GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

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Tel: (284)468-2730
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"Nothing Is Agreed Until Everything Is Agreed": Constitutional Talks Enter Final Phase Ahead of Early 2027 Target

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As constitutional negotiations between The Virgin Islands and the United Kingdom enter their final phase, Premier and Minister of Finance Honourable Dr Natalio D. Wheatley says both sides remain bound by the principle that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed.

"I want to hammer that point home because I think there are people who believe that some things have already been decided," the Premier said on *Virgin Islands Voice* on Wednesday, 30 September 2026. "That's just not how these negotiations go."

Premier Wheatley led The Virgin Islands Constitutional Negotiating Committee, which includes Members of His Majesty’s Loyal Opposition and senior legal experts, in talks in London from 23 to 25 September 2026, following the first round in the Territory on 14 and 15 July 2026. The first round of talks was held in The Virgin Islands, with the UK team led by Mr Nicholas Wareham of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. According to the Premier, that round was followed by work drafting proposed constitutional language for the London talks.

He described the second round in London as "very successful”, reporting that the delegation went through nearly all the issues it had raised and now understands the UK's views on most areas. He said some Virgin Islands positions had been changed or withdrawn. In some cases, he explained, the UK prefers a matter to be handled through local legislation instead of in the Constitution.

The Virgin Islands negotiating position is set out in an April 2026 House of Assembly report proposing 27 constitutional amendments. Key proposals include devolving responsibilities now held by the Governor, such as internal security and the administration of the courts; adding two at-large seats to the House of Assembly; and holding a referendum on the Territory's political status by 31 December 2031.

Premier Wheatley said the delegation was unified across government and opposition, adding that in London "you wouldn't know who was government or who was opposition."

The Premier announced that the next steps are further technical engagement and a meeting between himself and the UK Minister for the Overseas Territories, Uma Kumaran MP. One final round of negotiations would follow, at which the parties would seek to agree the full draft language of the new Constitution. The agreed text would then go to the House of Assembly for debate.

"Our goal would be to get it on the agenda of the Privy Council sometime early in 2027," he said.

Premier Wheatley said the final round is expected to be held in person, because negotiations at this level depend on face-to-face sessions and private discussions between delegations. He committed to informing the public of all agreed positions once they are confirmed by the UK Minister.

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About:

The Constitutional Negotiating Committee leads negotiations between The Virgin Islands and the United Kingdom on constitutional reform. Through the negotiations, the Committee is working with the UK Government to refine and agree the text of a modernised Constitution that reflects contemporary governance needs, strengthens democratic institutions, and supports the Territory's future development and aspirations.

Additional Documents or Media

- premier_on_constitution_on_viv_30sept26.pdf