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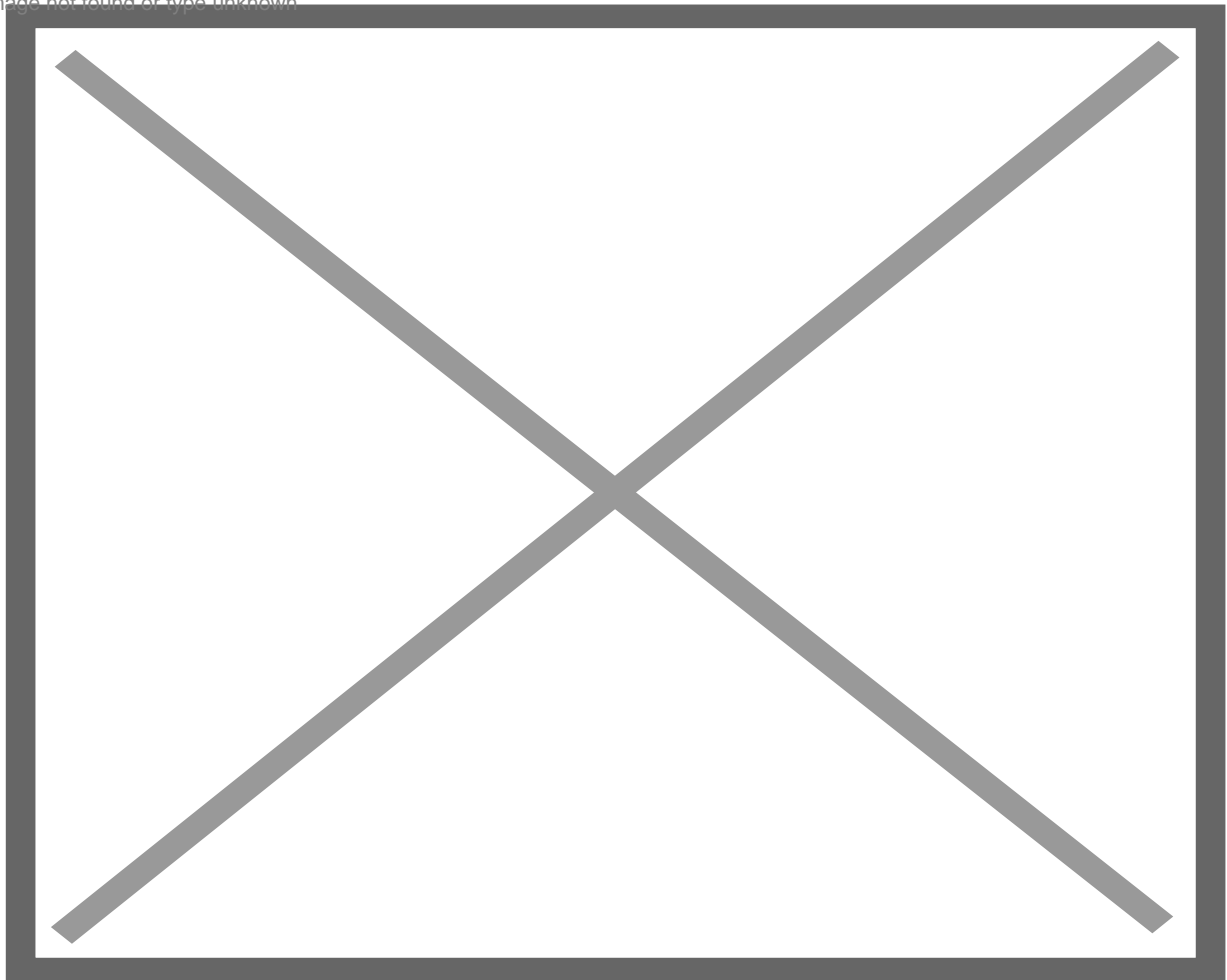
Acting Commissioner Brooks Gains Nomination for Top VIPD Role with Vision for Youth Engagement

Brooks emphasizes expanding the police cadet program to St. Thomas-St. John, aiming to forge positive relationships with youth as part of a long-term crime reduction strategy for the territory. He replaces former Police Commissioner Ray Martinez

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Janeke Simon **November 12, 2024**

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Police Commissioner Nominee Mario Brooks By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

Acting Police Commissioner Mario Brooks has been nominated to serve in the top spot on a permanent basis, according to Governor Albert Bryan Jr.'s announcement during a press briefing on Tuesday.

“Commissioner Brooks has proven himself to be a steady and capable leader, guiding the department through difficult times with a clear vision and unrelenting commitment to the safety of the people of the Virgin Islands,” said Governor Bryan.

Outlining Mr. Brooks's service with the VIPD and the Virgin Islands National Guard, where he holds the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, the governor said that the various leadership positions held by Mr. Brooks are evidence of “his innovative and steadfast commitment to public safety.”

Mr. Bryan made particular note of the acting commissioner's work in helping the department make “strides in strengthening community policing and building trust between law enforcement and the community.”

Asked to elaborate on those initiatives, Mr. Brooks homed in on a rejuvenated police cadet program. “We've gained some real good traction here on St. Croix...and as a result of that, we're expanding that project this year into the St. Thomas[-St. John] district,” he said.

According to Mr. Brooks, working on building trust with younger residents is a key strategy for the VIPD under his leadership. “They are our future, and we need to focus on them,” he declared, saying that it was a goal to prove that “we're not the enemy. We're actually friends to the community. We are eyes and ears. We are the ones that support you...I think we could bridge that gap and actually cause a reduction as far as it relates to crime,” Mr. Brooks concluded.

His nomination follows the [resignation](#) of former Police Commissioner Ray Martinez, who is currently embroiled in a federal fraud investigation, and had to relinquish his post as a result.