

British Virgin Islands National Security Strategy

A safe, secure and resilient Virgin Islands

2027–2030

Contents

Forewords.....	3
Our vision.....	6
Strategic objectives	6
Introduction	6
Scope	7
Chapter 1 – Context.....	8
The global context	8
Regional context.....	8
The Virgin Islands context	9
Chapter 2 – Threats facing the Virgin Islands.....	11
Introduction	11
2.1 Threats to people and communities	11
Firearms, serious violence and youth criminality	11
Domestic abuse, child abuse and safeguarding harms	11
Robbery	11
2.2 Threats to the Territory and its institutions.....	12
Serious and organised crime.....	12
Migrant smuggling and irregular migration	12
Corruption.....	12
Financial crime and illicit finance	12
Environmental and natural disasters	12
Cyber threats	12
Terrorism.....	13
2.3 Challenges and vulnerabilities affecting the response.....	13
Workforce capacity, resources and resilience.....	13
Skills, training and professional development.....	13
Professional standards, integrity and public confidence	13
Information sharing and multi-agency coordination	14
Technology, equipment and infrastructure	14
Border and maritime vulnerabilities	14
Legislation.....	14
Chapter 3 – Strategic security outcomes.....	15

3.1 Delivering a highly effective police force	15
3.2 A stronger multi-agency response to domestic and child abuse	15
3.3 An effective criminal justice system.....	16
3.4 A modern legislative framework for security and justice	16
3.5 A more effective prison service	16
3.6 Secure maritime borders	17
3.7 A stronger Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	17
3.8 Secure and resilient aviation and maritime sectors	18
3.9 A resilient Virgin Islands.....	18
3.10 Cyber resilience.....	19
3.11 A more effective response to illicit finance and financial crime.....	19
3.12 Stronger immigration services	19
3.13 A more efficient Customs service	20
3.14 Strengthening restorative justice.....	20
Chapter 4 – The approach	22
The Security and Justice Transformation Programme	22
Security and Justice Transformation Programme Governance	23
Partnership with the United Kingdom.....	23
Review and refresh.....	24

Forewords



Daniel Pruce, Governor of the British Virgin Islands

The British Virgin Islands remains a safe and successful Territory, but the threats we face are evolving. Serious and organised crime, firearms trafficking, illicit finance, cyberattacks, and increasingly severe natural hazards do not respect borders. Addressing them requires strong, professional security and justice services working together and with our regional and international partners.

This Security Strategy sets out a clear vision for a safer, more secure and resilient British Virgin Islands, that is protected by trusted, professional and coordinated institutions. It identifies the principal threats facing the Territory and details the priority actions we need to take to build stronger, more effective security and justice systems that are equipped to face both current and future challenges.

The Strategy is deliberately focused. The priority actions set out in it are not intended to represent every improvement that may be required across the security and justice system. They are the immediate priorities that we will tackle over the coming months. Progress will be reviewed regularly, and further actions will be identified as work advances.

Delivery will require sustained leadership and clear accountability. Through the Security and Justice Transformation Programme, the Premier and I will bring agencies together and ensure that challenges are identified and addressed. This arrangement will not alter existing constitutional, statutory or operational responsibilities. It will provide the coordination and oversight needed to translate ambition into action, and commitments into measurable improvements.

The United Kingdom will remain a committed partner in this work, building on the practical support already provided across policing, border security, vetting, prisons, cyber resilience and the response to illicit finance. Equally important will be the expertise and commitment of the Territory's own public servants, law-enforcement officers, justice professionals and community partners.

By working together, we can build a security and justice system that is more capable, more coordinated, more trusted, and is better able to protect the Territory's people and interests, ensuring that the British Virgin Islands is safe and prosperous for generations to come.



Honourable Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley, Premier of the Virgin Islands and Minister of Finance

The safety and security of the Virgin Islands is a shared priority that calls for shared commitment. Our people deserve to feel safe in their homes, our children deserve to grow up free from violence and exploitation, and our businesses and visitors must have confidence in the security of our Territory.

This Security Strategy provides an opportunity to strengthen the partnership between the elected Government, the Governor, our security and justice institutions, and the communities we serve. I am committed to working closely with His Excellency the Governor in a relationship grounded in mutual respect, trust, open communication and a clear understanding of our respective responsibilities. Our common interest in protecting the Virgin Islands must guide our cooperation and translate into practical, measurable results.

The threats we face cross borders and institutional boundaries. Addressing them requires our police, Customs, Immigration, justice services and other public agencies to share information, coordinate their efforts and use resources effectively. It also requires sustained collaboration with the United Kingdom, our Caribbean neighbours and international partners, drawing on their support while strengthening local expertise and capacity.

Through our joint leadership of the Security and Justice Transformation Programme, the Governor and I will work to turn this Strategy into action. Clear priorities, realistic resourcing, regular dialogue and accountability for delivery will be essential. The Government will play its part in supporting stronger institutions, better-equipped personnel and coordinated services that earn and maintain public confidence.

Security also depends on the relationship between institutions and the people they serve. Professionalism, fairness, respect for rights and responsiveness to community concerns must underpin our approach. Alongside this Strategy, our work on crime prevention must address the conditions that expose people, particularly our young people, to violence and criminal exploitation.

