

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Mapp On Violent Crime: It Will Get Worse Before It Gets Better

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ST. CROIX -- Governor Kenneth Mapp told The Consortium during a press conference held at Government House today, that crime in the territory will get worse before results of his administration's initiatives could start manifesting.

The governor said his administration has been making every effort along with its federal partners to quell crime, and revealed that 29 V.I.P.D. officers are currently embedded within federal law enforcement task forces across the territory. To that end, the governor said he would soon be meeting with U.S. Attorney Ronald Sharpe to discuss some of the results of those task forces that the public is not aware of in regards to gains being made with firearms and arrests.

"But I've got a bit of bad news that, as governor, being honest with the community, I must share," Mr. Mapp began. "The violence is going to be brought under control, but there is going to be more violence and there's going to be more homicides and more shootings before we arrest this problem because we have to catch up. The government has to catch up with a lack of officers on the streets, the lack of law enforcement personnel. We have to catch up because we've done little in the past modernizing our department and resources. [We have to give] equipment and tools to our law enforcement personnel, we are behind in what we've done to train them. We are behind because our partnerships with our federal law enforcement partners prior to this administration was practically nonexistent. The ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms) was not even in the Virgin Islands. And none of what I'm saying is ascribing any blame to anyone; I'm just saying as governor, this is the raw reality."

The governor said his administration's efforts have caused change, "and as we bring these resources to the table, as we bring additional boots on the ground, as we infuse more equipment and resources to our police department, as we train and upgrade all levels of policing in the territory, that is when policing in the community will begin to see a different change in this outward violence that we see," he said.

Mr. Mapp went on to list the new abilities that will eventually come online once these initiatives take hold. "We will have the capacity to target, we will have the intelligence-gathering capability to take people down before they're able to commit many of these violent acts that we are seeing. We're going to have to ask the Senate to make some minor adjustments on the statute having to do with the possession of firearms so people that we know that are bringing in firearms legally [through] their luggage into the Virgin Islands, to deal with that issue just by a simple change to our local statutes."

"Until all of these realities are aligned, there's going to be outbursts of violence and there's going to be outbursts of shootings, and that's an unfortunate reality, but to be very candid, that is the reality," Mr. Mapp said.

"I want to be clear, I'm not saying to the Virgin Islands community that the government is doing nothing until all of these things have occurred, because the police commissioner, myself and the U.S. Attorney -- we have been coming before the Virgin Islands community and updating you on the changes, infusions, partnerships and on the training."

"But in fifteen months we're not going to go from outward massive violent shootings in the community to none. And so we hope to see less of it, but I'm going to tell you we're going to see more as we go into the future, until we get ourselves completely retrofitted, positioned and resourced that we can really bring this problem to a screeching halt and only have exceptions rather than the normal course of action."