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PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE



THE FRIDAY REPORT



Honouring Heritage: St Vincent and the Grenadines Welcomes Garifuna Homecoming 2026

This week, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines proudly welcomed members of the global Garifuna community as the country hosted the 13th International Garifuna Conference, along with activities connected to the Garifuna Homecoming 2026 Rite of Passage and Pilgrimage.

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Prime Minister Hon. Dr Godwin Friday and members of his cabinet took part in several events recognising the historical and cultural importance of St Vincent and the Grenadines, known to the Garifuna people as Yurumein, their ancestral homeland.



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Prime Minister Delivers Keynote Address

On Wednesday, 11 March 2026, Prime Minister Friday delivered the keynote address at the Opening Ceremony of the 13th International Garifuna Conference, held under the theme “Sacred Grounds, Strategic Goals: Inclusion, Reparations, Balliceaux and the 2030 Pathway to Garifuna Empowerment.”

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In his speech, the Prime Minister reflected on the Garifuna people's lasting legacy and the importance of reclaiming and protecting this heritage within their ancestral homeland.

“The Garifuna story and our nation's story are one and the same: their story is our history and more and more also our present,” the Prime Minister stated.

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He also highlighted the importance of strengthening ties with Garifuna communities abroad, noting that

“We must see the Garifuna as part of our diaspora and look for ways and means to deepen the relationship through cultural and economic interactions.”



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Garifuna Homecoming Reception

On Thursday, 12 March 2026, Prime Minister Friday also hosted a Cocktail Reception in honour of the Garifuna Homecoming 2026 Rite of Passage and Pilgrimage, welcoming delegates, cultural leaders and members of the Garifuna diaspora visiting St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The evening featured a series of deeply moving and culturally rich performances by students from schools across the country, highlighting the vibrancy and resilience of Garifuna heritage.

Students from Evesham Methodist School, winners of the National Schools' Garifuna Folk Festival Best Choral Speech, delivered a powerful performance that showcased the historical journey and cultural pride of the Garifuna people.

This was followed by a vibrant dance display by St. Joseph's Convent Kingstown, winners of the National Schools' Garifuna Folk Festival Best Dance, which mesmerised the audience with its rhythmic expression of Garifuna traditions.

The programme ended with a vibrant Garifuna medley performed by students of the Dr. J.P. Eustace Memorial Secondary School, showcasing Garifuna music and culture through an energetic and captivating performance.



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Prime Minister Meets with Garifuna Diaspora Leaders

On Friday, 13 March 2026, Prime Minister Hon. Dr Godwin Friday met with visiting leaders of Garifuna organisations from the diaspora who were in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for the Garifuna Homecoming 2026 Rite of Passage and Pilgrimage and the 13th International Garifuna Conference.

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The meeting brought together representatives from several Garifuna organisations, including leaders linked to the United Garifuna Association Inc. and the Garifuna Nation, who travelled from across the region and the United States.

Also participating in the meeting were Hon. Shevern John, Minister of Social Welfare and Community Empowerment, Ecclesiastical Affairs and National Heritage, and Hon. Kaschaka Cupid, Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture.

The discussion focused on strengthening relationships between St Vincent and the Grenadines and the Garifuna communities abroad, as well as exploring opportunities for ongoing collaboration in preserving and promoting Garifuna heritage, culture, and historical awareness.

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