

Federal Warning Issued Amid Reports of Cockfighting Matches in U.S. Virgin Islands

U.S. Attorney Delia Smith reminds residents of the strict federal ban on cockfighting, highlighting penalties of up to five years in prison for involvement and the dangers of associated criminal activities

Federal / **Published On November 29, 2024 01:31 PM /**

Staff Consortium **November 29, 2024**

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The United States Attorney for the District of the Virgin Islands, Delia L. Smith, has issued a reminder to residents that cockfighting remains illegal under federal law. This prohibition, outlined in the Agricultural Improvement Act (P.L. 115-334) of [December 20, 2019](#), extends to all U.S. territories, including the Virgin Islands.

Animal fighting is a felony punishable by up to five years in prison, said U.S. Attorney Smith, who stressed that federal law prohibits numerous activities tied to animal fighting ventures. These include sponsoring, exhibiting, or attending such events, as well as the sale, transport, or training

of animals for fighting purposes. Additionally, the law bans the trafficking of knives and gaffs used in cockfighting.

While federal legislation outlawed the shipment of fighting birds to the Virgin Islands from the mainland United States as early as 2002, recent reports indicate that cockfighting matches continue in the community. U.S. Attorney Smith spoke to the potential dangers associated with these activities, which often correlate with other criminal offenses, including violent crime, firearms violations, and mail fraud.

“Cockfighting is illegal and potentially dangerous. We must therefore continue our commitment to keeping our community safe,” she said.

The United States Attorney’s Office encourages residents to report any information regarding cockfighting or related animal fighting crimes. Reports can be submitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigation at (787) 754-6000 or to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Office of Inspector General hotline at (800) 424-9121 or online at [USDA OIG Hotline](#).

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