

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Gunshots Ring Out In Campo Rico Leaving One Injured; Little League Game Called Off

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ST. CROIX -- A barrage of gunshots rang out in Campo Rico just before 11:00 a.m. this morning, leaving one man injured, multiple police sources confirmed to The Consortium this morning. The incident appears to be retaliatory in nature, following a [drive-by shooting incident](#) on Saturday at a gas station near the Concordia intersection on the Queen Mary Highway (Centerline Road).

Calls placed to Police Commissioner Delroy Richards were not returned at time of writing.

The 911 emergency call center reported the incident to the V.I.P.D. at about 10:57 a.m., and a Consortium reporter saw two ambulances on the scene, in a cordoned off area, where emergency medical technicians were administering care to the victim, who is said to be an elderly man. It was not clear whether the man was involved in the incident, or an innocent bystander who was caught in the line of fire.

Senator Kenneth Gittens, upon learning of the incident, told The Consortium that he concurred with Little League officials who postponed a game that was supposed to be played today at the Renholt "Rookie" Jackson Complex in Whim. The incident occurred one block away from the complex, and parents said the drive-by shooting incident that occurred on Saturday not too far from the sporting complex, had petrified the children.

The past three days have seen a surge in gun violence here, beginning on Friday night at about 8:00 p.m., when a man who had only recently been released from prison, was [shot multiple times in Castle Coakley](#), near Thomas Bakery. That incident was followed by the drive-by shooting near Concordia, which left two injured and prompted police to activate a massive manhunt spanning the Concordia intersection near a gas station on the Queen Mary Highway, all the way to the stoplights near the Community United Methodist School and Daycare.

The surge of criminal activity follows the end of an executive order signed by Governor Kenneth Mapp in December, 2015, that assigned all peace officers to the Virgin Islands Police Department, and shifted former Police Chief Winsburt McFarlane — currently heading the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs' (D.L.C.A.) enforcement arm — back to the police department [for six months](#). Mr. Richards had requested of the governor that Mr. McFarlane join him for a period of time as he formulated a strategy to squash crime in the islands. And the commissioner had given Mr. McFarlane "full oversight over special operations and initiatives on St. Croix."

"We have gone on the offensive," Mr. Richards said last December.

But while Mr. McFarlane is still with the V.I.P.D., [the executive order](#) that assigned the peace officers to the police force expired at the end of January, and operations at the V.I.P.D., though stepped up, lost that critical component of added manpower, which also included National Guard soldiers. Throughout the executive order's duration, officers and soldiers would station themselves at random locations throughout the island, stopping vehicles and conducting searches. The initiative also served as a deterrent against potential criminal activity, and gun crime had slowed significantly back then.

The scene in Campo Rico this morning was cleared quickly, as E.M.T.s worked swiftly to transport the victim to the Juan F. Luis Hospital, even as investigators remained in the area.

Police are asking anyone with information about this incident to contact the Major Crimes Unit at 340-714-9823 ext. 5617, Criminal Investigation Bureau at 340-714-9807 ext. 5556, Crime Stoppers or the Office of the Police Chief at 340-774-2211.

Feature Image: Crime scene in Campo Rico.

Image Credit: VIC.

