

STATEMENT FROM THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

The paramount concern of the National Security Council is the safety and security of the people of the Virgin Islands.

The National Security Council (NSC) met in an emergency meeting on Monday, 9th October, 2023 to review the attack on an HM Prison van and the event at the Elmore Stoutt High School (ESHS).

The Commissioner of Police provided the NSC with an update on both incidents. The prison officer, who was injured, is in a stable non-life threatening condition at the D. Orlando Smith Hospital, and the attack on the prison van remains under investigation.

The Royal Virgin Islands Police Force (RVIPF) responded immediately to the incident at the school. One person has been arrested and the police remained on campus until the end of the school day. The NSC confirmed with the Ministry of Education that no firearms or other weapons were found in the possession of the individuals or on the campus, although an imitation firearm has subsequently been recovered away from the school premises. The NSC shares the concern over misinformation circulated in relation to what occurred at the school.

The Members of the NSC are keenly aware of the concerns in the community over both events and is determined to support the RVIPF in its work. Following the concerns of the NSC, the Police Commissioner has ordered increased patrols. Additionally, NSC has requested a review of security at the ESHS to be carried out between the RVIPF and the Ministry of Education.

NSC is encouraging the community to assist the Police by calling in with tips at Crime Stoppers and the confidential and untraceable hotline **800-8477[TIPS], 800-847-8477** and **368-9339**.

The NSC reassures the public that the RVIPF is using every available tool to bring criminals to justice and to arrest the current trend of escalating crime. The NSC further reaffirms its commitment to a zero tolerance policy on crime.

The National Security Council considers matters relating to internal security and any significant security developments in the Territory, including the occurrence of significant criminal activity. The NSC comprises the Governor, as Chairman and members, including the Premier, the Minister for Communication and Works, the Attorney General (*ex-officio*) and the Commissioner of Police (*ex-officio*).

9th October, 2023