

The Virgin Islands Consortium

With Threat of Direct UK Rule Still Looming Over BVI, Commission of Inquiry Reports Progress on Systemic Reforms

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BVI Governor John Rankin, appointed by UK's King Charles III.

The British Virgin Islands has been making steady progress in tackling systemic reforms recommended by the Commission of Inquiry report that was published earlier this year

The Commission of Inquiry implementation unit issued a statement last week noting that its monthly progress report had been sent to Governor John Rankin and Premier Dr. Natalio Wheatley. Hadassah Ward, the unit's director, noted that work had begun on 48 of the 50 framework recommendations, with the other to be undertaken next year.

Overall, 34 percent of the 132 recommended actions have already been taken, 30 percent are underway, and 20 percent have not yet begun. Twenty-one actions, about 16 percent of the total, Ward noted, have been started but are “experiencing challenges.”

Last week Tuesday's statement also included a visual summary of the government's progress in implementing the agreed recommendations.

Questions from the public regarding going work o the Commission of Inquiry framework recommendations can be emailed to the Implementation Unit - implementationunit@gov.vg

As the territory's reforms occur under the still-looming threat of the loss of relative autonomy and being placed once again under the direct rule of the United kingdom, one lawmaker is pleading with British authorities to free the BVI from the shackles of colonial rule.

Speaking in the house of assembly on Tuesday, Mark Vanterpool, Member of Parliament for the territory's fourth district, used his time during the budget debate to speak directly to the UK.

The United Kingdom currently has an Order in Council that would “will allow the Foreign Secretary to swiftly provide me with the powers needed to take corrective action if progress against the milestones is unsatisfactory,” according to BVI governor John Rankin, speaking in June about the mechanism by which the UK could impose direct rule on its territory if governance reform efforts do not satisfy Home Office authorities.