

The Virgin Islands Consortium

An L.G.B.T. Pride Parade Is Scheduled For Saturday On St. Croix; Some Plan To Protest The Event

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ST. CROIX -- A furor raged on Virgin Islands social media circles on Tuesday, more specifically St. Croix, after it became widely known that a parade to celebrate Virgin Islanders in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (L.G.B.T.) community will be held on Saturday from the Frederiksted Pier to Dorsch Beach, where the first St. Croix "Rainbow Games" will also be held, [according to the event's organizers](#).

Being the first of its kind, talk raged throughout the community about what the event meant. On radio talk shows, callers blamed the L.G.B.T. community for spreading diseases; that "outsiders" were coming into the territory and bringing along their influences, and that with St. Croix being a "Christian" community, the parade should be

called off.

But even as those opposed to the L.G.B.T. lifestyle and hence the parade, freely expressed their opinions, supporters of the L.G.B.T. community came out swinging as well, with multiple posts on social media criticizing the uproar over the parade as hysteria.

[A long post on Facebook](#) in defense of the planned event by Khnuma Simmonds Esannason, executive director at the VI Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Council, received over 100 shares and over 200 favorable reactions. Mrs. Esannason's 10-paragraph post went into detail and sought to dismantle notions that painted the L.G.B.T. community as the cause of the territory's ills.

In her rebuttal missive, she wrote, "Accusation: 'We (referring to St. Croix) are a Christian community'

"Correction: St. Croix is a 'Christian Looking' community not a 'Christian Practicing Community'. If we were, the Christian Community would 'raise hell' about issues like domestic violence in the church, sexual assault and rape of wives (including pastor's wives), child abuse - issues that plague our community damn near every minute. Until such time, St. Croix's 'Christian community' is a facade and a hypocritical one at that. (And by the way, I go to church but I am not blinded or brainwashed; I see the world for what it is and because of that, I don't adhere to any religious label. I am a child of God and I am content with that.)"

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Shamari Haynes, [owner of the largest carnival troupe in the U.S. Virgin Islands](#), who is also known as a cultural bearer and is openly gay, chimed in to defend the L.G.B.T. community and the parade.

"All the problems in these Virgin Islands and we now find the energy to protest about a blasted pride parade! All of a sudden everybody holy and righteous! When the young boys getting screwed and the little girls getting feel up, nobody ain't protesting or standing up!

"We worry about the wrong things! Some of y'all still have no roofs! Hurricane season started on Friday! Use this same energy to appeal FEMA! And for the record, how much of y'all actually laying on y'all back and calling in the station today," [Mr. Haynes said](#).

[View the original embedded media](#)

It was not certain that those who plan to protest will wage an organized effort, or whether their words were just heated talk upon learning of the parade. And there hasn't been statement offered by religious leaders in regards to the event.

Feature Image: Two men kiss outside of the Stonewall Inn at a LGBTQ Pride celebration in New York

