

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Somber Mood At VIPD In Wake Of Officer Deaths, Commissioner Richards Says

Crime / **Published On August 15, 2016 01:25 PM /**

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ST. CROIX -- It has been a difficult time for members of the Virgin Islands Police Department following the homicide deaths of two of their own. The mood at the force, especially on St. Croix where the slain officers' colleagues are directly affected, is somber, and the force will spare no resource in making available psychological aid to officers struggling to cope.

That's according to Police Commissioner Delroy Richards, who told this publication this morning that up to three police officers who were close to the victims have been placed on temporary leave.

I feel the pain also, not simply because I'm the police commissioner, but because part of me still remains as police. - Police Commissioner Delroy Richards.

"Obviously as expected, it is a somber mood; the officers at taking this hard as it's two of their own. They knew them, worked with them, so it's hard," Mr. Richards said. "Even though I know that they are out there still working and doing their jobs, it's something that's still at the back of their minds."

The V.I.P.D. recovered the bodies of two police officers, [identified as Officer Leshia Lammy](#), 30, and Officer [Kai Javoi](#), 28, on a beach in Hams Bluff, Frederiksted on Thursday afternoon. The bodies were discovered by a couple who came to the beach looking to catch whelks, who immediately made contact with authorities following the discovery, according to Mr. Richards. The commissioner said the incident most likely occurred on Wednesday night, as Mr. Javoi was to report to duty that night but failed to show.

Multiple leads are being followed, Mr. Richards told The Consortium on Thursday, adding that the force has been speaking to several people of interest.

In this morning's conversation, the commissioner sought to encourage members of the police force, assuring them that no stone would be left unturned in efforts to bring to justice perpetrators. He also personalized the situation, stating that he too had lost colleagues on the line of duty while serving as a police officer.

"I feel the pain also, not simply because I'm the police commissioner, but because part of me still remains as police; I mean I was a police officer all my life," Mr. Richards said. "And I know the feeling because I've worked very closely with officers who were killed on the line of duty. So I know the feeling and would like to tell them that prayer can heal wounds with time. And the department will make all resources available to provide the necessary assistance in terms of counseling and related areas."

The commissioner said because of his concern for the well-being of officers, he has an open-door policy that gives union officials direct access to his office, who are then able to relay various situations to him.

"If there are issues and concerns, try the union hierarchy, because I look at them as a conduit to my office -- they have direct access to me -- and they can come and sit down and talk to me about the situation. I want to make sure that the environment is very welcoming and if officers have issues, we make all efforts to try and assist them."

Detectives have been relentlessly investigating the double homicide, and late Thursday, the force arrested Police Officer [Francis Williams](#), who was charged with stalking Ms. Lammy. [Mr. Williams was released the following day on \\$50,000 bond.](#)

The commissioner, knowing the difficulty of coping with losing a colleague on the line of duty, said he did not expect officers to heal immediately. "It's a hard time and I know that in the back of their minds they are thinking about it; some things you'll never forget," he said.

Meanwhile, gun violence continues to affect the territory. On Sunday at about 9:30 p.m., [two individuals were shot during an incident that occurred at the ballpark in Estate Profit.](#)

