

STATEMENT

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Statement on Delegation to CARIFESTA and Hurricane Erin

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It is with great pride that I announce the Virgin Islands' participation in the upcoming Caribbean Festival of Arts (CARIFESTA), to be held in Barbados. This premier regional event celebrates the depth and diversity of Caribbean artistic traditions, and the Virgin Islands is honoured to stand among our Caribbean brothers and sisters in showcasing our cultural wealth.

Our delegation, composed of talented Virgin Islanders across music, dance, theatre, culinary arts, and crafts, represents the essence of our cultural identity. These cultural ambassadors will not only share their gifts with regional and international audiences, but also tell our stories in a way that ensures the Virgin Islands is recognized as a vibrant and integral contributor to the Caribbean's cultural tapestry.

The significance of this participation extends far beyond performance. CARIFESTA provides a unique platform for cultural exchange, collaboration, and inspiration, deepening regional bonds and affirming the role of our heritage in shaping Caribbean identity. Through this engagement, our artists will strengthen both their craft and the wider regional cultural sector.

As Premier and Minister of Culture, I commend our delegation for their dedication and commitment as representatives of our Territory. I also extend gratitude to the many supporters and organizers who have made this journey possible. Together, we ensure that our cultural voice is heard, our heritage celebrated, and our legacy sustained on both a regional and international stage.

We remain attentive as final preparations are made, particularly mindful of weather developments during this active hurricane season. Necessary precautions are being taken to ensure the safety and success of our delegation as they prepare to represent the Virgin Islands with distinction in Barbados.

On Hurricane Erin and Its Impact on the Virgin Islands

The recent passing of Hurricane Erin once again reminded us of the power and unpredictability of nature. While the storm posed a serious threat to our Territory, we are deeply grateful that the Virgin Islands sustained only minimal damage.

I commend the people of the Virgin Islands for their vigilance and preparedness, as well as the tireless work of our emergency response personnel and supporting agencies. Their dedication and professionalism have enabled us to withstand this challenge with resilience.

The Director of the Department of Disaster Management, Mr. Jasen Penn, will provide a detailed update on the recovery process, including the latest assessments and the steps being undertaken to ensure all affected areas receive the necessary support for a swift return to normalcy.

In addition, the Minister for Communications and Works, Hon. Kye Rymer, will deliver a statement on the progress of cleanup operations following Hurricane Erin, as well as outline the Government's expectations and readiness for the remainder of the hurricane season. His report will highlight both the immediate measures taken to restore affected communities and the long-term strategies being implemented to enhance our resilience against future storms.

As we continue through this hurricane season, I urge all residents to remain vigilant, prepared, and united. Your Government remains steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding the lives and well-being of all who call the Virgin Islands home. Together, we give thanks for our safety, and together, we resolve to stand strong in the face of any challenge.