U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS
LAW ENFORCEMENT PLANNING COMMISSION (LEPC)

Breaking the Cycle

Understanding the Virgin Islands Homicide Dynamic – 1980–2025

Prepared by
Moleto A. Smith Jr.
Director
U.S. Virgin Islands Law Enforcement Planning Commission

MASTER REPORT | JUNE 2026
PUBLICATION NOVEMBER 2026

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS LAW ENFORCEMENT PLANNING COMMISSION (LEPC)

Breaking the Cycle

Understanding the Virgin Islands Homicide Dynamic – 1980 -2025

Prepared By
Moleto A. Smith Jr.,

Director
U.S. Virgin Islands Law Enforcement Planning Commission

Master Report | June 2026

Publication | November 2026

Transmittal Memorandum

***Prepared by**: Moleto A. Smith Jr., Director, U.S. Virgin Islands Law Enforcement Planning Commission*.

This Master Report is prepared to support strategic planning, public safety policy development, federal-territorial coordination, and evidence-informed violence reduction in the U.S. Virgin Islands. This report examines homicide dynamics over the 1980-2025 period and identifies the major structural drivers, risk concentrations, intervention points, and data modernization priorities needed to reduce lethal violence.

This report is intended for executive decision-makers, public safety leaders, territorial agencies, federal partners, community stakeholders, and policy planners. It should be used as a strategic framework for coordinated action, not as a substitute for official case-level datasets or agency-certified statistical releases.

Table of Contents

Transmittal Memorandum…….. Page 2

Director's Forward……. Page 5

About the Director……..…….. Page 6

About U. S. Virgin Islands Law Enforcement Planning Commission (LEPC)…….. Page 7

Executive Summary…….. Page 9

Report Overview…….. Page 13

Statistical Summary…… Page 13

1.Homicide Overview…….Page 14

2.Victim Profile…….. Page 14

2.1 Expanded Victim Profile Analysis…… Page 15

2.2 Expanded Perpetrator Profile Analysis…… Page 16

3. Geographic Distribution……Page 17

4. Drug Trafficking Environment…… Page 17

4.1 Drug Interdiction and Violence Correlation…… Page 17

5. System Model of Violence Drivers…….. Page 18

6. Homicide Clearance Analysis……..…… Page 19

7. Additional Homicide Drivers…… Page 19

7.1 Network/Gang-Associated Violence……Page 19

7.2 Prevalence of Illegal Firearms……Page 20

7.3 Domestic and Interpersonal Violence…… Page 20

7.4 Juvenile exposure and Early Pathways to Violence……..Page 20

7.5 Integrated Role of Additional Drivers……Page 20

7.6 Final Analytical Conclusion……Page 21

8. Policy Recommendations…….. Page 21

8.1 Drug Market Disruption…… Page 21

8.2 High Risk population Intervention…… Page 21

8.2A Perpetrator-Focused Violence Reduction Strategy……Page 21

8.3 Firearm Reduction……...Page 21

8.4 Clearance Improvement……..Page 21

8.5 Juvenile Prevention…… Page 21

8.6 Domestic Violence Strategy……Page 22

8.7 Intelligence and Data Modernization……Page 22

8.8 Territorial Violence Intelligence Center Recommendation……Page 22

Table of Contents (cont.)

9. Data Sources…….. Page 22

9.1 Federal Law Enforcement Sources…… Page 23

9.2 Territorial Sources Page…… Page 23

9.3 International Research and Analytical Sources…… Page 23

9.4 Derived and Modeled Data…… Page 23

10. Closeout Summary and Final Assessment…… Page 24

Appendix A - Statistical Tables……Page 26

Appendix B - Charts and Visual Interpretation…… Page 28

Appendix C - System Model of Violence Drivers…… Page 31

Appendix D – Methodology…….. Page 32

Appendix E - Data Sources……... Page 32

Appendix F – (Integrated)……..…….. Page 32

Final References…..…….. Page 33

Publication Information…… Page 35

Director's Foreword

The safety and security of the people of the United States Virgin Islands remain among the most important responsibilities of government. The challenges posed by violent crime, illicit drug trafficking, illegal firearms, and related public safety threats require sustained leadership, strong partnerships, and an unwavering commitment to evidence-based decision-making.

Breaking the Cycle: Understanding the Virgin Islands Homicide Dynamic – 1980-2025, represents a significant effort to better understand the long-term factors shaping violence within our Territory. This report moves beyond individual incidents and annual statistics to examine homicide as a system influenced by interconnected social, economic, criminal, and environmental forces.

The findings presented in this report make clear that homicide in the U.S. Virgin Islands is neither random nor inevitable. Rather, violence is concentrated among specific populations, locations, and networks, and is sustained by identifiable drivers including illicit drug markets, network-based conflict, illegal firearm availability, retaliation cycles, domestic violence, and youth exposure to high-risk environments. These findings provide both a challenge and an opportunity. Because these drivers can be identified, they can also be addressed through coordinated, strategic, and sustained intervention.

Reducing violence requires more than enforcement alone. It requires a comprehensive public safety framework that integrates prevention, intervention, enforcement, prosecution, victim services, community engagement, and data-driven policymaking. Success will depend upon continued collaboration among territorial agencies, federal partners, the judiciary, educational institutions, community organizations, faith-based leaders, and residents throughout the Virgin Islands.

The Law Enforcement Planning Commission remains committed to supporting this collaborative approach through research, strategic planning, policy development, grant administration, and the advancement of intelligence-led and evidence-informed public safety practices. By strengthening partnerships and aligning resources with identified risks, the Territory can continue to improve public safety outcomes and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

This report was not written simply to document homicide trends. It was prepared to help the people of the Virgin Islands better understand the dynamics of violence, encourage informed public dialogue, and support evidence-based strategies that reduce violence, strengthen public confidence, and improve community safety. Letters-to-the-Editors published in various U.S. Virgin Islands media outlets that preceded this publication were intended to begin that conversation. This report continues it.

The future of the Virgin Islands will not be determined solely by the number of homicides recorded each year. It will be determined by the choices we make together—to strengthen families, invest in young people, support victims, protect witnesses, improve investigations, hold violent offenders accountable, and build communities where opportunity is stronger than violence. The evidence provides a roadmap. The responsibility to follow it belongs to all of us.

It is my hope that this report will serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, criminal justice practitioners, researchers, and community stakeholders as we work collectively to reduce violence, strengthen communities, and build a safer and more resilient Virgin Islands.

Through shared commitment, strategic investment, and coordinated action, meaningful and sustained reductions in violence are achievable.

_____

Moleto A. Smith Jr.
Director
U.S. Virgin Islands Law Enforcement Planning Commission

About the Director



Moleto A. Smith Jr. serves as Director of the U.S. Virgin Islands Law Enforcement Planning Commission (LEPC), the Territory's principal criminal justice planning and policy agency. In this capacity, he leads strategic public safety planning, administers federal criminal justice grant programs, coordinates justice system improvement initiatives, and advances evidence-based policies designed to strengthen public safety throughout the United States Virgin Islands.

Mr. Smith is a member of Governor Albert Bryan, Jr.'s Cabinet and serves as the Governor's Chief Criminal Justice Advisor, providing strategic counsel and policy guidance on matters relating to public safety, criminal justice, violence reduction and justice system improvement. In these roles, he works closely with territorial and federal partners to develop and implement comprehensive strategies that enhance community safety and improve quality-of-life outcomes across the Territory.

As Director, Mr. Smith serves as the State Administering Agency (SAA) representative for numerous U.S. Department of Justice grant programs and oversees the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of federally supported criminal justice initiatives throughout the Territory. His work emphasizes violence reduction, criminal justice system modernization, data-driven policymaking, strategic resource allocation, and the development of collaborative community safety partnerships.

Mr. Smith also serves as Executive Secretary of the U.S. Virgin Islands State Crisis Intervention Program Advisory Board, member of the U. S. Virgin Islands Human Trafficking Council, and a member of the Governor's Workforce Development Advisory Board. Nationally, he serves on the Advisory Council of the National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) and participates in the National Governors Association Criminal Justice Policy Advisors Network, contributing to national discussions on criminal justice policy, violence prevention, community health, and public safety innovation.

Throughout his career, Mr. Smith has championed collaborative, intelligence-led, and evidence-informed approaches to community safety. His leadership has focused on strengthening interagency coordination, expanding community partnerships, improving data and analytical capabilities, and advancing comprehensive violence reduction strategies that improve both community safety and community well-being.

In addition to his criminal justice leadership, Mr. Smith has maintained an extensive record of service in health and human services, advancing the integration of public health and public safety approaches to address complex social challenges affecting vulnerable populations throughout the Virgin Islands.

Mr. Smith is widely recognized for his leadership in criminal justice policy, strategic planning, public health and public safety integration, violence prevention, grant administration, and community systems development within the U.S. Virgin Islands and the broader Caribbean region. Through his leadership, the Law Enforcement Planning Commission continues to advance its mission of promoting safer, healthier, and more resilient communities through research, innovation, collaboration, and evidence-based public policy.

