

For Immediate Release

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BVITB AND RVIPF WORK TO IMPROVE SECURITY IN ROAD TOWN

Road Town, Tortola, January 25 – The British Virgin Islands Tourist Board (BVITB) and Royal Virgin Islands Police Force (RVIPF) have teamed up to review security conditions around popular sites in Road Town.

Last Monday evening the group met for a foot patrol to survey the nighttime security conditions along the route of Bobby's Supermarket to Village Cay, the cruise ship pier and along Waterfront Drive and Main Street. In a recent meeting the group came up with a number of strategies to improve security not just for tourists but also for residents.

Acting Director of the Tourist Board Hadassah Ward said the Territory has changed over the years and it is important that tourists understand this. "Over 70% of our visitors are repeat visitors to the Territory. Though you will find crime in all destinations, as our Territory develops we need to educate new and returning visitors of potential risks but also work on environmental and policing measures to reduce the opportunities for crime to occur."

"Some of the improvements we are looking at should benefit everyone that lives or vacations in the BVI. We will be looking at improving the lighting in parking lots, travel/walking routes and around ATMs, having hedges trimmed regularly to discourage pockets of dark areas around buildings and walkways as well as working with the police to increase their night patrols," says Ms Ward.

Superintendent Roy Stoutt, who is also present at the meeting, echoed the need for more practical, immediate ways for improving security in Road Town. "We need to look at reducing the chances of anyone becoming victims



to crime. We put our heads together and came up with some practical ways in which to do so," the Superintendent added.

The Board's Visitor Support Services (VSS) Coordinator, Albert Wheatley said the element of safety of visitors is becoming increasingly important to the Territory and its tourism product. "A number of cases that I've had to assist with involved visitors being robbed or assaulted. We have to do our part to ensure we provide information to tourists about safety and let them know the same cautionary tactics they use in their home countries should also be used while on vacation. As a Territory we also have the responsibility to do what we can to ensure all residents and visitors feel safer. Safety while vacationing is fast becoming a priority for potential visitors and the destination that makes visitor safety a priority will very well be their destination of choice."

BVITB and RVIPF plans to further team up with agencies such as Public Works Department, Town and Country Planning, the Chamber of Commerce and Hotel Association as well as tourism based businesses to find ways of working together to achieve its main objectives. A comprehensive approach is planned to address this matter, as similar activities will be done to include all Sister Islands and other popular areas of Tortola.

The British Virgin Islands Tourist Board is responsible for marketing the Territory to international travelers. Annually over 800,000 travelers visit the Territory. VSS is designed to assist travellers to our islands that may experience a crisis such as a loss of life, hospitalisation, or criminal assaults while vacationing.

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Note to Editors:

Caption for attached image: The British Virgin Islands Tourist Board and Royal Virgin Islands Police Force representatives meet to survey security issues around popular sites in Road Town. (photo courtesy BVITB/S. Barnes)