



ROYAL ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES POLICE FORCE

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PRESS RELEASE

**RSVGPF LEADERSHIP OUTLINES COORDINATED RESPONSE TO GUN
VIOLENCE**

ACP Brenton Smith assumes responsibility for Crime as the Force strengthens intelligence-led operations, firearm interdiction, investigations and accountability

August 20, 2026 - Kingstown: The leadership of the Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force (RSVGPF) today outlined a strengthened, coordinated and intelligence-led response to gun violence, illegal firearms and serious crime during a press conference held at the Police Conference Room, Central Police Station. The conference was attended by media partners and carried live to the public through online streaming and radio.

Acting Commissioner of Police Mr. Trevor Bailey, Acting Deputy Commissioner of Police Mr. Junior O. Simmons and Assistant Commissioner of Police (Ag.) Mr. Brenton Smith addressed the public's concern surrounding recent acts of gun violence and detailed the leadership, operational, investigative and accountability measures being implemented by the Force. Central to those measures is the assignment of ACP Smith to responsibility for Crime, with strategic oversight of the RSVGPF's crime-fighting efforts.

Under the strengthened command structure, Acting Commissioner Bailey will establish the Force's strategic direction; Acting Deputy Commissioner Simmons will ensure that the strategy is converted into coordinated, sustained and effective policing; and ACP Smith will lead the Crime portfolio, with immediate priorities covering intelligence, illegal firearms, investigations, accountability and the management and support of police personnel.

Acting Commissioner Bailey acknowledged the fear, grief and wider social harm caused by shootings, particularly the lasting effects on victims, families and communities. He made clear that the illegal possession and discharge of firearms, the taking of human life and the disruption of community safety will be met with a determined and lawful institutional response.

"We will not normalize gun violence," the Acting Commissioner declared.

The strengthened response will include the more effective collection and use of intelligence, targeted operations, professional investigations, increased police visibility, firearm interdiction, stronger supervision, interdepartmental cooperation and sustained engagement with communities.

Acting Commissioner Bailey emphasized that responsibility for crime fighting does not rest with one department or a small group of investigators. Commanders, investigators, supervisors and frontline officers must each accept responsibility for carrying out the Force's mandate to prevent and detect crime, protect life and property, preserve public order, investigate offences professionally and place suspects before the courts where the evidence supports charges.

He further stressed that operational effectiveness cannot be separated from lawful and professional conduct.

"Effective policing and professional policing must go together," Acting Commissioner Bailey said.

The public was encouraged to assess the seriousness of the Force's commitments by the work, accountability and results that follow the press conference.

Acting Deputy Commissioner Simmons will be responsible for ensuring that the Commissioner's strategic direction is translated into vigorous, coordinated and sustained policing on the ground.

Operations will be guided by assessed intelligence, crime patterns and identified risks. Police resources will be directed strategically, including through targeted operations, lawful searches, the execution of warrants, checkpoints and increased patrols where circumstances justify such

measures. The objective is to intervene before further violence occurs, rather than responding only after lives have been lost.

“Our objective is not simply to respond to crime. Our objective is to prevent crime, protect lives, restore confidence and make our communities safer,” Acting Deputy Commissioner Simmons said.

The operational approach will require stronger intelligence sharing among the Criminal Investigations Department, Major Crimes Unit, Special Branch, Traffic Branch, police divisions, operational units and other relevant agencies. Cooperation will also be strengthened with local, regional and international law-enforcement partners and with the Financial Intelligence Unit, Customs and Excise Department, Immigration Department, port and airport authorities and other agencies whose functions can contribute to disrupting serious criminal activity.

Community policing will remain central to the response. Divisional commanders, non-commissioned officers and frontline personnel are expected to maintain meaningful engagement within the communities they serve. Preventive initiatives involving schools, Police Youth Clubs, mentorship and other community programmes will also be used to reach young people before conflicts, criminal influence and harmful choices escalate into violence.

Acting Deputy Commissioner Simmons made clear that vigorous policing does not mean indiscriminate policing. Officers are expected to exercise their powers lawfully, fairly and professionally, while respecting human rights and the dignity of every person.

He also called for responsible and accurate media reporting that informs the public without compromising investigations or unnecessarily exposing victims and witnesses. The RSVGPF will continue providing timely and accurate information when investigative and operational considerations permit.