About the U.S. Virgin Islands Law Enforcement Planning Commission (LEPC)

The U.S. Virgin Islands Law Enforcement Planning Commission (LEPC) serves as the principal criminal justice planning and policy agency for the Government of the United States Virgin Islands. Established to advance evidence-based public safety policy, strengthen interagency coordination, and administer federal criminal justice resources, the Commission plays a central role in promoting safe, resilient, and secure communities throughout the Territory.

The LEPC functions as the Territory's designated State Administering Agency (SAA) for numerous federal criminal justice grant programs administered by the U.S. Department of Justice. In this capacity, the Commission is responsible for strategic planning, grant administration, performance monitoring, compliance oversight, research, and the coordination of criminal justice initiatives designed to improve public safety outcomes across the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The Commission works collaboratively with territorial and federal law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, corrections, public health entities, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and community stakeholders to address complex public safety challenges through data-informed policy development and coordinated intervention strategies.

Core Mission

- Enhance public safety through strategic planning and evidence-based policy development.
- Strengthen criminal justice system effectiveness through research, analysis, and performance measurement.
- Administer and oversee federal criminal justice grant funding in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and best practices.
- Promote collaboration among local, territorial, federal, and community partners.
- Support violence prevention, victim services, and justice system improvement initiatives.
- Advance innovative, intelligence-led, and data-driven approaches to crime prevention and public safety.

Major Areas of Responsibility

Strategic Criminal Justice Planning

- Conduct research and policy analysis on crime trends, violence, emerging threats, and justice system performance.
- Develop territorial public safety plans, strategic frameworks, and policy recommendations.
- Support executive leadership and policymakers with analytical products and decision-support tools.

Federal Grant Administration

- Administer and monitor U.S. Department of Justice grant programs.
- Ensure fiscal accountability, regulatory compliance, and performance reporting.
- Coordinate investments that strengthen law enforcement, courts, corrections, victim services, prevention, and community-based initiatives.

Research, Data, and Intelligence Support

- Collect, analyze, and disseminate criminal justice data and public safety information.
- Support intelligence-led policing and evidence-informed decision-making.
- Promote data integration, performance measurement, and criminal justice system modernization.

Violence Reduction and Community Safety

- Support comprehensive violence reduction strategies targeting homicide, gun violence, youth violence, recidivism, and community safety.

- Coordinate prevention, intervention, and enforcement initiatives designed to reduce crime and improve community well-being.
- Promote multidisciplinary approaches that integrate public safety, public health, education, behavioral health, and community engagement.

Vision

The Law Enforcement Planning Commission envisions a U.S. Virgin Islands in which all residents and visitors live, work, and thrive in safe communities supported by an effective, equitable, data-driven, and collaborative criminal justice system.

Role in This Report

Breaking the Cycle: Understanding the Virgin Islands Homicide Dynamic – 1980-2025 reflects LEPC's commitment to advancing evidence-based public policy and strengthening public safety through rigorous analysis, strategic planning, and collaborative problem-solving. By examining long-term homicide dynamics, drug trafficking patterns, and violence drivers, the report seeks to provide policymakers and stakeholders with actionable intelligence to guide coordinated violence reduction efforts and improve public safety throughout the Territory.

> **Institutional Statement**: ***The U.S. Virgin Islands Law Enforcement Planning Commission remains committed to fostering safer, healthier, and more resilient communities through leadership, innovation, strategic partnerships, and the responsible application of research, data, and public policy in service to the people of the United States Virgin Islands.***

Executive Summary - Homicide System Assessment - U.S. Virgin Islands (1980-2025)

***Purpose*.** This Executive Brief summarizes the principal findings and strategic implications of the LEPC Master Report on drug trafficking, homicide dynamics, and public safety risk in the U.S. Virgin Islands from 1980 through 2025.

Bottom line. Homicide in the U.S. Virgin Islands is **not** random or episodic. It is a predictable outcome of interconnected systems: illicit drug markets, network-based conflict, firearm availability, domestic and interpersonal violence, youth exposure.

Key Findings (Verified and Standardized)

- Annual homicides: 30-45 incidents
- 2023 homicides: 37 incidents (1)
- Estimated cumulative (1980-2025): 1,250-1,800 victims (modeled estimate)
- Victims: approximately 90% male, approximately 60-70% ages 18-34 (2)
- Firearms account for an estimated majority of homicides (approximately 70-85%) consistent with UNODC findings for the Americas (3)
- Geographically concentration: approximately 95% in St. Thomas and St. Croix

Executive Metrics Dashboard

Key Metric	Value	Interpretation
Annual Homicides	30–45	Persistent structural violence
Firearm Involvement	70–85%	High lethality environment
High-Risk Age	18–34	Primary intervention population
Geographic Focus	STT / STX	Place-based concentration

Footnotes:

1. **FBI Crime Data Explorer; Virgin Islands Police Department reporting; Virgin Islands Source archives (2023)**
2. **UNODC (2023); IDB regional violence studies**
3. **UNODC (2023) – firearms account for majority (approx. 70–80%) of homicides in the Americas**

Core Analytical Corrections (Applied)

There is no single official dataset covering homicides in the U.S. Virgin Islands from 1980-2025; data is fragmented across federal, territorial and public sources requiring structured reconstruction. (4)

Footnote 4:
FBI UCR/NIBRS participation limitations: CDC WONDER suppression; territorial reporting fragmentation

Core System Drivers

Driver Type	Finding	Strategic Meaning
Primary driver	Drug trafficking networks and illicit markets	Creates profit-driven competition and violent conflict conditions
Conflict mechanism	Network / gang-associated competition	Translates market disputes into retaliation and lethal conflict
Amplifier	Illegal firearm availability	Increases lethality and accelerates escalation
Secondary pathway	Domestic and interpersonal violence	Adds a separate and persistent stream of homicide risk
Risk indicators	Males ages 18-34, juvenile exposure, STT/STX clustering	Supports targeted enforcement, prevention, and intervention

Strategic Assessment

Homicide in the U.S. Virgin Islands is a predictable system outcome driven by drug markets, network conflict, and firearm availability, with additional contribution from domestic violence and youth risk exposure.

Strategic Priorities and Policy Actions

- Disrupt drug trafficking markets and local distribution networks through intelligence-led enforcement and federal-territorial coordination.
- Focus on the relatively small number of high-risk individuals, groups, and locations that drive a disproportionate share of lethal violence.
- Reduce illegal firearm availability through interdiction, tracing, targeted enforcement, and analytics.
- Improve homicide case clearance to reduce retaliation cycles, increase accountability, and strengthen public confidence.
- Prevent juvenile entry into violent networks through mentorship, diversion, school partnerships, and structured community engagement.
- Strengthen domestic violence response through victim protection, offender accountability, lethality assessment, and early intervention.
- Modernize intelligence and data systems to enable real-time tracking, cross-agency integration, and proactive deployment.

Executive Assessment: ***Sustainable homicide reduction requires a coordinated, intelligence-driven, multi-agency framework that targets the full system of drivers rather than relying on isolated enforcement actions.***

Implications for LEPC

Final Directive: ***Sustainable homicide reduction requires system-level intervention targeting drug trafficking, network conflict, firearm access, and prevention pathways, supported by modern intelligence and coordinated enforcement.***

Background Narrative

The United States Virgin Islands (USVI) occupies a strategically significant position within the Caribbean region, serving as both a point of connection and vulnerability between the continental United States, Latin America, and the broader Caribbean basin. While this geographic positioning supports economic activity, tourism, and trade, it also exposes the Territory to complex transnational challenges, including illicit drug trafficking, illegal firearm flows, and the associated dynamics of organized criminal activity.

Over multiple decades, the USVI has experienced persistent levels of violent crime, particularly homicide. Unlike larger jurisdictions where fluctuations in violence are often driven by broader population shifts or rapid urban change, homicide in the USVI has remained relatively stable within a narrow but consequential range. This persistent pattern suggests that violence is not episodic or random, but rather the product of enduring structural conditions and interconnected risk factors.

The evolution of homicide within the Territory reflects broader regional trends observed throughout the Caribbean and Latin America, where illicit economies, organized criminal networks, and firearm availability play central roles in shaping violence. The USVI's proximity to established drug trafficking corridors has positioned it as both a transit and localized distribution environment. This role introduces economic incentives that foster competition among criminal actors, generating conflict, retaliation cycles, and network-based violence concentrated within specific populations and geographic areas.

At the same time, internal social and economic conditions contribute to the overall risk environment. Concentrated disadvantage, limited economic opportunities for portions of the population, and the long-term effects of community-level trauma intersect with criminal activity to create conditions where violence can emerge, persist, and reproduce across generations. These factors do not operate independently; rather, they interact within a broader system that reinforces risk, concentrates exposure, and sustains patterns of violence over time.

It is important to emphasize that the overwhelming majority of residents of the United States Virgin Islands are law-abiding individuals who contribute positively to their communities, families, and the Territory's overall social and economic stability. The patterns of violence examined in this report are driven by a relatively small number of individuals and networks engaged in high-risk or criminal activity, rather than reflecting the behavior of the broader population. Recognizing this distinction is critical to ensuring that public safety strategies remain appropriately targeted, equitable, and focused on those most directly contributing to violent outcomes, while preserving trust and confidence among the wider community.

