



THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE

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**VIRGIN ISLANDS AFRICAN HERITAGE WEEK
AND AFRICAN LIBERATION DAY**

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

A PROCLAMATION

In honorable respect to people of African ancestry and international cultural heritage observances celebrating freedom movements and liberating achievements of the African world, the Virgin Islands of the United States annually celebrates, commemorates and recognizes Virgin Islands African Heritage Week and African Liberation Day in May. Enacted through Act 5473 of 1989 pursuant to Title 1, Chapter 11, Section 192, General Provisions of the Virgin Islands Code, Virgin Islands African Heritage Week and African Liberation Day are to be annually commemorated during the third week of May and on May 25th respectively.

In 2019, Virgin Islands African Heritage Week and African Liberation Day observances, commemorations and celebrations are in harmony with the fifth year of the International Decade for People of African Descent (IDPAD) proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2024 (UN Resolution 68/237) with the theme of "People of African Descent: Recognition, Justice and Development."

Virgin Islands African Heritage Week annually commemorates, observes, memorializes and celebrates that African Liberation Day is rooted in the First Conference of Independent African States convened by 8 African nations in 1958 during African Freedom Day (April 15th) and led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of the independent Republic of Ghana- an African nation that many Virgin Islands Caribbean people have ancestral family lineage with.

African Liberation Day is also known as "African Unity Day" and "Africa Day" by the African Union (AU) as it simultaneously commemorates the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963 when 30 of the 32 independent African states signed a founding charter in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia committed to "help bring about change, freedom and independence to many African countries. In 1991, the OAU established the African Economic Community (AEC), and in 2002 the OAU established its own successor, the African Union (AU)." May 25th annually marks a time set aside for public education, reflection, contemplation,

introspection, community action, showcasing African cultural diversity and commemorative celebration for, by and with Virgin Islanders of African Descent in respectful remembrance of our proud African civilizations, culture, heritage, arts, technologies and more that are ancestrally linked to our Virgin Islands Caribbean Americas and the world.

Virgin Islands African Heritage Week and African Liberation Day provide historic and cultural heritage observances that reaffirm the ancestral heritage and cultural linkages to Africa, the patriotic ties to the United States of America in honor of the contributions of people of African descent, in concert with restoring ancestral indigenous memory of the positive traditions, quests for freedom, and dignified heritage of Africa and the African World inclusive of our transcultural liberation achievements of our beloved Virgin Islands Caribbean Americas. Themes of liberation, freedom, restorative justice, liberation and resilience are celebrated by, of and for Global Indigenous African people who have traversed through the Virgin Islands Caribbean Americas.

The Virgin Islands of the United States has historically remained at the center of many Global African historical, socioeconomic, cultural, spiritual, and educational affairs. Pan Africanists, Global Africanists and supporters of African unity, liberation and freedom within the Virgin Islands and wider Caribbean Americas consistently and respectfully support Virgin Islands African Heritage Week, African Liberation Day and other Global African Culture, Heritage and Identity (CHI) initiatives, activities, commemorations, celebrations and movements inclusive of yet not limited to the following Virgin Islands-based organizations and projects: Pan African Support Group; Per Ankh M Smai Tawi; Ethiopian World Federation; Ethiopia African Black International Congress (EABIC); Theocracy Reign of the Ancient Order of the Nyahbinghi; Caribbean Rastafari Organization; African Diaspora Youth Development Foundation; Nation of Islam/Muhammad Study Group; United Caribbean Association; Virgin Islands Youth Advocacy Coalition; NUWOMANRising2LIVEUP; United Nations Association of the Virgin Islands; Djabana Kuumba Camp Grounds; Strength2Strength; KWANZAA365; African Hebrew Israelite Community; Sankofa Saturdays Youth Enrichment; Opi'a Taino International; Afrikan Appraisal Workshop; African Liberation Day Coalition; VI Rastafari Sacramental Cannabis Council; Roaryal Abeba; We Grow Food/Bordeaux Farmers Association; Afrikan Study Group (BVI); and others.

The 21st century collaborative work of Virgin Islands-based organizations for Virgin Islands African Heritage Week and African Liberation Day observances supporting Global African and Pan African affairs in concert with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society networks (CSNs) are dynamically, proactively and creatively linked with: Caribbean Community (CARICOM); African Union Commission (AUC); Emancipation Support Committee of Trinidad and Tobago; CARICOM Reparations Commission; Antigua and Barbuda Reparations Support Committee; Caribbean Pan African Network (CPAN); Sixth Region Diaspora Caucus (SRDC); Pan African Diaspora Union (PADU); the All African People's Revolutionary Party (AAPRP); All African Women's Revolutionary Union (AAWRU); National Coalition Of Blacks for Reparations in America (NCOBRA); World African Diaspora Union (WADU); Universal Negro Improvement Association-African Communities League (UNIA ACL); Pan African Women's Organization (PAWO); African Union Commission (AUC); All African Youth Movement (AAYM); Central American Black Organizations (CABO); Clement Payne Movement (Barbados); Caribbean Movement for Peace and Integration; Pan African Culture Organizations;

Ancestral Afrakan Spiritual Council; and others supporting Pan Africanism, Global African Unity and Global Reparatory Justice efforts to optimize and support the restoration of our shared humanity. The collective work, study, creativity, self-determination and revolutionary strength of these organizations strengthens the foundational support for these annual observances of Virgin Islands African Heritage Week and African Liberation Day.

Virgin Islands African Heritage Week and African Liberation Day 2019 marks the 61st anniversary of these historic convenings to support Global African unification, liberation and social development. The University of the Virgin Islands (UVI), the only Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in the Caribbean and a Land Grant Institution (LGI) facilitated by its' Virgin Islands Caribbean Cultural Center (VICCC@UVI) continues to collaborate holistically with existing governmental and non-governmental organizations to support, teach, research, institute and facilitate Virgin Islands African Heritage Week and African Liberation Day cultural heritage education and commemorative socioeconomic activities, commemorations and projects. African Liberation Day, African Unity Day and Africa Day events hosted by the AU, CARICOM, UN-IDPAD, and other international organizations and institutions maintain a respectful platform for the Government of the Virgin Islands to promote African World and Pan African collaborative interactions with VI Caribbean NGOs, CSNs, and beyond that support human rights, justice, freedom and liberation among our shared humanity.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Albert Bryan, Jr., Governor of the Virgin Islands of the United States, by virtue of the Authority vested in me by the Virgin Islands Revised Organic Act of 1954, as amended, do hereby proclaim May 25, 2019 as African Liberation Day inclusive of the week of May 19-26, 2019 as Virgin Islands African Heritage Week 2019 throughout the Virgin Islands of the United States in solidarity with national, regional and global observances. May our Virgin Islands community continue to ring the bells of freedom with respect, solidarity and harmony with our regional, national and international sisters and brothers commemorating, observing, proclaiming and celebrating similar African Heritage, Unity, Freedom, and Liberation Day activities. I call upon all residents, ancestral natives and visitors of the Virgin Islands of the United States and respectfully inclusive of our sisters and brothers in the wider Caribbean and Americas, to support the organizational, individual and other multicultural events scheduled in honor of all of these historic occasions.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereto set my hand and cause the Seal of the Government of the Virgin Islands of the United States to be affixed at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, this 16 day of May, 2019, A.D.




Albert Bryan, Jr.
Governor