

The Virgin Islands Consortium

With 7 Homicides in Less Than a Month on St. Croix, Violet Calls for Federal Intervention Through State of Emergency Declaration

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ST. CROIX — Senator Kurt Violet on Tuesday morning [called for](#) a state of emergency to be declared against violence in the U.S. Virgin Islands, following [the shooting incident in Sion Farm](#) last night that left a 16-year-old boy, described by many as holding promise, dead.

"Declare a State of Emergency on violence and request Federal Intervention to take back our streets!" wrote Mr. Violet, a veteran lawmaker and former school principal.

"The warring turfs are destroying our island and frankly don't give a hell. A meeting must be held with the Judicial System to obtain the necessary search warrants and go after the guns. It is apparent that they are not stopping and will continue to harm innocent bystanders. Today should be an all out war against violence. All officers must be activated to work the streets to include peace officers. We have to show the criminals that enough is enough! My sincere condolences to all who have lost a loved one to gun violence," the senator added.

Violence in the USVI has been unrelenting this year. On St. Croix, between July 23 and Monday — less than a month — the island has seen 7 homicides. During the morning time of July 23, Jonathan Fontanelle [was shot and killed](#) at the Louis E. Brown Housing Community. On Wednesday, July 29 a man identified by next of kin as Shamal Riviere, 30, [was shot dead](#) in Sion Farm (the suspect said he acted in self-defense). On Friday, July 31 two men were shot dead, the first [during the morning time at HH Tire & Battery](#), and the second during the afternoon [at the Lorraine Village](#) housing community.

On August 5 a man identified as 24-year-old Rashawn Wyre [was gunned down](#) near a hotel in Christiansted. Then on Sunday afternoon, 27-year-old Joseph Leonardo Clarke of Grove Place [was shot and killed](#) in Frederiksted outside the Yam Yam Restaurant.

And Monday night, the 16-year-old was [ruthlessly murdered](#) in a barrage of gunfire aimed at him and another young man while walking in their Sion Farm neighborhood.

Thirty-eight people have died from gun violence in the U.S. Virgin Islands so far in 2020, with St. Croix leading with 20, followed by St. Thomas with 17, and St. John with 1, according to V.I.P.D. Public Information Officer Toby Derima.

Last night's shooting

St. Croix residents as far as The Meadows just north of Strawberry Hill reported hearing endless gunshots ringing from afar on Monday night. One person, rattled by the gunfire, declared it was World War III. Multiple residents said well over a hundred rounds were fired.

The gunfire was coming from Sion Farm near the Mill area, where two individuals — including the 16-year-old boy — were walking in their neighborhood when they were ambushed by an unfamiliar vehicle, whose occupant or occupants opened fire.

The 16-year-old was an honor student who played on the football team at the Central High School, was part of a baseball team and was praised by teachers as a student with great potential. He also played basketball and represented the Virgin Islands in sports as far as Panama.

Identified by family members as Tintawee Christian, he died on the scene after sustaining multiple gunshot wounds.

The other victim sustained a gunshot wound to the chest but survived the onslaught. He will be airlifted today for further medical attention, according to an EMT.

Sorrow filled St. Croix social media channels Monday night, with multiple people lamenting the untimely death.

"Just spoke to a teacher who was crying tears out for you," said Educator Eliza Rampersad on Facebook.

"I am screaming at our ELECTED OFFICIALS DO BLEEPING SOMETHING!!!!!! Mehn," wrote Arlene Coggins-John, a parent of a young man who was one of the deceased victim's peers.

"I watch my son [lose one teammate to a car accident](#) it was hard on him. Now his teammate to gun Violence!!!! HE DID NOT DESERVE THIS SH*T MAN. Where is all the promises of getting the Feds to help?? I am bleeding vex sh*t man!!!

"This child was not a gang member, he was an athlete. He played basketball, baseball, and football. He represented the Virgin Islands in countries such as Panama. He was respectful and funny. How do we protect our young men who are doing their part in this thing call life?" said Ms. Coggins-John.

Mr. Derima said the V.I.P.D. is investigating the crime. The police force also called on the community to provide information that may lead to the apprehension of the perpetrators. To provide anonymous information, simply go [here](#).