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Three People Charged in BVI Postal Service Investigation; Director of Trade Facing Scrutiny

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Wendy George, left, Pascha Stoutt, upper right, Ganesh Surujbally, lower right.

As the British Virgin Islands continues to grapple with the fallout of its former premier's arrest, which was swiftly followed by the Commission of Inquiry report suggesting systemic corruption among government and related agencies, financial irregularities in the BVI postal system are getting major scrutiny from law enforcement.

The investigation into BVI Post, the British territory's postal service, has thus far resulted in criminal charges against three people.

Last Friday, former Postmaster General Pascha Stoutt was hit with charges for what the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force said are various offenses. Wendy George, reportedly another BVI Post

employee, was also charged on December 16, while on Monday this week, 34-year-old Ganesh Surujbally became the third person charged in the matter.

That scrutiny is extending into other sectors as well. An investigation has reportedly been launched after allegations surfaced regarding alleged unethical behavior of Director of Trade Karia Christopher.

Local publication 284 Media reports that it has seen documentary evidence and received information from confidential sources to indicate that Christopher has been accused of editing records in the Department of Trade's database without due process.

The standing allegations include approving a trade license for someone who is not a BVI believer, a power that is reserved, according to 284 Media, for the premier and the Junior Minister for Trade. Christopher is also said to have adjusted records to remove conditions attached to some licensees without having any documentation on hand to justify the change. In some cases, 284 Media reports that she may have made the changes without notifying anyone else.

The media outlet reports that following an investigation, Christopher defended her alleged actions when the accusations against her were brought forward for a response.

She has reportedly denied making changes to the trade licenses she herself holds, and says the allegations against her are attempts at character assassination.

The allegations come in the face of Christopher's pending exit as director of Trade — she is reported to have submitted her resignation from the position effective next June.