GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

STATEMENT

Tel: (284)468-2730
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Statement from the National Security Council - 27th October 2025

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The National Security Council (NSC) convened a special meeting this afternoon under the chairmanship of His Excellency the Governor, Mr. Daniel Pruce, in light of the prison outbreak at His Majesty's Prison, Balsam Ghut on Saturday evening during which two inmates were discovered missing namely, Jose´ Almestica and John Burgos, both U.S. Virgin Islands residents.

The NSC expressed its deep concern about the escapes. At today's meeting Council received the Minister for Health and Social Development Hon. Vincent Wheatly, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health and Social Development Ms. Tasha Bertie and Superintendent of Prison Mr. Jay Kendall for discussions on the prison outbreak. Both the Superintendent of Prison and Acting Commissioner of Police Ms. Jacqueline Vanterpool briefed NSC, which included updates on the current investigation and search efforts.

Emanating from those updates were several agreed actions to strengthen security measures at HM Prison; increase police presence in key areas, enhance inter-agency coordination, and intensify the ongoing manhunt for the escaped inmates by ensuring close collaboration with regional and international law enforcement partners to secure the safe recapture of the escapees.

Equally, the NSC condemned the shooting incident reported in Purcell Estate on 26th October, and was assured that it was not connected to the prison escape. The NSC strongly supports the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force (RVIPF) investigation, and calls on members of the public to remain calm, not to approach the escapees, and to report any information to the police. Residents are also encouraged to be guided by the RVIPF to take precautionary measures such as remaining aware of your surroundings, and ensuring that your homes and vehicles are securely locked at all times.

Persons with information are encouraged to contact the police directly, call Crime Stoppers, or use the confidential and untraceable hotline at 800-8477 (TIPS), 800-847-8477, or 368-9339.

The NSC is the body that considers matters relating to internal security and any significant security developments in the Territory, including the occurrence of significant criminal activity. The Council is chaired by the Governor and includes as members, the Premier, the Minister for Communications and Works, the Attorney General, and the Commissioner of Police. The Cabinet Secretary facilitates the conduct of business of the NSC.

For Additional Information Contact:

Nekita Turnbull
Chief Information Officer
Department of Information and Public Relations
Government of the Virgin Islands
5th Floor, RJT Edifice Building
Tortola, Virgin Islands, VG1110
Telephone: +1 (284) 468-2731
Email: neturnbull@gov.vg

Additional Documents or Media

- nsc_statement_hm_prison_outbreak_27.10.2025.pdf