

Image not found or type unknown

Viral Recruitment Video Sparks Condemnation, Calls for Resignation of BVI Police Commissioner

Caribbean / **Published On July 01, 2022 06:14 AM /**

Janeke Simon **July 01, 2022**

Image not found or type unknown



BVI Police Commissioner Mark Collins. By. BVI DEPT. OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS — Many BVI citizens, belongers and residents are outraged and calling on Police Commissioner Mark Collins to resign his post after a recruitment video for the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force was circulated among the general public.

Some say the visuals in the now-viral video depict the BVI as a violent, crime-riddled territory. The near six-minute-long video, titled "Police in Paradise", begins by showcasing the breathtaking natural beauty of the territory, but then takes a decidedly darker tone.

“Kids with Guns” – a 2006 song by alternative-slash-hip hop virtual band Gorillaz, provides the soundtrack for the video, while local officers speak about the challenges of policing in a territory

rife with drug trafficking and gun crimes.

Immediately following those comments, the video cuts to scenes depicting graphic CCTV footage of gunmen firing high-powered weapons at an occupied vehicle.

Calling the video 'grotesque', BVI Tourist Board Director Clive McCoy said on ZBVI radio that the video threatens to reverse the hard work that the Tourist Board has been doing to promote the territory.

McCoy said his team is now monitoring the international impact of the video and is putting together a strategy to counteract any negative reaction.

BVI Premier Dr. Natalio Wheatley, who also holds the Tourism portfolio, called the video "unacceptable," and says it depicts a "highly distorted" image of the BVI. He says the impression given of an unsafe territory was untrue, and appealed directly to visitors currently in the territory and prospective travelers, assuring them that the BVI was a welcoming and safe vacation destination.

Following the public outcry, Mr. Collins, the police commissioner, issued a written apology, and said the video currently circulating was meant to be used in the region as a recruiting tool for the Force, and further, that it was not a finalized version. At least one activist - Cindy Rosan - told BVI News that Mr. Collins's words of contrition were not acceptable.

Despite several calls for Governor John Rankin to either condemn the video, require Mr. Collins's resignation, or both, as of press time there was no public comment from the Office of the Governor.

Premier Wheatley, in his comments earlier this week, said that the governor shares the wide public distaste over the video, but skeptical critics say that Mr. Rankin, who in his post as governor bears responsibility for security services, had to have known how and what the commissioner was doing with respect to the production of the material.