



REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

# Debates of the House of Representatives

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3rd Session – 11th Parliament (Rep.) – Volume 19 – Number 40

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**OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)**

THE HONOURABLE ANNISSETTE-GEORGE  
SPEAKER

THE HONOURABLE ESMOND FORDE  
DEPUTY SPEAKER

**Friday 22nd June, 2018**

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE: JACQUI SAMPSON-MEIGUEL**

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*Leave of Absence**Friday, June 22, 2018***HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Friday, June 22, 2018*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

**PRAYERS**[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, Mr. Ganga Singh MP, Member for Chaguanas West, has requested leave of absence from today's sitting of the House. The leave which the Member seeks is granted.

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Financial Statements of the Princes Town Regional Corporation for the year ended September 30, 2015. [*The Minister of Finance (Hon. Colm Imbert)*]  
*To be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.*
2. Consolidated Financial Statements of the Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation Limited for the year ended December 31, 2017. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]  
*To be referred to the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee.*
3. Final Audit Report of the Trinbago Unified Calypsonians' Organization (TUCO) operations for the period October 2013 to September 2016. [*The Minister of Community Development, Culture and the Arts (Hon. Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly)*]
4. Final Audit Report of the National Carnival Bands Association (NCBA) operations for the period October 2013 to September 2016. [*Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly*]
5. Final Audit Report of Pan Trinbago (Inc.)'s operations for the period October 2013 to September 2016. [*Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly*]

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORTS****(Presentation)****Local Authorities, Service Commissions and Statutory Authorities (including the THA) Statutory Authorities Service Commission**

**Mr. David Lee** (*Pointe-a-Pierre*): Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the absence of the Member for Couva North, I have the privilege and the honour to present the following report:

Eighth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Local Authorities, Service Commissions and Statutory Authorities (including the THA), Third Session (2017/2018), Eleventh Parliament on an Inquiry into the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Statutory Authorities Service Commission (SASC).

**State Enterprises****National Quarries Company Limited**

**The Minister of Social Development and Family Services (Hon. Cherrie-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn)**: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have the honour to present:

Eighth Report of the Joint Select Committee on State Enterprises, Third Session (2017/2018), Eleventh Parliament on an Inquiry to examine the operations of National Quarries Company Limited (NQCL), and to determine its effectiveness in fulfilling its mandate by maintaining quality of product and stability of supply.

**URGENT QUESTIONS****School Bus Drivers****(Reason for Non-Payment)**

**Mr. David Lee** (*Pointe-a-Pierre*): To the Minister of Education: Based on a recent report concerning protests by school bus drivers for the non-payment of salary arrears by the Ministry of Education in the sum of \$20 million, could the Minister state the reason for the non-payment and the time frame in which this issue will be rectified?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of Education. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of Education (Hon. Anthony Garcia)**: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Let me explain, as I have done on several occasions with respect to payments to the maxi-taxi operators. The maxi-taxi operators are engaged in a contract with the Public Transport Service Corporation. They have

to submit their invoices to the PTSC, who will examine the invoices and once those invoices meet the required stipulations, they are then sent to the Ministry of Education for payment. I have been informed that at the Ministry of Education there are no outstanding invoices awaiting payment. Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, supplemental?

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To the Minister of Education: Could the Minister of Education state—while he just stated there are no outstanding payments as far as the Ministry of Education, does he know if there are any outstanding payments waiting to be verified at the PTSC end of the process?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. A. Garcia:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not know whether the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre is asking me to go to PTSC and find out whether there are outstanding invoices. Where I stand, I am not aware of whether there are outstanding invoices residing at the PTSC. What I know is that at the Ministry of Education, there are no outstanding invoices awaiting payment. Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Oropouche West.

#### **Killing of Juvenile Sharks (Investigation of)**

**Mrs. Vidia Gayadeen-Gopeesingh (Oropouche West):** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries: In relation to a video currently circulating on social media depicting the killing of juvenile sharks via a “transparent net” in the Moruga waters, could the Minister indicate if any investigation has been launched into this matter?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (Sen. The Hon. Clarence Rambharat):** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I can confirm that the fisheries officer with responsibility for the Moruga area has reviewed the video and is in consultation with the Director of Fisheries to determine what action, if any, needs to be taken in relation to this matter. Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Oropouche West, supplemental?

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Hon. Minister, do you think that the “transparent net” may be plastic thrown into the waters by persons—the “transparent net”?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Rambharat:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am at a loss. I do not think the technology has reached to a point where the sea can convert discarded plastic into a fishing net. So the answer has to be no. I do not think that discarded plastic has turned itself into “transparent net” for the purpose of catching the juvenile sharks.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Oropouche West, question no. 3.

#### **Video of Sexual Activity in Classroom (Investigation of)**

**Mrs. Vidia Gayadeen-Gopeesingh (Oropouche West):** Thank you. To the Minister of Education: With regard to a video currently circulating on social media depicting two persons engaging in sexual activity in a classroom, could the Minister indicate if any investigation has been launched into this development?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of Education.

**The Minister of Education (Hon. Anthony Garcia):** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have seen a video circulating on social media, but I cannot ascertain whether that video really depicts two persons having sex. I really cannot decide that. What I know, however, is the contents of that video have absolutely nothing to do with any of our primary or secondary schools. And, therefore, it is unwise or unnecessary to launch any investigation. Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Supplemental, Oropouche West?

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Hon. Minister, have you or your department liaised with the cybercrime unit to verify the authenticity of that video?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. A. Garcia:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just said just now, it is unnecessary, or unwise for the Ministry of Education to delve further into that. Our business is educating our children, [*Desk thumping*] not to advocate anything with respect to videos that show any type of behaviour. Thank you.



**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Oropouche West, would you give way to your colleague?

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Yes, sure.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** All right. Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the Minister of Education telling this House that he is not concerned about the holistic development of the citizens of the country that fall under his jurisdiction? [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member that is a statement, not a question.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** No, I am asking.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** So could I get the question again, hon. Member?

**Mr. Indarsingh:** I simply asked the Minister of Education to clarify whether he, as the Minister of Education in relation to education institutions being under his jurisdiction, if he is concerned about the holistic development of students in Trinidad and Tobago. Simple as that.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I will not entertain that question, Member. Member for Barataria/San Juan, supplemental?

**Dr. Khan:** No.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I will go to question no. 4, then. I will call on the Chief Whip. The Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla is not present.

### **Rainy Season (Level of Preparedness For)**

**Mr. David Lee (*Pointe-a-Pierre*):** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On behalf of the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla who is stuck in traffic outside, question no. 4 to the Minister of Rural Development and Local Government: Given the impending onset of the rainy season and the hurricane season, could the Minister inform this House as to the level of preparedness of the various regional corporations?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I call on the Leader of the House.

**The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis):** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On behalf of the Minister of Rural Development and Local Government, the 14 municipal corporations have been put on alert and all resources have been given to the disaster

management units in the event of a hazard impact. Municipal corporations will utilize an all-of-corporation, all-of-government approach when dealing with the onset of any inclement weather systems.

The senior disaster management coordinator at the Ministry and the municipal corporations, through their disaster management units and the public health, have taken a number of steps to mitigate the effects of flooding and other natural disasters, such as: the cleaning of local drains and minor watercourses; cutting of trees that may create a hazard and the training of volunteers in community emergency response; shelter management; and first aid. They have also made efforts to stock both sandbags and sand for pre-event distribution in vulnerable areas. Shelters have been placed in a state of readiness with assigned shelter managers and necessary equipment. Thank you very kindly, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

#### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis):** Thank you very kindly, Mr. Deputy Speaker—[*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members, please. Leader of the House.

**Hon. C. Robinson-Regis:** Thank you very kindly, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are six questions for oral answer. We will be answering all six. There are no questions for written answer. Thank you very kindly, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

#### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

##### **Increased Violence by Secondary School Students (Measures To Assess Mental Health)**

**257. Mrs. Vidia Gayadeen-Gopeesingh** (*Oropouche West*) asked the hon. Minister of Education:

In light of reports of increased incidents of acts of violence committed by secondary school students, could the Minister indicate whether measures have been implemented to assess the mental health of students within the public secondary school system?

**The Minister of Education (Hon. Anthony Garcia):** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Ministry of Education, through the Student Support Services Division, (SSSD), has implemented a system of identification, referral and support for students who present themselves with symptoms associated with

mental health. Students who display insolent or dramatic changes affecting their performance, attendance or behaviour, are referred to the SSSD by school personnel. Initial screening by SSSD is conducted, and once a child is assessed for possible mental health issues, the parents are contacted and a referral is immediately prepared for the Child Guidance Clinic.

In instances where a student presents with suicide thoughts on the school compound, the parent is contacted and assistance is sought from the nearest health facility. Follow-up visits to the home of students are made by school social workers to assess any environmental factors associated with the behaviours. The student is allowed to return to school once a medical certificate of clearance is produced from a health facility or a medical practitioner. And ongoing support is provided by student support services personnel to ensure a smooth transition back to school.

Further, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Ministry of Education collaborates with several stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Health and the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Psychologists to provide support for students and training of Ministry of Education personnel, to identify students with mental issues. Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Supplemental, Member for Oropouche West.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Minister, how many school social workers are there in the Ministry? And I believe I will have to ask the other question, to ask how many are assigned to each school?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** We will take one at a time, Member. So we will go with the first one. Minister of Education.

**Hon. A. Garcia:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will provide the Member for Oropouche West with the specific information on written request. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Supplemental, Member for Oropouche West. The second question now?

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** The second question, I believe the Minister will also have to—because it follows—how many are assigned to each school?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It is just for the records. Thank you.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Yes, sure. How many social workers are assigned to each school?

**Sexual Activity in Schools  
(Sex Education Programme)**

**258. Mrs. Vidia Gayadeen-Gopeesingh (Oropouche West)** asked the hon. Minister of Education:

In light of reports of the increased number of students engaging in sexual activities in schools, could the Minister indicate whether there is a sex education programme for students?

**The Minister of Education (Hon. Anthony Garcia):** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our data do not corroborate an increase in the number of students engaging in sexual activity in our primary and secondary schools, as asserted by the Member of Parliament for Oropouche West. In fact, data provided by the Student Support Services Division show a 4 per cent decline in sexual inappropriate behaviour in 2017 over 2016 at the secondary level. Notwithstanding this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Ministry of Education considers every incident of sexual misconduct as one too many, and I am pleased to advise that sexuality and sexual health education is taught at both the primary and the secondary level through the Health and Family Life Education curriculum. This curriculum is designed to increase students' ability to make informed choices and practise responsible behaviour.

At the primary level, topics on sexuality and sexual health are discussed from as early as Infant Year I and continue throughout the class levels, incorporating areas such as growth and development with a focus on puberty, the concepts of gender and sexuality, respect for self and others, sexual health and factors and those things that influence sexual expressions.

At the lower secondary level, it is taught as a separate subject and some of the themes explored include: changes associated with puberty, managing inappropriate sexual behaviour and the impact on school life and sexual reproductive health, including sexually transmitted diseases. Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Supplemental, Member for Barataria/San Juan?

**Dr. Khan:** Minister, after reading that lengthy discussion, could you indicate and confirm whether sex education is definitely being taught in schools at this present time?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. A. Garcia:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, sometimes, you know, I wonder at the level of comprehension. I have stated specifically [*Desk thumping*] what is being taught in our schools. I explained that at the level of the primary school, this is immersed within the curriculum, and at the secondary level, it is a stand-alone subject. I said that. And the Member for Barataria/San Juan, you know, you went to a school that I am associated with. I am disappointed. Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Supplemental, Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Dr. Khan:** Supplemental. Because of the school I went to, and you know which school it is, you are then confirming that sex education is done in Trinidad and Tobago. Am I right or wrong?

**Hon. Member:** Always wrong.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker.** Minister of Education.

**Hon. A. Garcia:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, he is always wrong, as I am advised. [*Desk thumping*] Sex education is handled through the HFLE curriculum, and I have been saying that. Do I have to explain it word for word for you, so that you will understand? [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The Member for Fyzabad is not here, so I will call on the Chief Whip.

#### **South West Regional Health Authority (Status of Recent Leaked Photos)**

**269. Mr. David Lee (Pointe-a-Pierre)** on behalf of Mr. Lackram Bodoé (*Fyzabad*) asked the hon. Minister of Health:

Could the Minister indicate whether any employees of the South West Regional Health Authority were found culpable for the recent leaked photos of a patient while undergoing emergency surgery?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of Health.

**The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh):** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The investigation commenced on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April and is ongoing. The investigation is being conducted by the General Manager, Quality Improvement and Risk in collaboration with the Manager, Security Services. Due to the nature of the medical treatment that the patient had to

undergo, there were several teams of medical care personnel involved in the procedure and interviews are still being conducted. The investigation is 75 per cent complete.

**Child Sexual Abuse Offenders  
(Measures to Apprehend)**

**259. Mrs. Vidia Gayadeen-Gopeesingh** (*Oropouche West*) asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

Could the Minister state when additional measures will be implemented to improve the apprehension rate of child sexual abuse offenders for the protection of our children?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of National Security, question 259.

**The Minister of National Security (Hon. Maj. Gen. Edmund Dillon):** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Child Protection Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service continues to collaborate with the Children's Authority in responding to emergency reports. Representatives of the CPU will continue to accompany members of the Emergency Response Team of the Authority in conducting home/school visits and community enquiries especially in areas deemed to be of high risk in volatile situations, where the safety of the Authority's officer may be jeopardized.

The presence of the Child Protection Unit will also provide access to certain police powers that the Authority does not share. Furthermore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is currently reviewing the investigative process that is employed by the Child Protection Unit in matters related to child sexual abuse. The intention of such review is to devise a system which will generate an improved prosecution rate of these offenders. It is expected that this system will be finalized and operationalized by the end of June 2018, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Supplemental, Member for Oropouche West.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Thank you. Hon. Minister, what is the status of the sex offenders' registry?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** The status, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the registry is ongoing and is handled by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

**Public Health Sector  
(X-ray Services for Dental Patients)**

**270. Mr. David Lee** (*Pointe-a-Pierre*) on behalf of Mr. Lackram Bodoë (*Fyzabad*) asked the hon. Minister of Health:

Could the Minister indicate whether there are X-ray services for dental patients in the public health sector?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of Health.

**The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh):** Thank you very much again, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Yes, there are x-ray services for dental patients in the public health sector. A total of six facilities are outfitted with x-ray units that have been commissioned and operational. These facilities include:

1. The Biche Health Centre;
2. The Carenage Health Centre;
3. The Mayaro District Health Facility;
4. The Mayaro Health Centre;
5. The Valencia Health Centre; and
6. Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex, Mount Hope.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Primary School Students  
(New Ministry Directive)**

**271. Mr. David Lee** (*Pointe-a-Pierre*) on behalf of Mr. Lackram Bodoë (*Fyzabad*) asked the hon. Minister of Education:

Could the Minister indicate whether there is a new Ministry directive to primary schools to only accept students who live within a three-kilometre radius of a primary school?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of Education.

**The Minister of Education (Hon. Anthony Garcia):** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I stand on the fifth occasion to answer questions. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Ministry of Education has a stated policy that governs the admission of students into public primary schools. Where there are limited spaces available, priority must be given to applicants residing in the catchment area of the school. Catchment area is defined as three kilometres from the school. This is not a new directive to primary schools but has been in effect as far back as 1994. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as recent as February 2018, the Ministry of Education, in

consultation with the Association of Denominational Boards of Education, had agreed to the application procedure for the admission of students in primary schools. Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER**

**Final Audit Reports  
(TUCO/NCBA/Pan Trinbago)**

**The Minister of Community Development, Culture and the Arts (Hon. Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly):** Deputy Speaker, I have been authorized by the Cabinet to make the following statement subsequent to the laying of the Final Audit Reports for Trinbago Unified Calypsonians' Organisation (TUCO), National Carnival Bands Association (NCBA) and Pan Trinbago.

The Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts is charged with the responsibility of implementing policy initiatives for the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago as it pertains to the development and support of innovation and creativity in the cultural sector. In furtherance of this mandate, the Ministry provides funding to the three special interest carnival groups, through the National Carnival Commission (NCC) of Trinidad and Tobago for the efficient and effective presentation of Carnival, as well as other carnival-related activities.

The execution and management of these carnival-related activities and the hosting of the Carnival festival itself, have been under criticism and scrutiny by members of the special interest groups, other cultural stakeholders and the general public. Among the more serious criticisms are the disbursement and alleged mismanagement of funds to the stakeholders of these fraternities.

In an effort to enhance the transparency and improve the internal controls of the three special interest carnival groups, namely TUCO, NCBA and Pan Trinbago, the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts procured the services of an auditing firm to conduct a review of the income and expenditure, financial reporting and governance processes of the above mentioned interest groups for the period October 2013 to September 2016.

All tendering processes were administered and Ernst & Young Services Limited was contracted to conduct audit reviews on the operations of the interest groups. The scope of work of the audit for the period October 2013 to September 2016 included:



- i) Governance and executive oversight;
- ii) Internal control environment;
- iii) Executive recruitment and compensation; and
- iv) Analysis of revenue and expenditure.

**2.00 p.m.**

A summary of the main findings as reviewed and audited by Ernst & Young Services Limited revealed the following:

- The special interest groups are heavily dependent on government subventions for annual revenue;
- Their annual budget allocations are usually significantly less than their requests to the NCC;
- Key accounts and receipts were not properly checked and accounted for with respect to the receipt of revenue from the major carnival-related events;
- Policies and procedures were not formally approved and/or consistently adhered to;
- Adequate records for the receipt and payment of suppliers' invoices were not maintained;
- Payments to suppliers were not duly authorized as per the accounting policy and procedure;
- Tenders are not documented for the selection of vendors for significant purchases over \$100,000 and more so there was no evidence to suggest that tendering processes were conducted before vendors were selected;
- Conflicts of interest, re: executives being awarded contracts for the procurement of the goods and services;
- The required statutory payments were not remitted to the relevant financial institutions from July 2015 to present as funds were not available to pay these amounts;
- Bank accounts, receivables accounts and payables are not periodically checked and reconciled in the current year;
- Budgets were not formally approved by the executive;
- Lack of authorization and accountability for the issuance and receipt of company funds;

*Statement by Ministers*  
[HON DR. N. GADSBY-DOLLY]

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- Negative net current assets value over the period 2013 to 2017;
- Increases in bank overdrafts, loans and amounts payable in relation to events held for financial years 2015 and 2016 respectively;
- Limited guidelines on the recruitment and compensation for members of the executive;
- Inadequate accounting controls and their inability to determine the source of funds for financial transactions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, due to the fact that each of these entities, NCBA, Pan Trinbago and TUCO received considerable funding from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, the findings of the audits are of great concern to the Cabinet, the Ministry, and the citizens of this country. For this reason, Cabinet has directed that the audit reports of the special interest groups be forwarded to the Auditor General for provision of specific recommendations to the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts, which will increase the level of accountability, transparency, as well as value for money invested in the Carnival product through the interest groups.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, cognizant of the exigencies of the situation, Cabinet has requested an urgent response within one month from the Auditor General. This will facilitate the necessary adjustments in financial arrangements for Carnival 2019 between the NCC and the special interest groups which sit on its board. After receipt of the Auditor General's recommendations, the decisions of the Cabinet on this matter will be communicated to the Parliament in a subsequent statement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY  
(LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN)**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I recognize the Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Rodney Charles** (*Naparima*): [*Desk thumping*] Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

*Whereas* the Minister of National Security is responsible for ensuring public safety by the maintenance of law and order and the effective oversight of the national security infrastructure;

*And whereas* the number of citizens who have lost their lives to the criminal element since September 2015 has risen astronomically to unprecedented levels leading to a nation paralyzed by fear;

*And whereas* women, children and the elderly have been under attack in the most vicious and brutal ways ever experienced as a result of the rampant and emboldened criminal elements;

*And whereas* the actions and inactions of the Minister of National Security have demonstrated his failure to properly discharge his functions;

*And whereas* the conduct, actions and non-performance of the Minister of National Security have been the subject of widespread adverse commentary, criticism and censure by citizens, the media and the civil society which has undermined public confidence in him:

*Be it resolved* that this House express its lack of confidence in the Minister of National Security and call upon the Prime Minister to revoke his appointment forthwith. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, under this Minister of National Security, our nation struggles to escape from the grip of fear and criminals. His failure to manage the increasing crime levels has impacted our freedom, our business, our pockets and our sense of safety. Criminals are more brazen. They walk our streets, and rob and shoot in broad daylight. Crime no longer has any restriction. The whole of Trinidad and Tobago, including the constituency of Naparima, is a hot spot. His plans are fruitless. All talk, no action. He has done nothing to address the problem at the source and prevent the creation of more criminals, whilst simultaneously dealing with the current ones. The Minister of National Security has failed our country and failed the office he holds. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, first and foremost, I represent over 50,000 constituents of the Naparima constituency. Over 50-something—[*Interruption*]

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, Standing Order 48(10). Has the Member been given permission to read?

**Mr. Padarath:** The Member is not reading.

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** The Member was reading.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hold on. Excuse. Excuse. Member for Princes Town, it is too early. Right? There is a procedure. The Member got up and went

*No Confidence in Nat'l Sec. Minister*  
[MR. CHARLES]

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according to the procedure. You did not. There is a procedure. Members! Members, I have only recognized the Member for Naparima who is on his legs. Member for Naparima, proceed and I will be guided accordingly as we go along in terms of the Standing Order that the Member rose. Proceed.

**Mr. R. Charles:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Naparima we have had 14 murders since this Minister of the National Security came to office. [*Desk thumping*] I could call the names, the addresses, the ages, the suffering that these 14 murders have presented in our constituency. We have Eric Ganesh, 19 years; a male. He was killed on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June this year. He was shot; unsolved. Dipchand Heeralal, Williamsville, shot, murder unsolved; Radha Baldeo, shot, murder unsolved; Deoraj Bedassie, chopped, murder unsolved; Daniel Copper, Cedar Hill, shot, murder unsolved; Takari Aidihim, male. Takari stabbed, murder unsolved; CEPEP worker Basdeo Premand, shot, murder unsolved; Carlos Samuel, Khanhi Road, shot, murder unsolved; Kyle Francis, Williamsville, shot, murder unsolved. I could go on and on. [*Interruption*] It is 14 murders, one resolved, a detection rate of under 10 per cent. It is unacceptable [*Interruption*] in a country aspiring to 21<sup>st</sup> century status. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member? For a second time, Member for Princes Town, I am not tolerating those outbursts. I am taking note. It is the second time. Proceed.

**Mr. R. Charles:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will get injury time?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Yes. I will be guided.

**Mr. R. Charles:** Thank you. Since this Minister of National Security was appointed in September of 2015, there are more than 1,355 murders in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Hon. Member:** Repeat that.

**Mr. R. Charles:** One thousand, three hundred and fifty-five murders. From 2016 to—sorry. In 2015, there were 141 murders since September; in 2016, 462, representing a 10 per cent increase over the previous year. In 2017, it escalated to 495 murders, an increase of 7.1 per cent; and in 2018, so far we have 257—it could be 270 from what I heard on the radio this afternoon—an increase of 8.2 per cent. So comparing 2015 to 2018, from January to May, murders increased by 45.6 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the murder projection for 2018, according to economist Roger Hosein, is 552, the highest in the history of Trinidad and Tobago. According to reports, in January 2018, the murder toll of 60 murders was the highest ever recorded in a one-month period in Trinidad and Tobago. Researchers have pointed out to me—have recorded 61 murders for May 2018. In 2015, when the UNC or the People's Partnership Government was in office, there were only 31 murders, and today it has increased to 61, almost doubled under the watch of this Minister of National Security. When we look at murders by gender, from 2016 to present, out of the significant number that I just called, recorded murders, a total of 1,062 men and 118 females were killed. In other words, 88 per cent of the murders were males and 10 per cent females under the watch of this Minister of National Security. Too many of our males are dying to guns and murder, and the inability and the incapacity of this Government to provide safety and security to the citizenry.

When we look, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at murders by age group, under 15, 2 per cent. But the critical young male 16 to 25, 22 per cent of the murders under his watch were in the age group 16 to 25. In the age group 26 to 35, it was 30 per cent. The productive age, 30 per cent. So when we total 16 to 35, we get 52 per cent. So our young people have no confidence, have no capacity to survive under this administration. [*Desk thumping*] We looked at the age group 36 to 45. It is 16 per cent; 46 to 55, 9 per cent; 56 to 65, 4 per cent; and 66 and above, 2 per cent. If we total the age group from 16 to 45, 68 per cent of the murders fall in that category—[*Interruption*]

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Most productive years.

**Mr. R. Charles:**—and that I am reminded are the most productive years of our citizens in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at murders involving domestic relationships, in the past two years more than 50 women who obtained protection orders or restraining orders against their estranged husbands and partners are now dead. According to statistics from the International Women's Resource Network, the Minister of National Security is failing our women who have sought protection even from his Ministry. [*Desk thumping*] Ms. Adriana Rattan, President of the association that I just called, said and I quote:

“...protection orders ‘only serves to infuse more anger into the minds of perpetrators almost like a gateway to commit...heinous acts.’”

And:

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“Unless and until there is a holistic review of the content of these orders with guaranteed protection for the victims, the country would continue to lose our women tragically....”

So when our women go to this Government and say, “We need help”, the Government is unable to provide protection.

The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service Public Affairs Officer, ASP Michael Jackman, on May 2018:

“He said”—in 2017—“there were 1,100 cases of domestic violence reported of which 43 victims were killed.

So far”—as of 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2018—“there have been over 100 reports made to the police.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we look at our witness protection programme. Our witness protection support systems have virtually collapsed under this Minister of National Security. According to statistics from the Victim and Witness Support Unit of the TTPS, the number of domestic violence-related murders in 2015 was 15. In 2017, we are told it increased to 43 under the watch of this Minister; 15 in 2015, 43 in 2017.

Murder detection rate. This is information from the TTPS website: 2016, it was 15.2 per cent; in 2017, 17.9; and in 2018, 18.8. This increase in the detection rate is inconsistent with a country that aspires to provide for the safety and well-being of the citizens.

When we look at foreigners murdered since the Minister of National Security assumed office, based on records from 2016 to present, there have been 25 foreigners murdered, mainly Chinese and Guyanese. Chinese, seven; Guyanese, eight; Jamaican, two; Japanese, one; Venezuelan, one; British, one; Mexican, one; Dominican Republic, one; German, one; one Canadian.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Vishnu Narine, age 56 from Ontario, Canada, was shot dead and dumped at the side of the Usine Ste. Madeleine pond in December 2017, just a day before he was scheduled to fly back to Canada from vacation. The story was highlighted on all major Canadian networks. The *Global News*, Canada, headline, “Ontario man murdered in Trinidad”. The *Huffington Post* Canada, in December 3<sup>rd</sup>, “Canadian found dead in Trinidad and Tobago was murdered”. The *Toronto Star*, “Canadian man killed while vacationing in Trinidad and Tobago”. *CityNews* Canada, “Ontario man killed while vacationing in Trinidad and Tobago”. *CTV News*, Canada, “Canadian citizen dead in Trinidad

and Tobago”. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we talk about diversification and a tourism thrust. Would Canadians after reading this and understanding what takes place in Trinidad and Tobago with a Canadian citizen, vacationing in our country—it spells disaster for our tourism thrust.

The methods of murder since the Minister assumed office—and we are talking from September 2015 to the present: 1 per cent was strangled; 1 per cent throat slit—and I was listening on the radio coming up today and they were talking about a couple, I think they were businessmen and both their throats were slit—chopped, 2 per cent; burnt, 2 per cent; beaten with a blunt instrument, 3 per cent; stabbed, 9 per cent; and a whopping 74 per cent were killed using guns.

So we come to the issue of illegal firearm seized and whether that is having an impact on the reduction of the murder rate. Acting Police Commissioner Stephen Williams at a media briefing in December 2017, said:

“Trinidad and Tobago has seized the highest number of weapons— over one thousand—within the Caribbean region for the year 2017 to date.”

He said so.

“...for 2017 a total of 1,026 illegal firearms were seized; a 32 percent...compared to 2016, during which 765 firearms were seized.”

From January to April 2018, compared to the same period last year, there has been an increase in 15.5 per cent in possession of firearms and ammunition offences according to the TTPS data. However, there is no relationship between the number of guns seized by the police and gun-related murders. It seems as if the more that they seized the more murders are committed, and no one knows; there is no data. The Ministry of National Security is not data driven. No one knows, not even the Ministry of National Security, how many guns there are in Trinidad and Tobago as I speak.

**Hon. Member:** Illegal guns.

**Mr. R. Charles:** Illegal guns. The number of murders by division: Central, 18 per cent—this is since the Minister came into office—Eastern Division, 7; North Eastern, 10; Northern, 22; Port of Spain, 14; South Western, 7; Southern, 13; Tobago, 2; and Western Division, 8 per cent. Out of nine police divisions, the Northern Division has the highest murder rate of 272, 22 per cent, followed by Central Division and Southern Division. Tobago had four murders in 2016.

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Guess what happened in 2017? They had four in 2016. In 2017 it increased to 13. In other words, in Tobago, in one year there was a 225 per cent increase in murders and all this took place while this Minister was in office.

We note, anecdotally, that the Southern Division is experiencing an increase, an escalation in crime, as criminals migrate from the hot spots into what they consider to be safe havens in southern areas. The number of gangs increased exponentially under this Minister of National Security. The hon. Attorney General, in piloting the Anti-Gang legislation he said, between 2014 and this year gangs in Trinidad and Tobago have increased 129 per cent, and gang members have increased 60 per cent, and we are seeing, and I am quoting:

“...an exponential rise in gang activity.”

He said, in 2014 the Acting Police Commissioner said there were 92 gangs with 1,500 members. In 2016, guess what? It increased to 172 gangs and 2,358 members. Today, it has increased again to 211 gangs and 2,458 members.

What it is that when this PNM is in Government that the number of gangs and gang members increase exponentially? [*Desk thumping*] And what would a responsible Government do to stop that pipeline of young males from our secondary school system to our Remand Yard and our prison? A responsible Government would take the decisive action to stop that. [*Desk thumping*] Gang membership and incentives to join gangs have increased under the watch of this Government and, in particular, this Minister of National Security. He has failed. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I go to the cost of crime. This is a burden that our society is bearing. The country is paying a significant price for the incompetence of the Ministry of National Security. Crime is now a growth industry in Trinidad and Tobago. The only growing industry is funeral homes, and in Princes Town the only industry that has been established around my constituency. In Princes Town, along the Naparima/Mayaro Road, there is a new building; guess what? It is soon to be opened, the J. E. Guide Funeral Home and Crematorium Limited. That is where we reach in this country. According to the United Nations Global Burden on Armed Violence in 2015, methodology used by Roger Hosein, there was a \$172 million loss in productive output in 2017. Homicides are having a serious impact on this country and economist Roger Hosein said, “If someone was murdered at age 29, other things being constant, that person loses 31 years in the labour force”.



The Government budgeted to spend \$6.4 billion on national security in the current fiscal year. National security is the second largest allocation of the national budget, with education receiving \$7.39 billion. It is still a huge slice of our budgetary pie for keeping the country safe, as well as to fund the fight against crime. But since coming to office the Minister of National Security and his Ministry has spent over \$20 billion of our hard-earned taxes. Twenty billion dollars the Ministry has spent, yet this Minister of National Security has failed to deliver on his mandate on providing a safe and secure society. Out of 17 Latin American and Caribbean countries, Trinidad and Tobago ranks sixth for annual cost of crime as a portion of GDP—sixth. This country loses 2.26 per cent and 3.52 per cent of GDP to crime annually, the cost of crime that we all bear, the incompetence that we all pay for.