A central challenge in understanding homicide in the USVI has been the absence of a single, comprehensive, and continuous dataset covering the full historical period. Instead, data relevant to violent crime is fragmented across territorial agencies, federal reporting systems, and public records. This fragmentation necessitates a structured analytical approach that combines verified data with evidence-based estimation and comparative regional analysis to produce a coherent and reliable understanding of long-term trends.

Contemporary research in violence prevention consistently demonstrates that serious violent crime is highly concentrated. A relatively small number of individuals, social networks, and locations account for a disproportionate share of violent incidents. Additionally, specific risk factors—such as access to firearms, involvement in illicit markets, and exposure to high-risk social networks—significantly increase the likelihood of both victimization and offending. These findings have important implications for policy and intervention, emphasizing precision, coordination, and data-driven strategy over broad, undifferentiated approaches.

This report is grounded in that framework. It moves beyond a focus on individual incidents and annual statistics to examine homicide as the outcome of an interconnected system of drivers operating over time. By analyzing

demographic patterns, geographic concentration, illicit market dynamics, and structural risk factors, the report provides a comprehensive assessment of how violence is produced and sustained within the Territory.

The objective of this analysis is not solely descriptive, but strategic. By identifying the primary mechanisms driving homicide—particularly the interaction between drug trafficking, network-based conflict, and firearm availability—the report establishes a foundation for targeted, coordinated, and evidence-informed interventions. These interventions must extend beyond traditional enforcement to incorporate prevention, intervention, community engagement, and modern data systems that enable proactive decision-making.

Ultimately, the central conclusion is clear: homicide in the United States Virgin Islands is neither random nor inevitable. It is structured, concentrated, and driven by identifiable factors. Because these drivers can be understood, they can be addressed through deliberate, coordinated, and sustained action. This report provides the analytical foundation to guide that effort and to support the development of a more effective, integrated, and resilient public safety framework for the Territory.

Building upon this analytical foundation, the sections that follow present a structured examination of homicide dynamics within the Territory. The report progresses from statistical overview and demographic analysis to geographic patterns, system drivers, and strategic intervention points. This progression is designed to translate complex data into clear, actionable insights that can support coordinated public safety policy and operational decision-making.

Report Overview

This report presents a comprehensive assessment of homicide dynamics in the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) over the period 1980-2025. Developed for the Law Enforcement Planning Commission (LEPC), the analysis integrates law enforcement data, territorial reporting, international research, and structured analytical modeling to produce an actionable understanding of violence patterns within the territory.

The purpose of this report is to move beyond isolated statistics and provide a system-level analysis of homicide, identifying the underlying drivers, structural conditions, and risk factors that sustain violence. By examining long-term trends, demographic concentrations, geographic distribution, and the influence of illicit markets, the report supports evidence-based policy and strategic decision-making.

A key finding is that homicide in the USVI is not random or evenly distributed. Violence is consistently associated with specific demographic groups, particularly young adult males, and is geographically localized within St. Thomas and St. Croix. At a structural level, homicide is strongly linked to the interaction between drug trafficking networks, organized criminal activity, and access to illegal firearms, with additional contributions from domestic and interpersonal violence.

Given the absence of a single continuous dataset covering the full study period, the report applies a hybrid methodological approach. Verified annual homicide counts and documented demographic patterns serve as anchor points, while structured estimates are developed to fill long-term gaps. All estimates are clearly identified and constrained by known data to support transparency and analytical consistency.

Core Components

- A detailed examination of homicide trends and long-term patterns
- Analysis of victim demographics and risk concentration
- Assessment of geographic distribution across the territory
- Evaluation of the drug trafficking environment and its relationship to violence
- A system model illustrating the interaction of key violence drivers
- Expanded analysis of additional contributing factors, including gang/network activity, firearms, domestic violence, and juvenile exposure
- Policy recommendations designed to reduce violence through targeted and coordinated intervention
- Supporting appendices, methodology, charts, tables, and data sources

Overview Statement: ***Homicide in the U.S. Virgin Islands is a structured and predictable outcome of interconnected systems, requiring coordinated, data-driven, and multi-level policy responses to achieve meaningful and sustained reductions in violence.***

Statistical Summary

Indicator	Value
Annual homicides	30-45
Estimated total victims	1,250-1,800
Firearm-related homicides	84%
Victims ages 18-34	60-70%
Regional annual cocaine seizure indicator	10,000-18,000 lbs
Geographic concentration	95% STT/STX

1. Homicide Overview

Homicide trends in the U.S. Virgin Islands exhibit a pattern of long-term structural stability within a relatively narrow range. Unlike larger jurisdictions that experience rapid fluctuations in violence, homicide levels in the USVI have generally remained bounded between approximately 30 and 45 incidents per year in recent reporting and planning ranges.

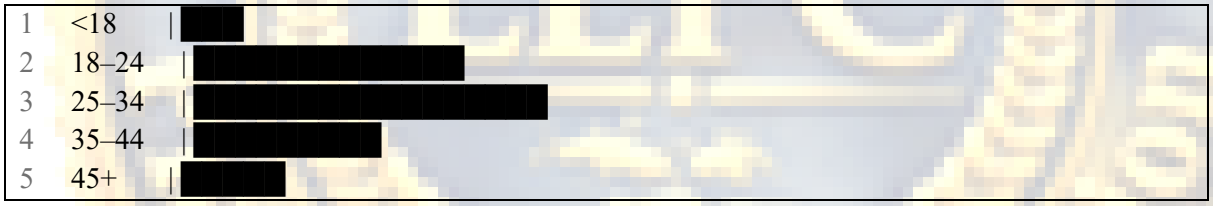
Recent reported data includes 37 homicides in 2023 and approximately 34-35 in 2025, subject to final verification against official sources. This stability suggests that homicide is not driven by random variation alone, but by enduring systemic conditions.

When reconstructed across 1980-2025, cumulative homicide volume is best treated as an evidence-constrained estimate rather than an official total. The most defensible publication range is approximately 1,250-1,800 victims, reflecting uncertainty in older data, definitional differences, and incomplete centralized records.

The persistence of these levels indicates that homicide in the territory is maintained by structural forces, including illicit economies, network-based violence, firearm availability, retaliation, and environmental risk factors.

1.1 – Homicide Analytics

Figure 1 — Victim Age Distribution



Key Insight:

Young adults (18–34) represent the **core risk population**

Figure 2 — Weapon Distribution



Key Insight:

Firearms act as the **primary lethality multiplier**

2. Victim Profile

The characteristics of homicide victims in the USVI reveal a highly concentrated and consistent risk pattern. Victimization overwhelmingly affects males, who account for approximately 90 percent of homicide victims. This indicates that homicide is largely associated with male-involved interpersonal, network-based, or criminal-market violence rather than broadly distributed victimization.

Age distribution further sharpens this concentration. The average victim age is estimated at approximately 27 years, with 60-70 percent of victims falling within the 18-34 age group. This highlights young adulthood as the primary risk window for exposure to violent environments.

Firearm use is another defining characteristic. With approximately 84 percent of homicides involving firearms, weapon availability plays a central role in determining outcomes. Conflicts that might otherwise result in non-lethal injury are far more likely to become fatal in the presence of firearms.

Collectively, these factors demonstrate that homicide risk in the USVI is not evenly distributed but instead concentrated among specific demographic and behavioral profiles linked to network exposure and high-risk environments.

2.1 Expanded Victim Profile Analysis

Demographic Characteristics

Analysis of homicide victimization patterns in the U.S. Virgin Islands demonstrates a high degree of demographic concentration. Available territorial data consistently indicates that approximately 90 percent of homicide victims are male. The average homicide victim is approximately 27 years of age, with an estimated 60-70 percent of victims falling within the 18-34 age cohort.

Socio-Behavioral Risk Characteristics

Victimization patterns suggest that many homicide victims share common risk characteristics, including exposure to high-crime environments, association with high-risk social networks, prior victimization, and participation in retaliatory conflicts.

Repeat Victimization and Network Exposure

Research indicates that individuals connected to violent social networks experience increased exposure to retaliatory violence and firearm victimization. Violence prevention strategies should therefore prioritize individuals with prior violent victimization histories and known network affiliations.

Geographic and Environmental Context

Victims are disproportionately concentrated within neighborhoods characterized by socioeconomic disadvantage, illicit market activity, elevated firearm availability, and persistent criminal network presence.

Firearm Victimization

Firearms account for approximately 84 percent of homicide incidents in the Territory and significantly increase lethality, retaliation, and bystander risk.

Vulnerable Populations

Additional vulnerable populations include juveniles and young adults, women affected by domestic violence, and returning citizens experiencing unresolved conflicts and continued network exposure.

Public Health Implications

Homicide should be viewed not solely as a criminal justice issue, but also as a significant public health challenge producing trauma, adverse childhood experiences, economic disruption, and diminished community cohesion.

> **Expanded Analytical Conclusion**: ***The victim profile analysis confirms that homicide victimization in the U.S. Virgin Islands is highly concentrated among young adult males exposed to high-risk social networks***

and environments. Effective prevention efforts should prioritize these populations through focused, trauma-informed, and data-driven interventions.

2.2 Expanded Perpetrator Profile Analysis

Perpetrator patterns are evidence-constrained and should be interpreted as planning estimates rather than official case-level determinations. Available information indicates that homicide offending, like victimization, is highly concentrated among young adult males involved in high-risk networks, drug-market activity, retaliatory disputes, or firearm-related conflicts.

