

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Governor Bryan Urges Unity Amid Homicide of Police Detective

Crime / **Published On July 06, 2023 06:18 AM /**

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Half-staff USVI flag at Government House on St. Croix, Thursday morning (7.6.23) in honor of fallen Detective Delberth Phipps. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

Wednesday's press briefing from Governor Albert Bryan began on a somber note, with the governor reflecting on the homicide of Detective Delbert Phipps, who was gunned down on Tuesday morning by a man awaiting trial for first degree murder.

"The whole entire Virgin Islands community grieves of this loss," said Governor Bryan, before he went on to reassure the territory's law enforcement community of the population's gratitude for the dangerous work that they do every day.

"I want you to know honestly and earnestly that your dedication and sacrifice to the people of this community for the people of this community do not go unnoticed," Mr. Bryan said. "I am extremely proud of the officers and their professionalism in bringing this perpetrator to the hospital in good condition.

"I cannot say that I would have had that kind of restraint, control or professionalism in doing the same. So hats off to them in that regard for doing their jobs and doing it in a manner that respects the most heinous of crimes."

Mr. Bryan expressed hope that officers of the VIPD avail themselves of mental health support in order to deal with the grief that accompanies such a tragic loss of a colleague and comrade. He also called on the community to come together in this time of loss. "Let us all unite as one Virgin Islands community and extend our support and gratitude to the brave men and women who protect us daily," he exhorted.

Noting the nature of criminality in the territory, Mr. Bryan announced break-ins at two schools over the weekend, at Addelita Cancryn on St. Thomas, and the St. Croix Educational Complex. The latter incident resulted in the theft of over 100 solar panels that are meant to serve as a backup supply for students and/or residents of the emergency shelter at the facility in the event of a storm. "This is very selfish and really uncalled for. I am pleading with our community and the perpetrators, if they're listening to me, just bring back the stuff," he requested, while also calling on members of the community with knowledge of the theft to report what they know to police.

The only way to ensure a safer society for all Virgin Islanders, said the governor, was through a renewed commitment to unity. "Together, we will overcome this strategy, this tragedy and emerge stronger, reaffirming our collective resolve to create a safer community by doing our part to ensure criminal offenders are brought to justice," he said.