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# Natalio Wheatley Sworn in as New BVI Premier as Fahie Scandal Continues to Rock British Territory

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**Premier Natalio Wheatley. By. PICTURE CREDIT: BVI NEWS**

A BVI House of Assembly no confidence vote against Andrew Fahie [was successful Thursday evening](#), and immediately after the vote, Natalio Wheatley was sworn in as the new premier of the BVI after Governor John Rankin revoked Fahie's position.

The fast-moving actions come amid one of the biggest scandals to affect the British Virgin Islands. A week ago, Mr. Fahie was arrested in Miami on charges related to conspiracy to import cocaine and money laundering, and since then has remained in federal prison as he seeks to be released on bond. Mr. Fahie's argument that he should be given diplomatic immunity because he was still the head of the BVI is no longer viable.

After being sworn in, Mr. Wheatley said, "I'm very proud to stand before you today, now officially as premier of the Virgin Islands. As premier, I pledge to carry out my duties of office with honesty and integrity and to always do what is in the best interest of the people of the Virgin Islands.

"I am also proud to lead this National Unity Government that reflects the hunger in our community for unity. This swearing ceremony represents another important and necessary step in the process of renewing our cherished democracy and reforming our institutions and systems of government. It is my hope that this day will be remembered as the day we began a new era of democratic governance in the territory."

His leadership is part of a newly formed national unity party that includes leaders of the opposition camps, who have set aside differences to address what is an unprecedented situation facing the BVI. As part of this new unity party, recommendations include Opposition Leader Marlon Penn being given the Health and Social Development Portfolio and his party colleague Mitch Turnbull being offered the Ministry of Labour and Natural Resources.

On Tuesday, Wheatley publicly denounced for the first time the alleged actions of Mr. Fahie, while reminding the public that the beleaguered, now-former premier was entitled to due process before the law. Mr. Wheatley then addressed the looming possibility that the United Kingdom will ultimately decide to suspend the autonomy of the BVI when it comes to representative government.

Whether Governor Rankin and mainland authorities accept the new developments remains to be seen, as Commissioner Sir Gary Hickinbottom concluded and wrote in his report that current and previous administrations have not only ignored tenets of good governance but actively encouraged the continuing dysfunction in the BVI public sector.