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Former VIPD Deputy Commissioner Shares Recommendations for Local Crime Prevention

Calvin Walwyn recommends data-based approaches, increased police presence, and collaboration with the public to prevent future homicides

Government / **Published On December 07, 2024 07:33 AM /**

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During the afternoon of Sat. Nov. 25, 2023, a suspect was fatally shot by VIPD officers. The police department reported that the suspect had opened fire on the officers as they responded to a report of a robbery in Market Square. By. V.I. POLICE DEPARTMENT, EMMET PREVOST

A former Deputy Commissioner of Police Operations for the V.I. Police Department is encouraging stronger community policing efforts and data-driven strategies to suppress the territory's growing crime problem.

With less than a month before the year ends, the U.S. Virgin Islands [has recorded 40 homicides](#). Mr. Calvin Walwyn, a career law enforcement officer who spent his teenage years living on St. Croix, believes simple tactics could prevent similar numbers in 2025. Speaking to the Consortium [on the heels of receiving recognition](#) for his community policing efforts in Houston Texas, Mr. Walwyn emphasized the need to embrace tried and true strategies implemented during his tenure that began in March 2019.

“For the first six months, [St. Thomas] only had two homicides when they would have normally had 14. That's because we had put some things in place,” he explained about their strategy in 2019. These included “focused deterrents” and Data-Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety (DDACTS) in communities like Tutu, resulting in notable reductions in the incidence of crime. “We had put police presence in those areas because we knew that these were areas where there could be issues,” he explained. According to Mr. Walwyn, after his departure, and that of former police commissioner Trevor Velinor, “things started happening again.”

The VIPD must “use the data to help combat crime...things can be done,” Mr. Walwyn said. “Things can be fixed, but people just have to pay attention to the data that's there.” Further, he advised that VIPD must continue to “embrace technology,” and referenced the usefulness of the ShotSpotter system.

He encouraged the VIPD to maintain a collaborative approach with the public, assuring that it would only bode well for policing efforts. “We used to choose one Sunday every month, we [would] go to a church, and we would speak to the people...The people would ask questions, and we would answer,” the police officer remembered. “It's like a town hall meeting, but because people didn't want to go out at night for fear.” Those meetings, he said, took place across the territory, including on Water Island. “We enjoyed meeting the community, but we had to go to them, where they were, and speak with them.”

While highlighting opportunities for strengthened community policing efforts, he commended local projects that offer young Virgin Islanders avenues to be productive, and reduce the chances of them turning to a life of crime. The renovation of sporting facilities and the resurgence of the Explorers Program to keep youth engaged were cited by Dr. Walwyn as notable advancements.