Accepting responsibility for Crime, ACP Smith placed the human consequences of violence at the centre of the Force’s programme. He emphasized that the objective cannot be limited to reducing figures on a report. Every shooting can leave a person dead or injured, a family grieving, children without support and an entire community feeling unsafe.

“Our responsibility is to save lives,” ACP Smith said.

He announced five immediate priorities for the Crime portfolio:

Intelligence: The Force will work to identify the persons, conflicts, locations, firearm movements and criminal relationships contributing to gun violence. Assessed intelligence must be shared appropriately and converted into timely, lawful operational or investigative action.

Illegal firearms: Greater emphasis will be placed on locating and recovering illegal firearms and ammunition, tracing their origins where possible and using ballistic evidence to determine whether recovered weapons may be connected to other criminal activity.

Investigations: Structured reviews will be conducted into outstanding homicide and firearm-related investigations. These reviews will identify incomplete enquiries, overlooked investigative opportunities and areas in which fuller use can be made of forensic and ballistic evidence.

Accountability: Regular crime briefings, defined operational objectives and timely investigative updates will be required. Strategies and deployments will be reviewed against available intelligence, crime patterns and results, and adjustments will be made when existing approaches are not producing the required effect.

Police personnel: Officers must be appropriately deployed, trained, supervised, equipped and supported. The Force will seek to ensure that personnel with the appropriate experience, competence and responsibilities are assigned where they can contribute most effectively.

ACP Smith emphasized that major investigations are organisational priorities. Investigators handling homicides, shootings and other serious offences must not be left isolated or expected to carry the full institutional burden without appropriate supervision, information and support.

Effective cooperation is therefore required across CID, Major Crimes, Traffic, the Special Services Unit, Coast Guard, Narcotics, Immigration, Telecommunications, Administration, rural police stations and every other department. Unnecessary departmental barriers, territorialism and the withholding of useful information cannot be allowed to weaken the Force's response or place lives at further risk.

The leadership of the RSVGPF also issued a clear message to members of the Force: crime fighting is the responsibility of the entire organisation.

Leadership at every level must be accompanied by accountability. Officers who perform their duties professionally, lawfully and courageously will receive the support of the Force's leadership. At the same time, misconduct, corruption, compromised investigations, misuse of official information and abuse of authority undermine public confidence and cannot coexist with effective policing.

Every officer, regardless of department or rank, is expected to contribute to the same public-safety objective. The Force must remain firm in the execution of its duties, disciplined in its conduct, lawful in its methods and respectful in its treatment of the public.

ACP Smith cautioned young people against the false sense of status associated with firearms and violence. Carrying a firearm does not create genuine power, and taking a life does not earn respect. Retaliation and temporary disputes can permanently destroy lives, families and futures. Seeking help, resolving conflict peacefully and walking away from violence are acts of strength.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to remain attentive to changes in behaviour, know the company their children keep and refuse to allow homes, vehicles or other property to be used to conceal firearms or support violent activity.

Community information can prevent a shooting and save a life. Persons with information concerning illegal firearms, planned retaliation, shootings, firearm trafficking or other serious offences are encouraged to contact the police through verified official or confidential reporting channels. Information received will be handled responsibly and in accordance with appropriate investigative procedures.

Businesses, schools, churches, civil-society organisations, community leaders, young people and media partners are also encouraged to participate responsibly in the national effort to prevent violence and strengthen community safety. Public cooperation is essential, but it complements rather than replaces the responsibility of the Police Force.

The RSVGPF will use every lawful investigative and enforcement measure available to identify persons reasonably suspected of involvement in shootings, illegal firearm possession, firearm trafficking or the facilitation of violent crime. Investigations will remain evidence-based and subject to the law and established legal safeguards, including the presumption of innocence.

Where the evidence supports charges, suspects will be placed before the courts.

The leadership of the RSVGPF affirmed that gun violence will not be permitted to define Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The strengthened response is not intended as a temporary operation. Intelligence, investigations, strategies and deployments will be continuously evaluated against crime patterns and measurable results.

The Force accepts its responsibility to protect life, uphold the law and pursue justice professionally. It asks the public to cooperate, but it also accepts that public confidence must be earned through disciplined conduct, lawful policing, accountability and sustained action. The RSVGPF remains united in its resolve to protect communities, support victims, prevent further loss of life and help ensure justice for all.

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