



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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Wednesday, March 11, 2026

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **PUBLIC ALERT: THEFT OF FIRE BURN QUEEN STATUE FROM FORT FREDERIK MUSEUM**

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The Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR), through the Division of Libraries, Archives & Museums, is alerting the public to the confirmed theft of one of the three *Fire Burn Queens*—a handcrafted mahogany statue—from the North Art Gallery at the Fort Frederik Museum in Frederiksted, St. Croix.

The Department reported the theft to the Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD) on February 24<sup>th</sup> and an investigation is underway.

The missing statue is one of three *Fire Burn Queens* commissioned for Fort Frederik in honor of the 150th Anniversary of Emancipation, a project initiated by the Emancipation Commemoration Committee. These statues honor the legacy of *Mary Thomas*, *Axeline "Agnes" Salomon*, and *Mathilda McBean*, three heroines of Virgin Islands history who symbolize resistance, courage, and the fight for freedom. The artwork holds deep cultural and historical significance and belongs to the people of the Virgin Islands.

DPNR is urging the community to assist in locating the missing statue. Anyone with information is asked to contact VIPD or the museum directly at (340) 249-0765. All tips can be provided anonymously.

“These statues are not just art pieces—they are part of our collective heritage; we ask the public to help ensure this important cultural artifact is safely returned. To those responsible for its removal: we strongly urge you to return it immediately. It belongs to all of us,” stated Fort Curator Monica Marin.

The Department extends its appreciation to the community for its vigilance and support in preserving the history and cultural legacy of the Virgin Islands.