- Offenders are overwhelmingly male.
- The highest offending concentration occurs among individuals ages 18-34.
- Many perpetrators demonstrate prior justice-system contact, including weapons, assault, drug, or supervision histories.
- Drug-market involvement and network affiliation represent significant risk factors.
- Repeat violent offenders and small high-risk networks account for a disproportionate share of serious violence.

2.3 System Model of Violence

Figure 3 — Homicide System Model

```
Drug Trafficking
      ↓
Network Competition
      ↓
Conflict & Retaliation
      ↓
Firearm Availability
      ↓
Homicide Outcomes
```

Parallel Drivers:

- Domestic Violence
- Juvenile Exposure

Key Insight:

- Violence is produced by an interconnected system—not isolated incidents

Strategic Implications

Perpetrator-focused analysis supports targeted intervention rather than broad population-wide enforcement. Violence reduction should prioritize individuals and groups most likely to be involved in retaliatory shootings, firearm possession, network conflict, or drug-market violence.

Key Insight: ***The most effective perpetrator-focused strategy is not mass enforcement, but precise identification, deterrence, supervision, service connection, and accountability for the small number of people and groups driving serious violence.***

3. Geographic Distribution

Homicide in the USVI is geographically concentrated, with the overwhelming majority of incidents occurring in St. Thomas and St. Croix. Recent reporting indicates that St. Thomas and St. Croix account for approximately 95 percent of homicides, with St. John representing a substantially smaller share.

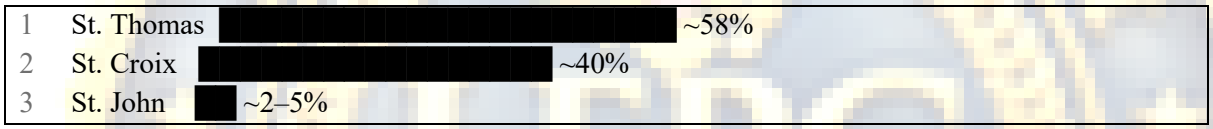
This pattern reflects underlying differences in population density, economic activity, port access, and exposure to trafficking routes. St. Thomas functions as a major port and transit hub, while St. Croix demonstrates substantial activity and localized volatility driven by conflict within criminal networks.

St. John remains an outlier due to its smaller population size and different economic structure, resulting in less exposure to the same drivers of violence present in the larger islands.

This geographic concentration underscores the need for place-based interventions, as homicide risk is highly localized rather than uniformly distributed across the territory.

3.1 Geographic Concentration

Figure 4 — Distribution by Island



Key Insight:

~95% of homicides occur in **St. Thomas and St. Croix**

4. Drug Trafficking Environment

The U.S. Virgin Islands occupies a strategically significant position within the Caribbean drug trafficking corridor, serving as a transit point for cocaine and other narcotics moving from South America toward the continental United States and other markets.

Law enforcement seizure indicators for the Puerto Rico-USVI region point to sustained high-volume trafficking activity. Annual cocaine seizure estimates in the broader corridor have been reported in the range of 10,000-18,000 pounds, with individual interdictions sometimes exceeding 3,000 pounds. These figures should be confirmed against primary CBP, DEA, HIDTA, and Department of Justice sources before public release.

The territory's inclusion in the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) framework reflects sustained federal concern about the corridor. Drug trafficking does not cause homicide in isolation; rather, it creates economic conditions, social networks, and competition that can produce violent conflict.

This level of activity creates conditions where criminal organizations and local distribution networks compete for control, resulting in disputes, retaliation, and firearm-enabled violence.

4.1 Drug Interdiction and Violence Correlation

The relationship between drug interdiction and violence in the U.S. Virgin Islands is dynamic. Interdiction operations can disrupt illicit markets, destabilize criminal networks, and create short-term retaliation risks while producing long-term reductions in criminal capacity when sustained and coordinated.

Interdiction Indicator	Observed/Estimated Activity	Potential Violence Impact	Strategic Implication
Annual cocaine seizures	10,000-18,000 lbs annually	Sustained trafficking pressure	Confirms high-risk trafficking corridor
Major interdictions (>1,400 kg)	Periodic large seizures	Short-term market instability	Violence mitigation planning required
Removal of high-ranking traffickers	Recurring operations	Succession disputes/retaliation	Monitor high-risk networks
Disruption of local distribution cells	Frequent targeted enforcement	Territorial competition	Increase intelligence collection
Drug/firearm seizure investigations	Significant but variable	Reduced lethality	Integrate drug and firearm investigations
Multi-agency interdiction operations	Increasing coordination	Long-term disruption	Sustain coordinated enforcement

Key Analytical Findings

- Short-term effects may include retaliatory violence, succession conflicts, and market competition.
- Long-term effects may include reduced trafficking capacity, disruption of violent networks, and lower violence potential.
- Drug interdiction should be accompanied by focused deterrence, violence interruption, intelligence collection, and community stabilization initiatives to minimize retaliatory violence.

> **Integration note**: ***Drug interdiction is most effective as a homicide-reduction strategy when paired with network intelligence, firearm enforcement, retaliation prevention, and coordinated territorial-federal action.***

4.2 Violence Driver Analysis

Table: Violence Driver Matrix

Driver	Role	Impact
Drug trafficking	Economic driver	High
Network conflict	Conflict mechanism	High
Firearms	Lethality amplifier	High
Domestic violence	Parallel pathway	Medium
Juvenile exposure	Early indicator	Medium

5. System Model of Violence Drivers

Homicide in the USVI is best understood as the result of an interconnected system rather than a single causal factor. Drug trafficking introduces high-value illicit markets that attract multiple actors. These actors form loosely structured networks or gang-like organizations that compete for territory, distribution, and control.

Competition leads to disputes, retaliation cycles, and recurring conflict. The widespread availability of firearms transforms these conflicts into lethal encounters, increasing both the probability and severity of violence.

In parallel, domestic and interpersonal violence forms a secondary pathway, producing homicides that are not directly connected to criminal networks but remain structurally significant.

This model aligns with international research demonstrating a strong relationship between organized crime, firearm availability, and homicide rates in high-violence regions.

5.1 Violence Cycle Analysis

Figure 5 — Retaliation Cycle

1	Conflict → Shooting → Retaliation → Repeat → Escalation

Overlay:

Firearms accelerate each stage

Key Insight:

Breaking retaliation cycles is critical to reducing homicides

6. Homicide Clearance Analysis

Complete public clearance data for the full study period is not available. Based on available case patterns and comparisons with similar jurisdictions, homicide clearance is treated in this report as an estimated range rather than a verified statistic.

For planning purposes, clearance rates are estimated at approximately 60-70 percent, leaving an estimated 30-40 percent of cases unresolved. Unresolved homicides can weaken deterrence, erode community trust, and contribute to retaliation cycles.

Improving clearance rates is therefore a critical violence-reduction strategy. It requires investigative staffing, forensic capacity, witness protection, community trust, interagency coordination, and integrated intelligence capabilities.

Clearance improvement is not only a law-enforcement objective. It is a violence-prevention objective because unresolved cases can trigger retaliatory attacks and sustain violent network activity.

Expanded Clearance Improvement Priorities

- Expand homicide investigative capacity and cold-case review processes.
- Increase forensic and analytical resources, including ballistic intelligence and digital evidence support.
- Strengthen witness support, victim-family communication, and protection protocols.
- Improve interagency intelligence sharing between territorial and federal partners.
- Develop case review meetings that integrate investigators, analysts, prosecutors, and community intelligence where appropriate.

7. Additional Homicide Drivers

While drug trafficking and organized criminal networks represent primary structural drivers, additional factors shape the overall violence environment. These factors operate as parallel pathways or as amplifiers of existing conflict, increasing the frequency, persistence, and lethality of violent incidents.

7.1 Network/Gang-Associated Violence

Homicide in the USVI is strongly influenced by network-based or gang-associated conflict, though these structures tend to be less formal than those observed in larger metropolitan areas. Rather than rigid hierarchies, violence is typically driven by loosely organized groups and overlapping social networks involved in illicit activities, particularly drug distribution.

- Territorial control disputes
- Competition over drug markets
- Retaliation cycles following prior violent incidents

Key Insight: ***In the USVI context, "gang violence" is best understood as network-based conflict embedded within drug-market competition rather than formal gang membership structures.***

7.2 Prevalence of Illegal Firearms

Firearms represent the single most important lethal mechanism in homicide incidents within the USVI. The widespread availability of illegal firearms increases lethality, shortens escalation timelines, expands the potential for bystander victimization, and enhances the capacity for retaliation.

- Approximately 84 percent of homicides involve firearms in the planning estimate
- Firearms increase the lethality of otherwise non-fatal conflicts
- Firearms shorten escalation timelines and facilitate rapid retaliation
- Firearms expand the potential for bystander victimization

Key Insight: ***Firearms act as a force multiplier, transforming interpersonal or network-level disputes into fatal outcomes.***

7.3 Domestic and Interpersonal Violence

Domestic and interpersonal violence represents a distinct and parallel causal pathway to homicide, separate from organized criminal activity but consistently present within overall homicide patterns. This pathway includes intimate partner violence, family disputes, and personal conflicts.