I thank the officers, public servants, community organisations and partners whose dedication protects our Territory every day. By working together with honesty, purpose and mutual trust, we can build a safer, more resilient Virgin Islands for this generation and those to come.



**The Rt Hon Lord Hanson
of Flint, Minister of State
at the Home Office**



**Uma Kumaran MP,
Parliamentary Under-
Secretary of State in the
Foreign, Commonwealth
and Development Office**



**Jake Richards MP,
Parliamentary Under-
Secretary of State for the
Ministry of Justice**

The UK Government is committed to working with the Virgin Islands Government and its agencies to strengthen security and justice across the Territory and protect its people. We are pleased to endorse this Security Strategy, which provides a clear framework for delivering that commitment.

Many of the security threats facing the Virgin Islands are familiar to the United Kingdom, and we face many of the same institutional challenges. Our partnership, founded on mutual respect, creates valuable opportunities to share experience, practical expertise and lessons learned, allowing both the United Kingdom and the Virgin Islands to learn from one another.

That cooperation is already delivering tangible benefits for the Virgin Islands as we work with local partners to strengthen law enforcement capability and tackle national security risks. Through the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, we, along with the Home Office, are providing specialist expertise and training to strengthen the operational capability of the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force. We are also exploring ways to jointly address violence against women and girls, supporting efforts to prevent domestic abuse, protect victims and raise public awareness. Through the Home Office, we are also supporting the introduction of sustainable vetting and a wider integrity framework for Police, Prison, Customs and Immigration officers to strengthen integrity and public confidence in these vital law enforcement agencies. Through the Ministry of Justice, we are working with local partners to increase the safety, security and operational effectiveness at His Majesty's Prison Balsam Ghut.

This Strategy provides an important framework for the years ahead. We look forward to continuing to work with the Virgin Islands Government and local partners to deliver its ambitions and build stronger security and justice systems that will ultimately make the Virgin Islands safer, more secure, and more resilient for future generations.

Our vision

To build a safe, secure and resilient Virgin Islands where residents, businesses and visitors feel protected, communities thrive, and security and justice institutions operate with integrity, professionalism and public trust; positioning the Territory as a globally recognised safe and secure jurisdiction.

Strategic objectives

- Safer communities
- Secure borders and institutions
- Effective and trusted security and justice services
- A resilient Territory able to withstand and recover from crises

Introduction

This Strategy identifies the main threats to the security of the Virgin Islands and some of the internal challenges facing our security and justice agencies. It then identifies a number of priority actions that will be taken to ensure that agencies and departments are better able to respond to those threats and maintain the security of the Territory.

Through a coordinated programme of transformation, the Territory will strengthen its ability to prevent crime, protect communities, respond to emerging threats and create an environment in which people can live, work, invest and visit with confidence.

Over the next three years our security and justice agencies will work to achieve the overarching outcomes described in Chapter Three:

- a more effective and accountable police force;
- a stronger response to domestic and child abuse;
- a more efficient criminal justice system;
- a modern legislative framework for security and justice;
- a more rehabilitative prison service;
- strengthened maritime border security;
- a stronger Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions;
- secure and resilient aviation and maritime sectors;
- enhanced national resilience to emergencies and natural disasters;
- improved cyber resilience across government;
- a more robust response to illicit finance and financial crime;
- stronger and more intelligence-led immigration services;
- a more efficient and technologically enabled Customs service; and
- a strengthened restorative justice system that supports victims, rehabilitation and community safety.

The Governor and Premier will together lead a Security and Justice Transformation Programme (SJTP) which will deliver the specific actions identified in this Strategy. The Strategy will be regularly reviewed to update and replace actions as progress is made.

Whilst the Governor retains constitutional responsibility for the security of the Territory, some aspects of security sit across ministerial departments. Border security, for example, is a shared responsibility, with HM Customs preventing restricted and prohibited goods from entering the Territory and the Department of Immigration preventing illegal immigration and associated threats. A partnered approach to strengthening security is therefore required.

Scope

September 2025 saw the Virgin Islands Inaugural Anti-Crime Summit which examined the causes and impacts of crime and identified opportunities for prevention. Some themes discussed at the Summit are reflected in this Strategy, but, while crime and security are closely related, they are not synonymous. This Strategy focuses on security: the policies, systems, capabilities and partnerships required to prevent, detect, respond to and recover from the threats facing the Virgin Islands. The broader social issues highlighted during the Summit, including tackling the root causes of offending, fall outside the scope of this Strategy and will be taken forward through the Virgin Islands Government's National Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy.

Chapter 1 – Context

The global context

The global security environment is becoming increasingly complex, interconnected and unpredictable. The UN Secretary-General recently warned of a world “brimming with conflict, impunity, inequality and unpredictability”.¹

In its National Security Strategy, the UK Government describes a new era characterised by radical uncertainty, heightened geopolitical competition, growing international instability and evolving threats that transcend national borders. Such threats include armed conflict and interstate tensions, the expansion of transnational organised crime, terrorism and violent extremism, cyber threats, hostile state activity, the misuse of emerging technologies, and the increasing impact of climate-related emergencies and natural disasters.

Technology is changing the nature of security and conflict, enabling cyber-attack and disinformation campaigns. At the same time, globalisation has increased the connectivity of financial systems, supply chains and communications networks, meaning that criminal activity and security threats can spread rapidly across jurisdictions.

