

## PRESS RELEASE

Tel: (284)468-2730

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# Virgin Islands Holds First Ever Roundtable on Ending Digital Violence Against Women and Girls

**Release Date:** 22 December, 2025



The Acting Governor of the Virgin Islands, His Excellency David D. Archer Jr., in collaboration with the Office of Gender Affairs, hosted the territory's first roundtable discussion focused on ending digital violence against women and girls.

Digital violence is increasingly threatening the safety and wellbeing of women and girls worldwide. Digital technologies are being used to amplify violent and misogynistic beliefs and enable new forms of abuse, including cyberstalking, harassment, and image-based exploitation.

This issue - highlighted as the theme of this year's '16 Days of Activism', a global campaign led annually by UN Women to end violence against women and girls - is becoming more pervasive, crossing borders at an unprecedented scale and speed.

To address these growing concerns, the Governor's Office and the Office of Gender Affairs convened a roundtable at Government House on Tuesday, 9 December 2025, bringing together policymakers, law enforcement and representatives from gender equality advocacy groups.

The Acting Governor and Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Social Development, Mrs. Sheniah Armstrong-Jones, delivered welcome remarks, followed by a keynote address from the Speaker of the House of Assembly, the Honourable Corine N. George-Massicote, who is a passionate advocate for this issue.

Detective Inspector Kendolph Bobb, Head of the Family and Juvenile Unit at the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force, outlined the current legal framework for tackling digital violence against women and girls, including the Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act, 2019 amendments, and highlighted enforcement challenges. Cases of digital violence against women and girls here in the Virgin Islands include child sexual exploitation and online grooming, possession of adult or child sexual exploitation material, cyber threats, online blackmail and cyberbullying, which is

the most common of these types of crimes.

Participants then explored how legislation, education, and partnerships can help combat digital violence against women and girls.

Attendees included:

1. Acting Governor of the Virgin Islands, David D. Archer, Jr.
2. The Honourable Corine N. George-Massicote, Speaker of the House of Assembly of the Virgin Islands.
3. Ms. Sheniah Armstrong-Jones, Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Social Development.
4. Detective Inspector Kendolph Bobb, Head of the Family and Juvenile Unit at the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force.
5. Dr. Nikki Rubaine-Connell, Vice President of the Zonta Club of Tortola.
6. Ms. Rochelle Smith, Secretary of the Zonta Club of Tortola.
7. Ms. Rhonda R. Victor-Pinnock, WIN BVI Ambassador.
8. Ms. Andrea Blumire, Policy & Communications Officer, Governor's Office.

Following the presentations and discussion, participants committed to:

1. Holding regular quarterly meetings to monitor progress, strengthen collaboration, and develop actionable strategies to address digital violence against women and girls in the Virgin Islands.
2. Conducting a review of current legislation in contrast with reporting data to identify gaps and ensure laws are effectively addressing emerging forms of digital violence.
3. Broadening engagement with key stakeholders, including schools and the college, churches, health and mental health practitioners, non-profit organisations especially those connected to men, corporate partners, and to create a comprehensive, community-wide approach to prevention and response.

Acting Governor of the Virgin Islands, Mr. David D. Archer, Jr., said:

“Digital violence is crossing borders at a scale and speed not previously seen. It is not just a legal issue - it is a societal challenge that demands a united response.

We must ensure our laws are fit-for-purpose, educate our communities and build partnerships that extend beyond government. Gender equality is not only a human right - it is fundamental to security and prosperity in the Virgin Islands. When women and girls are represented at all levels, we unlock innovation, strengthen governance and drive sustainable growth for all. Together, we can create safer digital spaces protect women and girls from harm in every sphere of life and empower them to thrive.'

Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Social Development, Mrs. Sheniah Armstrong-Jones, said:

'Digital violence is not confined to screens, it has real and lasting consequences for mental health, physical safety, family stability and community wellbeing. From the Ministry of Health and Social Development's perspective, this is both a public health and a social protection issue, particularly where women and girls are concerned. Through stronger coordination, public education, survivor-centred services and modernised policy responses, we are committed to ensuring that our digital spaces are just as safe as our physical ones. Ending digital violence requires collective responsibility, and today's discussion represents an important step toward building a more informed, responsive and protective system for the Virgin Islands.'

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**For Additional Information Contact:**

Mr. Eusa Z. Adams  
Communications Officer II  
Office of the Deputy Governor  
Governor's Group  
Constitutionally Established Departments  
Telephone: 1-284-468-2219/3000  
Email: eadams@gov.vg

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## **Additional Documents or Media**

- [GO RoundTable 5](#)
- [GO Roundtable 3](#)
- [GO RoundTable 2](#)
- [GO RoundTable 1](#)