The IDB report, *Restoring Paradise In The Caribbean, Combating Violence With Numbers*, looked at crime in five Caribbean countries: Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, the Bahamas, Barbados and Suriname, and found that Government expenditure on crime in Trinidad and Tobago is between 1.04 per cent and 1.68 per cent of GDP, which is above the average for 17 Latin America and Caribbean countries. In other words, we are spending more on crime than is the benchmark norm in Latin America and the Caribbean and we are not getting the results for the money we have invested in the Ministry of National Security. [*Desk thumping*]

The hon. Prime Minister, at the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service Manpower Audit Committee function, he said that every murder case that is going through the courthouse costs taxpayers between \$1 million and \$10 million. So if we eliminate murders, or reduce murders, the country saves money. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we solve the 550 anticipated murders for 2018, this year the legal cost could exceed \$1 billion. The macro and micro cost of crime is over TT \$10 billion, \$10,000 million, and could be as high as \$14 billion annually if one were to quantify Government cost, the social cost and the private cost. At a previous debate I indicated some of the cost. If we take, for example, funerals, and let us say each funeral costs \$20,000—they cost more—and we project 487 murders, that is \$9.74 million we are talking about. National security budget \$6.2 billion: health cost, loss of external investment, tourism cost with the travel advisories and tourist like Canadians—and friends of mine in Canada, who I studied with in Canada, indicated that they had postponed visits to Trinidad when they began to read the advisories and read reports of citizens being murdered in Trinidad and Tobago.

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We have individual cost. We all know burglar proof, CCTV, Blink, GPS alarm, psychological cost, loss of breadwinners in our homes, \$14 billion this country is paying for the incompetence of the Ministry of National Security. [*Desk thumping*] And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we get excuses galore. The Government fails to realize that they were elected to govern, and as the Member for Tobago West reminded us, we are in charge now and we are to deal with it. You want to take the advantage of being in charge now, but put the blame on everybody else.

So the Prime Minister, Dr. Rowley, asserted more will die after the Opposition failed to support the Anti-Gang Bill. But he was rebuffed by the Opposition Leader who instead asserted that the PNM administration was attempting to blame the Opposition Benches for runaway murder rate under National Security Minister, the hon. Edmund Dillon. And the excuse to blame the Opposition, I heard the Minister say, “When we say that when the PNM is in power murder rates increase”, and his response was, “When the UNC is in Opposition the murder rates increase”. I am trying to figure that out. I spoke to my seven-year-old granddaughter and she just steups and walked away. Does not make sense.

### **2.30 p.m.**

The National Security Minister sought to cast blame on the Opposition for the crime problem in the country, as he pointed out its failure to support the Bail (Amdt.) Bill last year, resulted in more than 1,400 prisoners accessing bail and walking free since August 2016. “Blame all wrong.” No data. No facts. “Get up, ketch ah vaps and it sound nice and yuh say it.”

Dr. Rowley criticized the process for selecting the top cop. Asked whether he knew who was on the short-list, he said: I as Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, I am the person who knows the least about that and that is part of the stupidity that is going on in this country. Absolving himself, Pontius Pilate. I am not responsible. I do not know what is going on. Blame everybody. Dr. Rowley said it appears as though some are eager because they like to—when you raise these issues and they are incapable of confronting them, they want to make you feel guilty, so that they silence you and you self-censor. Dr. Rowley said it appears as though some are eager to report on crime issues in Trinidad and Tobago.

We are not eager to report, it pains me to give this data. This is my country that I love. We on this side are patriots [*Desk thumping*] and it pains us to see what is happening. Cry, cry, my beloved country.

Angered by the escalating crime rate, especially domestic-related murders in the last month, Prime Minister, Dr. Rowley, last night called on women to choose their male companions more wisely.

So heaven. Blame women. Blame everybody except the incompetence of the Ministry of National Security. [*Desk thumping*] Failures of their many crime plans, failures, absolute failures.

They promised to address at-risk youth—that is in their manifesto—to improve legislation to deal with crime, to upgrade national security infrastructure and safeguard our borders, to establish and upgrade our agencies and policies and implement a crime prevention plan/programme. Talk with no meaning, with no serious intent to implement.

What have they done? At-risk youth, the PNM manifesto falsely claims that they will use police youth clubs, they will use the cadet force, the Citizens Security Programme and the like, to identify programmatic and strategic prevention and intervention and suppression activities. Nice words.

They say they will embed pro-social development strategies towards preventing young persons from becoming involved in offending behaviour, and they will implement an aggressive, public outreach campaign on effective strategies to combat juvenile violence. Anybody has seen anything in the national community about any public outreach campaign on effective strategies to combat juvenile violence? None of us have seen that.

The Citizens Security Programme which they sought to use to achieve these things has not been heard of since 2015. They talk about at-risk youth, but they have cut MiLAT allocation for 2018 by \$4 million, \$4 million. They could buy boats from Australia, which we do not need, with money we do not have, but cannot find \$4 million for MiLAT to save the young inner-city males, [*Desk thumping*] many of them are in their constituencies. That is immoral, it is immoral, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Member, your 30 minutes has elapsed. You have an additional 15. You care to avail yourself?

**Mr. Charles:** Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you. Their 10-point crime plan was almost—there is a fundamental mistake in their strategy. Their strategy is legislative and not management. The problem with crime is a managerial problem, not a legislative problem. [*Desk thumping*] It is an axiom of criminal

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justice studies that you cannot legislate yourself out of crime, yet 90 per cent of what they do is legislative.

They want you to become involved in the selection of the Commissioner of Police, legislative. They promised to activate laws as necessary to establish municipal police units in 14 local government agencies, legislative; to amend the existing legislation to give powers to the Police Complaints Authority, legislative; to establish a standing Joint Select Committee of Parliament on crime suppression and security, legislative; make the witness tampering an offence, legislative; make unlawful eviction an offence, legislative; anti-gang legislation, legislative. They want to, quote, "Accept the Caribbean Court of Appeal as a final court of appeal", legislative. Eight of their 10 strategies in their crime plan are legislative and none of them address the fundamental issues for crime and how to address the management issues related to the police and the support services.

They promised to upgrade the national security infrastructure and to protect our borders, they have failed. Gang wars and killings continue to evade detection. In 2018, they promised to upgrade the Remand Yard facility, failure. Fifty-three million was approved for this project. Nothing, no work as far as we know has begun. They have failed to manage our prison system, failure. They promised to upgrade the Immigration Detention Centre, failure. They promised to establish an offender management programme, which will manage the inmate population and allow information to be shared with other agencies, as well as improve the accountability of the TT Prison Service, failure. The Forensic Science Centre is under-staffed as we speak. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Laventille West, please, those outbursts.

**Mr. Charles:** Another failure. They talk about porous borders, \$336 million spent on the coast guard, but we cannot see them patrolling our borders and preventing arms and ammunitions from coming in. In fact, some people call it the "TTGS, the Trinidad and Tobago Ghost Guard", because we cannot see them.

An article published on June 14, 2018, by *Eurasia Review*, analyzing the "TT Ghost Guard" and the Australian connection said one of the politically-charged utterances emanating from the Prime Minister was his accusation the previous Government had run six Austal-built fast patrol craft into the ground and that they were now gathering moss. This is an unfortunate distortion of an even unfortunate saga that led to the vessels being rendered unserviceable. He said that. We left him with 12 vessels and yet they are nowhere to be seen.

Illegal immigrants cross our borders at a rate of 150 to 200 per week. We have lost our country. Everywhere you walk in San Fernando you hear Spanish. Every third lady is a Spanish person. And how do they come in? How many are there? Why can we not stop them? That is the responsibility of this Minister of National Security.

So, “hear talk”. They said in their manifesto: we would move swiftly to improve the coast guard. In their budget, one year later, they say we would move swiftly to manage the security and integrity.

During the 2017 budget, “dey say we far advanced” in establishing the joint border patrol agency. During the 2018 budget, we were told all of the new naval vessels are now in operation. But last month, upon his return from Australia, the Prime Minister stated that the coasts of Trinidad and Tobago are very porous and unprotected. “So dey say one ting but dey forget” that we could keep records and we could judge what they said yesterday with what they said today. It is a failure of the Minister of National Security when his 2.5 years in office has caused our borders to become more and more unprotected. Agencies that we are supposed to—that they said that they would upgrade—and that is why I say it is a management problem, not a legislative problem.

He said he will reform, upgrade and modernize and transform the police service. I want to give a tick, failure; establish a police management agency, failure; establish a police service inspectorate, failure; develop and employ a scientific investigative strategy, failure; develop a policy on prison management, another failure. Failure, failure, failure. [*Desk thumping*]

In the 2018 budget presentation, they proposed to launch a key initiative, the national crime prevention programme. Nine months later and we are still hearing it will be revealed soon. “It coming” like the *Galleons Passage* boat, “it coming soon but it cyah arrive”. [*Desk thumping*]

And they have now have started this strategy of walking, this Johnny Walker. We are now a walking country, and the Attorney General, he commended the Minister of National Security for his hard work in fighting crime. He said they would focus on guns and hot spots in an attempt to get crime under control, talk, in his strategy to walk about and hope the criminals will see his face and give up a life of criminality. That is the latest strategy.

So, since 2016 and it is not new. In 2016, they adopted this walking strategy. August 2016, they walked in Enterprise, crime increased. February 2017, they walked in Point Fortin, crime increased. February 13<sup>th</sup>, Carnival Tuesday,

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walkabout, crime increased. [*Desk thumping*] And on June 13<sup>th</sup>, a show of force, a glorified walkabout in Laventille “and murders increasing while dey walking”. Shameful. Disgraceful. This is the country that we love being taken for a ride. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of National Security was oblivious to the potential gang wars in Port of Spain. He got up and said—in response to a question—he said there is no gang activity in Port of Spain. I have the report here. He said it in Parliament. But a day later, the TTPS saying “Yes, Isis fighting Rasta City. So who tuh believe? Who tuh believe?” The man in charge does not know his Ministry.

I will tell you about the weaknesses of their approach. Plenty nice talk and plans that take too long to come into effect. The Enterprise police station is yet to be constructed. Yeah? The Minister of National Security blamed the UNC for dismantling and selling offshore patrol vessels but fails to answer why. After three years he has failed to reassemble it.

We see community patrols by police with their bright blue lights indicating criminals are in the area. The criminals in the area watching the blue lights and as soon as they drive, they commit the crime. A show of force in Port of Spain will not have any impact on crime. Just like Operation Anaconda, if you recall, in 2002, it did not have. That show of force and “man walking with gun, dah is 17<sup>th</sup> Century policing, Robert Peel and those fellas”. So we have no confidence in this Minister. Why? He is a non-performer, much like the rest of his colleagues. No sense of responsibility, blames everyone else.

The forensic science still overburdened. No youth incentive programmes to prevent the pipeline from our secondary schools to Remand Yard. The domestic violence cases are not being given the level of attention and severity they deserve. His focus is on locking up and not rehabilitating or providing options that disincentivize criminal activity.

Failure of the SSA to provide actionable intelligence. We get info on our citizens abroad via CNN, via Fox News, via the US Senate, via human rights watch but never, not at all, from the SSA—\$500 million wasted on that institution. The police service riddled with corruption. The PNM claim they are tackling corruption. They should have started with the police service and rooted out the bad officers who encourage crime and give the good ones a bad name.

It was a special reserve officer, a constable who was arrested recently in London, after he was found in possession of cocaine. The last person I would

expect to embarrass us on the global arena is a police officer. Why are the rogue officers not being rooted out? But yet we are told, [*Desk thumping*] when they had the anti-gang legislation, we gave 7,000 police the right to lock up anybody on suspicion of being a gang member for 72 hours, suspicion. If you have 10 per cent rogue officers, meaning 720 police officers, could lock up any one of us on the suspicion. They talk about a Carnival terror plot. “We not even sure that that is real. We have no data. We not sure.” Absolute failure to manage murders. His failure is costing the country between \$10 billion and \$15 billion.

What is patriotism? I want to focus a little bit on what is patriotism. It is love of country and a willingness to do anything to service the advancement of one's country. It is an act of patriotism: If one's country is attacked, that you volunteer to go in the armed service and you lay down your life in defence of your country. It is a patriotic act to sacrifice time and money for one's country. Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, Malcolm X, died, laid down their life for a philosophy tied to their country's growth and development. It is an act of patriotism, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If a Minister of National Security sees that he is unable to reduce crime, he is unable to break up gangs, he is unable to provide hope for lost inner-city souls, he is unable to console parents whose sons and daughters are being murdered, it is a patriotic duty to resign. You do not have to be told that. That is going to be your legacy.

In closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, the political leader, the Member for Siparia and myself, attended the funeral of Eric Ganesh. There we witnessed a family and a community in St. Charles, my constituency, in total distress, absolute distress. It was Eric Ganesh, 19 years old, St. Charles Village, Princes Town, who played by the rules, went to school. He was a church member in a Pentecostal church over the road. He took Holy Communion, played by the rules but killed because of the incompetence of this Government. What could the Opposition Leader say to console the mother? You saw the mother touching her son, the only child, his hair, fixing his face, chasing away the flies, putting perfume. She was totally lost. What could we tell that community? Even the pastor was at a loss for words. How could we comprehend the reasons for this murder? Eric Ganesh died because criminals know, they know, that they would kill and not be caught. That is the experience in Naparima, 14 murders and one detected. [*Desk thumping*] They know they could kill Ganesh and get away with it, because we have an incompetent Government in power. We cannot depend on this Minister of National Security and Government.

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I beg to move that the Prime Minister does the honourable thing, the patriotic thing, and remove this Minister of National Security and save the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. For heaven's sake, for God's sake, have some pride, have some sense of how history will assess your stewardship. Do the honourable thing and resign forthwith. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I would like to second this Motion moved by the Member for Naparima and I reserve my right to speak at a later date.

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of Communications, Minister in the Office of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Stuart Young):** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, my fellow Members and most importantly, audience of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, we rise here this afternoon, after hearing a most impassioned and read speech from the Member for Naparima, where he ended talking about patriotism. And, perhaps, that is the appropriate place to start. Because the civic-minded citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, understand quite well what patriotism is. They understand what it is that persons do to better Trinidad and Tobago. So using the opportunity and starting with the concept of patriotism and hearing it screamed from the hills that they are patriotic, let us remind ourselves what the 41 of us here sit in Parliament to do on a weekly basis. We sit here to pass legislation, because that is what is within our power. One of the tools to be utilized to fight crime is legislation. So if you are really serious and you are really patriotic and you want to do what is right for Trinidad and Tobago, you would support legislation utilized to fight crime. [*Desk thumping*]

I stand here to remind the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago what has taken place over the last two-plus years. FATF, FATCA, all of these important pieces of legislation that are to fight crime and white collar crime, where there were serious implications for Trinidad and Tobago, citizens of Trinidad and Tobago remind yourselves, what did those on the other side do, including the Member for Naparima. They stood here in protest against legislation, took it down to the wire and took Trinidad and Tobago to the brink.

Anti-gang legislation, the police service are the ones who said this was a necessary tool to fight crime in Trinidad and Tobago. And as we heard the Member for Naparima quote the statistics of the growth of gangs in Trinidad and



Tobago, Trinidad and Tobago remind yourselves what those on the other side, who are now mumbling, murmuring and looking rather nervous, did about anti-gang legislation. They blocked it two and three times in this Parliament. That is not patriotic behaviour. [*Desk thumping*]

It is quite ironic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we stand here today to be given advice by those on the other side as they direct their attacks on a fine man, Ret. Maj. Gen. Edmund Dillon for Point Fortin, whom we on this side [*Desk thumping*] stand fully behind, as he takes on the scourge of crime. Let us remind ourselves what the advice that can come from the other side is. Change a Minister of National Security every few months. Because the people of Trinidad and Tobago will know that it takes a Minister a minimum or around nine months to get fully acclimatized, in control and driving his or her Ministry forward.