Transnational organised crime remains a significant security challenge. Criminal networks operate across borders, exploiting technology, international transport systems and weaknesses in governance arrangements to facilitate drugs and firearms trafficking, people smuggling, money laundering, fraud and cyber-enabled crime. These activities generate significant illicit profits, fuel corruption and violence, and undermine the stability and resilience of states and communities worldwide.

Climate change and natural hazards pose security challenges. Globally, more frequent and severe weather events, resource pressures and humanitarian crises have the potential to drive displacement, economic disruption and instability.

No jurisdiction can address these threats in isolation. Effective security depends on strong institutions, international cooperation, intelligence sharing, resilient infrastructure and coordinated responses across government and relevant agencies.

Regional context

The Caribbean sits astride major cocaine trafficking routes linking South America with consumer markets in North America and Europe. It remains **a transit route for illicit trafficking**, including narcotics, firearms and people. Organised criminal networks exploit the extensive maritime domain, numerous islands, jurisdictional boundaries and capacity constraints across the region. Go-fast vessels, fishing boats, yachts, container shipping and other maritime vessels are used to transport illicit goods across the region. Drug trafficking continues to be a significant driver of organised crime, corruption, violence and illicit financial flows across the region.²³⁴

¹ [Guterres' final annual address outlining his priorities | United Nations](#)

² [9880-ccss.pdf](#)

³ [CARICOM IMPACS - CARICOM IMPACS commences development of new regional security strategy](#)

⁴ [rdjpdyb8hfleyovmtsib.pdf](#)

At the same time, Caribbean states are highly exposed to **hurricanes and the impacts of climate change**, which can drive economic shocks, displacement and humanitarian pressures. These risks underscore the importance of holistic, multi-agency responses and strong regional and international partnerships to enhance resilience and long-term stability.

CARICOM recognises that the region is not immune from **the global threat of terrorism**. Regional risks include online radicalisation, terrorist financing, the exploitation of porous borders and regional transit routes, and growing links between terrorist groups, organised crime and violent gangs.

These global and regional trends provide the wider context within which the Virgin Islands must assess its own security risks, strengthen its capabilities and build resilience against current and emerging threats.

The Virgin Islands context

The Virgin Islands are not insulated from global and regional threats. Transnational organised crime, illicit financial flows, cyber threats, climate-related disasters and wider regional instability can all directly affect the safety, security and prosperity of the Virgin Islands. We must therefore strengthen our law enforcement and border security capabilities, criminal justice institutions, emergency preparedness arrangements, and security and justice governance systems.

Many of the threats originate beyond our borders. Addressing these threats will require close partnerships, with the UK, regional partners, and international organisations. Equally, as a globally connected financial centre, the Virgin Islands has a role to play in helping to prevent, detect and disrupt threats that may affect other jurisdictions.

As an island heavily dependent on air and sea links, the security and resilience of the aviation and maritime sectors are essential to the Territory's economic prosperity and connectivity. These sectors are subject to international standards, including those established through the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Maritime Organization. As a UK Overseas Territory, the Virgin Islands contributes to the United Kingdom's compliance with these international obligations.

The Territory enters this Strategy having already made important progress in strengthening its security and justice system. Over recent years, investment has been made in maritime law-enforcement capabilities, reforms across the Prison Service have progressed, the Territory has developed a stronger understanding of cyber risk and resilience, and enhancements and modernisation of the Border Management System have been made. The implementation of comprehensive vetting programmes for Police and Prison officers has commenced, while work is underway to modernise police communications through the introduction of a new radio network and enhanced command-and-control capabilities.

Important legislative and policy reforms have also been advanced. Recent measures have strengthened the Territory's response to terrorist financing, asset recovery, anti-money laundering, immigration and border management, and customs enforcement. Progress continues to modernise the legislative framework supporting public safety and the administration of justice, including the ongoing review of the Domestic Violence Act, 2011 and the development of Sexual Offences legislation. Alongside these reforms, a range of safeguarding, crisis intervention and family support services are delivered through the Social

Development Department and its partners, such as the Partnership for Peace Programme, helping to protect vulnerable individuals and strengthen community resilience.

The 2025 Virgin Islands Anti-Crime Summit brought together government, law-enforcement agencies and civil society to help shape the approach to crime prevention and community safety. More recently, work has advanced to introduce restorative justice approaches and strengthen rehabilitation and victim-centred interventions. These developments provide a strong foundation for the next phase of reform and the delivery of a more effective, resilient and trusted security and justice system.

Chapter 2 – Threats facing the Virgin Islands

Introduction

This chapter identifies the principal security threats facing the Virgin Islands. These threats have the potential to undermine public safety and security, and in some cases the effective functioning of the Territory's institutions.

This chapter has been informed by analysis of crime, enforcement and operational data from the Territory's law enforcement agencies, as well as the law enforcement reviews conducted by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the Virgin Islands National Sustainable Development Plan.

Socio-economic factors and underlying drivers of crime, such as inequality, poverty and unemployment, were identified during the Anti-Crime Summit and are important issues that influence security in the Virgin Islands. However, these issues fall outside the scope of this Strategy and will be considered through the National Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy.

