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VIPD Says Stingray Device That Intercepts People's Phone Communication is Not in Use in Virgin Islands

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The V.I. Police Department said Wednesday that rumors making the rounds on social media claiming that the department has procured a "Stingray" device that intercepts people's cellphone conversations without their knowledge were completely false.

"The department does not use the 'Sting Ray' device which functions by tricking your phone into thinking that the surveillance device is a cell tower," the VIPD said. "This results in your phone routing any traffic — such as text messages, web queries or phone calls — through the device."

Police Commissioner Ray Martinez stated, "While the claimed 'Sting Ray' device may have been used by US Military, Federal Law Enforcement Agencies and Police Departments throughout the mainland, I can emphatically and without any reservations state that the V.I. Police Department

does not own, possess nor use any such device.

“The V.I. Police Department has a responsibility to enforce laws which, in turn, ensures the safety of the citizenry of the territory; however, it is our obligation to also follow laws and policies which do not infringe on the rights of the community.

“Furthermore, the device operates only on the 2G Network, which no longer exists in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Additionally, the device's reliance on 2G technology makes it less useful for law enforcement with every passing year as 4G and eventually 5G networks take over.”

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