What did they do to deal with national security issues and crime which we are reaping the benefits for today? Sandy. After Sandy was Mr. Warner. After Mr. Warner was gone, “ahhhh” Mr. Warner. We remember the cloud over Mr. Warner, their chosen Minister of National Security, the chairman of the party. “Dey looking fuh him in de US; trying to extradite him for crimes committed in FIFA. Dat is Minister ah National Security.”

After Warner, Emmanuel George. Poor Emmanuel George. “Put him in, pull him out.” After Emmanuel George, Gary Griffith. And why did Gary Griffith get moved from office? Because he told the truth. Gary Griffith, as a Minister of National Security, was removed from office because he stood up, told the truth and is a witness against a former Attorney General, [*Desk thumping*] who is now before the criminal courts for tampering with a witness. That is how you deal with crime UNC style. “And de last thing dey do is dey bring in Alphonso.” [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence. Silence.

**Hon. S. Young:** Mr. Deputy Speaker—oh yes, and there was a Minister in the Ministry of National Security stumbling out the blocks, flicking on blue lights, refusing to breathe. Gone. Mohini as well, gone. So those are the UNC Ministers of National Security. But you know what? A PNM Government took no pride in seeing the crime levels skyrocket. What we would do is we would stand up and do what is right for the people of Trinidad and Tobago and support legislation when we were in Opposition, for example the Anti-Gang Bill. [*Desk thumping*] So we reject their suggestions as to how to deal with national security.

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We reject their call for the hon. Minister of National Security to be removed, because your plan failed and the country today is facing and reaping the benefits of your six, seven, eight Ministers of failed national security, bar one who got fired because he squealed on your Attorney General, and let us leave that alone now and let us now walk.

We are now going to walk to a Commissioner of Police because everybody knows the constitutional body charged with the responsibility of protecting and serving the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago is not the Government. It is not the Minister of National Security. It is the Commissioner of Police. What did they do? What did they do? They brought in two foreigners, Gibbs and Ewatski. And what did they do? They fired them midterm, paid them millions of dollars.

But I want to remind the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, what they also did when Gibbs and Ewatski were in Brazil. Gibbs and Ewatski were in Brazil attending a conference and they called a state of emergency. The Commissioner of Police, the police force, did not know and to this day, do not know why they called that state of emergency. I heard them this week talk about there were a few police officers who suggested it. We know what happened with them too. Right? So, they got rid of the last permanent Commissioner of Police and Deputy Commissioner of Police that this country has had. And their then Attorney General is on record as saying: "It better tuh have him temporary. He go work hard acting. He need tuh beg for his supper", et cetera. That is not how this Government deals with crime. [*Desk thumping*]

One of the first things this patriotic Government did is amend the order to appoint a Commissioner of Police and to simplify it. What did they do? "Run tuh court, challenge it, demolish certain parts of it." But we still pressed on. We did what we could have done. We took a decision not to appeal it, even though we thought it was wrong in law. Why? To allow the Police Service Commission to get on with their job of appointing a Commissioner of Police.

And we saw, in this Parliament, just a few weeks ago, what it is; an interference that took place in that process of appointment of a Commissioner of Police. And we know. We know that there were certain persons coaching people who had advance information, coaching people to get a certain person as a Commissioner of Police. We will not stand for that on this side. [*Desk thumping*]

I heard him talking about guns. Because we accept, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the majority of heinous crimes today being committed against our citizens of Trinidad and Tobago that are really criminal-related, not the crimes of passion, not the family disputes where they still use, on occasions, the cutlasses, the

hammers, the knives, et cetera. We cannot ban cutlasses, knives and hammers. Those are crimes of passion. Those are crimes of emotion. Those are crimes where people have family disputes, et cetera, and they are most unfortunate. But again, this Government does not politicize that the way those on the other side do. He stood here today in full glare of the public.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, again, I would like you to identify the Member appropriately, please. The “he” and the “him”—

**Hon. S. Young:** The Member for Naparima stood here today, and with a great sense of enthusiasm and pride, dragged up some of these heinous crimes and crimes of passion and the same children who today are suffering, because they found their mother dead, it appears as the result of bludgeoning from a hammer, that is what they want to politicize.

You saw the Member for Naparima a short while ago, theatrics, pretending to be someone in a funeral and telling us. That is not what you do if you are a true patriot. That is what you do when you are a politician politicizing crime. [*Desk thumping*]

So let us talk about guns, because no one in Trinidad that we know of manufactures guns. Guns come in via porous borders. They like to make fun now of porous borders. But let me remind the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the borders were porous, what was done about it and what is most importantly being done about it now.

So the Government, prior to 2010, took a decision and bought six Austal fast patrol boats to patrol the borders, as part of a tiered system, to protect our borders. There was a maintenance contract in place to keep these vessels afloat and to make sure these vessels were working properly; a contract to maintain those six fast-patrol vessels by Austal. Do you know what happened? When the contract expired, “dey fire and run Austal”. The boats deteriorated and that is because they on the other sides, calling themselves, falsely, patriots, they are the ones who like to see things fall apart in Trinidad. “Dey leave a Lara stadium unfinished.” They did the same thing with the Austal vessels and they gave their friend or his friend gave his son a contract to maintain the vessels. That is what happened. And today now, this Government—an agency, to maintain the MTU engines—has asked Austal to come. They have completed. They are looking at the vessels. They are producing a report for us next week and we will get those six patrol boats back on the waters in the Gulf of Paria to do what they have to do. [*Desk thumping*]

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They cancelled the OPVs. “Dey doh like tuh” hear about the cancellation of the OPVs. The OPVs were specifically built to patrol outside and keep the guns from coming in. The OPVs are now the pride of the Brazilian Navy. They are the pride of the Brazilian Navy now. We could have used those OPVs. They cancelled them. “But yuh know what?” the helicopters that were supposed to come with the OPVs they kept, and the country knows that they saw the helicopter flying from north to south, north to south every week. “What they used the helicopters for?” But what this country does not know, they also did, with respect to the helicopters in Trinidad and Tobago, and we are currently investigating it now. The former administration entered into two contracts for two helicopters. Those helicopters have cost this country hundreds of thousands of US dollars on a monthly basis.

Two contracts entered into by the former administration; one, using the National Helicopter Services, the other one using out of the office of the Prime Minister, signed by the former Chairman of the National Security Council approving it. Those two helicopters have never come to Trinidad, one has been parked up in a hanger in Delaware and the other one, somewhere else in the United States.

### **3.00 p.m.**

You know what we discovered? The contracts that they entered into had no termination clause. So, pay hundreds of thousands of US dollars every month for helicopters there. So then when we ask, well, why do we not repair them and bring them? They say they cannot, because the persons that they entered into for those contracts brought them from Scandinavia without the logs as to all of the work done on the helicopter. So to this day, since under that administration—another contract where hundreds of thousands US dollars have been paid every month, so we are now running in tens of millions of US dollars—we have never been able to utilize even the seat beat, at least on this side, some might have gone on that side and sat down and put on a seat belt; we have never seen those helicopters. What did we do? As soon as we found out, we cancelled the contract, we are fighting them in the courts of the United States now because that is what patriotism is about. [*Desk thumping*]

Talking about legislation again, the Attorney General yesterday led a charge, to try and speed up the judicial process, the criminal judicial process in Trinidad and Tobago, and make a specific court to deal with specific charges. We heard a front-line UNC Senator stand up and tell everybody about the toilets, about the air

condition, about how the Hall of Justice is falling apart. That did not start yesterday, that has been an ongoing problem. And the question we asked, when there was money, when there was money in the Treasury and the \$16 billion in NGC, why did you not give the Judiciary the money to fix the air condition? I will tell you why, they gave SIS the money, to build—

**Mr. Lee:** 48(1), Mr. Deputy Speaker, relevance [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Overruled, overruled. [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. S. Young:** Relevance?—the relevance is crime, you committed crimes against the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago—[*Desk thumping*]*—that is the relevance. [Desk thumping]* So what you did is that you gave contracts.

[*Both Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC and Mr. Lee stand*]

**Deputy Speaker:** One person, one person on their legs, please. One person on their legs.

**Mr. Lee:** 48(6), Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West is imputing improper motives against us as an Opposition.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Overruled.

**Hon. S. Young:** Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Member:** “You make it up.”

**Hon. S. Young:** Make it up? Let me tell you where you can go and look “when you speaking to Mamoo”, I will say it outside. PSAEL, PSAEL, they gave NGC, they told NGC to enter into contracts with PSAEL to build recreation grounds for \$12 million-plus that only cost \$2 million. That is a crime against the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Lee:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, 48(1) this is not about that Motion, the Motion is about the—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, I have already overruled. Overruled.

**Hon. Member:** Take your lash. [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. S. Young:** You know what the member for Naparima also spoke about that I found quiet hilarious? He spoke about walking, he said when you walk here and you walk there and you walk—yesterday, in the middle of meetings, my

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phone started to burn-up, constituents in Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West in Belmont, sending me pictures of a deputy leader from the UNC, walking in Belmont—if you see the outfit, Gucci boots! She was wearing Gucci boots costing US \$1,500; that is a crime too.

**Mr. Lee:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, how that—"Gucci boots" is a crime? [Crosstalk]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Listen, Member, Member—[Continuous crosstalk] Listen, Member, Member for Pointe-a-Pierre. There is a procedure, say it accordingly.

**Mr. Lee:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, 48(1). Gucci boots have nothing to do with the Motion. The Motion is against the Member for Point Fortin.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, rephrase, retract accordingly. [Crosstalk]

**Hon. S. Young:** I will rephrase. We were talking about walking, I am talking about crime committed, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence, other Members.

**Hon. S. Young:** Crime committed against the Treasury to be able to afford US \$1,500 Gucci boots and go and walk in Belmont. [Desk thumping]

**Mr. Charles:** 48(1). Again, that is not a crime to "walk with a boots" in Trinidad. That is nothing to do with—[Crosstalk]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence. Member, I would suggest you move on, go to your other point. [Crosstalk]

**Hon. S. Young:** I will leave the Gucci boots behind. Another point about patriotism as they get excited on the other side—[Continuous Crosstalk] "Duppy" who is on the other side gets excited. Another point, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

**Mr. Lee:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, who is he referring to as that name? Offensive language. [Crosstalk]

**Hon. S. Young:** Another point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about patriotism—[Continuous crosstalk]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay, Members, Members. We are in the second—Member for Siparia, just one second, please, just one second. Right, we are in the second Member of the day for the Motion, all right? I would have given the mover of the Motion certain leeway, as the mover of the Motion, to proceed. I

would like to listen to the discourse of all Members during this particular Motion and as the Speaker, I will rule accordingly. There is a procedure to follow based on the Standing Orders, both sides know the procedure, Chief Whip, Leader of the House. Act accordingly and I will rule accordingly. Right now I am recognizing the Member that is on his legs and we shall proceed.

**Hon. S. Young:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We were talking about guns and illegal firearms and we were also talking about walking and Gucci boots and we were also talking about detection of crime.

One of the ways we effectively detect crime and then move it from intelligence to evidence for prosecution of crime, is by a proper intelligence agency. Let me remind the population how those on the other side dealt with intelligence under their time.

There was an organization that was in charge of intercept and intelligence gathering, at the time it was called the SIA, I believe, correct?—the Security Intelligence Agency. Now, let us remind the country by those who want to give advice today on how to deal with crime, how they dealt with crime. They fired who was there before, created a whole big grey cloud that did not exist.

Because how do you deal with gathering of intelligence? One of the things you might have to do is interact with covert intelligence operatives; you may have to pay persons for intelligence, et cetera, whilst you are working intelligence and getting into crime. They stormed into the SIA, said, “Look, we found cash”. Well, obviously you are going to find cash because they have to pay the CIs in cash. “We find guns”—obviously they have guns, they have to defend themselves on street.

“So, what do we do?” They put the receptionist to run it. That is what they did. Resmi Ramnarine ran SIA for them until it was discovered. That is how they dealt with crime. That is how they dealt with intelligence. What have we done? We have come back in, one of the first things we did is we made sure that the SSA is getting resources again, they are doing their job and in fact a lot of the detection taking place now is not only the SSA, but is also the technology being given to the police.

When we came in—and I have said this before here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I will say it again. When we came in, the first thing they ran to us and they told us is, they dismantled the facial recognition system. They dismantled all of the servers for intelligence, they cancelled the OPVs. They told us that the helicopter

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that was—the helicopter that was supposed to be used at Camp Cumuto for the Special Forces to do their job, they dismantled it, they put in a wet bar, they put in a television and God alone knows what it was being used to do.

So, the methodology and the assets to be used [*Interruption*] were not being used but now, under this administration, they are being used. I hear “chopper”. Another thing we came in and we met were exorbitant contracts for the maintenance of the helicopters. Immediately we set about ensuring that Trinidad and Tobago got value for money, and we actually had to ground the helicopters. But some of the other things being done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by this administration, under the leadership of the hon. Member for Point Fortin, is rebuilding the intelligence service and that is happening and we are seeing now the results.

Again, I saw another Member across there, call a press conference this week, “A month has gone since anti-gang legislation; not a single arrest”. Not true, there have been arrests of alleged gang leaders, there have not been charges under the anti-gang legislation. But again, to build a successful case, one has to gather sufficient evidence and do it properly.

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Charges are coming.

**Hon. S. Young:** And as the Attorney General says, he suspects that very soon charges will come.

The next thing that we did as an administration under the leadership of the Prime Minister, one of the first things he did was set up a very small—he populated a very small National Security Council and that National Security Council works very hard along with the heads, the divisional heads and the leadership of law enforcement. Because, you know what we met when we came in? Three-quarters of the Cabinet on that side, sitting on the National Security Council, no meetings being held, “vaille-que-vaille” decisions being taken, and when asked well, where is the Minute for this decision? Where is the Minute for that? They do not exist. Helicopter in place—they talked about \$500 million being spent on the NOC, “what they did with it”?

Another thing they were famous for doing—they want to talk about vessels. Gone off on a trip to China, taking a walk on a dock, see a boat and say, “I want one”. Where is the procurement process in that? That is what they did to fight crime? And you know what is worse, Mr. Deputy Speaker? They saddled the taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago in all these initiatives including the half a billion dollars they spent, on building an NOC, with no financing in place whatsoever. They were just spending money that did not exist from the Treasury



so whoever came in next had to take that up. That is a crime in itself.

**Hon. Member:** That is right.

**Hon. S. Young:** So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is quite ironic, it is quite ironic to stand here today and hear the discussion taking place, and the screaming, and the shouting, and the hysterics, and the bending down pretending they are at a funeral. And, calling themselves patriots, they are not patriots. They are not patriots because the record will show, the *Hansard* will reflect, the number of recording of who voted for what, and history will reflect that they do not support the legislation that is being utilized to fight crime. They do not want to support anything. And anything positive taking place in national security—look at the jokes he is making. They vex about Gucci boots, but he was—the Member for Naparima was the one talking about walking.

Yes, the Member for Laventille West and the Minister of National Security went and they walked in the Member for Laventille West's constituency to see what was happening, and to go down on the ground and to tell the law-abiding citizens that they are going to do what needs to be done—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence.

**Hon. S. Young:**—and that is not something to be laughed at. Every constituent out there will tell you they like when their MP walks and comes to find out what is going on. So that is something that we on this side actually commend. [*Desk thumping*]

The hon. Member for Point Fortin works tirelessly, he works tirelessly calling in the heads, asking them what to do, giving them instructions from a policy decision. He is constantly working with the law enforcement, and the TTDF, and the SSA, and the other units. They talk about the terror threat and I have heard them say in the most frivolous way, things about the terror threat that took place over the Carnival period and they make a joke out of it, they try to politicize it, they even try to bring religion into it.

I stand up here today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago looking on and give them the assurance that there was absolutely nothing false about that terror threat. That terror threat was brought to us as a result of the rebuilding of relationships, international relationships that had been retracted. When we first came in, we were told that there was a refusal to sit with some on the other side because they did not know where they would stand in getting the job done.

