

The Virgin Islands Consortium

VIPD Ends Home Inspections in Firearm Licensing Amid Federal Lawsuit as Brooks Reports 25% Drop in Violent Crime

Commissioner Mario Brooks confirmed the department has stopped conducting home inspections as part of firearm licensing while defending the process in federal court and maintaining focus on constitutional policing and sustained violent crime reductions.

Government / **Published On March 03, 2026 06:24 AM /**

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

With the V.I. Police Department officially declared in compliance with its long-standing federal consent decree, attention is now shifting to two parallel challenges: sustaining

constitutional policing standards while confronting violent crime and defending the territory's firearm licensing system amid a new federal lawsuit.

Speaking at the administration's press briefing Monday, Commissioner Mario Brooks said that reaching compliance does not mark the end of reform efforts. Instead, the department will continue focusing on reducing crime in the territory.

The department is already seeing progress, he said. "Based on our average from '24 to '25 we've seen a 25 percent reduction in violent crime. So our goal is to get that down even more."

Brooks noted that officers are implementing "some new strategies" to maintain the downward trend.

Although compliance has been achieved, Brooks stressed that the consent decree process is not fully concluded. "We still have more work to do because we still have the monitoring period that's ahead, but we will stay focused on maintaining constitutional policing for our community," he said. "Our people deserve the best, and that is our goal – to give them the best policing that we can possibly provide to them."

At the same time, the department faces a separate [federal lawsuit alleging unconstitutional delays](#) and barriers in the firearm licensing process. While declining to discuss details due to ongoing litigation, Brooks acknowledged changes have already been implemented.

"For one, we're not conducting any home inspections anymore," he said. "In discussion with, of course, with the AG's office and the Office of the Governor, we've made it a goal that these specific Second Amendment issues are addressed upfront."

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. addressed enforcement separately, emphasizing that individuals possessing unlicensed firearms will continue to face prosecution.

"We're gonna arrest you, going to try to put you in jail, and give you the hardest sentence we can," the governor said.

He argued that many individuals carrying illegal firearms are "not even trying to get them registered." According to Bryan, the registration process "is not onerous." He disclosed that he became a licensed firearm holder before assuming office. "I went and took the test. I followed all the rules that we had to do...and then I got a licensed firearm or two."

Bryan stated that, with the changes referenced by Brooks, "the commissioner is making it a lot less difficult in order for you to license a firearm." However, he underscored that "the law in the Virgin Islands books is a law that the executive branch has to enforce."

The governor reiterated a [statement he made last year](#): "our approach to firearms in the territory has totally failed because...there are more unlicensed than there are licensed firearms out there."

He urged individuals transporting firearms through the airport to comply with local law by registering them upon arrival with VIPD. "We'll try to get your paperwork on through as soon as possible."

