

The Virgin Islands Consortium

British V.I. Government Announces Initiative to Assist Security Officers During Pandemic

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BVI Premier Andrew Fahie

TORTOLA, British Virgin Islands, CMC – BVI Premier Andrew Fahie has announced an initiative that will see border security officers receiving a monthly allowance in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

Speaking during a press conference earlier this week, Fahie said the allowance will go to each officer involved in the territory's border security initiative .

The premier did not disclose the exact sum of money that will be issued but said it is an incentive for the border security officers' hard work during this time.

"We have boosted our manpower for law enforcement and border protection by redeploying personnel from within our systems," he said. "And may I add that we are making sure that allowances will be passed for all officers monthly who are part of the security team during the COVID-19 era until those officers are no longer deployed in that capacity."

The premier added, "We want to do that not only for our law enforcement but across the board for those who have fought so hard with COVID-19. We have to reward our people even in these bitter hard times ... because not only are they working now, they are actually putting their lives on the line."

Fahie also said the government was putting the necessary measures in place to increase the overall fleet size of law enforcement vessels to further protect and strengthen the British territory's borders.

"By next week, Customs should have at least three more vessels on the water when all of the parts reach. Within the next month, Customs and police will have at least seven more vessels out there combined and we have other areas that we are bringing to strengthen our border in terms of equipment and material resources," he said.

The move comes amid rampant talk in the BVI that St. Thomas residents had snuck into Tortola. St. Thomas has seen the worst Covid-19 outbreak in all of the U.S. and British Virgin Islands, and has announced for 9 of the 14 coronavirus-related deaths in the USVI.

USVI Governor Albert Bryan mentioned the BVI surge during his Monday Covid-19 press briefing, and urged St. Thomas residents not to visit the BVI if they don't have to.

"If you're not supposed to be going across to those waters, please don't travel over or try to get in," Bryan said. "We've had some cases over there, they don't know where they came from."