INDEPENDENCE ADDRESS BY THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE (AG.)

Mr. Trevor Bailey

On the Occasion of the 47th Anniversary of Independence of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
27 October 2026

National Theme: “Hand in Hand, Uplifting Our Nation”

Fellow Vincentians, at home and abroad,

As Saint Vincent and the Grenadines commemorates forty-seven years of political independence, I extend warm greetings and sincere congratulations to every citizen of our beloved nation, on behalf of the officers and other members of the Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force.

Independence is an occasion for celebration, but it also invites serious reflection upon the country we have inherited, the responsibilities we presently bear, and the future we intend to place in the hands of generations yet to come. Across our nation, there is a growing consciousness of the challenges before us. Questions concerning our security, economic prosperity, national character and collective direction occupy the minds of Vincentians from every walk of life. These are legitimate concerns, deserving of thoughtful engagement and decisive leadership.

We would do well, however, to remember the circumstances under which our independent nation first emerged. On October 27, 1979, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines assumed full responsibility for its political destiny, ending its constitutional association with the United Kingdom. Yet independence did not arrive in a season of international calm or domestic certainty. Barely six months earlier, La Soufrière had erupted, uprooting thousands of Vincentians from their homes, disrupting livelihoods and leaving entire communities to confront the difficult work of recovery. It was against this difficult backdrop that our forebears accepted the responsibility of nationhood.

They possessed neither the assurance of prosperity nor the luxury of knowing what the succeeding decades would bring. What they possessed was the conviction that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines deserved a future shaped by the industry, judgment and aspirations of its own people. The enormity of that undertaking should never be underestimated. Independence conferred upon us the authority to determine our national affairs, though it did not relieve us of hardship or settle every question accompanying statehood. Forty-seven years later, we remain engaged in that undertaking.

I remain convinced that the spirit that carried us into independence remains an active force in our national life today. It lives in the everyday dedication of our people, those who show up, step forward, and carry Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on their shoulders through every season of uncertainty. We have faced adversity in every form, yet our resolve as a nation has never faltered. That proven resilience is the bedrock of our security, the heart of our community, and the promise of our future.

Today, the international environment remains unsettled. Armed conflicts, economic pressures, technological developments, transnational criminal activity and climate change continue to influence small island developing states. While we value cooperation with regional neighbours and international partners, the central responsibility for the preservation and advancement of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines belongs to Vincentians.

As Commissioner of Police, I am particularly conscious of what that obligation demands of the institution I have the honour to lead. The history of the Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force reaches back to 1834. Throughout changing circumstances, our fundamental obligation has endured: to preserve the public peace, protect life and property, prevent and investigate crime, and uphold the law. That obligation acquires particular significance in an independent democracy, where police powers must be exercised faithfully, fairly, and strictly within the limits prescribed by law.

The Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force is presently undertaking important operational and administrative changes. We are strengthening intelligence-led policing, improving serious crime investigations, reinforcing supervision, and placing greater emphasis upon professional responsibility and public accountability. Our intention is to develop a Police Force that is resolute in enforcement, disciplined in the exercise of its powers, and deserving of public confidence.

We must also confront the very real anxieties surrounding serious crime and illegal firearms. Our response must be sustained, lawful and effective. Yet the preservation of public safety demands more than police intervention; it requires an active partnership with the people we serve. When citizens provide credible information, discourage violence, and support lawful efforts, they strengthen the foundations of effective policing.

To the young people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: you stand at a decisive point in our national development. I urge you to prepare yourselves conscientiously, value your education, develop useful skills, respect others, and resist unlawful conduct. Through our Police Youth Clubs, school engagements, and community initiatives, the Police Force will continue to support the development of responsible, confident and capable young citizens.

On this Independence anniversary, I pay special tribute to the men and women of the Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force across our mainland, the Grenadines, and specialised departments. Through long hours, difficult investigations, and emergency responses, you shoulder essential responsibilities, often away from public attention and at great personal sacrifice. I recognize these sacrifices, and I extend deep appreciation to your families, as well as acknowledgment to our retired officers and those who have passed on.

Fellow Vincentians, this year's national theme, “Hand in Hand, Uplifting Our Nation,” speaks directly to the responsibility before us. Political independence was achieved in 1979, but the full promise of nationhood remains a continuing responsibility. Forty-seven years ago, Vincentians accepted responsibility for a future they could not fully foresee, and we honour them most faithfully when we demonstrate an equal willingness to accept responsibility for the future now entrusted to us.

As Commissioner of Police, I reaffirm the commitment of the Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force to the preservation of peace, the protection of life, the defence of lawful freedom, and the continued improvement of our service to the public.

May the courage of those who came before us strengthen our resolve, may wisdom guide our leadership, and may the generations that follow inherit a safer, more prosperous, and more united Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

On behalf of the entire Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force, I wish every Vincentian, at home and abroad, a proud and meaningful 47th Independence Anniversary.

May Almighty God bless our people, preserve our peace, and continue to guide Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Happy Independence!

We care. We serve. We protect.