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Roach Urges Public to Speak Up After Tre’Vante Etienne Killing, 16-Year-Old Shooting

Before a man was shot dead in Whim Monday evening, Roach said a possible person of interest was identified in Tre’Vante Etienne’s killing, urged the public to speak up, and said police alone cannot stop violence after a 16-year-old was shot multiple times

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Janeke Simon **June 16, 2026**

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Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach.

Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach on Monday urged Virgin Islanders to assist law enforcement and take a more active role in the lives of young people after three shootings from Friday through Monday left 15-year-old Tre’Vante Etienne dead and two others injured.

During Monday's press briefing from Government House, Mr. Roach addressed the fatal shooting of Tre'Vante, who was gunned down Friday afternoon near Vester Gade on St. Thomas.

"The loss of any young life is painful," said the lieutenant governor. "The killing of a 15-year-old child is especially difficult to comprehend."

Mr. Roach expressed condolences to Tre'Vante's family, friends and classmates, and said the killing should not be accepted as routine.

"No family should have to endure this kind of grief because someone chose to use a gun," he said.

The lieutenant governor disclosed that authorities have already identified a possible person of interest in the case, though no formal arrests or charges have been announced.

Mr. Roach also cautioned the public against becoming desensitized to gun violence in the territory.

"We cannot go numb each time another family is forced to grieve," he declared.

While the community was still mourning Tre'Vante's death, another shooting occurred on St. Thomas on Saturday. According to Mr. Roach, a 16-year-old told police he was riding a motorbike on Alton Adams Drive near the Omar Brown Fire Station when someone opened fire on him from behind.

The teenager was struck several times about the body and was taken to the hospital for treatment by two bystanders.

Mr. Roach credited the bystanders for their quick response.

"We are grateful for their intervention, which may have possibly saved his life."

Early Monday, police received reports of another shooting, this time at the Walter I.M. Hodge housing community on St. Croix. Several rounds of gunfire were detected by the ShotSpotter system and confirmed by residents in the area.

Shortly afterward, [a gunshot victim arrived](#) at the Juan F. Luis Hospital North campus by private vehicle for treatment. Police continue to investigate the incident following the discharge of the gunshot victim.

The violence continued after Monday's press briefing. During the evening, a man was [shot dead in Whim](#).

Mr. Roach said preventing crime requires more than police response.

"Law enforcement cannot solve this problem by itself," he said. "Parents, relatives, teachers, coaches, faith leaders, and neighbors must remain present in the lives of our young people. We must listen to them, guide them, and step in when we see conflict developing. Our children need safe places to gather. They need trusted adults to turn to. They need to know that their lives matter and that violence is never the answer to disagreement or disrespect."

Officials are asking anyone with information about any of the three shootings to contact Crime Stoppers through its anonymous tipline.

“Please remember that remaining silent only makes it harder to hold accountable the person or persons responsible for these heinous acts, and to see justice done,” Mr. Roach said.

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