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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**U.S. ATTORNEY SAYS FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT CONTINUES TO
ADDRESS FEDERAL GUN CRIMES IN TERRITORY**

Federal law enforcement is continuing to address federal crimes in the U.S. Virgin Islands, including crimes involving firearms, U.S. Attorney Paul A. Murphy announced today.

“I have met with the Governor and with the V.I. Attorney General on numerous occasions over the last several months, and we are making every effort to resolve the issues surrounding the departure of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) from the territory,” Murphy said. “I had many meetings with former Police Commissioner James McCall and have spoken with Acting Commissioner Novelle Francis on this topic.”

Murphy said the U.S. Marshals Service is assisting with the investigation and prosecution of some of the firearms cases which were previously handled by ATF, including some cases which originated with the Virgin Islands Police Department. ATF agents also are providing support to cases which were charged prior to their departure.

“ATF’s return to the District of the Virgin Islands is a priority that is being discussed with officials in Washington, D.C.,” Murphy said.

Along with the U.S. Marshals Service, other federal agencies are continuing to investigate federal offenses in which firearms are involved, Murphy said. Murphy also pointed to Customs and Border Protection, which recently conducted a two-month interdiction program to help prevent the importation of firearms, drugs, and other contraband in containers into the U.S. Virgin Islands. That operation resulted in the search of approximately 2,600 containers.

Federal law enforcement agencies also are continuing to work with the Virgin Islands Police Department. “There are good and faithful police officers in the Virgin Islands Police Department and we are continuing to engage in some joint operations with them,” Murphy said.