

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Governor Mapp Is 'Living Out Of A Suitcase' At The Ritz-Carlton When In St. Thomas

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Ernice Gilbert **July 14, 2015**



ST. THOMAS -- Governor Kenneth Mapp said on AM radio on Monday afternoon that he's currently living "out of a suitcase" while in the territory's capital, again reminding the listening audience that, "I am the only governor in a state capital that does not have a home to reside out of any other governor, and for all intents and purposes, I'm the homeless governor."

But sources with direct knowledge of the governor's housing situation have told *The Consortium* that Mapp has been residing at the Ritz-Carlton when in St. Thomas. The sources even provided the room number -- which *The Consortium* withheld for security purposes -- that was revealed to be one of the luxurious hotel's executive club level

suites, with prices ranging from \$449 to over \$1,000 daily, according to a reservations specialist at the hotel.

[Last week](#), West Indian Company and Government House officials testifying at a Committee of the Whole hearing told senators that they did not know where the governor resides when on St. Thomas. And in yesterday's interview on WDHP 1620 AM with Mario Moorehead, the governor again refused to make known his location when asked by a caller.

"I'm living out my suitcase at the moment," Mapp told the caller with a chuckle. The caller, however, was not pleased with the governor's response, contending that when the governor says he's homeless, it reflects as an insult to residents who actually have no place to reside.

Mapp took issue with that notion. He said when saying he was the only homeless governor of any state, "I didn't say that as any attack to persons in the territory who are homeless -- we have been speaking about persons in the territory who are homeless, and what we believe needs to be done in terms of being able to help them, and some of the issues dealing with mental illness that drive folks to not be living somewhere with their family or living in a home."

The governor, however, did not reveal where he lives when on St. Thomas.

But the chief executive must reside somewhere when in the territory's capital, a consensus that the 31st Legislature agrees with. And while there remains no solution following the Estate Nazareth scandal, hotels or a more affordable living quarters remain the only short-term answer.

"Somewhere down the line you got to find money to pay for somewhere for the chief executive to stay. Somewhere down the line it has to happen," At-Large Senator Almando "Rocky" Liburd said at the [Committee of the Whole hearing](#) last Thursday. Senator Clifford Graham, Finance Committee chair, carried the same sentiments, even as he expressed frustration with what had transpired at Estate Nazareth.

"As a responsible Body, as a responsible community, looking out for our governor, something has to happen, and I'm saying at some point monies have to be appropriated, some place has to be identified, and I believe that the governor has a right to choose where he wants to stay," Liburd continued, contending that some people may want the governor to live somewhere that's not befitting of the territory's chief executive.

"Let's be real," Liburd added with empathy in his voice. "Kenneth Mapp may be who he is; we don't know who is going to be the next governor. But at some point there has to be a place where our people are proud of where we place our chief executive."

The territory's leader left the islands for a whirlwind trip to the mainland that will see stops in Washington, D.C., Colorado, Atlanta, Georgia and West Virginia. Sources also told *The Consortium* that the Ritz Carlton suite was reserved for the governor, however it remains unclear as to whether the government is paying for the room while Mapp travels. He won't be back until July 26.

In a May 31 press release, Mapp said he made the decision to leave the Estate Nazareth villa in an effort to demonstrate his willingness to compromise and cut costs with respect to his cabinet nominees.

“I made this decision to show an additional willingness to reduce expenses and make a path forward to confirm my cabinet,” the chief executive said. “This has been a sticking point in the community, and I hear that. I suspect that I may be the only Governor that does not have a home in the Capitol in the jurisdiction in which he presides.

“This is not a priority for me. When I ran for this office, I ran for this office because of a vision, a passion and my concern about the welfare and well-being of the people of the Virgin Islands, not for a home.”

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