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We worked hard with all of our international law enforcement partners. We gave them not only the reassurance, but over time, rebuilt the relationships that allowed us to get the intelligence from the international agencies that alerted us to pass on to our intelligence services and our law enforcement services, and as citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, I think today we should applaud all those who worked over the Carnival period for averting a very real threat. [*Desk thumping*]

And the irony in situations of terrorism is you will never be thanked for getting rid, or averting, and preventing what could have happened. But we will not sleep on this side under the leadership of the Member for Point Fortin, we will continue to do what needs to be done despite the noise from other quarters in the society, to make sure that citizens can sleep safely at night and avoid terror threats, and to avoid the disaster. Because every country, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we travelled to in the world, recently sitting in London with the MI6, SO15 and these bodies, sitting in Australia with New South Wales police, their Ministries of Justice, you know what they told us?—and the same thing in Washington. They said the only time that the legislators became serious about dealing with terrorism is after a massive disaster; 9/11, 7/7 in Australia—7/7 in England, sorry. The irony of when we were meeting in Australia, right outside the building around the corner was the Lindt Café where a lone wolf for ISIS took lives.

This Government will not sleep, we will not rest on our laurels, we will work with international partners, and despite whatever false criticism there is out there, under the leadership of the Member for Point Fortin we will take on terrorism frontally. [*Desk thumping*]

The Attorney General is bringing the legislation. He is doing what needs to be done at the advice of our international partners, and we will do it and we will get it right, and we will fight the crime and do what we can to do it. Because that is what true patriotism is about. It is not about just making noise and actually taking delight—you actually see on their faces, delight as we just saw from the Member for Naparima, in expressing—and expressing the tragedy of the most heinous murders in society. That is patriotism? The people of Trinidad and Tobago judge them, judge them by what is going on, and they are still going on about the boots. They say the boots are not relevant, but it is interesting that Oropouche East is talking about the boots. Because that person worked under Oropouche East. So one wonders how they could afford the boots, right? And whether the boots come from a mall in Holland. [*Laughter and crosstalk*]

So he says—so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we stand here on this side and we say—and we hear all of the noise being made about the initiatives being taken by the Government to fight crime.

Another thing that was done, the first thing that they did is sell the blimps. Every law enforcement officer and intelligence officer will tell you, the yeoman service those blimps did for Trinidad and Tobago, in terms of hovering and gathering intelligence on the ground. They got rid of it. The radar system, they allowed to deteriorate. It seems that every single piece of crime-fighting equipment, they did nothing about. But, in the last few months before an election, they ran off—they buy some boats from Damen, they buy a boat from China, and you know, as I just said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, no money in place to pay for those boats but they like to say—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, your initial 30 minutes has expired, you have an additional 15. You care to avail yourself?

**Hon. S. Young:** Thank you very much. So as I was saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was not real crime-fighting. So we will take no advice from our friends. We will take their assistance graciously, when they want to assist with legislation. The Prime Minister has led his team on times to meet with the Leader of the Opposition to talk about crime, they have met together to talk about crime and initiatives. That is something that is patriotic, that is what the people Trinidad and Tobago want to see.

Because at the end of the day the truth is, after all of the politics, Mr. Deputy Speaker, crime affects everyone regardless of race, regardless of religion, regardless of your creed, where you live, where you come from, et cetera. And this administration will continue to do all that it can under the leadership of the Member for Point Fortin, to take on that fight against crime, and we will do it seriously. And he has done his job very quietly, he is not bombastic, he does not walk around with a large entourage, and make a lot of noise. He sits down very quietly and he does his job—

**Dr. Moonilal:** He dances a lot.

**Hon. S. Young:**—and he does his job well and with the support of the National Security Council—[*Desk thumping*]—and the hon. Prime Minister.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we reject without hesitation this Motion and the audacity of bringing this Motion to the House here today. We reject it outright, all of those on the other side—and I suspect if they raise the whip, some of those

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on the other side including the Member for Oropouche East, would vote against the Motion. [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*]

So, on behalf of those constituents in Belmont—on behalf of those constituents who flooded my phone with the photos, I say “doh worry, Belmont East, let your hearts not be troubled”—

**Hon. Member:** “Uh huh.”

**Hon. S. Young:**—“because very soon, the two that they send into Belmont East will be gone, never to be seen again, Gucci boots and all.”

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Is that a threat?

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** It is a promise.

**Hon. S. Young:** It is a prophecy. It is a prophecy that you will lose the bi-elections in Belmont. [*Crosstalk*] What are you on about? [*Continuous crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members, Members, Members! [*Continuous crosstalk*] All right, both sides.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** That is out of order. It is a threat, it is a threat to a person.

**Hon. Member:** He is an OJT, you know.

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** The Deputy Speaker is on his legs, “what happen to you”?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** You must continue to speak and not me? He cannot threaten our members. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay, Members. Member for Siparia, you are experienced enough and you know the procedure. Your Chief Whip is next to you, again, there is the Standing Orders, let us do it appropriately and rest assured the Speaker will recognize. Do you have—would you like to raise on—Member for Siparia, on a Standing Order? Right, and Members, please—[*Crosstalk*]—Members, please. Members. The “Gucci boots”, it is happening on both sides. You all are encouraging the “Gucci boots” on both sides. So, deal with it appropriately so that I can rule. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:**—who is not a Member of this House.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Right, proceed.

**Hon. S. Young:** Just to clarify the record, because this is a typical type of distraction, and a typical type of trying to mislead the population. I at no point in time threatened anyone. I have not threatened anyone wearing Gucci boots or otherwise. All I was saying is that there is a bi-election taking place in Belmont East, and as the Member of Parliament for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West, where Belmont East falls under, I am assuring the party that I represent, that very soon they will have a PNM councillor back in place and those who walk there with Gucci boots will not come there to try and pretend that they care for them anymore. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Hinds:** That is right, that is right, that is right!

**Hon. S. Young:** And I am reminded, Tobago feels the same way. They come in there, they throw money around, they try to do all sorts of things, they lose and they are not to be seen again. That is all it is—[*Desk thumping*—so for the Member for Siparia to jump up with all of the theatrics about threatening, I “doh” threaten—I do not have to threaten—Gucci boots—

**Mr. Hinds:** “Member for Siparia have a yellow pair.”

**Hon. S. Young:**—she is not on the radar apart from cases in court. [*Desk thumping*] So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues on this side and starting for the colleagues on this side, we stand in full support of the Member for Point Fortin, and reject outright this spurious Motion. And we will take absolutely no advice from those who failed between 2010 and 2015 in national security, as well—and they are threatening, they are threatening—they want to talk about threats? They are now threatening—the Member for Oropouche East is now threatening to withdraw and to refrain from supporting any legislation going forward to deal with crime. [*Crosstalk*]

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the citizens will judge, the citizens will decide who is patriotic and who is not patriotic. But we support the Member for Point Fortin as the Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Members:** Yes, yes, yes! [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I recognize the Member for Siparia. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Member:** “Hear serious talk now, not bacchanal talk, serious talk, teach them.” [*Crosstalk*]

**Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC** (*Siparia*): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Some of us in here seem to have forgotten that we are dealing with a very, very serious matter. [*Desk thumping*] You know I walked to come to the Parliament today and I saw people there, outside—[*Crosstalk*]—I walked to come—[*Crosstalk and laughter*] I saw people outside the Parliament—

**Hon. Members:** Nooo!

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:**—today, I know some of them—

**Hon. Members:** “Ohhh.”

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:**—I do not know some of them, and they came to express their pain and their fear with respect to the level of crime in this country. [*Desk thumping*] And one woman—one mother, she said “MP, three of my children have been murdered at different points in time”. Three children, not one, you know. And yet, you come here to talk about Gucci boots. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Member:** “Dey doh care.”

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** They do not care—Gucci boots. And apparently the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West, does not even know what is a “real Gucci boots”—

**Mr. Young:** No, I would not, because I cannot afford it.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** But he so wants to make—he so wants to make a big joke and a distraction, and he talks about distractions when what he has done here is to completely try to distract from—[*Desk thumping*]—the state of affairs in Trinidad and Tobago. So he comes in here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he is like a big bad wolf, he is huffing, he is puffing—

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, please, “he”.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** The Member—

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Thank you.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:**—for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West, huffing and puffing, moaning and complaining, weeping and wailing, gnashing his teeth, here in this Parliament today, and then goes back—they are like in a time warp. They are caught in a time warp in a rearview mirror. So everything they campaigned on in 2015, we are now in 2018, you are coming to talk about

OPV, you are coming to talk about what? What is it?—helicopters, Resmi. Okay, fine, that is why you are there—[*Desk thumping*]*—and having been there for almost three years, going two years and nine months, if all that was wrong, what have you done to fix it? [Desk thumping]*

You moan and groan about the OPV, well, why did you not in the two years—you want OPV, why did you not get the OPV—why go back down to Australia—[*Desk thumping*]*—“why you gone” down to Australia to pick up again, AUSTAL? The same AUSTAL boat is sitting!—sitting. [Desk thumping]*

**Hon. Member:** Wasting money.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** You talk about Resmi Ramnarine, who did not last one day in the Ministry of National Security. Not one day. You come back, “blame Kamla”, “blame the Partnership”, “blame the government that was there”. But you did that—

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** “Who else we will blame?”

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:**—having done that, having done that you are sitting on that side and we are here.

And now that you are in charge, take charge, [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*] wake up and take charge.

**Hon. Members:** Take charge.

**Mr. Charles:** Solve crime.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** And when they go outside—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Siparia, one second. Members, we know the procedure, yes, the thumping of the desks, but there are some outbursts that are taking place. No problem with the thumping of the desks, but the outbursts that go with it, please. Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you very much, thank you. And so, two years, nine months later, what have you done?

**Hon. Members:** Nothing.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** You accuse us when we were in government of all manner of things. Some of which—I will not have the documents right now, but we will answer a lot of those allegations being made many times, which

are untrue and we cannot immediately bring up the document now talking—okay, so fine, we take blame for all of that, we take blame. We apologize for whatever wrongdoing we have done. But you are there two years and nine months. What are you doing [*Crosstalk*] to solve the crime today? [*Desk thumping*]

And we did all of that you say, and we fired whoever—Commissioner of Police, and the “true one” and the “substantive” and never put back one and—we did all of that, yes. And guess what? We brought crime—serious crimes, down to the lowest, [*Desk thumping*] the lowest in three decades, the lowest in three decades. So we take blame for that, for bringing crime down.

We constructed over eight police stations. How many have you constructed?

**Hon. Members:** None.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** All you are doing is turning the key, opening the door on police stations that we built. [*Crosstalk*] And you are continuing cutting ribbon everywhere. So we will take the blame, I say. But I want you to squarely take blame for the state of crime in our country today. [*Desk thumping*] Take it.

It has escalated—my colleague here from Naparima gave the numbers. We have the highest number of murders ever recorded for any one month, in January of this year. We have—amongst the highest numbers of murders since you came into office, climbing over 1,300 murders, man. And you want to come here and talk about Gucci boots, and laugh, and grin, make a joke of the entire thing when there are people in this country who are suffering. [*Desk thumping*] There are people—do you know what it is to talk to a mother who has lost her only child? Do you know the pain of a family? Theatrics to you because you do not care, you do not care, you just do not care. [*Desk thumping*]

**3.30 p.m.**

And I would have thought you would come today and tell us: “Well, look, this is what we did, this is what we are trying to do”, not go back in that rearview mirror for when we were there. [*Crosstalk*] I am being totally disturbed by the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West. He had his turn, I did not shout at him then. [*Crosstalk*] Grumbling, forever grumbling.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members. Each Member will have their time to join the debate accordingly. I am recognizing the Member for Siparia and, again, address the Chair. And please, the outbursts and the crosstalk, minimize. Proceed.



**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I thank you, and I stand in total support of the Motion brought by my colleague, the Member for Naparima, that this House express its lack of confidence in the Minister of National Security and call upon the Prime Minister to revoke his appointment forthwith. This is a very serious matter and the levels of crime rising is happening at the same times when jobs are under stress, jobs are being lost. We are of the view—I am of the firm view that this particular Minister of National Security has failed to do his job to protect the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

The Member for Point Fortin has spent nearly three years as the Minister, and during that time, these are some of the headlines: dancing Dillon, Dillon dodging—I am quoting from the newspapers—no dent in crime under Dillon, more deaths under Dillon. And the performance of this particular Minister—he is a good person you know—but it is his performance and his competence in fighting crime, it has been a disastrous performance. [*Desk thumping*] And I said it before, it is time to wake up, to take charge, to start leading, because the country is disintegrating. And when the public outcry comes, what happens? The leader of that party sends out the Minister and others to go to hot spots and walk. As my colleague has already pointed out, instead of the murders going down, they went up.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this country deserves proper governance. They deserve to have a Government in place which will take its mandate with respect to safety and security as a priority. The first duty of any Government is to protect its citizens—that is the first, first duty—and this Government under this Minister of National Security has failed to take care. [*Desk thumping*] It is time then to really look at what these numbers are telling us—and I want to congratulate my colleague, the Member for Naparima [*Desk thumping*] for giving us all the statistics in a thoroughly, well-researched presentation here today. So, I am saying the primary obligation of any Government is to protect our citizens.

That is so important that when you go to the first guarantee under our Constitution to citizens, that first guarantee under a democracy such as ours is to deal with safety and security, and this Minister of National Security is the reporting and is the line Minister for the TTPS, for the coast guard, for the defence force, for the air guards and also for the prison service. The Minister is responsible for the protection, safety and security of Trinidad and Tobago. And then we have a Government Minister in the person of the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West come to tell us: "They are not in charge, it is the TTPS." How many times will you continue to blame the police service? [*Desk*

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*thumping*] How many times? How many times do you not understand that you will give the policy direction? The police will implement, but you have to give the policy direction. You have to give the plan; you are in charge.

We had the same TTPS, the same coast guard, the same prison service and the same defence force and, I repeat, it is under the same units under TTPS and the Commissioner of Police we were able to bring the serious crimes down to the lowest in 31 years. So what has changed? What has changed? What has changed is that you are now in charge, the PNM is in Government. [*Desk thumping*] That is what has changed. [*Desk thumping*] It is not the police has changed, the defence force, the coast guard and the prison service. No, no, no. It is those who are in the administration and those in charge who are failing and abdicating their responsibility to do exactly what they were elected to do.

And so, we need not go any further to see what is the role of the Ministry and the Minister. On their very own website, they tell us this, that their mission is:

“To create an environment which ensures public safety and security through the maintenance of law and order and the commitment of all available resources to the protection of life and property.”

Is that happening? Is this Minister of National Security and his Ministry ensuring public safety and security through maintaining law and order? The answer is no.

Roles and functions under the website:

- “Maintenance of Law and Order, Public Safety and Defence against aggression.”

Is that happening? The answer is no. [*Desk thumping*]

- “Co-ordination of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Relief.”

Wow, well rainy season back again, that has not happened, and I very much fear that that is going to happen coming in the new rainy season soon.

So when we read the mission statement, the roles and functions and so on of the Minister of National Security, when we understand what we have had to endure over the past two years and the nine months—the fear that we live under—it is clear why this Motion should succeed and this Minister should be taken out of office. [*Desk thumping*] It is the mission, as I read from the website, of the Minister to create an environment for public safety in the villages, in the towns, wherever it may be, that is the primary function. But what did we see? Instead, we have seen a breakdown in law and order.

Under this Minister, the criminal element has prospered. They have found refuge as has always happened when the PNM is in power. Under this Minister, respect for human life and the value of human life has hit an all-time low. Under this Minister, the criminal element has become more brazen and brutish in their attacks upon citizens.

