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One of the Largest Jouvets St. Croix Has Ever Seen Happened Thursday as 8,000 or More People Poured Into Frederiksted to Revel

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Ernice Gilbert **January 09, 2023**

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Jouvert Morning on St. Croix on Thursday, Jan. 5, 2023. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

If there were any doubts about the readiness of Virgin Islanders to be outside having a good time in the post-pandemic era, Thursday's Jouvert Morning event — a staple in the Crucian Christmas Festival — laid them to rest.

This year's Jouvert was arguably the largest, and if not, it was certainly among the greatest turnouts on St. Croix. According to Police Commissioner Ray Martinez, between 6,000 to 8,000 people — if not more — were in Frederiksted for the daybreak event.

"Jouvert was a challenge," he admitted. "We had about 6,000 to 8,000 people, if not more. We ran that Jouvert with a small number of men and women. My soldiers did a tremendous job in keeping that amount of people in check. It's all about keeping people safe so that they can come out and enjoy the festival."

Of the several bands and deejays that made their way down King Street, all were followed by a sea of people spanning several generations dancing to thumping Soca music booming from loud speakers placed on trucks.

The 2022-2023 Crucian Christmas Festival was the first full event of any of the islands since the Covid-19 pandemic affected the world in 2020, and there was anecdotal evidence that this year would see overwhelming participation as almost all events leading up to the season's official kickoff saw large crowds.

From the [Coquito Festival](#) to the [Coconut Festival](#), and virtually anything thrown together by event organizers saw strong participation.

Though there were a few skirmishes, violence during Jouvert was negligible as the V.I. Police Department's presence, show limited in manpower, was ubiquitous. Mr. Martinez was among law enforcement on the road for the event to keep law and order. He described the weeks leading up to the Festival season as "the two weeks of hell," due to the logistical effort relating to security as President Joe Biden was on St. Croix and territorial inaugural activities for Governor Albert Bryan.

Even so, the department executed successfully. "The guys are just working and truthfully all of us can't wait until festival is over so we can slow down and get the guys a few days off," Mr. Martinez said. "We've been working for the last three weeks with no days off, but again if you look at my officers out there, they are smiling and they just continue to work. We're going to continuing doing the work to keep our streets and people safe."

The overall experience appeared to be euphoric for a majority of Jouvert participants, and it has set the stage for the upcoming V.I. Carnival, which is [scheduled for April 23-30](#).