



**THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE
Charlotte Amalie, V.I. 00802
340-774-0001**

**VIRGIN ISLANDS OBSERVANCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE
WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE 2024**

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the annual observance of the International Day for the World's Indigenous People on August 9th is an occasion for Virgin Islanders of Indigenous Amerindian Caribbean Descent to reaffirm their patriotic ties to the original peoples of the Caribbean and the United States of America, their cultural ties with Indigenous people, their traditions and heritage with their kith and kin throughout the lands of the Caribbean, Americas and the world; and

WHEREAS, all citizens of the diverse ethnic and cultural communities in the Territory are invited to acknowledge and celebrate the vital individual, community and institutional contributions of Indigenous Caribbean Amerindians and all Indigenous people of the world to the economic, political, cultural, scientific, educational, spiritual and religious life of the Territory; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations designated August 9th annually as the "*International Day of the World's Indigenous People*" by UN Resolution 49/214 on December 23, 1994, which was the date of the inauguration of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations in 1982; and

WHEREAS, the focus of this year's International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is "Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact"; and

WHEREAS, around 200 groups of Indigenous Peoples currently live in voluntary isolation and initial contact. They reside in remote forests, rich in natural resources, in Bolivia, Brazil, Columbia, Ecuador, India, Papua New Guinea, Peru and Venezuela; and

WHEREAS, the results of research, DNA testing, and oral tradition affirm the existence of descendants of Indigenous Amerindian people within the United States Virgin Islands; including the Guainia Taino Tribe of the Virgin Islands, guided by Maekiaphan Phillips since May 2012, whose tribal membership, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, officially bestowed upon Maekiaphan Phillips the esteemed rank and honor of Kasike (Chief) and Chairwoman of the Guainia Taino of the Virgin Islands' Tribal Council; and

WHEREAS, on June 28, 2021, I, Governor Albert Bryan Jr., signed a Proclamation officially acknowledging the Guainia Taino Tribe of the Virgin Islands, and on July 6, 2022, again affirmed the recognition of the Guainia Taino Tribe through a proclamation commemorating the one-year anniversary of the recognized Guainia Taino Tribe of the Virgin Islands; and

WHEREAS, protections of Indigenous Amerindian sacred sites, lands, artifacts and cultural heritage traditions include Salt River Bay, Reef Bay, Hull Bay, Cinnamon Bay, Botany Bay, Magens Bay, and Tutu Park in St. Thomas; and other sacred VI historic and cultural heritage sites; and

WHEREAS, respectful Indigenous Amerindian historic preservation, educational research and heritage restoration have been spearheaded by the Guainia Taino Tribe of the Virgin Islands and Opi'a Taino International, Inc.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Albert Bryan Jr., Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, by virtue of the Authority vested in me by the Revised Organic Act of 1954, as amended, do hereby **proclaim August 9, 2024 as “*International Day of the World's Indigenous People*”** throughout the United States Virgin Islands. I encourage our communities to join in celebrating and honoring Indigenous People worldwide. Let us pay tribute to their history, culture, and indispensable roles within the narratives of both American and Virgin Islands heritage, and let us continue to unite in solidarity, respecting one another as we commemorate this occasion. To all residents and visitors of our Territory, I invite you to embrace this kinship to our broader Caribbean and Americas family by supporting multicultural events that mark these occasions.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands to be affixed at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas Virgin Islands, this 31st day of July 2024.



Albert Bryan Jr.
Governor

Attest:



Senate President Novel E. Francis, Jr.
Acting Lieutenant Governor

