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## VIPD Issues Warning Against Celebratory Gunfire During New Year Celebrations

**Additional law enforcement officers to be deployed to ensure quick response to incidents of celebratory gunfire**

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In anticipation of the upcoming New Year celebrations, the V.I. Police Department is issuing a stern warning to the public against engaging in celebratory gunfire. The practice, which involves shooting firearms into the air as a form of celebration, is not only hazardous but also illegal.

Chief of Police for the St. Thomas, St. John, and Water Island District, Steven Phillip, expressed concern over the reckless and unlawful behavior of discharging firearms in the community. He emphasized the potential harm to lives and property and assured that the VIPD would continue to arrest individuals participating in such activities to ensure community safety.

In an effort to curb these illegal acts, the VIPD said it will deploy additional officers on patrol throughout the New Year's holiday. These increased patrols aim to facilitate quick responses and apprehend individuals engaging in celebratory gunfire.

Police Chief Sean Santos of the St. Croix District implored the public to desist from discharging firearms, highlighting the grave responsibility of gun ownership. He warned that even one stray bullet could have fatal consequences and urged responsible behavior to usher in the new year safely.

The VIPD reminded everyone that celebratory gunfire poses a significant danger, as bullets shot into the air must inevitably come down. The department calls for vigilance from the public and requests that any instances of celebratory gunfire be reported immediately to 911.

As the Virgin Islands community prepares to welcome the new year, the VIPD said it looks forward to the cooperation of the public in maintaining safety and upholding the law. The department extended its wishes for a Happy New Year to all.

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