



VIRGIN ISLANDS 35TH LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY, JUSTICE, AND PUBLIC SAFETY CHAIRPERSON, HONORABLE SENATOR KENNETH L. GITTENS

SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL GUARD TESTIMONY

MAJOR GENERAL KODJO S. KNOX-LIMBACKER



Introduction

- Good afternoon, Honorable Senator Kenneth L. Gittens, Chairman of the 35th Legislature 3
- Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety, other committee members present in the Senate 4
- chambers and virtually; family, friends, and the general public viewing and listening locally and 5
- abroad. 6
- I am Maior General Kodio S. Knox-Limbacker, the 15th Adjutant General and Commander of 7
- the Virgin Islands Army and Air National Guard. It is an honor to be sitting before this esteemed 8
- body to discuss the National Guards Hurricane Preparedness. 9

Context 10

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As we know the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) sits at the edge of the Atlantic Ocean and the 11 Caribbean Sea. The USVI has a collective population of approximately 87,146 persons, down 12 from 105,000 from over a decade ago. Much of its population is split between St. Croix and St. 13 Thomas, with approximately 40,000 (+) people on each. The remainder of its population is on St. 14 John Island with a small population on Water Island. We are geographically isolated from the

mainland United States which makes external support complex. With our limited force structure

and transportation issues caused by our geographical isolation, we estimate the manpower

available to respond during any response is approximately 330 Servicemembers, which is evenly

split between St. Thomas and St. Croix. When impacted by an All-Hazards event like hurricanes,

the territory is faced with a myriad of complex dilemmas. We are geographically isolated and

dispersed, which creates a set of conditions that are completely opposite of those responses that

occur in the Continental United States, where neighboring states can posture and assist.





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Furthermore, the population in unable to fully evacuate the impacted areas as exercised in the states. Currently there is no military air assets in the USVI, and our neighbor island of Puerto Rico has only limited air assets. Neither Territory possess Air Force fixed wing capability in their respective National Guards, Puerto Rico having only a small amount Army rotary and fixed wing capability in their Army National Guard.

Defense Support to Civil Authorities Strategic Requirements

Operational Bottom Line Up Front

4 Levels of Hurricane Response; Levels 1 – 4

	EPAX Required	# HMMWVs Required	E LMTVs Required	# 800 MByz Radios	# SINGAR Radios	# Level 1 PPE	#Level 2 PPE	# Laser Thermal Scanners	Thermal Cameras	# Quick Test Kits	# Chain Saw Kits	# Riot Kits	# MH 72 MEDIVAC Helicopters	# UH 72 Utility Helicopters	# UH 60 Utility Helicopters	#CH47 Cargo Helicopters
Level 1	232	30	17	55	20	134	96	24	- 4	100	16	0	0	0	0	0
Level 2	327	31	11	75	21	209	118	24	- 4	100	18	20	0	0	8	0
Level 3	614	51	35	138	35	313	301	34	5	125	18	60	6	0	2	6
Level 4	1343	118	77	800	83	65.6	687	96	14	350	36	120	- 6	4	14	- 6
	FPAX Required	# HMMWVs Required	# LMTVs Required	# 800 Mbz Radios	# SINGAR Radios	#Level1 PPE	#Level2 PPE	filaser Thermal Scanners	FR Thermal Cameras	# Quick Test Kits	If Chain Save Kits	# Niot Kits	# MH 72 MEDIVAC Helicopters	# UH 72 Utility Helicopters	m UH GO LETTRY Melicopters	# CH 47 Cargo Helicopters

- Level 1 Based on any response from a Tropical Storm up to a CAT 1 Hurricane requiring a local organic VING response.
- Level 2 Based on a major (CAT 2 or 3) hurricane impacting 1 of the U.S. Virgin Islands. Near 100% damage with some devastation. Government of Virgin Island is overwhelmed with regard to support or operations. Would require day and night operations.
- Level 3 Based on a catastrophic (CAT 4 or 5) hurricane impacting 1 of the U.S. Virgin Islands.
 Near 100% devastation and Government of Virgin Island is incapacitated regarding movement, support or operations. Would require day and night operations, with over blue water capability.
- Level 4 Based on a catastrophic (CAT 4 or 5) hurricane impacting at least 2 of the U.S. Virgin Islands. With nearly 100% devastation and Government of Virgin Island is incapacitated with regard to movement, support or operations throughout the Territory. Would require day and night operations.

Operationally, the worse day in the USVI requires an additional 989 PAX, 81 x HMMWVs, 56 x LMTVs, 78 x Riot Kits and 5 x SNAP Terminals. Some of this requirement will need to be deployed prior to landfall.

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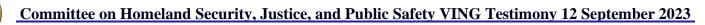
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- Operationally, the worse day in the USVI requires an additional 989 PAX, 81 x HMMWV's, 56 x LMTVs, 78 x Riot Kits and 5 x SNAP Terminals. Some of these requirements will
- need to be deployed prior to landfall.
- Below are the Emergency Support Functions (ESF) that these assets will support.
 - Establish a Dual Status Command for mission assignment for all T-32 and T-10 forces.
- Conduct Joint Reception Staging Onward Movement and Integration (JRSOI) or responding to Department of Defense (DOD) agencies.
- Deploy immediate Response Teams (IRT) to predetermined locations in support of the
 Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD) and Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Services
 (VIFEMS).
 - Provide Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Liaison Officer to support (Virgin Islands Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA).
 - Coordinate Emergency Management Agreement Compact with the National Guard Bureau (NGB).
 - Conduct Congregate Shelter Operations Medical screenings to support Department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Health (DOH).
 - Movement of temporary power generators in support of VITEMA.
 - Perform Route Clearance operations.
 - Assist with patient movement tracking and liaison with military airlift for evacuation supporting DOH, DHS, and U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS).
 - Conduct airport opening operations with DOD assets to support logistic sustainment operations and personnel response.
 - Conduct commodities transport to establish Points of Distributions with DHS.
 - Conduct Traffic Control Points with Virgin Island Police Department during periods of curfew.





Closing

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Virgin Islands National Guards preparedness to support all 15 Emergency Support Functions when called. VING will continue stay at a high level of readiness to provide Defense Support to Civil Authorities during times of crises. Rest assure we will always be there with our ready, relevant, responsive joint force of Soldiers, Airmen, and Civilians to answer our territories needs within our authorities. I stand by for any questions.