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Karen Downgraded to a Tropical Depression on Approach to the Territory; Heavy Rains, Winds Still Anticipated

*Governor Bryan Announces Closure of Government Operations, Schools on Tuesday;
No Curfew Will Be Put Into Effect*

ST. CROIX – Governor Albert Bryan Jr., today, held a press conference at Government House to update the public on the latest trajectory of Tropical Depression Karen and its potential impact on the US Virgin Islands, the government’s preparedness actions, and critical information for residents and visitors.

The Governor said he is not instituting a curfew; however, the Territory’s schools will be closed, and Government will remain closed Tuesday as the storm system moves past the U.S. Virgin Islands

At 5:05 p.m. Monday, Governor Bryan and key senior leadership received a full briefing on the path of the tropical depression by the National Weather Service-San Juan Senior Meteorologist in Charge, Walter Snell.

As of 5 p.m., Tropical Storm Karen, had shifted further south of the Territory than originally forecast, with wind velocity tempering down slightly to 35 miles per hour. The National Weather Service also reported that rainfall amounts are still forecast to be within 2 to 4 inches, with up to 6 inches in isolated areas.

Winds and rain are expected to hit its peak in the afternoon hours into the night on Tuesday. However, the USVI will continue to experience lingering showers throughout Wednesday and Thursday. Sea conditions are expected to deteriorate on Tuesday, with a high risk of rip currents and breaking waves up to 10 feet, according to the National Weather Service. Sea conditions are expected to improve on Wednesday.

Government Operations and Curfew

Based on official weather reports and on recommendations from his senior leadership, Governor Bryan announced that all government offices will be closed on Tuesday; however, all essential Government personnel are expected to report to work as normal.

All public schools Territory-wide also will be closed on Tuesday.

The governor also announced that no curfew will be imposed on Tuesday; however, he urged residents to remain at home for the duration of the weather event and for those who have to travel to do so with extreme caution. The Governor also advised that there is a possibility of mudslides throughout the Territory, as the ground is saturated from recent rains.

Air and Sea Ports

At 8 p.m., all seaports will be set to Port Condition ZULU as directed by the US Coast Guard. This means that all commercial vessels will be unable to enter ports Territory-wide.

Ferry operators on St. Thomas made their final run to St. John at 6 p.m. Monday. On St. John, the last ferry to St. Thomas departed at 5 p.m.

V.I. Port Authority Executive Director Carlton Dowe said Monday that both the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix and the Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas will be open for regular operation Tuesday.

As of 6 p.m. Monday, no major airlines had cancelled flights to the Territory. Seaborne Aviation and Sea Flight cancelled flights on Monday afternoon and also have cancelled all flights on Tuesday.

An announcement will be made on Wednesday on the reopening of government offices and schools, following an assessment of road condition and facilities.

The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) will be issuing periodic updates on the progress of the storm. Residents and guests are urged to be alert to these updates by visiting vitema.vi.gov and signing up for Alert VI. Updates from VITEMA also are available on the Government Access Channel (VIYA channel 27) and local radio stations.

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