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## Federal Agencies in the U.S. Virgin Islands Commit to Enforcing Executive Order on Immigration

**The U.S. Attorney's Office, FBI, DEA, ATF, and U.S. Marshals are working with DHS to implement the executive order targeting illegal entry**

Federal / **Published On March 12, 2025 05:55 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **March 12, 2025**

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**ICE agents conducting an immigration raid in Puerto Rico earlier this year. By. ICE**

Federal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. Virgin Islands have pledged full enforcement of the January 20, 2025, Executive Order titled "Protecting the American People Against Invasion." This directive focuses on prosecuting individuals who unlawfully enter the United States, with a particular emphasis on criminal immigrants and those deemed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to pose national security or counterintelligence threats.

U.S. Attorney Delia L. Smith reaffirmed the Department of Justice's commitment to implementing the order in the Virgin Islands through prosecution efforts. "The United States Attorney's Office is fully committed to protecting our borders by prosecuting individuals who unlawfully enter the United States," said Smith. "We are working closely with our federal partners to interrupt the flow of illegal immigration into the U.S. Virgin Islands."

A coalition of federal agencies, including the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and the United States Marshals Service, have partnered with DHS and its agencies in the Virgin Islands to carry out the directive.

Acting Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Devin Kowalski spoke of the importance of collaboration in law enforcement efforts. "The FBI remains committed to working alongside our law enforcement partners to uphold the rule of law and ensure public safety," he said. "Through this initiative, continued collaboration and intelligence-driven operations, we are supporting efforts to protect our communities, while adhering to our mission of upholding the Constitution."

The DEA, which already works to combat drug trafficking and transnational criminal organizations in the Caribbean, has pledged to support immigration enforcement as well. "The Drug Enforcement Administration remains resolute in its mission to protect the U.S. Virgin Islands from the devastating impact of drug trafficking and transnational criminal organizations," said Michael A. Miranda, Special Agent in Charge of the DEA Caribbean Division. He added that the agency will work closely with the Department of Justice and DHS to identify and prosecute criminal aliens involved in drug-related offenses.

Similarly, ATF officials emphasized their commitment to stemming illegal immigration. "We stand in unison with our federal partners in this all-hands-on-deck approach to stemming the tide of illegal immigration," said Christopher A. Robinson, Special Agent in Charge of ATF's Miami Field Division.

The U.S. Marshals Service has also reinforced its role in immigration enforcement, with Acting U.S. Marshal for the District of the Virgin Islands Kwesi Howard stating that the agency will focus on apprehending non-U.S. citizens with active criminal warrants. "Historically, the United States Marshals have played a crucial role in serving our nation by apprehending and removing dangerous fugitives from our communities," Howard said. "We are confident that these collaborative efforts will lead to safer communities and encourage all citizens to continue cooperating with our investigations to help locate these fugitives and bring them to justice."

Rebecca González-Ramos, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations, emphasized DHS's role in identifying and removing individuals who pose a threat to public safety. "The executive order aims to protect the United States from individuals who pose a threat to public safety by committing crimes, and Homeland Security Investigations is dedicated to identifying and prosecuting individuals who are illegally present in the United States, ensuring they are swiftly removed to their home countries," she said.

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials reiterated their role in enforcing immigration laws at ports of entry. Roberto Vaquero, Director of the San Juan Office of Field Operations, stated that CBP officers are responsible for determining the admissibility of arriving foreign travelers. "Every day CBP Officers are responsible for determining the admissibility of aliens arriving at our ports of entry," Vaquero said. "Foreign travelers requesting entry undergo an inspection and determination of admissibility to the United States, and if they are not admissible, they are

returned to their point of embarkation.”

Meanwhile, the U.S. Border Patrol's Ramey Sector is focused on deterring unauthorized entry into the United States. “U.S. immigration law makes it a crime to enter or attempt to enter without requesting admission at a port of entry designated for that purpose by immigration officials,” said Reggie Johnson, Chief Patrol Agent of the Ramey Sector. “Migrants should know that they will face full legal consequences of unlawful entry.”

Christopher Hunter, Director of the Caribbean Air and Marine Branch, confirmed that Air and Marine Operations (AMO) will assist in implementing the executive order by enforcing immigration laws and monitoring emerging threats. “AMO will continue to safeguard our Nation by anticipating and confronting security threats through our aviation and maritime law enforcement expertise, innovative capabilities, and partnerships at the border and beyond,” he stated.

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