

STATEMENT

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Statement by the Minister of Communication and Works- Post Hurricane Erin Update

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Statement by the Minister for Communications and Works

Honourable Kye M. Rymer at the Update on the Carifesta Participation and Post Hurricane Erin Update

Monday 18th August 2025

I stand before you today to provide an update on our response to Hurricane Erin and the actions we have taken to protect lives, infrastructure, and essential services across the Territory.

Hurricane Erin passed approximately 100 miles north of the Virgin Islands at Category 5 strength. While the center of the storm did not pass directly over our islands, we experienced sustained rainfall and intermittent gusts that tested our systems and our readiness. In Road Town alone, we recorded over nine (9) inches of rain. That volume of rainfall placed significant strain on our drainage systems and contributed to localised impacts across several districts.

Thanks to proactive ghut clearing, road preparation, and careful coordination among agencies, we were able to mount swift responses to the impacts that did occur.

Impacts

- Minor landslides were reported across multiple districts.
- Some roads experienced washouts, particularly in vulnerable low-lying zones.
- Fallen trees and hillside debris were widespread.
- Mud accumulation required rapid cleanup to keep roads and access routes safe.

Water & Sewerage Department — Tortola

- Pipe exposure was noted at Sabbath Hill, Joes Hill, Tred Fall, Jennings Hill, and Nottingham Estate.
- Sabbath Hill, Jennings Hill, and Nottingham Estate sustained the most severe impacts.

Mitigation and repairs in Tortola include:

- Sabbath Hill: regrading with road base, drainage improvements, and concreting of the road surface.
- Nottingham Estate: fractured pipeline being relaid and road rehabilitation ongoing.
- Jennings Hill: rehabilitation requiring a revetment wall; designs and costings are being prepared.

Estimated cost for these mitigation works is \$66,500.

Power & Water Supply Interruptions

- We experienced loss of power at the 7Seas, Bar Bay, Capoons Bay water plants and at the Diamond Estate, Johns Hole, and ESHS pump stations. These issues were resolved once electricity service was restored.

Water rationing measures — Tortola

- Fort Hill, Long Bush, and Maya Cove reservoirs required rationing.
- Water distribution took place from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on 17 August at Fort Hill and Long Bush.
- Maya Cove resumed continuous supply at 5:00 p.m. on 17 August.
- Balsam Ghut and Hannah Hill were restored by 7:00 a.m. on 18 August.

Virgin Gorda — Water & Sewerage

- Pipe exposure was reported at Handsome Bay, South Sound, North Sound (Jefferey George area), and Bakers Bay.

- The issue at Handsome Bay has been resolved.
- Regrading with road base and concrete surfacing is ongoing in other affected areas.
- Power loss affected the Handsome Bay and North Sound desalination plants; service was restored when BVIEC returned power.

Water rationing — Virgin Gorda

- Rationing was implemented due to the power outage. Water distribution occurred from 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on 17 August through 5:00 a.m. on 18 August at Minton Hill.
- Continuous supply resumed at the Bond/North Sound desalination plant from 3:00 p.m. on 17 August.
- Severe interruptions continued at Little Hill, Leverick Bay, Bakers Bay, South Sound, and Gun Creek, with restoration scheduled for 4:00 p.m. on 18 August.

Public Works Department

- PWD District Response Teams were deployed across the Territory throughout the event, providing real-time updates on site conditions, hazards, and operational needs.
- Their work enabled timely interventions and strong coordination with the Department of Disaster Management and other agencies.

Key achievements of the response:

- The ghut adjacent to the Road Town Fire Station remained fully operational with no overflow or damage due to pre-storm preparations.
- Heavy equipment was deployed in real time to stabilise saturated roads and clear debris.
- Every site was visually logged and assessed for structural, environmental, and public safety impacts.

- Early interventions prevented more severe damage.
- We recorded an 85% improvement in operational readiness compared to previous rainfall events.
- In some districts, zero-cost interventions were achieved through collaborative partnerships.
- Documentation models developed during this response will be aligned with Ministry standards and will support future policy development.

Our preparedness efforts significantly reduced the potential for greater damage. The Water & Sewerage and Public Works teams acted swiftly to mitigate impacts, restore services where possible, and ensure public safety. Recovery works are ongoing; critical areas have been prioritised and cost estimates are being compiled so we can move quickly with repairs.

The Ministry remains committed to ensuring continued resilience and readiness for future events. We thank our emergency responders, utility crews, partners, and members of the public for their cooperation and resilience.