

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Osbert Potter Sends Condolences To Hansen Family; Says Community Must Step Up

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ST. CROIX -- Gun violence has taken the life of yet another victim on this island, the [latest being 29-year-old Ericksen Hansen](#), son of former Senator Alicia "Chucky" Hansen, who was gunned down in the wee hours of Wednesday morning in Williams Delight, according to Police Commissioner Delroy Richards.

Two weeks ago, there were three homicides in four days between here and St. Thomas, but Governor Kenneth Mapp -- who [left the territory](#) for Colorado Springs, CO, and Florida -- did not issue a statement on the upsurge of homicides and what his administration intended to do. Mr. Mapp won't be back in the islands until November 7, making Lieutenant Governor Osbert Potter leader of the territory until the chief executive

returns.

At Government House here today, where a ceremony for Veterans was being held, The Consortium spoke with Mr. Potter, asking if the administration had any plans to respond to the ongoing violence.

"[The homicide of] Mrs. Hansen's son is another indication of how unfortunate this whole situation is when it comes to lawlessness and all of the weapons that we can't trace to anyone," Mr. Potter began. "We have to come together as a community. It has gotten out of control, and I just want to send my condolences to Senator Hansen on the loss of her son."

Asked if Government House would take extra measures to help quell the criminal activity, Mr. Potter placed the onus on the community.

"Well, we can do only but so much. I have asked continuously for the help of the community, and I think that is the key to us getting this under any sort of control," said the acting governor.

He added: "There's a lot of information that the community has regarding who has these weapons, where they are being housed, weapons in people's homes -- and these are the kinds of information that we have asked for the public to share with the law enforcement community.

"We can do our searches, we can do our morning sweeps, and we continue to do that as a law enforcement division, but we also need to get the tips from the community and information from the community that will assist us in making sure that these weapons get off the street."

Pressed harder concerning added action by the government to better secure its people, and pointing to the idea of checkpoints being randomly installed at various areas unannounced, Mr. Potter said such an initiative would be costly to maintain.

"At one point there were checkpoints, but these are not things that you can maintain 24-7, because they are extremely costly," Mr. Potter revealed. "And I know that the last time that we had all of the shootings in Red Brick and other places, I instituted a state of emergency and the public took me to task for instituting a state of emergency for a couple days. They said it was not necessary. And, oh, you are overreacting and stuff. So sometimes you're damned if you do, you're damned if you don't," Mr. Potter said.

Even so, Mr. Potter, who could be seen interacting with veterans at the luncheon before the interview, said the administration would do more.

"We recognize the situation for what it is, and the police department will be doing random checks," he concluded.