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VIPD Takes 10 Illegal Guns Off the Streets of St. Croix. 'These Are Crime Weapons'; Linked to Senseless Murders in Castle Coakley and Estate Paradise

Crime / **Published On June 03, 2020 05:38 AM /**

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Firearms recovered by the VIPD during recent raids were displayed during a VIPD press briefing on Tuesday, June 2, 2020. By. VIPD

Deep into a territorial gun violence epidemic, the Virgin Islands Police Department seized a cache of illegal firearms and put felony cases on four gun-toting men in their 20s.

St. Croix District Police Chief Sidney Elskoe said the Criminal Investigations and Special Operations bureaus executed search warrants Friday, May 29th, at multiple St. Croix locations

tied to active investigations into the senseless killings of [19-year-old Selena Chitolie](#) and Gyasi Chiverton, 22, in a brazen [daylight shooting outside of the Thomas Bakery](#) in Castle Coakley and in Estate Paradise, near the Evelyn Williams Elementary School.

Chief Elskoe said four suspects in the ongoing investigation were arrested and charged with illegal possession of firearms. The men were identified as:

Twenty-six-year-old [Jose Osorio](#) from Sion Hill, who was charged with possession of an unlicensed firearm and held on a \$50,000 bail with no 10 percent provision. He was turned over to the Bureau of Corrections pending an advisement hearing.

Twenty-three -year-old [Jareem Tutein](#) of La Grande Princesse was charged with possession of an unlicensed firearm after the discovery of loaded gun and ammunition inside a residence. He was turned over to the Bureau of Corrections pending his advisement hearing.

Twenty-two-year-old [Oshanie Cornelius](#) of Castle Coakley was charged with possession of an unlicensed firearm. He was caught with a loaded firearm as a search warrant was being executed, and was turned over to the Bureau of Corrections pending his advisement hearing.

[Michael Cruz](#), 21, of Sion Farm, was charged with possession of an unlicensed firearm. He was armed with two firearms, two loaded magazines and additional ammunition, police said. Bail was set at \$50,000 with no 10 percent provision. Cruz also was turned over to the Bureau of Corrections pending his advisement hearing.

In executing the warrants, police seized a total of 10 firearms, to include 9 handguns and one long gun. “These weapons are not legally registered in the Virgin Islands and appeared to be owned for one reason — these are crime weapons,” Mr. Elskoe said. “These are crime weapons. The ownership is for violent, criminal intent.”

The V.I.P.D. said that at about 12 o’clock on a Saturday afternoon in January authorities received a report of a gunshot victim in the vicinity of Thomas Bakery. Mr. Chiverton was taken to Juan F. Luis Hospital & Medical Center, where he later died.

Last month, Ms. Chitolie was riding in a vehicle with her month, in search of an apartment to rent, when police say at least three suspects opened fire. According to police the gunmen may have believed they were coming under an attack.

There have been at least 23 homicides in the territory in 2020, with the number of shooting deaths rising virtually every week.