

Press Release For Immediate Release

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BVITB CHAIRMAN ENCOURAGES RESIDENTS TO WORK WITH RVIPF TO PREVENT CRIME IN THE BVI

Road Town, Tortola, February 3 – Chairman of the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board, Myron Walwyn is encouraging the Territory to work with the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force (RVIPF) to help to deter criminal activity in the BVI.

The Chairman's concerns come after another cruise line has pulled out of neighbouring destination, Antigua. Star Clipper Cruise Line announced on January 29, that they would no longer be stopping at the island after a 29-year-old cruiser from San Francisco was murdered on that island. In early October 2009 Carnival Cruise Line announced that in January 2010, they would no longer come to port in Antigua after six passengers were detained following an argument over taxi charges. Just yesterday, two elderly tourists were also beaten during a robbery in Antigua.

"In the BVI we must realise the significant role tourism plays in our every day lives," warned Walwyn. "It is the livelihood of thousands of residents and can be damaged if travellers feel it is no longer safe to visit our shores. Walwyn added, "We have had a small dose of tourists being attacked and robbed, as was the case with two Americans in January, but such behaviour must be prohibited. If we are unable to control crime in our destination, then we will lose the investment that Government and the people of the Territory have made in this industry."

Walwyn said the Board has had to get involve with incidences of assault on tourists but is now taking a proactive approach to not only protect tourists,



but to make the Territory safer for all residents and deter persons wishing to partake in criminal activity. "We have joined efforts with the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force to evaluate the safety of popular sites around town. This will also be done for popular spots on our Sister Islands and other villages around Tortola."

Staff of the Tourist Board and RVIPF have been working together to present proposals to the business community and Government on the concept of designing out crime; finding ways to improve security features on properties. This includes better lighting of public places as well as the use of close circuit cameras for the detection of criminal activity as well as a deterrent.

Throughout the region, increased crime threatens the economies of major tourism destinations. Despite St. Lucia's Minister of Tourism initiating talks with the cruise line, in mid January, Norwegian Cruise warned it would take the island off its schedules from 2011 onward if crimes against cruise passengers do not decrease. Since 2005 the Bahamas has seen a reduction of cruise lines coming into the main city of Nassau for on-island excursions due to an increase in crimes around popular tourist sites. Since 2008 four tourists have been murdered on the island nation of Antigua, including last month's incident. For three of the murders, Antiguan authorities believe robbery was the motive. In 2005 Aruba came under heavy scrutiny after an American teenager disappeared. The island's tourism product remains haunted by the international media frenzy surrounding the incident.

Noting the effect of increased crime on islands around the Caribbean, Walwyn concluded, "Ensuring that the BVI is as safe for residents as it is for tourists is the responsibility of our entire community. It is not something the police can do alone. Maintaining safety for residents and tourists is something we all have a stake in."

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Note to Editors:

Please find attached a photograph of BVI Tourist Board Chairman, Myron Walwyn.