You know, and I heard the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West speaking about terror threats and so on, nothing did he say about home invasions which have increased. Nothing. That is what the ordinary citizen is living under. The Minister said nothing of kidnapping, again, which are on the increase but, you see, he probably does not care because he could probably afford to pay ransom [*Desk thumping*] which the ordinary people cannot do. [*Crosstalk*] He talked nothing about throats—you see, you know, words, words can never— [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence. Members, Listen. Members? Members? [*Crosstalk*] Member for Siparia. [*Crosstalk*] Member for Siparia. Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West, you had your time and I am not going to tolerate the crosstalk with regard to the discourse, and also Member for Siparia, address the Chair and you will have my protection. Proceed.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** So, the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Naparima, please, I ruled. [*Crosstalk*] Listen, Members—Member for Laventille West, Member for Naparima, I am recognizing the Member for Siparia. Proceed.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I thank you very much, Sir. [*Crosstalk*] I said the Member had nothing to say about the home invasions which are now a cause for grave concern throughout the country; nothing about throats being sliced from ear to ear which is happening in our country; nothing about robberies resulting in stab wounds, throat slitting, killings at homes; nothing of the sort being told to us.

And just as we are here—even whilst we are here today, a story is put out here in the *Trinidad Express*. In the middle of the day on one of the busiest streets in the country, someone walked into a lawyer's office and slit the throat of the secretary in that office. That has just happened today, whilst we are here skinning and grinning about Gucci boots, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The body of Nicole Dabideen was discovered around 11.00 a.m. It happened in a building on Ramsaran Street, Chaguanas, not far from the courthouse and police station.

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Dabideen lived at California Village, Couva, and worked for a particular attorney-at-law. This is hot off the press from today's *Express*, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So these are the things that are happening.

I really would appreciate instead of the mudslinging and about bottles and who smoking weed and who not smoking weed, all these things, you know, tell us what you plan to do—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, address the Chair, address the Chair.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:**—tell us what you have done in order to deal with crime. [*Desk thumping*] We have seen under this Minister of National Security the morale of the members of law enforcement has hit an all-time low. More members of law enforcement, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have been killed by the criminal element under this administration as compared to under any other administration in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

We had agreed as a Cabinet that we would give a one million dollar grant to families of deceased police officers, law enforcement officers, who were killed in duty. When we raised questions about it, the other side said they had to bring legislation. Well, three years later—two years and nine months later there is no legislation. So whilst there would be provisions—you give to some, you give to others—there is no uniformed process for it. There are many families out there who still have not received it and the Government now—two years and nine months later—what excuse do you have?

Under this Minister of National Security, homes have been turned into prisons. You are barricaded in your own homes. Business places have been turned into hunting grounds. Our communities have been transformed into killing fields, and what are you doing about this? Blame us. “We did this with choppers, we did this with boat, we did so and so and so, yeah, yeah yeah.” That sounds all good, blame me. I said I will take the blame for whatever wrongdoing, but I am not taking blame for the increase in crime and the suffering that is taking place right now. [*Desk thumping*]

And then, the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West said again, you know what? Well, you all did certain things with the money—you spend out the money and you give out contracts and all these things. So we do not have the money. But this one Ministry and one Minister who cannot complain about lack of money, [*Desk thumping*] this one Minister because over the past two years and nine months, the Minister of National Security has been allocated more than \$24 billion. So do not come to say the money is not there, because this is one Ministry that can make no complaint about lack of the money, lack of resources;

\$24 billion allocated to the Ministry of National Security under your Government. And what does the country have to show for this \$24 billion? What, two years and nine months later?

Under this Minister of National Security, close to 1,400 or over 1,300 but close to 1,400 citizens have been murdered. Over the past two years we have lost more than 50 of our women to crimes. More children have been murdered under this Government than under any other administration in the history of our country. Six months ago we were mourning the death of Joshua Andrews. Today we are mourning the death of Joshua James. In a few days' time it will be one year anniversary of the slaying, the slaughter of young Videsh Subar. You could—it is so palpable with the pain and the grief of the deaths of our children, sons and daughters of our soil. If you could only understand the heartache of these families, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it will be no laughing matter here. Instead, the Government will be telling us, “We will do this, we have done this”, but they have nothing to show. [*Desk thumping*] Two years, nine months later, the Government cannot point to anything, because you see PNM to them means “people never matter, people never matter”. [*Desk thumping*]

Under this Minister of National Security, sons and daughters have been facing, once again, the scourge of kidnapping. Kidnappers have once again invaded the homes, business places. Today we should remember Ria Sookdeo, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will remember, whose father up to today is waiting for her to return home. We should remember Kirby Mohammed's mother, who up to today still awaits to see that child, her son, walk through the door. Do you ever take time to sit and comprehend and understand under this Minister of National Security there have been more children sexually assaulted? Our children have become targets and playthings of criminal elements.

More children have gone missing—my colleague gave the statistics and if you want it, we would share it with you after—and never to be heard of under this Minister than any other time. There have been more home invasions under this Minister. More women have been under attack, more businessmen and women and business places raided, robbed and invaded. Under this Minister, the number of criminal gangs and gang members have hit an all-time high. And yes, the hon. Member for San Fernando West wants to know where those statistics are from. I can tell you, go straight to your contribution in this Parliament on the anti-gang law. [*Desk thumping*] And in the sister island, under this Government, Tobago is experiencing, has experienced an unprecedented level of really lawlessness and viciousness by the criminal element.

And so, I want to remember and recall to this honourable Chamber, it was the Member for Diego Martin West when in Opposition said—he told the whole country—that:

The Government—and I am quoting—who could not deal with the crime problem was part of the problem, and that such administration has lost the legitimacy to govern the country.

I repeat those words today for the Member for Diego Martin West, by his own words, the Prime Minister and the Minister should really tender their resignations, both of them, and call the elections. [*Desk thumping*]

And so we come to the Motion of no confidence, and I want to really remind—my colleague touched on it, but I think I want to remind ourselves and the national community of the failed so-called crime plan of the other side because they put forward nothing else. Before the election of 2015, 10-point crime plan. They transferred that 10-point crime plan into their manifesto and then budget after budget, the 10-point crime plan has come forward, and now, let us look at this 10-point crime plan.

“1. Appoint a Commissioner of Police”

Before elections, he first said it, manifesto and then budget presentations. Two years and nine months, the country is still awaiting the appointment of a Commissioner of Police and the Member, again, for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West said: “We blocked it when we took it to court.” Mr. Deputy Speaker, I gave the assurance that we will always take what we believe to be illegal to a court of law for a determination [*Desk thumping*] and we succeeded. The Government was engaged in an illegal and unconstitutional process to appoint the Commissioner of Police. That was struck down, parts of it, by the High Court. The Member says, they did not appeal it, because they did not appeal it because they accepted that they were wrong and accepted the decision of the High Court. [*Desk thumping*]

When that constitutional process now—after the parts were struck out—when that was brought here to the Parliament—right here to this Parliament—which resulted in the candidate that they did not approve of, they used their majority in the Parliament to scrap the process. So after two years and nine months they are no further to having a Commissioner of Police, a promise that they made before elections, during elections and after.

The second promise was with respect to the manpower audit. Two years and nine months, this process was completed—the audit was done—but there has not been implementation of a single recommendation from that manpower audit.

Ten-point crime plan No. 3:

“3. Municipal Police

Activate the laws...to establish municipal police in all 14 Local Government bodies and the Tobago House of Assembly.”

**Dr. Moonilal:** How much they have now?

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I think we have three. I think we have three.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence, Members.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Two years and nine months later, this was not only promised in the 10-point plan, it was highlighted as a part of the crime-fighting initiatives 2015 budget package, 2016 and 2017. This is yet to see the light of day. It is like the *MV Galleons Passage*, you know. It is coming, it is coming. [*Desk thumping*] “It just cyar reach.” We do not see it two years and nine months later. Item 4, in the 10-point crime plan:

“4. Police Complaints Authority

Amend the existing legislation to give greater powers to the...(PCA), including the”—powers—“to independently prosecute...police officers.”

Not even an attempt has been made, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to bring this piece of legislation in Parliament to achieve reform of the Police Complaints Authority. For this alone and the other three broken promises, you should resign.

“5. Parliamentary Oversight

Establish a...Joint Select Committee of Parliament on Crime Suppression and Security”

Well, yes, that JSC has been established, but it is being chaired by none other than a member of the Executive of the Government, and when we met, the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West again said, yes the Prime Minister and the Opposition Leader, we met, which is good and patriotic and so on, but the promise never materialized and the Member of the Government still sits on that JSC.

“6. Witness Tampering Offence”

Spoke about again—you know if they do not call the name of Anand Ramlogan in this Parliament they would not—the former AG—if they do not call

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the previous AG, they will not have a happy evening at all. But here “6” in the plan that they had put forward, witness tampering:

“Amend the”—present—“law to create a specific offence of ‘witness tampering’”

Two years and nine months later, not one line has come to the Parliament on this aspect.

So when my colleague, the Member for Naparima spoke of legislation and so on, the response from the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West—talked about we would not support legislation, we did not do certain things—but these are the things that you promised and almost going on three years, they have failed to materialize.

Seventh, the Prime Minister called me when I was then Prime Minister: “He has to see me very urgently; urgently.” I said, okay. “Come across to the Diplomatic Centre”, and we went one evening. He talked to me about people invading people’s homes—that there were people going into people’s homes and we must do something. We must do something about it. We must create an offence of unlawful eviction. We must create an unlawful eviction offence, and this is one of the things they had promised. So we did not do it, okay, but you are in charge. You had two years, nine months—after two years and nine months, the Government has realized the lack of wisdom in this measure and, again, another broken promise in their plan. Nothing has happened with respect to that.

“8. Anti-Gang Legislation

Review the Anti-Gang Legislation to ensure its usage is more effective.”

The Government eventually got the support of the Opposition. Legislation was passed and proclaimed, and well up to today we are told some people have been arrested. [*Crosstalk*] The AG is saying sotto voce that they will be charged soon.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence please.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** We wait again like the *MV Galleons Passage*. We will know it when we see it. Well, I think his colleagues were very kind. The Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West said they expect to have some charges soon.

“9. Urban Renewal Plan.

Return to a sustained implementation of the Urban Renewal Plan for East Port of Spain, subscribing to the recommendations of the Ryan Report.”



Again, this is another promise that has failed to materialize; and 10:

“Acceptance of the Caribbean Court of Justice...as our final Court of Appeal.”

Nothing has been done. So this entire 10-point crime plan, we repeat, we repeat, failed. [*Desk thumping*] Promises never materialized. Nothing to do after two years and nine months, nothing more than misrepresentations, broken promises and, of course, dismal failure and the crime numbers continue to increase.

My colleague spoke about the—So we sit in this House today close to, as I said, two years and nine months. We have seen the murder rate increased rapidly as the Member for Naparima has shared with us. I would not go through the numbers. The statistics speak to themselves—crime, murders continue to soar under the Government, under this Minister of National Security.

One economist predicts that Trinidad and Tobago may have the highest murder rate in history this year if the current crime rate continues, and it is not brought down. In an article in *LoopTT*, headline: “Crime analysis: T&T on track for highest murder rate in history”. This was in June 07, 2018, and the article talks about the projections given what has happened so far, maybe 260/270 murders to date in just this year, and the projection is for it to be the highest in the country. What is the Government going to do with that kind of projection? Are they going to say the person who said that and the person who predicted that they are UNC? Is that going to be the answer and to blame the messenger rather than listen to the message? [*Crosstalk*] And it was not Roger Hosein, Madam, by the way. You could check the Loop article, June 07, 2018. [*Crosstalk*] I do not want you impugning their name as being UNC. The persons is not a UNC—07 June, 2018.

“Crime analysis: T&T on track for highest murder rate in history.

Approximately 550 people were murdered... in 2008”—that was—“the highest number ever, while in 2017...494”

As of today, the murder toll stands at about—what was it we said? 269, 270. On June 7<sup>th</sup> it was 263 and compared with the same period last year, it was 240. So already when this was being done, you had an increase year-on-year from the previous year. The fact is, to date, more murders for every full year in office than in our term in office for each full year.

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A 2015 article by a gentleman who to the best of my knowledge is not a UNC, Kevin Baldeosingh asked—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member?

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Your initial 30 minutes has expired, you have an additional 15. Do you care to avail yourself?

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes please, Sir.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Proceed.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Okay. So Kevin Baldeosingh—and I am quoting, if you will allow me to read from it.

“Does crime go up when the... (PNM) is in office?

The headline is: “Spike in murders after September 7”, Sunday, September 27, 2015, *Trinidad Guardian*. I quote:

“In the days right after the September 7 general election, homicide rates spiked in both Trinidad and Tobago. Within the subsequent fortnight, more than 20 people were murdered, causing the 2015 homicide total to surpass last year’s for the first time.”

It continues:

“...the last PNM government’s record on crime-fighting was abject—under the Patrick Manning administration from 2001 to 2010, homicides went up by 300 per cent with then-national security minister Martin Joseph”—now the late martin Joseph—“(now deceased)”—the then Minister—“promising every year that the measures the government had put in place would soon bear fruit.”

Of course, that never happened. So in 1991, party came into power, PNM—2000 sorry—2000 UNC, 120; 2001 UNC, 151; 2002 PNM, 171. These are the statistics and my colleague had quoted for the years since 2010 to 2015 as we move along.

So what we see in this same article from Kevin Baldeosingh, is that the Government continues as it did then, and as they are doing now, promising they would put measures in place that would bear fruit, but that is not happening. The situation is just getting worse. There is no interest on the part of the Government, it appears, to deal with crime.

I want to quote from an *Express* editorial dated May 20, 2018, just recently entitled “Crime SOS” and that editorial noted—and I quote with your leave, please Sir, to read this:

“Criminals have become confident in their power to do as they like without facing consequences. Today, the message of crime without punishment has the country firmly in its grip. No place is safe from the random violence that has infiltrated every nook and cranny. When temples and churches are seen as easy prey, then it is time to recognise that every boundary of security has been breached.”

I ask again, I say, this is a serious indictment on the performance of the Minister of National Security. [*Desk thumping*] And whilst we have to look at competence, there are other reasons where we feel, and I will share, to point to the failure of this Minister of National Security and to note that the Minister is completely ill-suited for this particular job.

In November 2015, according to the *Trinidad Express*, the Minister declared that ISIS is not a threat to Trinidad and Tobago. [*Crosstalk*] Asha Javeed, *Trinidad Express*, 13 November, 2015.

**Hon. Member:** He said that?

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Asha Javeed in an article in the *Trinidad Express* of 13 November, 2015, where the Minister is quoted as saying:

“Isis is not a threat to Trinidad and Tobago”

This serious faux pas forced the Prime Minister to respond to the public condemnation of its Minister of National Security, the blunder, by affirming that the rest of the country already knew, that Trinidad and Tobago was more vulnerable to the threat of terrorism than ever before.

**4.00 p.m.**

Now, we could have perhaps put down the Minister’s statement as he recently came into the job from September. He made the statement in November, and we could put it down to newness. But, you know, two years later again speaking, it seems, out of turn, oblivious to what was going on in the country, the Minister said—Carnival 2017, he said was crime free; crime free. Seven murders recorded over the Carnival weekend, 2017; attacks on two police officers, a number of shootings and stabbings, this Minister of National Security puts out a press release on Ash Wednesday to say that Carnival 2017 was crime free. Following

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questions from the media, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the bewildered Minister was forced to admit the press release that was done was done in error. It could not be a crime free Carnival.

And so we come to another series of episodes with respect to the Cedros fishermen, where again the hon. Minister did not appear to know what was happening, when it was happening, and seemed to be totally in the dark as to what was going on with those Cedros fishermen. When the anti-gang legislation was filed in December of last year the Prime Minister declared many more will die, and it is perhaps one of the few things that he got right. We are not prepared to allow more to die under this Minister of National Security. We are not prepared to lose more of our children, or sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, wives, husbands, mothers, fathers. Therefore, that is why we felt that since the Prime Minister will not take action that we should bring this Motion to this Parliament so that the issues can be ventilated. [*Desk thumping*]

You know, and as I say that, the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West in his response to the Member for Naparima spoke about the number of Ministers that were under the Government I led, the number of Ministers that I had removed, or caused to be removed, or who had resigned from offices—Ministers of National Security. I do not have any regrets or apology for doing that. [*Desk thumping*] We had the political will, the courage to do what was right. [*Desk thumping*] If a Minister was not performing then the Minister would have to go. [*Desk thumping*] But that is not happening under this Government. Today, I think, is 58 days or 59 days since the Minister—Darryl Smith matter came up. Some report to be brought. Fifty eight or 59—that we will deal with Ministers who do not perform or perform inappropriately. [*Desk thumping*]

It was raised by the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West. And so, I have not seen, the country is not seeing—the majority—any concrete measures, any decisive action on the part of the Government. What the population has been waiting for two years and nine months for the Minister is to, look, bring a plan, do something. We expect that it will continue as they have been doing, blaming everybody, taking no responsibility, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But right now in this country people are overwhelmed. They feel threatened. They live in constant fear, whether it is a robbery home, whether it is the home invasions that you have reminded me of, the kidnapping, Government has thrown their hands up in the air.

