

Federal Law Enforcement Adopts New Procedures for Handling Illegal Immigrants

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St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands – As of today, federal law enforcement agencies in the Virgin Islands have standardized procedures for the interdiction, investigation and prosecution of illegal immigrants. The new agreement was announced during a signing ceremony today in the Office of the U.S. Attorney in St. Thomas, USVI.

The Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG) Migrant Smuggling Prosecution Operating Procedures provide detailed guidelines with respect to detection, identification and investigation of offenses, processing arrests, detention, evidence gathering, suspect and witness disposition, and other procedures applicable to the prosecution of alien smuggling, illegal reentry and related offenses. CBIG was created in July 2006 to unify law enforcement efforts to protect Puerto Rico against illegal maritime traffic and control of their borders.

“This unified approach has proven successful in Puerto Rico and we expect to have the same success here in the Virgin Islands,” United States Attorney Ronald Sharpe said. In the Western Corridor of Puerto Rico, the flow of illegal immigrants has decreased nearly 80 percent over the past three years.

Members of CBIG include the Customs and Border Protection’s Office of Border Patrol, Office of Air & Marine, and the Office of Field Operations, the U.S. Coast Guard, National Park Service, U.S. Marshals Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the United States Attorney’s Office.

CBIG partners hope to create a structured interagency plan of action that aids in the prosecution of suspected smugglers and the expedited removal of undocumented aliens. Immigrants typically come from Haiti, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, China, Colombia, Dominica and Jordan.

Through the safe utilization and effective coordination of assets from CBIG partners, the program is expected to strengthen law enforcement efforts in preventing and deterring illegal immigration in the Virgin Islands.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.

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