

The Virgin Islands Consortium

6 People Shot At Beach Event In Frederiksted; Women, Possible Minor, Among Injured; One Victim Being Airlifted After Sustaining Injury In Shoulder

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ST. CROIX -- What was otherwise a fun-filled day in Frederiksted at the popular "Floatopia" beach event on Sunday, came to an abrupt end when gunfire erupted in a dense crowd during the nighttime, sending a mass of people running for their lives as the gunmen made their way from the event to the streets, shooting through the throngs and injuring innocent individuals who attended the summer beach party.

According to V.I.P.D. Public Information Officer Glen Dratte, six individuals, including female victims and possibly a minor between 16-17 years old, were injured as a result of

the shootout. He said all victims were transported to the Juan F. Luis Hospital for medical treatment by private vehicles.

The call came in to the 911 emergency call center at about 9:25 p.m. According to Mr. Dratte, "an undisclosed amount of gunshots were discharged from multiple directions," creating chaos and extreme fear.

The shootout could not have happened at a worse time. The Fort Frederik Beach where the gun battle occurred and the nearby road had so many people that, before the shooting, it took 20 minutes by vehicle to travel a distance that usually takes seconds. And the event was one of the best attended affairs this summer, with a mixture of teens, young adults and middle-aged individuals enjoying themselves. Floatopia had children, too. However, it was unclear as to whether parents with children were still at the beach when the incident broke out.



Scene at Fort Frederik Beach area following the shooting at Floatopia that left 6 people injured

But as the Sunday occasion neared its end, the shooting broke out from behind the bar area. Then, the gunmen continued shooting -- seemingly unbothered by the hundreds of individuals both young and old running frantically for cover -- from the event location to the main road, injuring several individuals.

The Consortium had visited what was arguably one of the best attended events all summer to speak with event planner Chad Pringle to write about Floatopia's success over the years. Yesterday's effort had a variety of fun activities, including an inflatable foam pit, games and several performances from local artists and deejays. It was the first time that a shooting had occurred at Floatopia, and there was not much the organizer could have done to prevent such an incident at a beach that's open to all, where crowds are hard to control. Several police officers were on location for the duration of the event.

Mr. Dratte said while most of the victims' wounds were not life-threatening, one individual who was shot in the shoulder is scheduled to be airlifted to the U.S. mainland for further medical attention today.

Heavy security at the Juan F. Luis Hospital

The Juan F. Luis Hospital had several heavily armed police officers with automatic rifles protecting the medical facility, according to people who were at the hospital for purposes unrelated to the shooting.

The frantic scene at the hospital's emergency room caused alarm, too, as individuals injured from the shooting were rushed into the ER, straining the hospital's limited resources. As of May, J.F.L. only had [one functioning operating room](#).

The V.I.P.D. said the investigation into the incident is ongoing.

This is a developing story... (Mr. Dratte said the ages of the victims, along with possible motive of shooting, should be provided during the day Monday).