2.1 Threats to people and communities

Firearms, serious violence and youth criminality

The criminal use of firearms remains one of the most serious threats to community safety in the Virgin Islands. Firearms are linked to robberies, serious assaults, homicides and organised criminal activity. Police reporting indicates increasing youth involvement in gang-associated offending and greater access to, and use of, firearms by younger offenders. This increases the risk of serious violence, community harm and long-term criminal exploitation of young people.

Domestic abuse, child abuse and safeguarding harms

Domestic abuse and child abuse in the Territory present significant safeguarding risks. Domestic abuse accounted for 49% of all 'violence against the person' offences recorded in 2025. Increasing numbers of repeat and high-risk domestic abuse incidents are creating sustained risks to victims, families and children. In 2025 police investigated 93 child abuse cases. Emerging threats include online child sexual abuse, exploitation through digital platforms, and increasing cyber-enabled abuse referrals.

Robbery

Robbery remains a persistent threat to public safety and economic confidence. The RVIPTF reported an increase in robberies during 2025, particularly offences involving the targeting of high-value goods and assets. Approximately 89% of reported robberies involved the use of firearms, increasing the risk of serious injury, psychological harm and escalation to more serious violence.

2.2 Threats to the Territory and its institutions

Serious and organised crime

Serious and organised crime poses a significant threat to the Virgin Islands. The Territory's location along maritime trafficking routes makes it vulnerable to the movement of illegal drugs and firearms. Organised criminal networks exploit regional transport routes and maritime borders to facilitate trafficking. These activities, and the associated violence, contribute to firearm-enabled crime, community harm and broader security threats.

Migrant smuggling and irregular migration

Migrant smuggling poses a threat to the Virgin Islands' border security and national resilience. The Territory's geographic location and extensive maritime borders make it vulnerable to the illegal movement of migrants by organised smuggling networks. In 2025, 10 irregular migrants were intercepted which showed a 91.1% reduction from 112 in 2024. These activities do however place pressure on immigration, border security and law enforcement agencies.

Corruption

Corruption poses a significant risk to the integrity and effectiveness of security and justice institutions. The misuse of authority, facilitation of criminal activity, or improper influence over operational decisions can undermine public confidence, weaken the rule of law and compromise law enforcement outcomes. Police, prison and other security personnel may be targeted by criminal groups seeking access to information, protection from enforcement action or assistance in facilitating illicit activities.

Financial crime and illicit finance

Financial crime and illicit finance are transnational threats that present significant risks to the Territory. Overseas criminal and terrorist-financing networks, as well as state threats, seek to exploit the Territory's position as a major international financial centre to facilitate the movement of illicit funds through international networks. Such activities could negatively affect the integrity of the Territory's financial system, the stability of its economy and the safety of its citizens.

Environmental and natural disasters

The Virgin Islands are exposed to hurricanes, tropical storms and other natural hazards. These events can cause storm surges, flooding and landslides, disrupt essential services, and result in significant economic damage and injuries. Although less frequent, tsunamis and storm surges pose a potentially severe threat to coastal communities and critical infrastructure. Vulnerability is heightened by the concentration of population, economic activity and public infrastructure in low-lying coastal areas.

Cyber threats

Cyber threats are growing in scale, frequency and sophistication. Leaders of the Caribbean Overseas Territories agree cyber security is a matter of national security. Some Territories have already experienced significant cyber-attacks. Such attacks can disrupt essential

services, compromise sensitive information, and undermine public confidence in government institutions. Strengthening cyber resilience is therefore essential.

Terrorism

Although there is no recent history of terrorism in the Virgin Islands, attacks cannot be ruled out.⁵ The risk of terrorist-financing activity originating within the Virgin Islands is low; however, the Territory faces a medium-high risk of being used, directly or indirectly, to move terrorist funds through its international financial and business networks.

2.3 Challenges and vulnerabilities affecting the response

The threats above are compounded by system-level challenges within our security and justice agencies and vulnerabilities related to the geography of the Virgin Islands. These challenges affect our ability to prevent, detect, respond to and recover from security threats. Addressing these gaps is essential to ensuring the safety and security of the Virgin Islands.

Many of these system-level challenges have been identified in previous reviews, self-assessments and international assessments, including the CFATF Mutual Evaluation Report and the Law Enforcement Review of the Virgin Islands. It is therefore unnecessary to set out the detail in this Strategy. However, it is important to identify the key themes that affect the ability of the Territory's security and justice agencies to respond to threats.

Workforce capacity, resources and resilience

Across the security and justice sector, recruiting, developing and retaining suitably qualified personnel remains a challenge. Competition for specialist skills and difficulties filling critical posts can create operational vulnerabilities and increase pressure on staff. These challenges are compounded by finite financial resources, competing public-sector priorities and the limited capacity of small agencies. Effective workforce planning, succession management, talent development and sustainable investment are therefore essential to ensuring agencies maintain the people, skills, equipment and capabilities required.

Skills, training and professional development

The complex threat landscape requires a workforce equipped with modern skills and professional expertise. As criminality becomes more sophisticated, agencies must continue to strengthen specialist capabilities in areas such as investigations, intelligence, financial crime, digital and cyber-enabled offences, safeguarding, emergency response, leadership and strategic planning. Investment in training and development will be required to ensure that personnel are equipped to meet future challenges.

