



ROYAL ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES POLICE FORCE

Public Relations and Complaints Department

P.O. Box 835

Kingstown

Tel: (1-784) 485-6891 or (1-784) 485-6697 Fax: (1-784) 456-2816

E-mail: relations.complaints@gmail.com

Your Reference:

October 20, 2021

PRESS RELEASE

COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, MR. COLIN JOHN'S INDEPENDENCE

MESSAGE 2021

Independence Message – 2021

Commissioner of Police, Mr. Colin John

“TRIUMPH THROUGH THE CHANGING SCENES”

My fellow Vincentians – here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) and in the Diaspora. As we mark the occasion of our forty-second (42nd) year of Independence, I extend warmest greetings to you on behalf of the members of the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force (RSVGPF) and its auxiliaries. The commemoration of our National Independence evokes pride and joy in our country. It is a time when we reflect on where we came from; where we are, and where we are heading as a developing nation.

Ladies and gentlemen, 2021 has been a very challenging year for the members of the RSVGPF. The year began with the advent of the COVID-19 global pandemic. This occurrence has adversely affected and is still affecting every community in SVG. It also brought about new duties where police offices have constantly been on the frontlines enforcing the COVID-19 protocols, both on land and sea.

Then in April, we witnessed the explosive eruption of the La Soufriere Volcano- which occasioned the relocation of over 20,000 persons from their homes in the Red Zones. And once again, as the primary law enforcement agency in SVG, the RSVGPF and the Coast Guard rose to the occasion and successfully (with other stakeholders) spearheaded security, safety, and the transportation of those who were affected to the Green Zones.

Then in July, three (3) police stations – namely, Owia, Sandy Bay, and Georgetown sustained damage to their roofs and windows as a result of Hurricane Elsa.

While these occurrences were very overwhelming, they brought out the best in many of us including members of the Constabulary. It allowed us to showcase the leadership skills that exist in the police force at various levels. Never before since 1979 have the resources and the resolve of the police force been this tested. But with the help of the almighty God and civic-minded Vincentians, the RSVGPF has managed to surmount the seemingly unsurmountable.

The police regulations inform that the primary function of the police is to prevent crimes. While we took an oath to protect and safeguard the lives and properties of every citizen, preventing our citizens from becoming victims of crimes surpasses every other duty. To this end, the Police High Command continues to invest heavily in training and retooling our officers so that they can effectively discharge their duties.

To enhance their skill-set, officers were trained in the following areas locally and virtually: Fingerprinting, Investigation of Sexual Offences, Basic Seamanship, Cybercrimes, Human Trafficking, and Human Smuggling, Anti-Gang Investigations, Tactical Safety, and Planning, Port Security Management Crisis and Incident Management, Incident Command System, Emotional Intelligence, Strategic Leadership and Management, Child Abuse, Intelligence Management, and Drug Investigations among others.

Moreover, in 2021, the RSVGPF recruited and trained 76 officers to assist in the execution of the force's mission. These officers have been deployed all over SVG to serve the public.

Fellow Vincentians, societies everywhere contend with the issue of crime every day. This phenomenon has existed since the beginning of civilization. While we would wish that there are no occurrences of crime in our communities, this remains an aspiration. What the RSVGPF has done with some success is to 'manage' the

crime situation so that it would not escalate to uncontrollable levels. I am therefore pleased to announce a 22.5% reduction in crimes generally for the period January to September 2021, compared to the same period in 2020. A total of 3969 Crimes were reported to the police in 2020 while 3076 were reported in 2021.

For this, I wish to thank and congratulate the hard-working men and women of the RSVGPF who go above and beyond the call of duty to engender peace and security in our blessed land. Equally, I commend the law-abiding citizens who continue to cooperate with the police on matters of law enforcement and community policing. Permit me also to thank all of our partners who continue to donate and contribute to the well-being and development of the RSVGPF. We appreciate your generosity.

Ladies and gentlemen, COVID-19 is real. The pandemic has affected us negatively and changed our way of life. At the time of writing this message, there were 1643 active COVID-19 cases and 54 deaths. Families have been devastated as a result of the loss of their loved ones from this deadly disease. The RSVGPF was no exception. I urge all Vincentians to comply with the COVID-19 protocols. They can save your life and others.

It would be remiss of me not to commend all of the organizations and frontline workers who have been battling COVID-19 from its inception. The situation could have been worse without you.

Sadly, the RSVGPF has lost three (3) police officers so far in 2021; the Late Sgt. 569 Lawrence Thomas, Cpl. 584 Keith Matthews and Constable 702 Delano Robertsons. They were excellent police officers and their deaths brought along profound sadness to their families (including the police) and their friends. Once again, on the behalf of the members of the RSVGPF, I extend the deepest condolence to the families of officers Thomas, Matthews, and Robertson. May their souls rest in Peace.

Fellow Vincentians, on Independence Day, I encourage you to use the precious time to do some quiet reflection and introspection. Despite the challenges, we still triumphed and came out stronger than before. Happy Independence! May God's perpetual blessings continue to fall on St. Vincent and the Grenadines.