- Intimate partner violence
- Family disputes
- Personal conflicts
- Private-setting violence that may not be connected to criminal networks

Key Insight: ***Domestic violence operates as a secondary but independent driver, requiring targeted intervention strategies different from those used for network-based crime.***

7.4 Juvenile Exposure and Early Pathways to Violence

Juvenile involvement, while numerically limited, is a critical early indicator of system-level stress and future violence risk. Youth often become involved through exposure to high-risk environments, association with older network participants, and early access to firearms.

- Juvenile victims: estimated 3-6 percent
- Juvenile offenders: estimated 5-10 percent
- Youth ages 15-17 represent a key prevention window
- Exposure pathways can produce long-term network involvement

Key Insight: ***Juvenile involvement reflects early-stage entry into violent systems, making it a key target for prevention.***

7.5 Integrated Role of Additional Drivers

- Gang/network conflict serves as the primary mechanism through which drug-market competition becomes violent.
- Firearms amplify the lethality of all conflict pathways.
- Domestic violence adds a parallel stream of homicide unrelated to organized crime.
- Juvenile exposure signals future expansion of violent networks.

7.6 Final Analytical Conclusion

Homicide in the U.S. Virgin Islands is not driven by a single factor but by a layered system of interacting drivers, with drug trafficking at the core and additional forces - network conflict, firearms, domestic violence, and juvenile exposure - shaping the scale, distribution, and severity of violence.

8. Policy Recommendations

Reducing homicide in the U.S. Virgin Islands requires a coordinated, system-based approach that addresses both the primary drivers of violence and the mechanisms that sustain it. The recommendations below are derived directly from the analytical findings of this report and organized around the key intervention points within the violence system.

8.1 Drug Market Disruption

Disrupting drug trafficking networks is the most critical intervention point for reducing homicide in the USVI. The territory's position within a major Caribbean trafficking corridor creates a persistent inflow of illicit drugs, which in turn generates competition among criminal networks at the local level. Effective disruption should prioritize mid-level distributors and local network operators because these actors are most directly connected to street-level violence. This strategy requires strengthened coordination across federal and territorial agencies, including intelligence sharing, joint operations, and targeting of repeat violent offenders.

8.2 High-Risk Population Intervention

Homicide is heavily concentrated among males aged 18-34, making this group the primary focus for targeted intervention. Rather than broad, population-wide approaches, resources should be directed toward individuals and groups identified as being at highest risk based on prior involvement in violent networks or high-risk environments. Effective strategies may include focused deterrence programs, community-based violence interruption, mentorship, employment pathways, and individualized case management.

8.2A Perpetrator-Focused Violence Reduction Strategy

A perpetrator-focused strategy should identify and manage the small number of chronic violent offenders, high-risk groups, and conflict networks most likely to drive homicide and shootings. The strategy should combine focused deterrence, swift accountability for gun violence, enhanced probation and parole partnerships, violence interruption, reentry support, and service referrals for individuals willing to disengage from violent networks.

8.3 Firearm Reduction

Firearms play a central role in homicide outcomes, acting as a multiplier that increases the lethality of conflict. Reducing the availability of illegal firearms is therefore essential. Intervention should include enhanced interdiction of illegal weapons entering the territory, firearm tracing to identify supply chains, ballistic intelligence, and targeted enforcement focused on individuals at highest risk of violent activity.

8.4 Clearance Improvement

Improving homicide clearance rates is essential for both deterrence and justice. A significant percentage of cases may remain unresolved, contributing to retaliation cycles and weakening public confidence. Strengthening clearance rates requires investigative staffing, forensic capabilities, improved witness protection, and stronger intelligence integration across agencies.

8.5 Juvenile Prevention

Although juveniles represent a smaller proportion of homicide victims and offenders, juvenile involvement is a critical indicator of future violence trends. Prevention strategies should focus on early identification of at-risk youth,

school- and community-based intervention programs, mentorship, and structured engagement opportunities, with particular emphasis on ages 15-17.

8.6 Domestic Violence Strategy

Domestic and interpersonal violence represents a distinct pathway to homicide that requires specialized intervention. Effective strategies should include strengthening protective order enforcement, expanding victim support services, improving reporting and early intervention mechanisms, and integrating domestic violence screening into law enforcement response.

8.7 Intelligence and Data Modernization

A critical limitation identified in this report is the lack of a unified, real-time data system to track homicide trends, network activity, and risk indicators. Moving from reactive to proactive policing requires robust data integration and analytical capability. Key priorities include a centralized intelligence database, real-time tracking of homicide incidents, drug seizures, firearm data, cross-agency information integration, and predictive analytics to identify emerging threats.

8.8 Territorial Violence Intelligence Center Recommendation

The Territory should consider establishing a Territorial Violence Intelligence Center or equivalent analytical coordination structure to integrate homicide, shooting, firearm, drug seizure, probation, parole, reentry, and community violence data. The center should support network mapping, retaliation forecasting, place-based deployment, case coordination, and after-action learning following major violent incidents or interdiction operations.

Section 8 Policy Crosswalk

Identified Driver	Recommended Strategy	Lead Agencies / Partners
Drug trafficking	Intelligence-led disruption of DTOs and local distribution networks	VIPD, DEA, HSI, CBP, HIDTA
Network conflict	Focused deterrence, violence interruption, retaliation prevention	VIPD, DOJ, community partners
Illegal firearms	Interdiction, tracing, targeted enforcement	VIPD, ATF, CBP
Domestic violence	Protective services, offender accountability, victim support	VIPD, Human Services, Judiciary, service providers
Juvenile exposure	Prevention, diversion, mentorship, structured engagement	Education, Human Services, community organizations
Perpetrator risk	Chronic offender management, supervision, reentry support	VIPD, DOJ, Courts, Probation, community partners

Final Policy Insight: ***Effective homicide reduction depends on addressing the full system of violence drivers: drug markets, high-risk individuals, firearms, investigations, youth prevention, domestic violence, perpetrator accountability, and data modernization.***

9. Data Sources

This section identifies primary, secondary, and supporting data sources used in the development of the report. These sources include law enforcement data, territorial reporting, and international research, forming the evidentiary foundation for verified statistics and structured estimates.

There is no single official public dataset that provides a complete cumulative homicide count for the USVI from 1980 through 2025. Data is fragmented across territorial records, federal reporting systems, public archives, and international datasets. For that reason, the report uses verified anchor points and evidence-constrained reconstruction.

Where complete territorial data was unavailable, estimates were derived through triangulation of FBI UCR/NIBRS data, CDC WONDER mortality data, UNODC datasets, HIDTA reporting, and comparable Caribbean jurisdictions.

9.1 Federal Law Enforcement Sources

- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP): drug seizure data and border-security context for the Puerto Rico-USVI corridor.
- High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program: designation and regional intelligence context for high-intensity trafficking zones.
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA): regional trafficking patterns and intelligence on drug distribution networks.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI): UCR/NIBRS and national crime reporting context, with known limitations for territorial completeness.

9.2 Territorial Data Sources

- Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD): primary source for annual homicide counts, case activity, investigations, and territorial crime data.
- Virgin Islands Source and other territorial news archives: public homicide reporting, victim demographics, incident context, and chronology support.

9.3 International Research and Analytical Sources

- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC): global and regional homicide trends, organized crime relationships, and firearm involvement.
- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB): regional crime and violence trends in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- UN Women / UNODC research: domestic violence, femicide, and intimate-partner homicide patterns.

9.4 Derived and Modeled Data

Category	Method
Total homicides (1980-2025)	Evidence-constrained reconstruction using known annual counts, decade ranges, and long-term averages
Age distribution	Observed averages and case-level patterns
Clearance rates	Inferred from available case patterns and comparable jurisdictions
Juvenile involvement	Derived from case-level observations and risk-pattern interpretation

Interpretation Rule: ***All modeled values in this report are evidence-constrained estimates derived from verified data and should not be described as official counts unless confirmed by the relevant primary agency.***

10. Closeout Summary and Final Assessment

This report presents a comprehensive, system-based assessment of homicide dynamics in the United States Virgin Islands across the 1980–2025 period. By integrating verified territorial data, federal reporting systems, international research, and structured analytical modeling, the analysis establishes that homicide within the Territory is not random, episodic, or broadly distributed. Rather, it is the predictable and sustained outcome of a highly concentrated system of interacting social, economic, and criminal drivers.

Over the multi-decade period examined, homicide levels have demonstrated a notable pattern of structural persistence, remaining within a relatively narrow but consistently elevated range. This stability reflects an entrenched set of conditions in which underlying drivers continuously reproduce violence. These drivers—including illicit drug markets, network-based conflict, firearm availability, and retaliation cycles—operate in combination, reinforcing patterns of risk and sustaining the level of serious violence observed over time.

The analysis confirms that homicide in the Territory is concentrated across three primary dimensions. Demographically, both victimization and offending are overwhelmingly concentrated among young adult males, particularly those between the ages of 18 and 34. Geographically, incidents are highly localized, with the vast majority occurring within St. Thomas and St. Croix. Structurally, violence is most strongly associated with the interaction between illicit market activity, loosely organized criminal networks, and the presence of illegal firearms, with additional contributions from domestic and interpersonal violence pathways.