Professional standards, integrity and public confidence

Public confidence in security and justice institutions depends on a workforce that demonstrates the highest standards of professionalism, ethics and integrity. Strong governance, effective vetting, professional standards arrangements and mechanisms for accountability are essential to ensuring public trust and organisational legitimacy.

⁵ [Safety and security - British Virgin Islands \(British Overseas Territory\) travel advice - GOV.UK](#)

Information sharing and multi-agency coordination

Many of the threats facing the Virgin Islands require a coordinated response from multiple agencies. Effective information sharing, joint planning and collaborative working arrangements are essential to identifying risks and coordinating resources.

Technology, equipment and infrastructure

Modern and reliable communications systems, information technology, operational equipment and physical infrastructure are essential to effective security and justice services. Ageing or unsuitable systems and equipment can affect operational coordination, information management, situational awareness, staff safety and the continuity of essential services.

Border and maritime vulnerabilities

The geography of the Virgin Islands creates inherent border and maritime security vulnerabilities. An extensive coastline, numerous islands and landing points, high levels of commercial and recreational maritime activity, and a significant dependence on maritime transport make the monitoring and control of cross-border movements challenging.

Legislation

A number of laws underpinning the Territory's security and criminal justice system require review and modernisation including the Criminal Code, Criminal Procedure Act and Evidence Act, in addition to other legislation affecting policing, prosecutions, sentencing, offender management and the protection of vulnerable persons. Reforms will need to be prioritised and coordinated with the agencies responsible for applying the legislation.

Chapter 3 – Strategic security outcomes

This chapter sets out the strategic outcomes that agencies will seek to deliver. This is not an exhaustive list. Instead, agencies have identified priority actions to be taken over the coming months to support delivery of each outcome. Progress will be reviewed regularly through the Security and Justice Transformation Programme. As actions are completed, new priorities will be identified and included as the Strategy is updated.

3.1 Delivering a highly effective police force

Outcome: A more professional, fully vetted, highly-trained and intelligence-led Royal Virgin Islands Police Force that is strongly led, accountable at every level, and equipped to prevent, detect and respond effectively to the security threats facing the Virgin Islands.

Priority Actions

1. Modernise command, control and communications capabilities, including the introduction of a resilient radio network and enhanced operational coordination arrangements.
2. Complete the vetting of all officers and establish arrangements for ongoing vetting and integrity assurance.
3. Maintain an annual Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment (STRA) to inform policing priorities and resource allocation.
4. Complete a workforce review and succession plan, and realign personnel, specialist capabilities and resources in line with the STRA.
5. Develop a comprehensive learning and development framework, including investigative capability and leadership development programmes at all ranks.
6. Strengthen the Professional Standards Department to enhance accountability, misconduct investigations and organisational learning.
7. Strengthen intelligence collection, analysis and sharing capabilities to support intelligence-led policing.

3.2 A stronger multi-agency response to domestic and child abuse

Outcome: A coordinated multi-agency safeguarding and public protection system that brings together law enforcement, criminal justice, health, education and social services to protect victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence, exploitation, child abuse and neglect, and vulnerable adults.

Priority Actions

1. Establish and resource a dedicated Public Protection Unit to strengthen the safeguarding of vulnerable persons and the investigation of domestic abuse and sexual offences.
2. Strengthen multi-agency working and information sharing in relation to high-risk cases, including by establishing a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and a system of multi-agency conferences to consider cases (MARAC-style arrangements).

3. Strengthen information sharing across agencies regarding violent and sexual offenders, centred on probation services and using a Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements approach.
4. Improve the police front-line service to vulnerable victims, including risk assessments and safeguarding.

3.3 An effective criminal justice system

Outcome: A more coordinated, efficient and victim-centred criminal justice system that delivers timely and fair outcomes, with strong partnership working, clear accountability, effective information sharing, and robust performance oversight across all agencies.

Priority Actions

1. Strengthen criminal justice data sharing through the Criminal Justice Advisory Board and develop end-to-end performance measures across the criminal justice system to identify and address delays in investigations, prosecutions and court proceedings.
2. Develop and maintain a Criminal Justice System Risk Register to identify, monitor and track progress on mitigating systemic risks.
3. Introduce an electronic monitoring framework to support sentencing, offender management and rehabilitation.

3.4 A modern legislative framework for security and justice

Outcome: A modern, coherent and effective legislative framework that supports the fair and efficient administration of justice and enables security and justice agencies to respond effectively to current and emerging threats.

Priority Actions

1. Amend legislation to increase penalties for firearms offences and strengthen the Territory's response to gun crime.
2. Introduce legislation to enable the use of electronic monitoring to support sentencing, offender management and rehabilitation.
3. Amend existing legislative provisions to strengthen the framework governing the collection and use of DNA (non-intimate) samples to enable the operational use of such evidence in criminal investigations and prosecutions.
4. Amend legislation to strengthen the enforcement of bail conditions, including clearer powers and procedures for responding to suspected breaches and returning defendants to court.
5. Continue the work to modernise the Domestic Violence Act to strengthen protection for victims and improve the criminal justice response to abuse and exploitation.
6. Progress the modernisation of legislation relating to sexual offences, child sexual abuse and the protection of vulnerable persons.

