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Territory's Leaders Share Condolences Following Tragic Helicopter Crash in Botany Bay

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Fire personnel leaving scene of helicopter crash in Botany Bay, St. Thomas on Monday, Feb. 15, 2021. By. KYLE MURPHY FOR VI CONSORTIUM

Following the tragic helicopter crash in Botany Bay Monday afternoon that left at least four people dead, among them a family of three, the territory's leaders, including Governor Albert Bryan and Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach, and Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory, expressed deep sadness and shared condolences with the families of the deceased.

Mr. Roach, who is serving as acting governor while Mr. Bryan is away on a personal matter, said, "As the entire community tries to process this painful loss, I pray for comfort and strength for the families, friends, and loved ones of the passengers. The loss of these lives is so deeply felt,

especially during a time when we are taking such measures to protect life during the ongoing pandemic which we face,” he said.

He added, “I am extremely grateful for the collective response of emergency response teams who are to be commended and recognized for their efforts.”

According to Mr. Roach, Governor Bryan expressed his condolences to the families impacted by Monday's unfortunate incident.

Ms. Donna-Frett-Gregory stated, "We commend the efforts of the first responders, as this tragic event highlights the importance of providing them the resources needed to respond appropriately to emergencies.

“May the departed rest in peace, and may the families and friends be comforted and granted solace. May those who responded to the scene be given the strength needed to process what was faced and may our community lift them all in collective prayer.”

In a statement issued Tuesday morning, Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett said, “I was deeply devastated to hear of yesterday’s helicopter crash in Botany Bay that claimed precious lives, including a family of 3. One of the passengers was a senior in my youngest son’s class at Antilles School and had a bright, beautiful future ahead of him.

“I offer my sincere condolences and prayers to the family members, loved ones and friends of each of the individuals that was onboard. This is a horrific tragedy that no one should have to face. I’d like to thank our local public servants, including St. Thomas Rescue, Director Daryl George and the V.I. Fire Service, the V.I. Police Department, and VITEMA for their courageous service to the people of the Virgin Islands.

“On behalf of my staff, my family and myself, our thoughts and fervent prayers for comfort, strength and peace are with the families and loved ones of the victims of this tragic incident.”

The helicopter crashed at Botany Bay Monday afternoon and left at least four individuals dead, the Consortium can confirm.

A Consortium reporter as of 6:32 p.m. Monday was in the vicinity of the scene of the accident, however emergency personnel had cordoned off a broad area.

The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) said in a release issued at about 6:24 p.m. Monday that a number of local emergency responders were on the scene, including VITEMA, VI Fire Service, VI Port Authority and the V.I. Police Department. VITEMA said the incident occurred at roughly 3:00 p.m.

The federal government also had personnel on the scene, including the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and National Transportation Safety Board. St. Thomas Rescue was on site as well.

According to a person with knowledge of the matter, at least four people were on the helicopter, including a St. Thomas business owner, his wife and son. VITEMA at about 7:36 p.m. subsequently confirmed in a second news release that four people were on the helicopter, all of whom succumbed to injuries sustained during the tragic incident. According to the person, first responders are set continue their search and rescue efforts early Tuesday, as visibility diminished Monday night. The helicopter is said to have been completely destroyed during the crash, said the

person.

VITEMA said identification of victims would be withheld pending next of kin notification.

See below for pictures and a video.



Fire personnel leaving scene of accident. (Kyle Murphy for VI Consortium)



First responders near scene of helicopter crash (Kyle Murphy for VI Consortium)

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