GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

# PRESS RELEASE

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# Personal Safety and Collective Action Highlights for Domestic Violence Month

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The Office of Gender Affairs (OGA), in collaboration with community partners, observed Domestic Violence Awareness Month through a series of activities aimed at promoting personal safety, increasing public awareness and encouraging collective action to end domestic violence.

Among the month's activities were free self-defence classes for women and men, radio awareness programmes and a community march highlighting the importance of building safe, respectful and supportive communities.

The Office of Gender Affairs partnered with Women in Need (WINBVI) to host two self-defence sessions at Boynes Taekwondo Academy.

The individual sessions were well supported by females on 3 October 2026, and males on 17 October 2026. Participants were introduced to practical self-defence techniques designed to strengthen confidence and improve personal safety awareness.

As part of the sessions, Acting Sergeant Jemron Delplesche of the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force delivered presentations on the lawful use of self-defense tools and the legal considerations associated with personal protection.

In addition to the practical sessions, OGA and WINBVI collaborated on a Radio Almanac series on ZBVI Radio. The series formed part of ongoing efforts to share information, encourage dialogue and reinforce the importance of recognising and addressing domestic violence.

The month's activities cumulated with a community march on Friday, 30 October 2026, which brought the community together in a visible demonstration of solidarity and a shared commitment to ending domestic violence.

The Office of Gender Affairs continues to emphasise that addressing domestic violence requires more than awareness during a designated month. It calls for sustained community involvement, access to support, education and a collective commitment to fostering relationships and environments where persons feel safe and respected.

The Office extends appreciation to WINBVI, the Family Support Network (FSN), the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force, the Social Development Department and all participants and partners who supported the month's awareness activities.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development remains committed to supporting initiatives that promote personal safety, strengthen community awareness and contribute to the prevention of domestic violence throughout the Virgin Islands.

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