3.5 A more effective prison service

Outcome: Delivery of the His Majesty's Prison Strategic Development Plan 2024–2034, resulting in a professional, fully vetted and well-trained prison service with the leadership, workforce, infrastructure and resources required to manage offenders safely and securely;

support rehabilitation and reintegration; reduce the risk of reoffending; and contribute to public safety and security across the Virgin Islands.

Priority Actions

1. Build a sufficiently staffed, trained and professional Prison Service, with strong supervision, leadership, specialist capability, succession planning and staff welfare.
2. Complete staff vetting and establish ongoing integrity and professional standards arrangements.
3. Strengthen intelligence-led security, searching, contraband controls, and physical, procedural and dynamic security.
4. Deliver urgent repairs to ensure safe conditions.
5. Develop a costed prison infrastructure plan to address current population pressures and the longer-term need for additional custodial capacity.
6. Reduce reoffending through evidence-based rehabilitation and the eight Reducing Reoffending Pathways, and by retaining and developing the Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme to support rehabilitation.

3.6 Secure maritime borders

Outcome: A coordinated, intelligence-led and resilient border security system that is well-equipped, supported by strong regional partnerships, and capable of delivering a 24/7 response to protect the Virgin Islands from illicit trafficking, organised crime and other evolving security threats.

Priority Actions

1. Realign land and maritime law enforcement resources to enable a coordinated 24/7 operational response.
2. Procure and operationalise a maritime coastal radar system supported by a 24/7 monitoring and response capability.
3. Strengthen joint maritime operations, intelligence sharing and tasking arrangements across law enforcement agencies.
4. Enhance regional cooperation and operational partnerships with neighbouring jurisdictions and international partners.
5. Develop specialist maritime enforcement capabilities, training and equipment to strengthen interdiction and response operations, including suitable vessels.

3.7 A stronger Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

Outcome: A resilient and sustainable Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, supported by modern legislation, appropriate resources and effective partnership across the criminal justice system.

Priority Actions

1. Improve the ODPP's accommodation and operational facilities to provide an appropriate, secure and effective working environment for prosecutors and support staff.

2. Strengthen the capacity and resilience of the ODPP including through the development of a workforce strategy that tackles recruitment and workload challenges.
3. Assess and strengthen security arrangements for prosecutors, including the personal and workplace security risks arising from the performance of prosecutorial duties.

3.8 Secure and resilient aviation and maritime sectors

Outcome: Safe, secure and resilient aviation and maritime sectors that meet applicable international standards, protect the Territory's critical transport links and support the United Kingdom's compliance with its international obligations.

Priority Actions

1. Maintain effective arrangements for oversight of aviation and maritime security and safety, with clear roles and responsibilities between the Virgin Islands, the Governor, UK Government and designated regulatory bodies.
2. Maintain compliance with applicable international aviation and maritime standards and address recommendations arising from international or UK-led audits and assessments.
3. Regularly assess security and resilience risks affecting airports, ports, territorial waters and associated critical infrastructure, and ensure appropriate contingency and continuity arrangements are in place.
4. Maintain effective multi-agency arrangements for responding to major aviation and maritime incidents, including appropriate search-and-rescue and emergency-response arrangements.
5. Strengthen cooperation, information sharing, training and exercising with UK, regional and international partners responsible for aviation and maritime security and safety.

3.9 A resilient Virgin Islands

Outcome: A coordinated emergency management system, led by the Department of Disaster Management, capable of delivering a rapid, effective and sustained response to natural disasters and other emergencies, whilst maintaining essential services and protecting communities, critical infrastructure and national interests.

Priority Actions

1. Maintain and annually review the National Emergency Operations Plan and supporting hazard-specific contingency plans.
2. Conduct annual multi-agency hurricane, tsunami and national security exercises, including strategic, operational and community-level scenarios to test command, control, communications, resource mobilisation and recovery arrangements and implement identified lessons.
3. Develop and maintain a Critical Infrastructure Resilience Programme covering energy, communications, ports, sea and air ports, healthcare, water and government services.
4. Modernise public warning systems to ensure timely, accessible and reliable alerts.

5. Expand public education and preparedness programmes to strengthen community resilience.

3.10 Cyber resilience

Outcome: A cyber-resilient Virgin Islands, led by the Department of Information Technology, with the capability to identify, assess and manage cyber risks, protect critical systems and data, and prevent, respond to and recover from cyber incidents affecting government, critical infrastructure and essential services.

Priority Actions

1. Maintain a comprehensive national cyber risk management framework, including regular cyber risk assessments and a government cyber risk register.
2. Develop arrangements to identify and manage cyber risks across critical sectors.

3.11 A more effective response to illicit finance and financial crime

Outcome: A coordinated, intelligence-led system supported by technology, strong investigative capabilities, specialist expertise, a robust legal framework and domestic and international partnerships, equipped to detect, investigate and disrupt illicit finance, money laundering and other forms of financial crime.

Priority Actions

1. Deliver the Law Enforcement Agencies' commitments under the FATF Action Plan and demonstrate sustained improvements in financial crime investigations, prosecutions and asset recovery outcomes.
2. Strengthen specialist resources, skills and institutional capacity across law enforcement agencies and competent authorities to enhance the Territory's response to financial crime.
3. Improve the collection, analysis and use of financial intelligence, beneficial ownership information and other relevant data to support intelligence-led operations and the disruption and detection of financial crime.
4. Strengthen domestic, regional and international cooperation, information sharing and operational coordination to support the timely progression of investigations and the disruption of transnational financial crime.
5. Increase the identification, restraint, confiscation and recovery of criminal assets and proceeds of crime.

