

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Riot At Golden Grove Prison; Warden, Staff Give Conflicting Reports

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Diane Prosper, assistant warden at the Golden Grove Adult Correctional Facility on St. Croix, told the *VI Consortium* on Monday there was a riot at the prison that morning and one detainee had been beaten by other prisoners. Today, however, other local media outlets are reporting the severe beating of seven prisoners by corrections officers at the prison.

At 9:57 a.m. on Monday, the *VI Consortium* received a tip that there had been a riot at the prison and went to the facility to inquire about the incident.

Prosper met with this reporter in the front area of the prison. When asked to provide details of the incident, Prosper said one detainee in the prison's secure lock down unit had been released from his cell during his one-hour recreation period on Monday morning. She then went on to say that the detainee, somehow, got into a fight with other prisoners and the incident had gotten out of control.

Prosper explained that the incident took place in the prison's lock down unit, which houses 16 prisoners. That unit, Prosper said, is on 24-hour lock down and detainees housed there are in their cells 23 hours of the day and are only released for one hour of recreation.

It is unclear if other prisoners joined the detainee during his recreation period on Monday morning, as Prosper told this reporter that prisoners in the lock down unit are released individually during recreation and do not have contact with other prisoners.

At the time the *VI Consortium* spoke with Prosper, she said an investigation into the incident was underway, but that the incident was under control. In fact, during the interview, Prosper pointed this reporter's attention to a prison guard whom, she said, had just returned from securing the incident.

However, late Tuesday night, Juel Anderson, public information officer for the VI Bureau of Corrections, issued the following statement on the incident:

Director of the Virgin Islands Bureau of Corrections Julius Wilson on Tuesday said that an assault and riot took place at the Golden Grove Adult Correctional Facility & Detention Center (GGACF/DC) on Monday morning, November 10, 2014 at approximately 9:00 a.m. The incident resulted in an assault on an officer by two detainees. At approximately 9:20 a.m. the incident was under control. An investigation into this matter is ongoing. Golden Grove is on a modified lockdown status, which permits inmates to perform work duties and attend classes as well as facilitates visitation.

The *VI Consortium* asked Anderson if she could confirm reports of prisoners being beaten by corrections officers, she said she could not provide any information and that the matter was being handled by the top leadership of the BOC.

The *VI Consortium* will provide updates on this story as they become available.