

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Expresses Concern With Wave Of Gun Violence Affecting USVI

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Governor Albert Bryan on Tuesday expressed his grave concern with the recent occurrences of gun violence in the territory that resulted in the deaths and senseless injury of several Virgin Islanders over the last two weeks, a release Government issue late Tuesday said.

“While I assure you that our Virgin Islands Police Department has launched immediate investigations into these incidents and are working to bring those responsible to justice, I also want to assure you that our administration is being proactive in addressing the issues at the root of our persisting problem with violent in our community,” Governor Bryan said, according to the release.

The newly-sworn in governor called on Virgin Islanders to come together and take back their community and to work with law enforcement, both the private sector and non-profit organizations, as well as with his administration to provide better opportunities for young people and to improve the socioeconomic conditions in the territory, according to the release.

"I want to also underscore the important need for us all, to take greater steps to take back our community. It will take courage and painstaking measures to make the changes we need to address the problems of lawlessness in our neighborhoods, but we can and will if we all step up and do our part," Mr. Bryan said.

He added, "We've had studies, consent decrees, and prayer vigils, but what we need is real action from all corners of our community to protect our young people. We need to improve the socioeconomic standing for many of our families, and to do better in our efforts to offer places of refuge for our young people who believe they are out of alternatives."

"The Bryan/Roach administration will require stringent law enforcement by those responsible, but we will also hold accountable, through a comprehensive program, the V.I. Departments of Education, Human Services and of Health. We will work closely with our churches and with our non-profit organizations that have continued to provide social services that the government has failed to provide.

"But we must all be brave. Brave enough to say something when we see something wrong, brave enough to question and to appropriately discipline our children in our homes, and brave enough to take positive leadership roles in our communities and to look out for our neighbors as well as ourselves. Please get involved," the governor concluded.

Crime has been surging this year, with St. Croix already experiencing four homicides for 2019, three of which came within the first eight days of the year. A recent shooting in St. Thomas [left three men injured](#). However, even as the governor highlighted the crime issue facing the territory, he did not name a commissioner for the Virgin Islands Police Department during his Tuesday press conference used to name cabinet members. Instead, the governor gave himself a 90-day window to name the remainder of his cabinet, giving no indication as to when within the three months critical government arms such as the V.I.P.D., the Department of Human Services, the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Consumer and Licensing Affairs, and the Department of Justice would receive leadership.