home on St. Thomas."

He pointed out that it was important for him to be open about the true cost of his living space on St. Thomas.

"But I did not want the public to walk away believing that we were only paying \$4,000 in rental. Plus, when contract and the lease is all done, it will be made available to the public and it would not reflect that mistake printed in the *Avis*, so I felt this morning to take the opportunity to say to the public what the amount is," he said.

It is unknown why Jones reported the amount of the governor's St. Thomas rental at \$4,000. According to the newspaper report, the private residence is located in Estate Nazareth.