

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Potter, Mona Barnes Give Update On Tsunami Advisory Response

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ST. CROIX -- The Department of Justice and Acting Governor Osbert Potter held a joint press conference at Government House this morning, with Mr. Potter along with Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency Director, Mona Barnes, giving residents an update on VITEMA's response to the tsunami advisory last night that followed an earthquake near Honduras in the Caribbean sea. Many residents complained that the only alert they received from VITEMA was one announcing the cancellation of the tsunami advisory, but no notification alerting residents of the earthquake and possible tsunami.

Ms. Barnes blamed the delay on connectivity problems at VITEMA, which she said was rectified around the same time the tsunami advisory was cancelled -- hence the reason

why, she said, both advisories came almost in tandem. Some residents dispute Ms. Barnes's response, however, contending that they only received the latter alert.

Ms. Barnes reached out to The Consortium when it became apparent that their connectivity systems were down, and the publication moved [immediately](#) to alert residents with information provided by VITEMA.

[View the original embedded media](#)

Ms. Barnes explained the different levels of alert relative to tsunamis, and acknowledged that all of the 42 tsunami alert sirens in the territory were inoperable because of the storms. Yet even if the sirens were operational, they would not have been utilized, Ms. Barnes said, adding that the sirens would only be activated if a tsunami warning had been issued.

Still, residents held to the stance that VITEMA and the Mapp administration had failed Virgin Islanders during such a critical moment, which, if things had turned out differently, could have easily meant life and death.

And some questioned why an indelible agency such as VITEMA was still struggling with connectivity issues, knowing its importance to the community, and they said VITEMA should have utilized other means aside from VI Alert to reach out to residents.

The tsunami evacuation maps are available at the following locations:

St. Thomas:

- ? West Bay Supermarket
- ? Pueblo Subbase
- ? Pueblo Long bay
- ? Turnbull Library
- ? Plaza Extra Supermarket
- ? Moe's Supermarket Red Hook

St. Croix:

- ? Tide Village Gas Station
- ? Seaside Market & Deli
- ? One Love Gas Stations located in La Grande Princesse, Golden Rock & Frederiksted
- ? Plaza Extra East
- ? Plaza Extra West
- ? Stop & Shop
- ? Cruzan Petroleum
- ? Cost U Less

St. John: **Maps will be delivered to the following locations**

- ? Starfish Market

- ? Dolphin Market
- ? St. John Gourmet Market

Maps can also be collected at VITEMA offices located on St. Croix and St. Thomas. For questions, contact VITEMA at (340) 773-2244 (St. Croix), or (340) 774-2244 (St. Thomas).

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