

## **BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

### **PRESS NOTICE**

#### **NEW COVID-19 MEASURES FOR COI HEARINGS**

The Commission of Inquiry (“the COI”) was issued on 19 January 2021 to look into whether corruption, abuse of office or other serious dishonesty may have taken place amongst public, elected and statutory officials in recent years; and to make appropriate recommendations as to governance and the operation of the law enforcement and justice systems in the BVI. The Rt Hon Sir Gary Hickinbottom is the sole Commissioner.

The COI is holding its oral hearings in the International Arbitration Centre (IAC) in Road Town. Bearing in mind the BVI government’s latest COVID-19 advice and the COI’s continuing desire to protect the health, well-being and safety of witnesses, visitors and staff, the COI has strengthened its COVID-19 measures.

Witnesses are still able, if they wish, to give their evidence in person at the IAC but can now choose to give their evidence remotely via video link. Additionally, in order to keep to a minimum the number of people in the IAC and in the hearing room at any one time, witnesses’ legal representatives can now only attend remotely via video link. They will not be able to attend in person even if a witness (whom they represent) decides to give evidence in person. The IAC is also currently limiting general access to its premises to key card holders only.

Even before this latest rise in COVID-19 cases, all visitors to the IAC have been required to follow strict COVID-19 measures including: wearing a mask/face covering, hand sanitising on arrival, and registering at the IAC reception. Once seated in the waiting room and hearing room, witnesses and other participants are able to remove their mask/face covering if they are comfortable doing so. Social distancing is encouraged in the hearing room, and across the IAC, at all times. The IAC, including the hearing room, is cleaned thoroughly at the end of each sitting day. Additional sanitising as appropriate is carried out between different witness sessions. These measures will continue.

All measures remain under constant review.

Steven Chandler  
Secretary to the Commission

7 July 2021