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Bryan Announces \$1 Million Fund Rewarding \$50,000 for Tips Leading to Homicide-Related Arrests, \$25,000 for Armed Robberies

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Officers inspect red Honda Civic that was riddled with bullets near Central High School on St. Croix on Saturday, Sept. 5, 2015. By. VI CONSORTIUM

Governor Albert Bryan on Monday announced a \$1 million crime-fighting initiative aimed at encouraging the community to provide tips leading to the arrest of major criminals by offering monetary rewards ranging from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

Speaking during the administration's Covid-19 response update, Mr. Bryan referred to crime as the other pandemic and criminals perpetrating them as terrorists.

The governor said the initiative is one of a number of strategies to be announced in the coming months aimed at motivating residents "to do the right thing and testify against these people who are terrorists in our community. We are counting on you to make sure that we can get this done," he said.

The governor stressed the importance of subduing the criminal element. "We have to get a grip on these small groups of terrorists in our community," he said.

"Over the next couple of months you will be hearing initiatives from not only me but your commissioner of police, your chief of police to fight this crime epidemic that we're facing. We will stamp it out and we will be successful," the governor said.

Mr. Bryan said funding for the initiative was added as an appendage in the Fiscal Year 2022 budget. "We also have some other reserves that we can use in order to fund it if more is needed," the governor said, pointing to funding through the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan — both Covid-19 stimulus measures signed into law by former President Donald Trump and current President Joseph Biden, respectively.

"The money isn't the issue, we have the money to pay for it," Mr. Bryan said.

The Consortium [has been reporting on](#) the wave of gun violence and armed robberies that have been plaguing the territory.

The initiative will be well received by the V.I. Police Department, whose leaders have complained that the Virgin Islands community has not been forthcoming with information that could lead to the arrest of violent criminals.

"You're holding the information to your chest while more people get harmed. I'm just asking please call 911, call Crime Stoppers, call 340-778-4950, call 340-712-6092. Call us. We need your help because we cannot solve crime without the bigger police force, you the community at large," said V.I.P.D. Criminal Investigation Bureau Commander Naomi Joseph last week during a press briefing held to discuss [a homicide that occurred on Carlton Road](#) in Frederiksted.

Deputy Police Chief for the St. Croix District, Sean Santos, said the department is aware of the fear of one's identity being exposed. "But I could guarantee you that I have worked with the Investigations Bureau here for the V.I.P.D., and they keep this information to where they are not jeopardizing anyone," he said.