3.12 Stronger immigration services

Outcome: A modern, intelligence-led and customer-focused Department of Immigration, supported by skilled personnel, effective technology and strong domestic, regional and international partnerships.

Priority Actions

1. Strengthen cross-border, regional, and international information and intelligence-sharing capabilities to support border security and facilitate entry and long-term stay applications.
2. Enhance the use of risk-based assessments for the pre-vetting and clearance of travellers.
3. Introduce legislative amendments and technology-driven solutions to support strengthened pre-screening processes for travellers to the Territory.
4. Strengthen the workforce through the implementation of findings arising from the Training Needs Assessment, with an increased emphasis on cross-agency development opportunities.
5. Enhance the marine security presence through continued development of the Joint Task Force Marine Unit.

3.13 A more efficient Customs service

Outcome: A modern, intelligence-led and technologically enabled Customs service that facilitates legitimate trade and travel, protects government revenue, and effectively detects and disrupts the movement of prohibited and restricted goods through a risk-based and collaborative approach to border management.

Priority Actions

1. Install and utilise non-intrusive devices (X-ray technology) at ports of entry for greater efficiency in searches and contraband detection.
2. Update the department commodity coding scheme to ensure accurate data capture of the commodities imported into and exported from the Territory.
3. Integrate an I.T. System with the Department of Immigration's Border Management & eVisa System and the Treasury Department's J.D. Edwards Accounting System.
4. Incorporate Risk Management legislation into the Customs Management Act.
5. Digitise departmental records.
6. Improve maritime capability to increase presence on the water and conduct more intelligence-driven operations.

3.14 Strengthening restorative justice

Outcome: A fair, accessible and restorative justice system that promotes accountability, supports victims, repairs harm, strengthens communities and reduces reoffending through appropriate restorative practices and coordinated interventions.

Priority Actions

1. Develop and implement a coordinated Restorative Justice Framework that builds on existing work and establishes clear objectives, referral pathways, eligibility criteria, safeguards and institutional responsibilities.
2. Strengthen the integration of restorative justice approaches within the criminal justice system, where legally appropriate, including opportunities for diversion, community-based interventions and restorative processes.
3. Establish structured collaboration among the relevant justice agencies, social services, community organisations and other stakeholders to support the effective delivery of restorative justice initiatives.

4. Develop the necessary professional competencies and training for personnel involved in restorative justice, including victim-sensitive practice, facilitation, mediation and trauma-informed approaches.
5. Promote appropriate victim participation, offender accountability, reconciliation and community restoration, ensuring that participation is voluntary, informed and supported by suitable safeguards.
6. Establish mechanisms to monitor restorative justice outcomes, including victim satisfaction, programme completion, compliance, reoffending and the effectiveness of community reintegration.

Chapter 4 – The approach

The Security and Justice Transformation Programme

The security outcomes and actions in Chapter 3 cannot be delivered by any single agency. A coordinated and sustained approach is needed which brings together security and justice agencies, our Ministries, UK partners and wider external expertise to share knowledge, capabilities and resources.

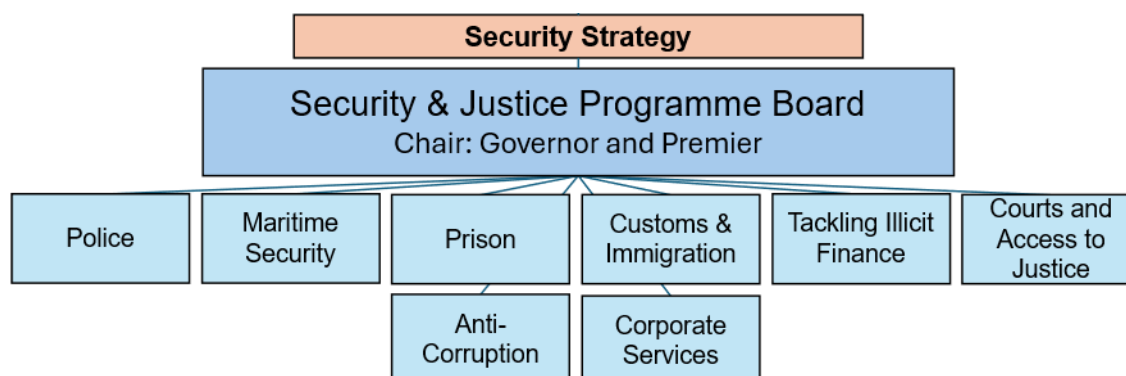
To achieve this, the Governor and Premier will lead a Security and Justice Transformation Programme (SJTP). The Programme will bring together the right people to drive progress and provide clear governance, accountability and oversight of implementation. It will not alter existing constitutional, statutory or operational responsibilities; rather, it will provide the structure needed to coordinate and drive change, monitor progress and escalate challenges.

The Governor and Premier will resolve challenges affecting delivery and ensure a coordinated approach aligned with the Territory's wider priorities. A separate internal SJTP Implementation Plan will be developed and maintained. The plan will provide the detailed framework required to translate the Strategy into action. It will set out specific actions and sub-actions, delivery timeframes, responsible agencies and owners, and key dependencies and measures for success. The Plan will enable the SJTP Board to monitor progress, assess delivery against agreed milestones, identify risks or blockages, and take timely action to maintain momentum and accountability across the programme.

