

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Sticks To 90-Window For Choosing Police Commissioner Even With Crime Issue At The Fore

Crime / **Published On January 23, 2019 11:54 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **January 23, 2019**



Governor Albert Bryan -- even in light of a daunting crime problem in the U.S. Virgin Islands -- stood firm by his decision giving himself 90 days to name a commissioner for the Virgin Islands Police Department.

The governor held a press conference on Tuesday in conjunction with the V.I.P.D. to reassure the community that his administration was taking steps to fight back against the surging gun violence in the islands. St. Croix saw five deaths by the seventeenth day of January, and three men were shot in one incident on January 14 in St. Thomas.

To combat such violence, stable leadership is needed at the police department, not an acting commissioner who knows that at any moment his replacement could be named, and therefore would be reluctant in exerting authority and implementing crime-fighting strategies. The police department is also one of the most important arms of government that political observers say should have been among the first to receive leadership from Mr. Bryan.

During his first press conference as governor, where Mr. Bryan announced some department and agency heads, the governor said, "It may take us within 90 days to name everyone because some people, even though they are ready to come on board, they have other commitments that will keep them working or otherwise occupied for some time, and we don't want to announce people before they're ready to come on."

Aside from holding to his 90-day timeline, Mr. Bryan said his administration's approach to fighting crime will be more comprehensive, include getting into neighborhoods and having conversations with individuals. "So we're not only shaking them down, asking them questions, showing up when there is a murder, but we're there to make sure that their joblessness needs, their education needs, their street lighting, their water, any sewage issues that they have in their community are being addressed as well. I think you have to treat people like citizens if you want them to do the responsibility of reporting crime and feeling that they have a trusting partner in the government."

The governor will deliver his State of the Territory Address, where he said more details on crime-fighting initiatives would be unveiled, on January 28.