

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Ghost Guns Among Over 30 Firearms Uncovered in Major St. Croix Operation

Ammunition and Accessories Seized: Agents find thousands of rounds and extended magazines in Lopez's possession

Crime / **Published On November 13, 2023 06:32 PM /**

Staff Consortium **November 13, 2023**



ST. CROIX — United States Attorney Delia L. Smith today announced that Kishawn Lopez, 35, of St. Croix, was charged and detained by U.S. Magistrate Judge Emile A. Henderson after being charged with possession of firearms and ammunition by a convicted Felon.

“The rate of gun violence in the Virgin Islands is unacceptable, and the proliferation of ghost guns and other illegal firearms is a main source of the problem,” said United States

Attorney Smith. "Working in collaboration with our federal and local law enforcement partners, we are committed to taking ghost guns and other illegal firearms off the streets. Targeting firearms traffickers and those who illegally possess firearms is a priority for this office, and those who commit such crimes will be brought to justice."

According to court documents, on November 8, 2023, federal law enforcement agents executed a search warrant at Lopez's Frederiksted home. During the search, agents recovered more than 30 firearms, including multiple "ghost guns," assault rifles, and other handguns. "Ghost guns" are assembled from firearm kits which can be purchased from various kit manufacturers or secondary retailers. "Ghost guns" are unregistered, lack serial numbers and are untraceable. During the search, agents also recovered approximately 5830 rounds of ammunition and a cache of extended magazines. In 2011, Lopez was convicted of firearm possession in federal court, and was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment.

This investigation is part of the Virgin Islands Violent Crime Task Force which consists of Homeland Security Investigations, United States Postal Inspections Service, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Customs and Border Protection, United States Marshal Services, and the Virgin Islands Police Department. The mission of the Violent Crime Task Force is to identify, disrupt, and bring to justice individuals that plague the Virgin Islands community with acts of drug and gun violence.

"This collaboration with law enforcement partners is an essential element towards combatting violent crime and illicit activities in our area of responsibility" said Homeland Security Investigations Resident Agent in Charge Bernhardt Simmonds. Our agency remains steadfast in our fight against weapons trafficking into the Virgin Islands, which contributes to the uptick in violent crimes in our territory."

"These individuals pose the greatest threat to the safety and health of our citizens", stated Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent in Charge Denise Foster. "We will continue to allocate all our law enforcement resources to make a greater impact in vulnerable areas where criminal organizations dedicated to drug trafficking are causing greater damage."

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Yasir Sadat and Evan Rikhye. United States Attorney Smith reminds the public that a complaint is merely an allegation that a crime was committed, and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.