**Hon. Member:** Carjacking.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Carjacking, my colleague is reminding me. All these things are taking—when you send your children out, you know you cannot sleep, you know. You do not know if they are coming back home, and not because they are bad children, but because of the level of criminality in our country. Some parents are driven to the point where they stay on the phone with their children as soon as the children leave the school compound, but then now it is happening in the schools as well. Your children are not even safe in schools.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of this country just want the Government to fulfil its basic duty. I started saying there is a basic priority duty to protect them and keep them safe, and if they cannot do that they should do the responsible thing and step aside. [*Desk thumping*] They should resign and call an election now. I know it can be done. I know it can be done because, as I said, we had brought the serious crimes down to the lowest in three decades, in 31 years. And then, as I close—[*Interruption*]

And how did we do it? You said you do not want my advice. You do not want any advice. Fine. You do not want any advice, I give you none. I give you none with respect to crime, but I want you to remember the things we did that we were able to bring the serious crimes down [*Desk thumping*] to the lowest in 31 years. A steady decline—the Rapid Response Unit, the Community Comfort Patrols which you have shut down, the National Operations Centre which you are huffing and puffing and condemning about, that is what will give you the largest reach across the entire country from one spot. Every country, developed, First World, they have a National Operations Centre. But you did not understand that. You pick up the NOC and you put it where, in something called the SSA, when the SSA has its own role and functions under the statute. And then talking about what we did with intercept and did not do with intercept, and so on. Who is talking about firing? Who has fired all these people from the present SSA and they have them in courthouse now? Whom? [*Desk thumping*] So, do so do not like so, you know. What you have to do in terms of intelligence gathering—you have, in some ways, really damaged the National Operations Centre, and the whole concept of how it is to work by putting it in the SSA. National Operations Centre, what does it mean? You will be able to coordinate all the arms, law enforcement arms of the State, all of them. Is that happening?

You had the National Training Agency as well, what has happened to that? Did you put that also into the SSA? Is this SSA now some top-heavy, you know, octopus with arms reaching everywhere? Is that what it has become? We had relaunched the E99 so the population had a powerful tool when reporting crimes.

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We implemented the inter-agency joint patrols; I have been advocating that for so long. I saw recently the Minister on his walkabout, or after the walkabout said, look, we will do the joint patrols. You did not have to have 1,300 people die before you put these joint patrols in place, man. [*Desk thumping*]

We established a Counter Human Trafficking Unit. As I said before, we built police stations, modern police stations so officers will have a decent place of work. And we did not build them in any of my constituencies that you like to tell us, only UNC constituencies, built in Arima, built in Piarco, [*Desk thumping*] built in Maloney, built in Cumuto, Brasso, La Brea, Oropouche and Moruga. That is where they were built where they were most needed. We opened the Duncan Street police post. [*Desk thumping*] We trained several batches of CSI—Crime Scene Investigators—to supplement the Homicide Investigations Bureau of the TTPS.

I remember we had promised we would put GPS in the police vehicles; we promised and we did it. We were able to put that technology in the police vehicles. [*Desk thumping*] And we acquired and left for you the 12 vessels out there, and with all of that and more—I repeat, I repeat, I repeat—with the same Commissioner of Police, with the same TTPS, [*Desk thumping*] with the same coast guard, with the same defence force, we brought the serious crimes down to the lowest in three decades, 31 years. We were able to bring that crime down. So what is the way forward? They said they do not want any advice, but it is clear that they have nothing in place, nothing to be done to deal—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, you have two more minutes.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Sir—to deal with the crime. And, again, I support this Motion brought by my colleague. I congratulate him for his contribution, and I await to hear with bated breath what it is the Government would tell us that they have in mind to put a slide on the increase in the murder rate.

You know, there is a video, I do not know how many of us saw it, with the hon. Minister doing the electric slide, and that is all good; that is all well and good, but what about, you know, his performance in bringing the murder rate—to slide down that murder rate? What about when you look at things and, you know, it is shaking and it is electric, and, you know, what is the electric? The only thing electric is the terrifying situation in this country when it comes to crime.

And I just want to put one more comment to Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West, you know. When you are pointing at people—when they say, when you

dig hole for someone, you fall into it. So I want him to tell me who has this Hublot watch on his hand which cost us \$35,000, yeah? But you want to talk about Jearlean US \$20 looking like Gucci boots. And what about going online and seeing our hon. Prime Minister in Savile Row suits advertised at £5,000 for one; \$50,000 online? It is there now, we just checked it again. And that person has got a \$3 million contract somewhere at UTT. So, look, be careful of your Gucci stories, be careful of those. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members, silence.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the last few seconds, again, I support this Motion wholeheartedly, and I call on the Government, the Prime Minister to fire the Minister of National Security now. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I recognize the Member for Point Fortin. [*Desk thumping*]

**Dr. Moonilal:** It is with deep regret—

**The Minister of National Security (Hon. Maj. Gen. Edmund Dillon):** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Excuse, Member for Oropouche East, retract that statement.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I retract, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my statement is of deep regret.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Proceed.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today in response to a Motion that I can outwardly reject from the start of my contribution [*Desk thumping*] coming from the MP for Naparima. He spoke for a long while, but I want to touch on one area that he mentioned in his closing comments, the word “patriotism”. He seems to want to pronounce, the Member for Naparima, pronounce that he is patriotic, and the people on that other side, they are patriotic, but I said to him and I say to them again, Margaret Thatcher once said that if a lady has to say that she is a lady, then she is not. [*Desk thumping*] Patriotism must be shown. It must be manifested in your actions, [*Desk thumping*] in what you do and what you say. [*Crosstalk*] And let me tell you something—Member for Princes Town, shut up. [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Princes Town, kindly vacate the Chamber, please. [*Desk thumping*] Members, okay, Members—hon. Members,

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once we recognize the Standing Orders my job will be very easy. As the Deputy Speaker I am going to recognize the Standing Orders and I am going to maintain the decorum of this House, honourable or otherwise. I say no more, and I only recognize the Member for Point Fortin. Proceed.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question of patriotism always trouble these people on the other side because it touches them to their heart. You can see them. They do not attend national functions unless they are in power. [*Desk thumping*] You do not see them around, none whatsoever. The Leader of the Opposition, she plays mas every time when she is in power. You ever see her partake in Carnival when she is out of power? [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, I would like you to recognize the Member appropriately, right, appropriately. Proceed.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Let me touch on the area of patriotism, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am going to touch on it because I want to demonstrate to you what true patriotism is. Let me tell you what it is. I served in the defence force for 36 years, one month and 17 days, and during that time, myself—Gen. Antoine will also talk about it, we were instrumental in 1970, dealing with the remnants of the NUFF freedom fighters in the hills of Trinidad and Tobago. In 1990, the only trained bomb disposal technician in Trinidad and Tobago was your good self, who had to go into the Red House, go at the Police Headquarters, go at TTT before anyone else to ensure that there were no explosive devices in any one of those areas—before anybody else can go, single-handedly, car by car, room by room, building by building, in 1990. The only trained bomb disposal technician in Trinidad and Tobago was your good self. I had to do that. [*Desk thumping*] That is patriotism. A story that has never been told, I am telling it today; that is patriotism.

In 1994, Gen. Antoine was the commanding officer of the Caricom Battalion. I was second in command. We were sent from this Government of Trinidad and Tobago to deal with “Operation Restore Democracy” in Haiti under a non-permit of entry. We went there under a non-permit of entry when it was a hostile environment. That is patriotism: love for one country—[*Desk thumping*]—the love for one country. That is the definition, it says, the love and defence of one’s country; that is patriotism. So when you are talking about patriotism, MP for Naparima, understand. Which one of you on the other side have done yeoman service to the country of Trinidad and Tobago? Which one of you have been a member of the defence force, the protective services? Which one? Which one of



your children has been a member of the defence force, the public service, or anything like that? Which one? Which one, name it? Where is the sacrifice for this country? Where is it? [*Desk thumping*] Where is the sacrifice for this country?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Point Fortin.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, 48(4). We all serve.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Expound.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the speaker is talking about his service, but he is casting aspersions on the service, the creditability, the integrity of Members opposite. This Motion is a substantive Motion on him, not on the Opposition.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay, fair enough. Overruled. Proceed. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You see, because I serve this country and you serve yourself. [*Desk thumping*] I serve this country.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, he is now saying he served the country and those in the Opposition served themselves. Are you going to permit that to stay on the record? Would you permit that to stay on the record; that is my question? He said it in his speech. [*Crosstalk*] He said it in his speech not in crosstalk. It is on the record.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Point Fortin, I will like you to rephrase or retract, either/or. But before you have your seat, Members, again, I am going according to the Standing Orders and I would not tolerate the outburst and the standing up unless you are identifying a particular Standing Order. Proceed, and, as I said, retract or rephrase.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, they served the country and, at the same time, they gratified themselves. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, retract the statement.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** I retract the statement, Mr Deputy Speaker. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Listen, Members, again, I have ruled. Proceed.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are all concerned in this country about the murder rate in Trinidad and Tobago. It concerns each and every one of us. It is an area that we know is the barometer by which crime is measured, and it is a concern for me as Minister of National Security. To lose one life is a life too many, because a life that is lost is somebody's son, somebody's daughter, somebody's brother, somebody's nephew, somebody's sister, and therefore it concerns me very much when a life is lost, when a murder is committed in Trinidad and Tobago.

But one has to understand that when we talk about the murder in Trinidad and Tobago, we all have a role to play, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It starts from discipline: discipline of our young people, of our youths, discipline in our very society. And we know for quite some time, we know for a while that when we talk about discipline of youths, you know, the Member for Siparia was the one person who had made a decision to remove discipline from schools, you know. And, you know, she talks about we are going back into a time warp—sorry, the Member for Siparia. Sorry, with all due respect, the Member for Siparia. The Member for Siparia talks that we are going back into a time warp and we should not go back in the history. But there is always a cause and effect. There is a cause and effect of actions. You cannot be part of the cause and not be part of the effect. You cannot be. It is karma. That is karma. You cannot be part of the cause and not be part of the effect. If you are the cause of something, you must also be part of the effect of something. [*Desk thumping*]

So that when we talk about the destructions of the security architecture, the security industry when they were in power, there is a cause and effect relationship, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And every time we talk about it they say, do not go back there, do not talk about it, but we are where we are today based on the decisions and the actions that they did in their time. [*Desk thumping*] We are suffering the consequences of the actions that they did between 2010 and 2015. We have to talk about it. We have to talk about the destruction of the security architecture. We have to talk about Resmi scandal. We have to talk about the absence of the vessels to protect our borders. We have to and we will continue to talk about it, because we are suffering the effects of those decisions that took place under your administration. We are and we continue so to do. We continue to do that.

But I want to pause for this while to thank the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, and my colleagues [*Desk thumping*] and the Cabinet of Trinidad and

Tobago for stabilizing this country, for bringing us to a sense of reality because we are going down a stream between 2010 and 2015.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what else has the Opposition done in the last five years, and I will repeat it; I am going to talk about it again. I am going to talk about that just now. I will talk about it again, because in that last five years—we are talking about the Minister of National Security—you had five Ministers of National Security—I will talk about it again—five Ministers of National Security and what did you do? The first Minister, Brig. John Sandy, he is a good man. He was my instructor, a very good man, very good gentleman. The mistake he made was joining the United National Congress. [*Desk thumping*] And let me tell you something, I want to re-christen that party, you know, that thing, you know, it is not the United National Congress, it is the unpatriotic national congress—unpatriotic national congress! [*Desk thumping*] That is the meaning of the UNC. It is always an oxymoron to put unpatriotic and national together; an oxymoron. You cannot be national and at the same time be unpatriotic; it is an oxymoron. Then you had Mr. Jack Warner, claim to fame, fire truck and breaking down tents as Minister of National Security. That was his claim to fame.

**Hon. Member:** And FIFA.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Yeah. That was his claim to fame. He writes in the *Sunshine* now. He has all the ideas now about security now, all the ideas on the *Sunshine*. By the time the AG is finished with him he will be in a place where the sun does not shine. [*Desk thumping*] Then you had Mr. Emmanuel George, I have no [*Inaudible*] about Mr. Emmanuel. He was thrown into the deep end. Mr. Gary Griffith, well, you heard the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West talk about him, I will say no more, as I call Mr. Gary Griffith. Then Brig. Carl Alfonso, a man who always wear green. The day he put on a yellow shirt—

**Hon. Member:** Blight. Blight.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members, please, please.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:**—a very good man. The mistake he made was to join the unpatriotic national congress. [*Desk thumping*] But let us examine the facts, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the Member for Siparia spoke about serious crime down during that time. She spoke about more children gone missing, more women have been attacked. Now, unprecedented levels, the Motion says, unprecedented levels. Let us examine the facts, and I want to use the base years. I do not want to use the years when we came into power or when the UNC came into power. So I will rule out 2010, and I am going to rule out 2015, because we

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both contributed in those years.

Let us use 2011, 2012 and 2013, and let us use 2016, 2017 and 2018. Let us see what the facts say, because the Member for Siparia comment you know. She said serious crime went down, more children, more women. Let us see what the facts says. I am going to start with firearm and ammunition.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Murders.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Nope. Nope. You said serious crimes. You said serious crimes—you said serious crimes. [*Crosstalk*] The *Hansard* will show it. You said serious crimes.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence. Silence.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** In terms of ammunition seizure in 2011, 425 firearms; 8,465 ammunitions were taken. In 2016, and now we are in a comparative year, 765 firearms; 19,543 ammunitions were taken off the streets. In 2012, we had 420 firearms; 8,650 rounds of ammunition. In 2017, comparative year, we took 1,064 firearms off the streets, [*Desk thumping*] the largest; 18,000 rounds of ammunition, the largest. Yes. Let me go again. In terms of narcotics seizure, in 2011—in 2012 we had 129 kilograms; 2013, 173. In 2016, we had 365.76 kilograms, 225.61 kilograms; 297 more drugs taken off the streets than during your period, more. Arrests during your period, 2011, 2012, 2013. 2011, 4,044, corresponding time 2016; 11,672 arrests. In 2012, arrests under your charge, 10,212. In our 2017, 12,532. 2013 to date you had 9,751; in our time to date, 5,917.

Serious crimes. Serious crimes? Let me give you the figures for serious crimes. You saying that, to quote you, serious crime was down during your time. Look, I am using the same base here, 2011, 2012, 2013; 2016, 2017, 2018. 2011, serious crimes under your control reported 15,877 and 19 per cent detection rate. That is 2011. Compare it with 2016, 11,031; detection rate 24 per cent. [*Desk thumping*] Serious crime was down in your time? Come on! Yeah, come on! Serious crime reported, the Member for Siparia said serious crime was down, look at the stats, 2012, serious crime, 17,841 serious crime reported, a detection rate of 19 per cent; comparative year 2017, 13,113; [*Desk thumping*] a detection rate of 31 per cent. And you are telling us about serious crime was down in your time? Making it up, making it up as you go along. Making it up as you go along, smokes and mirrors—smokes and mirrors when I am talking to the country in this

time—[*Desk thumping*—2013, serious crime, 13,147, an 18 per cent detection rate; up to 2018 now 5,823, a 35 per cent detection rate. How can you come and tell this House that serious crime was down in your period? Come on, comparative years we are talking about, apples and apples, not apples and grapes—not apples and grapes. [*Desk thumping*]

I am giving you another one, victims of crime 17 years and under, because you talk about the children, and this is what the Motion speaks to, you know. Let me remind the House, you know—let me remind the House and the MP for Naparima, yeah:

“...whereas women, children and the elderly have been under attack in the most vicious and brutal ways ever experienced...”

