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Virgin Islands to Begin Constitutional Negotiations with the United Kingdom in Early 2026

(Updates from the Joint Ministerial Council)

The Government of the Virgin Islands has secured agreement with the United Kingdom to commence formal constitutional negotiations in the first quarter of 2026, Premier Dr. the Honourable Natalio D. Wheatley announced during his government's press conference on Friday.

Premier Wheatley was reporting on The Territory's participation in the recent Joint Ministerial Council (JMC) in London.

He said: "We secured agreement to begin formal constitutional negotiations with the United Kingdom early in 2026. This is an important milestone. These talks will allow us to advance the recommendations of our own House of Assembly and continue the work of building a stronger, more self-reliant Territory."

According to The Leader of Government Business, he will soon be laying on the Table of the House of Assembly the Committee of the House's Report on Constitutional Advancement, which will be sent to the Overseas Territories Minister. A negotiating team will be appointed thereafter.

The negotiations are expected to lead to a new Constitution, followed by a bilateral compact with the United Kingdom, guiding The Territory's cooperation over the next few years. "We continue to celebrate the most robust governance reform programme in the history of the Virgin Islands, which provided the foundation of good governance, transparency and trust upon which we negotiation,' Premier Wheatley said.

Confirmation of Date for Order in Council to be Lifted

As a related update, the UK Government has confirmed that the Virgin Islands Constitution (Interim Amendment) Order 2022 is expected to be formally revoked in March 2026, following completion of the required UK constitutional and Privy Council processes.

More Support for Law Enforcement

Security and law enforcement were key priorities at the Joint Ministerial Council, JMC. The Virgin Islands secured additional support from the UK Home Office for anti-violence and anti-gang programmes and additional funding in the 2026 budget to strengthen law enforcement agencies, including Customs and Immigration.

Fiscal and Other Reforms

A constructive agreement was also reached, in principle, to reduce the mandated liquidity ratio - minimum reserve of cash and short-term assets - from 25% to 20% of recurrent revenue. The Virgin Islands delegation also advanced reforms to strengthen the public service, governance systems, and youth development, while fostering stronger engagement with the diaspora.

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About:

The Government of the Virgin Islands is committed to promoting good governance and the sustainable development of the Territory with a view to ensuring a well-informed, prosperous, cohesive and stable society. The Premier's Office serves as the focal point for coordinating cross-sectoral policies and programmes and promoting the sustainable development of the Virgin Islands to ensure a well-informed, prosperous, cohesive and stable society.