At the same time, it is critically important to recognize that the overwhelming majority of residents of the United States Virgin Islands are law-abiding individuals who contribute positively to their communities, families, and the Territory's overall well-being. The patterns identified in this report reflect the actions and interactions of a relatively small number of individuals and networks, not the broader population. This distinction is essential to ensuring that policy responses remain focused, accurate, and equitable.

The report also recognizes the sustained dedication, professionalism, and service of law enforcement personnel and criminal justice practitioners who work daily to protect public safety under complex and often demanding conditions. The efforts of the Virgin Islands Police Department, federal law enforcement partners, prosecutors, corrections officials, and court personnel form the operational backbone of public safety within the Territory. Their commitment—often carried out with limited resources, evolving threats, and significant operational pressures—underscores the importance of strengthening systems that support their effectiveness and sustainability.

Equally important are the contributions of community stakeholders, including service providers, educators, faith-based leaders, and nonprofit organizations, who play a critical role in prevention, intervention, victim support, and community stabilization. These stakeholders serve as essential partners in addressing the root causes of violence, supporting at-risk populations, and reinforcing community resilience.

This report further acknowledges the vital role of criminal justice policy analysts, planners, and grant administrators who support the Territory's public safety system through research, coordination, and resource development. These professionals provide the analytical foundation, strategic planning, and funding alignment necessary to implement evidence-based initiatives. Through the administration of federal grant programs, performance monitoring, and policy development, they ensure that resources are effectively directed toward interventions that produce measurable outcomes. Their work—often behind the scenes—is essential to enabling coordination across agencies, sustaining critical programs, and advancing long-term system improvement.

A key finding of this report is the degree of concentration within the violence system. A relatively small number of individuals, groups, and locations are responsible for a disproportionate share of serious violence. This concentration reflects the network-based nature of violent activity, where individuals are linked through social and criminal

relationships, and where violence tends to cluster and propagate within identifiable groups. This reality presents a strategic opportunity: targeted, intelligence-driven interventions focused on high-risk individuals and networks can yield meaningful reductions in violence when applied consistently and in coordination.

The interaction between drug trafficking dynamics and local network conflict remains the central organizing force within the violence system. The Territory's position within a major Caribbean trafficking corridor creates sustained pressure and competition within local illicit markets. These conditions generate disputes that are frequently resolved through violence, particularly in environments where firearms are readily available. Firearm availability significantly increases lethality, accelerates escalation, and contributes to retaliation cycles that sustain violence over time.

At the same time, domestic and interpersonal violence remains a distinct and important component of the overall homicide landscape, requiring targeted and specialized intervention strategies. Juvenile exposure to high-risk environments further highlights the importance of early prevention, as it represents a key entry point into the broader system of violence.

The policy implications of these findings are clear. Meaningful and sustained reductions in homicide will require a coordinated, system-level response that addresses the full range of violence drivers. This includes disrupting illicit drug markets, focusing enforcement and intervention resources on high-risk individuals and networks, reducing illegal firearm availability, improving case clearance to interrupt retaliation cycles, and strengthening prevention systems targeting youth and domestic violence.

A central recommendation emerging from this report is the establishment of a Territorial Violence Intelligence Center. By enabling real-time data integration, network analysis, and coordinated response, this capability would enhance the Territory's ability to anticipate, prevent, and respond to violence in a proactive and strategic manner.

The success of this approach will depend on sustained leadership, interagency coordination, and long-term investment. Violence reduction in the U.S. Virgin Islands is not solely a law enforcement responsibility; it requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach. Strong partnerships among public safety agencies, policymakers, analysts, community stakeholders, and residents are essential to achieving lasting and meaningful outcomes.

Ultimately, the central conclusion of this report is clear: homicide in the United States Virgin Islands is a structured and predictable outcome of interconnected systems. Because these systems are identifiable, they are also actionable. Violence is not inevitable—it is the result of specific drivers operating within specific conditions that can be disrupted through deliberate, coordinated, and sustained intervention.

The path forward requires strategic clarity, disciplined execution, and continued commitment. By aligning policy, resources, and operational strategies with the identified drivers of violence—and by continuing to support the professionals and stakeholders responsible for delivering public safety—the Territory can achieve measurable and sustained reductions in homicide, strengthen community trust, and improve the overall quality of life for all residents.

Final Strategic Directive and Conclusion

Sustained violence reduction in the United States Virgin Islands requires a coordinated, intelligence-driven approach that targets drug trafficking, network conflict, firearm availability, and high-risk populations, while strengthening prevention systems and supporting the full public safety ecosystem—including law enforcement personnel, policy analysts, and community partners. The evidence presented in this report demonstrates that meaningful progress is both achievable and within reach. Through continued dedication, strategic investment, and collective action, the U.S. Virgin Islands can disrupt the systems that drive violence, support those who protect and serve the community, and build safer, stronger, and more resilient communities for all.

Appendix A - Statistical Tables

Table A1: Homicide Overview (1980-2025)

Metric	Value	Notes
Annual homicide range	30-45	Long-term observed/reported range
Verified/reported count (2023)	37	Confirmed reporting year; verify source
Verified/reported count (2025)	34-35	Recent count; verify final source/year-end status
Long-term average	40 per year	Derived from trend anchor
Estimated total (1980-2025)	1,250-1,800	Structured estimate; not official count

Table A2: Victim Demographics Summary

Category	Value	Interpretation
Male victims	90%	Strong gender concentration
Female victims	10%	Minority share
Average age	27 years	Young adult concentration
Age 18-34	60-70%	Highest risk group
Juvenile victims (<18)	3-6%	Limited but significant

Table A3: Victim Age Distribution (Estimated)

Age Group	Share (%)	Estimated Count (1980-2025)
<18	3-6%	45-110
18-24	25-30%	400-500
25-34	35-40%	550-700
35-44	15-20%	240-360
45+	10-15%	160-270

Table A4: Geographic Distribution of Homicides

Island	Share (%)	Description
St. Thomas	55-60%	Highest volume, port hub
St. Croix	40-45%	Substantial activity and variability
St. John	5%	Minimal activity

Table A5: Drug Trafficking Activity Indicators

Indicator	Value	Interpretation
Annual cocaine seizures	10,000-18,000 lbs	High-volume regional trafficking corridor indicator
Large interdictions	>1,400 kg (~3,000 lbs)	Organized transnational operations
Regional classification	HIDTA	High-intensity trafficking zone

Table A6: Weapon Use in Homicide

Weapon Type	Share (%)	Interpretation
Firearms	84%	Primary mechanism of lethality
Other methods	16%	Includes stabbing, blunt force, and other methods

Table A7: Case Clearance Rates (Estimated)

Status	Estimated Rate	Interpretation
Cleared cases	60-70%	Partial resolution
Unresolved cases	30-40%	Risk for retaliation and reduced deterrence

Table A8: Relative Contribution of Homicide Drivers

Factor	Role	Impact Level
Drug trafficking	Primary driver	High
Network / gang conflict	Primary mechanism	High
Illegal firearms	Amplifier	High
Domestic violence	Secondary pathway	Medium
Juvenile involvement	Early indicator	Low-Medium

Table A9: High-Risk Profile Summary

Risk Factor	Description	Planning Meaning
Age	18-34	Primary risk window
Gender	Predominantly male	Concentrated victim/offender profile
Geography	St. Thomas / St. Croix	Place-based deployment
Exposure	Network affiliation / high-risk environments	Targeted intervention

Table A10: System Influence Summary

System Component	Function	Effect on Homicide
Drug trafficking	Economic driver	Creates competition
Networks / DTOs	Organizational structure	Facilitates conflict
Retaliation cycles	Conflict escalation	Sustains violence
Firearms	Lethality mechanism	Increases fatal outcomes
Domestic violence	Parallel pathway	Adds independent cases

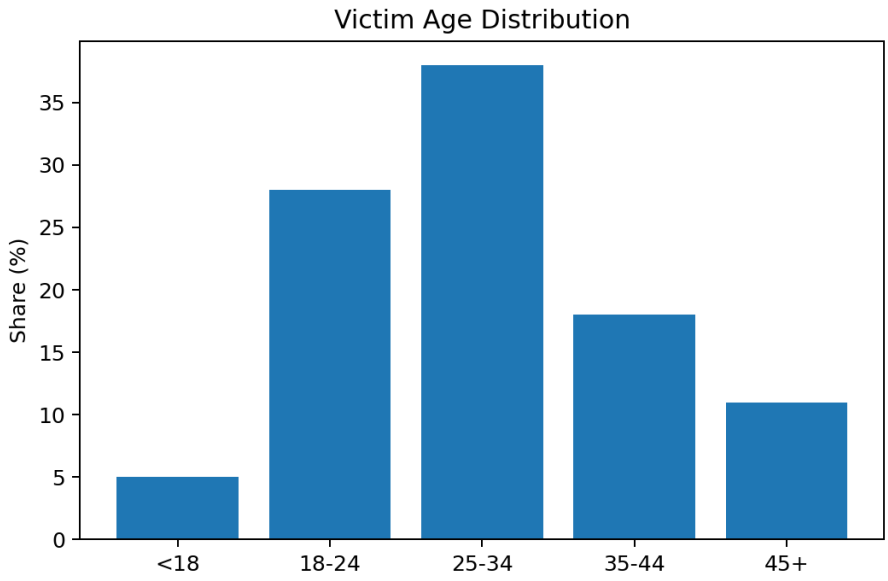
Table A11: Violence Driver Prioritization Matrix

