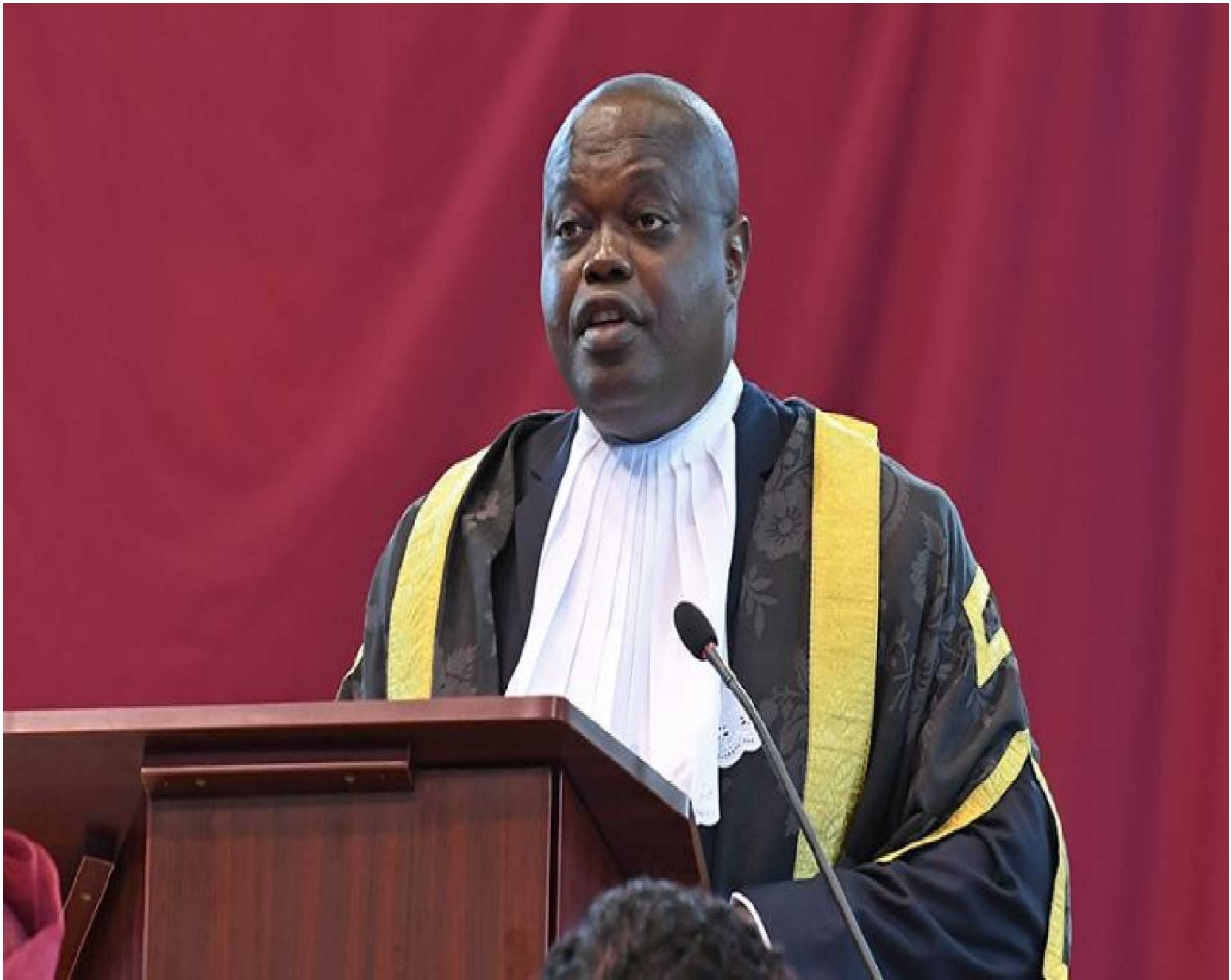


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Former BVI House Speaker Detained on Human Trafficking Allegations Proclaims Innocence

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Former Speaker of the British Virgin Islands House of Assembly Julian Willock

Former Speaker of the British Virgin Islands House of Assembly Julian Willock has suggested that he is being targeted after being detained and subsequently released by police on Tuesday.

Although nothing has been forthcoming from the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force as of press time, Willock issued a statement following his release from detention indicating that he was being investigated in connection with potential human trafficking, "because of some VISA waivers I had obtained over the years."

Willock admitted to obtaining visa waivers "in association with my company, Advance Marketing and Professional Services." However, the former speaker insisted that all such waivers were "legally acquired through the Deputy Governor's Office."

The waivers mostly predate Willock's tenure as Speaker, and the people to whom the waivers apply, Willock says, "have since left the territory and did so as per Immigration requirements."

In the statement, Willock insinuates that he is being targeted by unnamed people. "It was suggested if they could not get me via the Commission of Inquiry they had to get me another way," he wrote.

As of Tuesday afternoon, Willock said his communication devices were still in the custody of police, namely the six officers from the UK who initially detained him.

He issued thanks to the public "for their good wishes," and expressed confidence that with the help of his attorney, "I will put those unfounded allegations to" rest.