

Premier Wheatley Launches Our Constitution Campaign

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Premier of The Virgin Islands, Honourable Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley today announced the launch of Our Constitution, a public information campaign to ensure every person living in the Virgin Islands, and every Virgin Islander abroad, understands the constitutional reform process now underway. The campaign's digital home, ourconstitution.vg, is live today ahead of the first formal round of constitutional negotiations with the United Kingdom, scheduled for later this month.

Prior to the launch of this website, the Premier, along with members of the Constitutional Negotiation Committee (CNC), have visited the four main islands in the Territory, presenting the 27 points the team will be negotiating. During those sessions, the Committee had the opportunity to provide residents with information about the timeline of negotiations, what those negotiations would mean, and, importantly, to listen to residents' concerns.

Speaking about the process, Premier Wheatley said, "For generations, our people have built something on these islands worth protecting and worth passing on. This constitutional review process was not handed to us; we chose it. The Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) went to every island; they listened and presented recommendations based on those discussions. When our House of Assembly came together, the 13 elected members agreed on 27 changes to bring to the negotiation table, which I believe is a strong mandate from our people. Now

our responsibility is to make sure every person who calls these islands home understands what we agreed to negotiate, and why it matters for all of us."

Premier Wheatley said the proposed 27 recommendations are rooted in Virgin Islander identity but also look ahead, building on the work of previous generations and setting the pace for the next generation. Because this constitution governs everyone who lives in the Territory, the campaign speaks to everyone who calls the BVI home: Virgin Islanders, Belongers, and residents who have chosen to build their lives in this Territory. The Premier explained, "Some amendments speak to all - governance, rights, the courts. Others, including Belonger status, ancestral land, and the new Ancestral Virgin Islander category, speak specifically to Virgin Islander heritage." Wheatley said the campaign will explain both, clearly and honestly.

The House of Assembly reviewed all 57 CRC recommendations. Twenty-seven are being advanced as proposed constitutional amendments. Twenty-eight are being addressed through legislation and policy, which are the correct tools for those matters. The frequently cited claim that "only a third of recommendations were accepted" is factually incomplete. Thirty-five of 57 resulted in either a constitutional amendment or a concrete legislative commitment.

The 27 proposed amendments cover five themes:

- Who We Are - identity, Belonger status, Ancestral Virgin Islander, and Virgin Islands land
- Our Rights - fundamental rights, elderly protection, disability, and the right to marry
- Taking Control - devolution of the Governor's powers, UK consultation requirements, and a mandatory referendum on political status by 31 December 2031
- How We Govern - Senate, at-large seats, five-year elections, Cabinet reform, and Attorney General reform
- Our Communities - District Councils, the Deputy Governor, and Magistracy reform

This information campaign runs through July 2026 across Facebook, WhatsApp, radio, and ourconstitution.vg, featuring video interviews with the Constitutional

Negotiating Committee, past negotiators, legal experts, and community voices from across the Territory. It is expected that diaspora content will be distributed through the BVI London Office for Virgin Islanders living abroad.

All residents are invited to visit ourconstitution.vg to read the summaries of all 27 proposed amendments, explore the process timeline, and read the frequently asked section, which archives questions posed in public forums about the 27 amendments and the negotiation process. The public may also ask questions via the website.

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About Our Constitution Campaign

Our Constitution is the Government of the Virgin Islands' public information campaign supporting the 2026 constitutional negotiations with the United Kingdom. The campaign runs through July 2026 and is anchored at ourconstitution.vg.

For Additional Information Contact:

Nekita Turnbull

Chief Information Officer

Department of Information and Public Relations

Government of the Virgin Islands

5th Floor, RJT Edifice Building

Tortola, Virgin Islands, VG1110

Telephone: +1 (284) 468-2731

Email: neturnbull@gov.vg