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## VIPD and Governor Bryan Warn Against New Year's Eve Gunfire

**Officials caution Virgin Islanders about the dangers of celebratory gunfire, emphasizing its potential for harm and disruption as police prepare for high-visibility patrols to deter the practice**

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During Monday's press briefing from Government House, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. and Deputy Chief of Police Uston Cornelius both warned the public against shooting into the air to welcome the New Year.

"Remember, what goes up will come down, and again, it just might hurt you or somebody close to you," said Mr. Cornelius, noting that celebratory gunfire "has become a thing where our people within this community...they don't feel comfortable."

The deputy chief says he hears stories each year about “when the hour comes, people have to lie down on the floor, they’re going in the closet, and all of that.” The VIPD, Mr. Cornelius said, was “decrying” the practice, noting that owners of licensed guns are among the culprits. “Please let us stop the discharging of these weapons in our community,” the VIPD official urged. “This is not our tradition.”

He warned that VIPD officers would be doing “what we would call high visibility patrol within our communities” to guard against the practice.

Governor Bryan also pleaded with Virgin Islanders to refrain from celebratory gunfire as the calendar turns over to 2025, noting that the unintended consequences could be dire. “All those bullets drop down; they hit...the coax cables, big phone cables, and they do damage,” he said, explaining why phone service is sometimes disrupted in the early days of January.

“It might be your mother or your grandmother out to church on that night and have to run from gunshots or unknowingly just get hit,” Governor Bryan warned.

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