Established mechanisms such as the National Security Council, the Criminal Justice Advisory Board and the Joint Task Force will play a critical role in delivering the Strategy, and will support joint decision-making, information sharing and collective problem-solving. The Department of Human Resources will also have a key role to play to support agencies with implementation, particularly where organisational restructuring, additional allowances or other changes to terms and responsibilities are required. There will also be a role for the Virgin Islands Public Service Learning Institute in supporting, where appropriate, the cross-agency capability-building requirements arising from the Strategy.

Delivery will require agencies to align existing resources with assessed priorities, strengthen workforce and financial planning, and identify where additional investment or external expertise is required. Proposals with financial implications will remain subject to the Territory's established budgeting, procurement and approval processes.

Security and Justice Transformation Programme Governance



The strategic outcomes in Chapter 3 set out the Territory's priorities for strengthening security and justice. The Security and Justice Transformation Programme will support delivery of these outcomes through three cross-cutting themes: Confidence, Coordination and Capability. Together, these themes provide the organisational, operational and cultural foundations required to deliver sustainable and lasting improvements across the security and justice system.

Confidence	Security and justice agencies operate with integrity, professionalism and accountability, earning public trust and strengthening confidence in the rule of law.
Coordination	Agencies work together through clear governance structures, shared information, joint planning and coordinated operational activity.
Capability	Agencies have the leadership, people, specialist skills, infrastructure, technology and resources needed to respond effectively to current and emerging threats.

Achieving these outcomes will strengthen the effectiveness, resilience and public legitimacy of the Virgin Islands' security and justice system. Delivery will depend on strong leadership, clear accountability and sustained collaboration between ministries, departments, security and justice agencies, regional partners and the United Kingdom. Through the Security and Justice Transformation Programme, agencies will be better equipped to work together, develop their capabilities, and respond to the evolving threats and risks facing the Territory.

Partnership with the United Kingdom

The Security and Justice Transformation Programme will build on the strong and long-standing partnership between the Virgin Islands and the United Kingdom. The UK's commitment to working with all Overseas Territories to strengthen security and justice across the UK family is well established. The UK has already provided practical support, specialist expertise and targeted investment to help strengthen the Territory's security, law enforcement and criminal justice capabilities. A key element of this support was funding the independent HMICFRS review of law enforcement and criminal justice agencies, which provides a foundation for this Strategy and a roadmap for the development of the Territory's security and justice agencies.

The FCDO continues to fund several strands of support to the RVIPF, including specialist training and development opportunities for officers; crime-analysis and investigative support; targeted projects, including support for officer welfare; and improvements to communications, command and control systems. The FCDO also supports the maintenance of the police and intelligence database used by Overseas Territory law enforcement agencies to record and manage cases and share intelligence securely across jurisdictions. It has also funded security equipment, including four rigid-hulled inflatable boats for the Marine Police.

The UK Government is funding the introduction of a vetting programme for Police, Prison, Customs and Immigration officers. The programme is designed to strengthen integrity, accountability and public confidence across frontline enforcement agencies.

The UK Home Office is supporting the Virgin Islands to improve its cyber security. A Cyber Security Risk Review has been completed to identify vulnerabilities within the Territory's critical infrastructure⁶ and the Home Office is helping the Government to address these vulnerabilities, strengthen its cyber policies, manage cyber risks more effectively, and improve its ability to respond to cyber incidents.

The Home Office is also helping the Virgin Islands strengthen its resilience against illicit finance and wider organised crime threats, including by strengthening legislation and regulatory standards, enhancing financial crime intelligence, the use of beneficial ownership information and investigative capabilities, and building the Territory's ability to detect, deter and disrupt criminal activity.

The UK Defence Forces' primary role is to defend, protect, and enhance the resilience of the UK, its Overseas Territories, and Crown Dependencies.⁷ The Royal Navy has deployed vessels and personnel to the Caribbean to support the Overseas Territories during hurricane season.⁸ It has also supported the establishment of Territory Regiments to increase Territories' resilience and scope for mutual aid.

The UK Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has provided significant support to His Majesty's Prison (HMP) Balsam Ghut to improve prison safety, security and organisational resilience. This assistance has included mentoring and training for prison officers, leadership support and training, and the provision of specialist equipment and security enhancements, including lock and key replacement programmes, enhanced communications systems and upgraded identification and access-control measures.

Review and refresh

This Security Strategy provides a framework for strengthening the security of the Virgin Islands during 2027–2030. To ensure that it remains relevant, effective and aligned with emerging risks, priorities and operational realities, the Strategy will be reviewed formally each year. The review will assess progress against the strategic outcomes, consider changes in the security environment, evaluate lessons identified through implementation and determine whether updates to priority actions or governance arrangements are required.

⁶ [UK cyber experts enhance Virgin Islands' resilience | GOV.VG](#)

⁷ [Strategic Defence Review 2025 – Making Britain Safer: secure at home, strong abroad](#)

⁸ [Royal Navy warship bound for Caribbean mission and New Orleans visit](#)

This cyclical review process will help ensure that the Strategy continues to provide an effective basis for enhancing the Territory's security, resilience and public safety.