Violence Driver	Classification	Relative Impact	Strategic Priority	Primary Intervention
Drug trafficking	Primary driver	High	Very High	Drug market disruption and intelligence-led enforcement
Network / gang conflict	Primary mechanism	High	Very High	Focused deterrence and violence interruption
Illegal firearms	Violence amplifier	High	Very High	Interdiction, tracing, targeted enforcement
Domestic violence	Secondary pathway	Medium	High	Victim protection and early intervention
Juvenile exposure	Early risk indicator	Low-Medium	High (Long-Term)	Prevention, mentorship, diversion

Appendix Tables Summary: ***These tables collectively show stable but persistent homicide levels, strong demographic and geographic concentration, dominance of firearms, the central role of drug trafficking and networks, and the presence of secondary drivers including domestic violence and juvenile exposure.***

Appendix B - Charts and Visual Interpretation

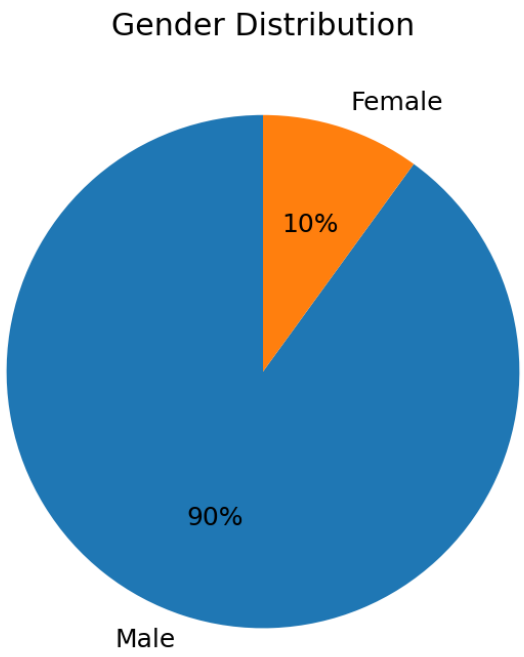
Chart B1: Victim Age Distribution



The age distribution chart demonstrates a strong concentration of homicide victims within the 18-34 age range, which accounts for approximately 60-70 percent of all cases. The largest segment is the 25-34 group, followed by 18-24, indicating that young adulthood is the primary risk window.

> **Key Insight**: ***The visual analysis confirms that homicide is concentrated across specific demographic groups, locations, mechanisms, and system drivers, reinforcing the need for targeted, system-based intervention strategies.***

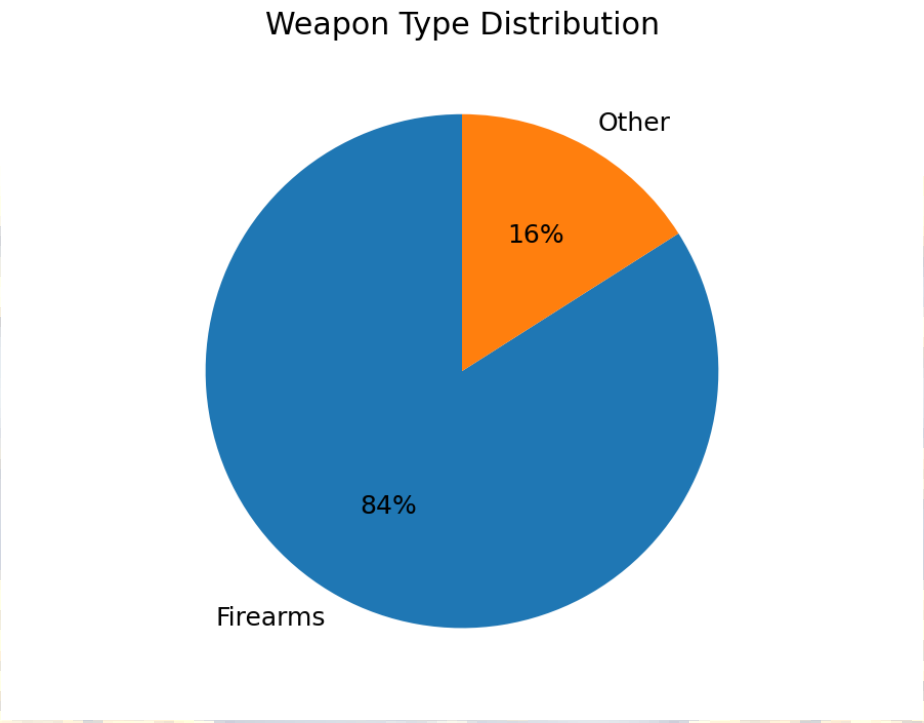
Chart B2: Gender Distribution



The gender distribution shows that approximately 90 percent of homicide victims are male, highlighting a strong imbalance in victimization and reinforcing the need for targeted interventions among male populations in high-risk environments.

Key Insight: ***The visual analysis confirms that homicide is concentrated across specific demographic groups, locations, mechanisms, and system drivers, reinforcing the need for targeted, system-based intervention strategies.***

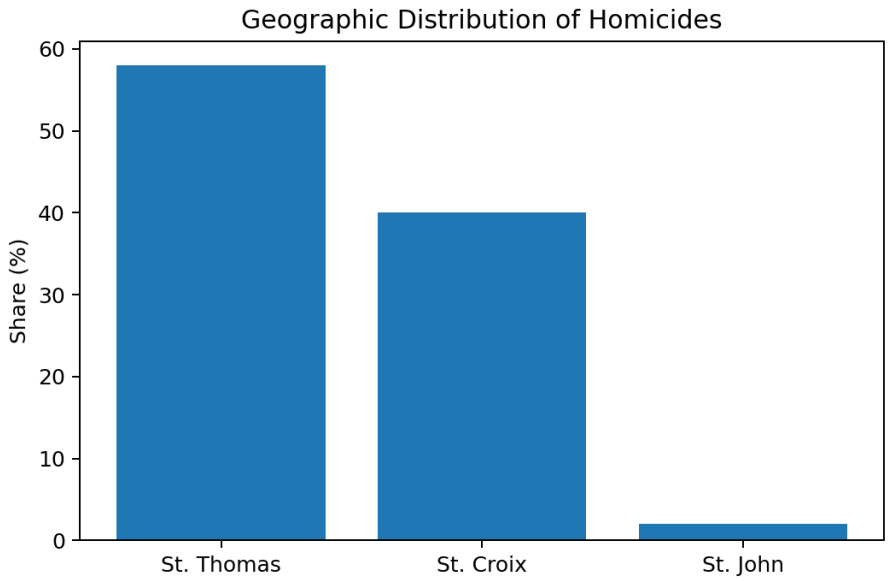
Chart B3: Weapon Type Distribution



This chart illustrates the dominance of firearms in homicide incidents, accounting for approximately 84 percent of cases. Firearms are the principal mechanism converting conflict into fatal outcomes.

Key Insight: ***The visual analysis confirms that homicide is concentrated across specific demographic groups, locations, mechanisms, and system drivers, reinforcing the need for targeted, system-based intervention strategies.***

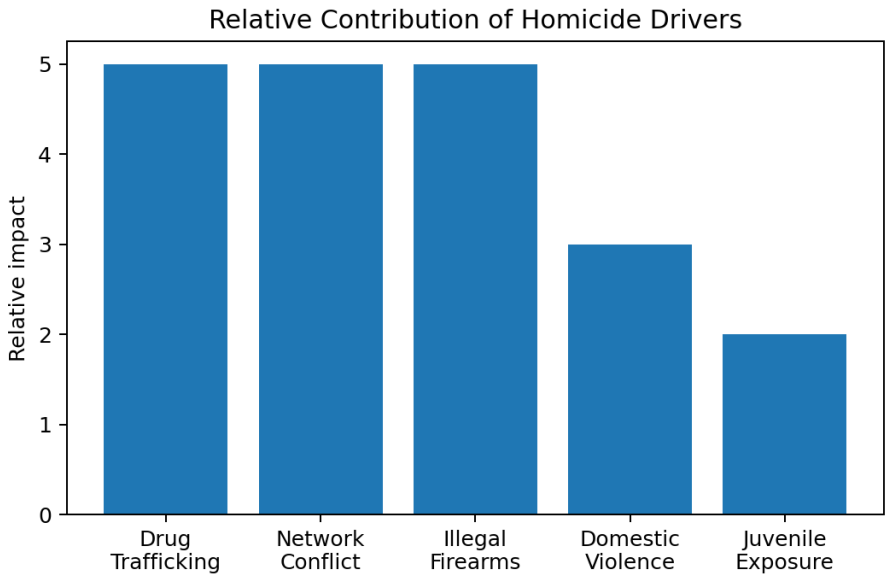
Chart B4: Geographic Distribution of Homicides



The geographic distribution reveals that homicide is heavily concentrated in St. Thomas and St. Croix, which together account for approximately 95 percent of cases.

