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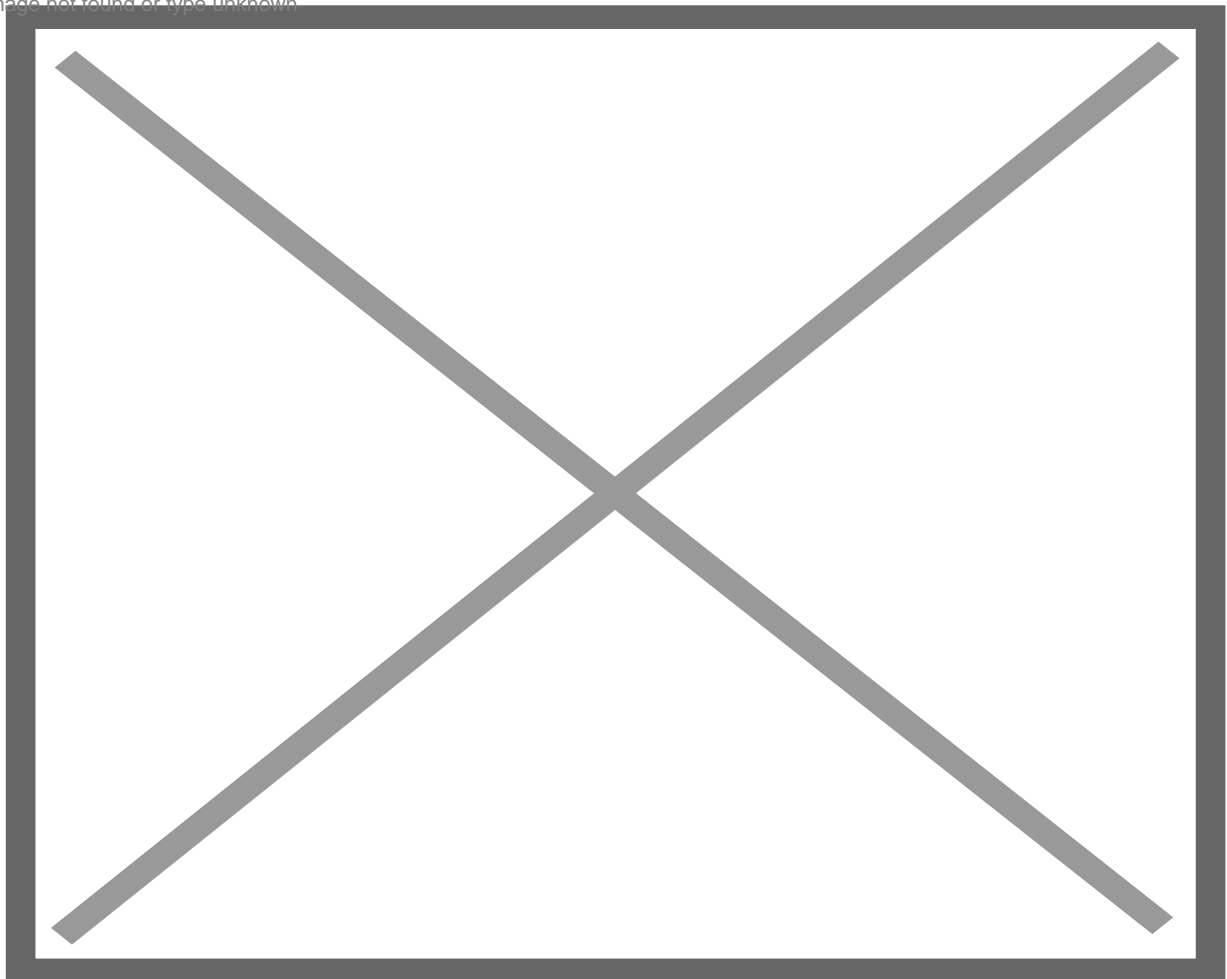
V.I. Police Department Nears Full Compliance with Consent Decree, Faces Ongoing Challenges

Remaining challenges in management and supervision identified

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Janeke Simon **December 19, 2023**

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The V.I. Police Department has shown significant progress in terms of compliance with the consent decree that has been in effect since 2009, according to the most recent report from the Independent Monitoring Team tasked with overseeing the VIPD's progress. However, challenges remain in two key areas.

Of significance is the VIPD's considerable achievement when it comes to the department's handling of citizen complaints. According to the report, "this quarter's assessment demonstrates substantial compliance with all citizen complaint paragraphs." This milestone brings overall compliance to just over 88% - the VIPD is considered to now be in substantial compliance with 37 of the consent decree's 42 paragraphs.

However, the report notes that challenges remain in the department's management and supervision, identifying issues with the timeliness of investigations and accountability. The introduction of a new operational directive is expected to drive improvements in these areas, according to the independent monitoring team.

Data collection and analysis with respect to the handling of Use of Force (UOF) investigations are still areas which need work, the report indicates, despite some progress in that regard. The IMT underscores the importance of systematic tracking for case progress, recommending a limitation on the use of stays and waivers in investigations to maintain integrity and ensure timely resolutions.

In its own update to the court, the VIPD acknowledged that the lack of timeliness in completing UOF investigations is a "major stumbling block in achieving compliance" in this regard. Delays in returning cases to officers to correct deficiencies, as well as the length of time taken in curing said deficiencies, have been identified as a major part of the problem.

Furthermore, the report emphasizes the need for regular review and analysis of data to promote civil rights and best police practices. This must be done in order to "manage risk and liability and to evaluate the performance of VIPD officers across all ranks, units, and shifts," according to the report filed in federal court.