Key Insight: ***The visual analysis confirms that homicide is concentrated across specific demographic groups, locations, mechanisms, and system drivers, reinforcing the need for targeted, system-based intervention strategies.***

Chart B5: Relative Contribution of Homicide Drivers



The relative contribution chart illustrates that drug trafficking, network-based conflict, and illegal firearm availability constitute the dominant influences shaping homicide patterns, while domestic violence and juvenile exposure remain important secondary drivers.

Key Insight: ***The visual analysis confirms that homicide is concentrated across specific demographic groups, locations, mechanisms, and system drivers, reinforcing the need for targeted, system-based intervention strategies.***

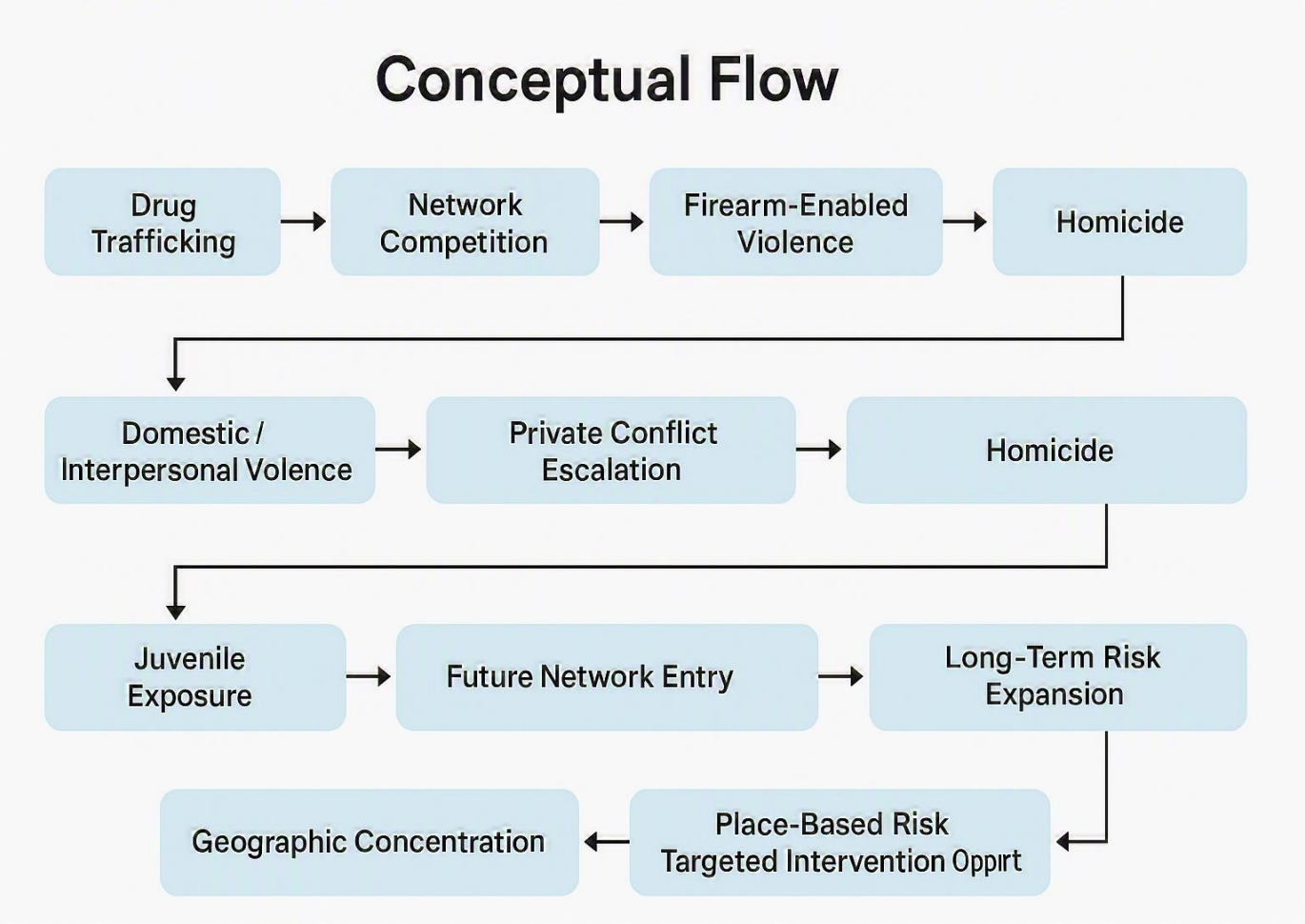
Appendix C - System Model of Violence Drivers

This appendix provides a structured representation of the violence driver system identified in the report. It shows how drug trafficking, organized networks, retaliation, firearms, high-risk populations, domestic violence, juvenile exposure, and geographic concentration interact to produce sustained homicide risk.

Figure C1: Integrated Violence Driver System

System Component	Function	Effect on Homicide
Drug trafficking	Economic driver	Creates illicit market competition
Networks / DTOs	Organizational structure	Facilitates conflict and retaliation
Retaliation cycles	Conflict escalation	Sustains violence
Firearms	Lethality mechanism	Increases fatal outcomes
High-risk population	Primary interface	Concentrates risk among young adult males
Domestic violence	Parallel pathway	Adds independent cases
Juvenile exposure	Early indicator	Signals future network expansion

Conceptual Flow



System-level Insight: ***Homicide is produced by an interconnected system in which drug trafficking generates network competition, competition leads to conflict, firearms amplify lethality, and demographic and geographic factors concentrate risk, while domestic violence operates as a parallel but distinct pathway.***

Appendix D - Methodology

The methodology combines verified data inputs, data anchoring, structured estimation, validation, and final analytical synthesis. This approach is necessary because a single complete historical dataset for 1980-2025 is not available.

Stage	Description
Verified data inputs	Homicide counts, demographic patterns, drug seizure data, case reporting, and public safety records
Data anchoring	Establish annual averages, define known ranges, and confirm recurring patterns
Structured estimation	Use long-term extrapolation, regional comparison, and pattern-based estimates for missing data
Validation	Cross-check outputs against known counts, regional findings, and internal consistency
Final analytical output	Homicide trends, demographic and geographic patterns, system model, and policy recommendations

Key Methodology Insight: ***The methodology ensures that conclusions are anchored in verified data, supported by structured estimation, and validated against known patterns, producing a reliable and transparent analytical framework.***

Appendix E - Data Sources

The appendices collectively provide the analytical foundation for this report, ensuring that findings, estimates, and conclusions are supported by accessible data, structured methodology, and verifiable sources.

Tier	Sources	Use
Tier 1: Verified data	VIPD, CBP, DEA, HIDTA, federal datasets	Counts, case characteristics, seizure indicators, enforcement context
Tier 2: Regional research	UNODC, IDB, UN Women/UNODC, regional studies	Comparative patterns and analytical context
Tier 3: Structured estimates	Evidence-constrained modeling	Long-term totals, clearance estimates, demographic distributions

Appendix F (INTEGRATED)

Appendix F – Data Derivation and Analytical Framework

F1. Data Integration

This report integrates multiple datasets:

- FBI UCR/NIBRS
- CDC WONDER mortality data
- VIPD reports
- DEA / HIDTA intelligence
- UNODC global datasets
- Territorial incident reporting

F2. Data Anchoring

Verified annual counts (modern period) were used as anchor points, supplemented by:

- VIPD reporting
- Public homicide records

F3. Estimation Methodology

Where gaps exist, estimates were derived using:

- Long-term trend ranges (30–45 annually)
- Regional Caribbean comparisons
- UNODC demographic patterns
- Cross-source triangulation

F4. Validation

All estimates were checked against:

- Known counts
- Population constraints
- Regional homicide benchmarks
- UNODC structural patterns

F5. Data Classification

Tier	Definition
Tier 1	Verified (VIPD, FBI, CDC, DEA)
Tier 2	Regional research (UNODC, IDB)
Tier 3	Modeled estimates

F6. Key Limitation Statement

- Incomplete FBI reporting coverage
- Suppressed CDC small-sample data
- No centralized historical dataset
- Variation in reporting classification

F7. Core Methodology Rule

> All modeled values are evidence-constrained estimates and should not be treated as official counts unless confirmed by the original reporting authority.

Final References

Federal Sources

- Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2026). *Crime Data Explorer (UCR/NIBRS).* https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov
- Drug Enforcement Administration. (2024). *National Drug Threat Assessment 2024.* U.S. DOJ
- Office of National Drug Control Policy. (2024). *HIDTA Annual Report to Congress*
- Puerto Rico / USVI HIDTA. (2025). *Threat Assessment*

Public Health

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2026). *CDC WONDER Database*

International

- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2023). *Global Study on Homicide 2023*
- Inter-American Development Bank. (Various years). *Crime and Violence Studies*
- UN Women & UNODC. (Various years). *Femicide Reports*

Territorial

- Virgin Islands Police Department. (Various years). *Crime Statistics Reports*
- Virgin Islands Source. (Various years). *Homicide Reporting Archives*

Publication Information

U. S. Virgin Islands Law Enforcement Planning Commission (LEPC)
Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands
Final Report | June 2026
Published November 2026
Prepared by Moleto A. Smith Jr., Director