Ever experienced in the recent ramp in criminal elements, ever experienced. Let me give you the victims under 17, come, I am going, comparative years again, 2011, 977 victims of crimes, 977, yeah? And there is a whole set of categories, I could read the categories. The source is on Crime and Problem Analysis Branch—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Member, at this time I will like to suspend the sitting. We will break for tea—[*Interruption*] Excuse. Right. At this time I would like to suspend the sitting. We will break for tea and we will resume at 5.00 p.m. And also at that time the MP for Princes Town can resume, Chief Whip, after tea.

**4.29 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**5.00 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** As we resume after tea, I will recognize the Member for Point Fortin. [*Desk thumping*] You have an additional 11 minutes of your initial speaking time, and do you care to avail yourself of your additional 15, one time?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Kindly proceed.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. [*Desk thumping*] I want to go back slightly to what I was addressing before the tea break, and it had to do with the part of the Motion that spoke to women, children and the elderly experiencing unprecedented level under the serious crime. And I quoted, I started quoting from the Crime and Problem Analysis Branch of the

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Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. And again, I mention I used the base years 2011, 2012 and 2013, the first three years of the then Government and the first three years of this Government, so it is apples and apples that I am comparing.

When we look at victims of crime under 17 years, serious crimes for the period 2011, it was 977 compared to 2016, 572; 2012, 1,304, compared to 2017, 589; 2013, 776 to date, in 2018, 326. So when they spoke about, when the Member for Siparia and the Member for Naparima spoke about serious crimes in our period, I think they tried to fool the people, fool the people, fool the people. [*Desk thumping*] These are the facts, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are the facts.

So when, so therefore, we could already reject this part of the Motion that spoke to the children being under attack in the most vicious ways in our period, you can reject that out completely, the statistics show that for itself. Let me go on, again, I will deal with the victims of crime 60 years and older because the Motion spoke about the elderly. Base years, again, apples and apples 2011, 2012, 2013 compared to 2016, 2017 and 2018. 2011, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 1,397 victims of crime 60 years and older compared to 2016, 1,209, less than during their period. 2012, 1,590 compared to 2017, 1,232. 2013, 1,151 compared to 2018 to date, 511.

So where is the unprecedented level that the Member for Naparima comes and acted out as though it is unprecedented level, [*Interruption*] you cannot tell me that my data is inaccurate. You know where it comes from? You spoke to yourself. Your data is inaccurate. I told you where my data comes from. [*Desk thumping*] I said that it comes from the Crime and Problem Analysis Branch. I know where my data comes from. Where the MP for Naparima's data comes from?—that is the question you should ask. “Doh” ask this question; this is an honest gentleman here. Right?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, female victims of serious crime, again, mentioned in the Motion. Women have been under attack in the most vicious mode ever experienced as a result of the rampant—women. And the Member for Naparima came and, oh, he was “gallerying” for the camera, man, “gallerying” for the camera, emotional outburst as usual as he does.

2011, and base years, again, 2011, 5,450 female victims of serious crime; 2016, 3,879. Yeah? 2012, 6,473 female victims of serious crimes; in 2017, 3,977. Yes? But you were one who said that the women were subject and experienced—I will quote you know, unprecedented levels were women, the

statistics prove you wrong, wrong! [*Desk thumping*] Do not come and fool the people with your theatrics, these are the facts that the citizens of Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. These are the facts, “doh” mislead the population when you come with a spurious Motion here for people. Do not mislead the population.

2013, 4,537 compared to 2018, to date it is 1,766; you see? So everything that you have said in your Motion has been rejected by the statistics that I have just put forward here, [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*] rejected completely.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members. Member, again, there is ongoing—I have recognized the Member for Point Fortin. Member for Naparima, I know you are the mover of the Motion, but again, you are not allowed to break the Standing Order by continuous, making debatable statements. So, again, Member for Point Fortin, proceed.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I can handle him, you know, he is a minion, you know.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No. Again, address the Chair, Sir, address the Chair.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, certainly. You know the Member for Siparia mentioned about the NOC, and she talked about the NOC is just coordinating centre. She is lost, you know, “doh” understand security, you know, does not understand security. Because I recall, you know, let me remind the people of Trinidad and Tobago that I was the Chief of Defence Staff for the first six months of this Government, you know, I was the Chief of Defence Staff until I retired in November, 2010, I was there from May 2010 to November 2010. The very first National Security Council meeting that we had, you know what happened, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The press was invited to that meeting. I do not know if you all remember that picture with Commissioner of Police James Philbert, Chief of Defence Staff Edmund Dillon and you saw the look on our face in that picture on the front page of the newspaper. The National Security Council was, the media was invited to the meeting of a National Security Council.

You know who was the Chair of the council? The MP for Siparia, the then Prime Minister. That, might I tell you, is a demonstration of an understanding of security, [*crosstalk*] on the front page of the newspaper, National Security Council. If you understand that we are not even allowed to carry telephones in that meeting, the press was invited. That gives you an understanding, and I am telling you, I was the Chief of Defence Staff at the time, so I am telling you, I was there; that is the understanding of security. Yeah? [*Crosstalk*] In the meeting.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** You see and then, again, you talk about the NOC. The NOC during that time was placed in the Office of the Prime Minister. You know what happened? Our intelligence partners at that time failed to do any relationship with that NOC because it was illegal, it was not a legal entity. This Government has placed, not the NOC, it is a fusion centre, it is not a National Operations Centre. It is an intelligence fusion centre, it has now been placed under a legal footing because we have made the SSA a legal entity; now our international partners are talking to us because they are talking to a legal entity that we have put in power. So when the Member for Siparia talks about the NOC as a coordinating centre, again, she does not understand the nature of security.

Regionally, we lost our status under that last Government, we lost it completely, where always the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago is the lead for security in Caricom, we saw what happened. Our Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley has now been able to rebuild the status of Trinidad and Tobago [*Desk thumping*] as lead for crime and security in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that this Motion should be a no confidence on that other side. [*Desk thumping*] Even Mr. Sat Maharaj has given them a no vote of confidence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me go on to talk about some things that I have done as Minister of National Security, because you understand that the Government and the Ministers are responsible for policies and strategies and directions of the entities under their charge, in particular the Ministry of National Security, policies and strategies and directions. That is what I, as Minister of National Security, that I am responsible for, because the Member for Naparima talks about “have demonstrated his failure to properly discharge his functions”. What is the functions of the Minister? The Minister is there to develop policies, strategies and directions for the entities under his charge. That is what he is there to do.

And let me put it, let me give you it, because from the Constitution we are dealing with two main entities in law enforcement and security; the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force. Let me tell you what the Constitution says. The Constitution under 123A says:

“Subject to section 123(1), the Commissioner of Police shall have the complete power to manage the Police Service and is required to ensure that the human, financial, and material resources available to the Service are used in an efficient and effective manner.”



Complete power, the Commissioner of Police under the Constitution, the Commissioner of Police, the Minister does not have that power. The Minister is about policies, strategies and directions. That is the Constitution. So when you come here and talk about the function of the Minister, again, in your Motion, strike it out, strike it out once again, [*Desk thumping*] strike it out.

And let me go to the Defence Act now, section 191(2):

“The Chief of Defence Staff who shall be appointed from among the officers of the Force shall be vested with responsibility for the operational use of the Force and shall in the exercise of any power connected with such responsibility conform with any special or general directions of the Minister.”

The operation and control of the defence force is the Chief of Defence Staff by law just as the Commissioner of Police. The Minister cannot tell the Chief of Defence Staff or instruct the Chief of Defence Staff or the Commissioner of Police about operational matters. It is about policy and strategy and direction, the law says that.

So when you bring a spurious Motion here talking about the functions, discharge of functions and so on, it is about policy, directions, and strategy. And let me show you, let me give you some examples, [*Interruption*] I will tell “yuh”.

**Ms. Ramdial:** Tell us about your directions.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** I will tell “yuh”. The strategic plan for the period 2018 to 2023 was developed based on my input, my directions, as the Minister of National Security. [*Desk thumping*] And I have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with your permission, I have your permission to display this document, so it is not a document that is not—the strategic plan 2018 to 2023, it is a living document [*Desk thumping*] policy and strategy, a living document never before, never before, you had five Ministers. Ask them for a policy document; ask them for a strategy document; ask them for a strategy document. None! It is the first time in the history of the Ministry of National Security that there is such a document that they will look at and give a reference point. [*Desk thumping*]

Yes. The national security policy is another. One, first time, again, 2018 to 2023 a statement of principles that established a national understanding of the risk, the threats and challenges to security in this country, talks about a national interest, and how we as a country relate to other states within the region and within the hemisphere; that is subject to Cabinet approval. Again, five Ministers,

no policy, no strategy. This Minister has done that, we are about policy, strategy and directions. [*Interruption*]

The counter-terrorism strategy. I “doh” have time, I can give it to you to read. You will read it, you could ask for it, it is a public document, you will read it. I “doh” have time to give you that, but I am telling you, it is about policy and strategy. At least, anyone can go to the Ministry, our international partners can come to the Ministry of National Security and say: “What is your policy on this? What is your strategy on this?”—and we can provide it. You can come to the Ministry and ask for that [*Desk thumping*] and you can be presented with a paper, you can get that, you could never have gotten that before. You can ask for it, it is available, you can ask for a policy document. You can do that, but you are not interested in that; the first time ever.

The counter-terrorism strategy was approved in 2017, and it guides our response as a country to Trinidad and Tobago, and I have already gotten permission from the Deputy Speaker, it is here, it is a living document, a living document that you can see, you can refer to, we can refer to it. There is something here that you can refer to; never happened before. You had five Ministers of National Security, ask them: Where is your policy? Where is your strategy? Not one can be presented over the five years that you were in power. That is what this Minister and this Government is all about—preventing, providing policy and directions to the variances under their charge.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me, I realize, let me look at some of the areas or initiatives that have been taken under this Minister and this Ministry and this Government. Videoconferencing facility. The videoconferencing facility is an initiative that has borne fruit under this Government. It is due to be completed by the end of this year, early next year, because there are some contractual problems that NIPDEC is working out right now, but it will be finished, I can tell you it will be finished by the end of this year. That videoconferencing facility is one that will reduce substantial costs to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, because no longer would you have to take prisoners from remand to send them to Tobago, to Point Fortin, to Siparia, to Port of Spain. It will be taking a simple walk from the Remand Yard into the videoconferencing centre, saving the Government about \$80 million. [*Desk thumping*] This is what this Government is about, this is what this Minister is all about. Electronic monitoring—

**Hon. Member:** That coming too?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Yes. Yes, it is coming. It is on the books. Yeah. Since 2012, nothing happened, you had it there, five years you had it there, write down the history. [*Desk thumping*] Five years you had it to work with; five years, five years, nothing happened. It took this Government and this Minister [*Desk thumping*] to tick it off. Yeah? To date right now, hear the update. IGovTT has been formally engaged by the Ministry to carry out the procurement of the electronic monitoring solution. Yeah? A request for proposal has been issued for the provision of electronic monitoring devices and solutions, and the submission of tenders closes on July 06, 2018, next couple of weeks, submission closes on July 06, 2018, tenders will be closed.

Electronic monitoring unit is operating out—it is really housed in an area, I would not give you the address for security reasons. The positions of manager, deputy manager, business operating clients and drivers have been filled. Persons have been identified for the other positions, and will be brought on board upon the award for the contract for provision of the devices; that is the Minister working. Yeah.

DNA databank, again, you had it here since 2012, since 2012 you had it. Five Ministers of National Security, nothing happened. Nothing happened! It was this Minister and this Government, [*Desk thumping*] this Minister and this Government have moved the process forward [*Desk thumping*] to the extent where right now the national forensic databank unit is set up with the necessary hardware, the software and the firm ware. The positions—it is set up already.

The position of manager, database specialist, databank analyst have been filled, persons for the other positions have been identified and will assume their positions in the near future, the custodian manager has been in discussion with the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre to secure availability of DNA profiles currently in the possession of the Forensic Science Centre. The Ministry of National Security of which I have the honour to lead has acquired 15,000 buccal swabs to start to process of collecting DNA samples. [*Desk thumping*] Yes. And hear what, we have already started [*Interruption*] because the first target group is incarcerated persons, and then we come to you, after we will take a swab from you too. Yeah. [*Desk thumping*] We will take a swab from you too.

The custodian manager has started the training process in DNA, sample collection with the various stakeholders inclusive of the police service, the prison service, the regional health authority. Right? The regulations for that have been passed by Parliament and have been gazetted.

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Upgrade of the electrical and plumbing system of the Remand Yard, Golden Grove, the Government has invested in that, the Ministry has signed the contract with NIPDEC to have the upgrade executed. NIPDEC has conducted the procurement of a design consultant and they are working; go ahead and tick. Construction of the girls rehabilitation centre at YTC. [*Desk thumping*] We are working, this Minister is working; check it. The Minister of National Security has signed the contract with NIPDEC to have the construction of the rehab centre executed. NIPDEC is currently engaged in developing the design brief. Construction of the new Forensic Science Centre. You talked about it, the construction of the new Forensic Science Centre, let me tell you, it is coming. Cabinet has approved the sourcing of a grant from the Chinese Government to fund the construction of the DNA laboratory service in Mount Hope, that is coming on stream, a new Forensic Science Centre. [*Desk thumping*]

Construction of a correction facility in Hope, Tobago, UDeCOTT is currently developing the design brief for that project to bring the load of the prison in Tobago. And there a number of other things, but time does not permit, I will give you some.

The municipal police that you spoke about, oh yes, that is coming, as we have already started the recruitment process for that. Already persons have been examined and they are being processed to take up the positions; we promised that, and you will get that in the next couple of months. [*Desk thumping*] There will be, they have already been processed.

Our closed-circuit television that you all had that you did nothing with it. We have taken a decision to reengineering and expand the CCTV network. We have to look at it because the technology is outdated, we need to upgrade the technology, we have to reengineer that now, and that is what this Government is doing, because we have to be with the times, we understand how technology plays a very important part in the role of crime fighting. Yes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are launching in the next couple of weeks or so the national crime prevention programme; it is coming. A number of the things took place already, stakeholder meetings with the municipalities and the Tobago House of Assembly have taken place. All the CEOs, the mayors were at that meeting, we had them there, and we started in three areas, you know, three areas, Chaguanas, Diego Martin, and Tobago, all the stakeholders have been informed; [*Desk thumping*] all the stakeholders are on board. That is going to change the way we think because we are empowering the communities to be part and parcel of the

crime initiative, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And what we call, and our manifesto spoke about it, on a whole-of-government approach bringing all the Ministries to bear on crime and criminality in our various communities, and we will continue because we have the Counter Trafficking Unit. Counter Trafficking Unit has been boosted by a number of additional human resource elements, because on an issue and in an area that we have to spend some time with it.

The Joint Border Protection Agency, it is already starting to take shape I can tell you because we have started the joint border protection management agency, and based on the team that we put together, they advise that we form a joint border protection task force [*Desk thumping*] and that is what we are doing. Again, it is going to change the way we think, the way in which we deal with issues in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will continue with a number of other initiatives, but I want to also add that while we as a country continue to treat with those initiatives, we also understand that we are a state of interdependence. Interdependence suggests that, and I will educate the Member for Naparima, he is a professed foreign affairs expert, but I too am. Yes, he is a professed—

**Mr. Charles:** Me?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:**—I have a masters in International Relations, and we understand that we have to relate to our international partners. And to that end, this Minister of National Security has re-established bilateral cooperation with Venezuela. Yes. We have done that, and what that has redounded to?—is that now the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard commander can talk to his counterpart in the Guardia Costa and the Guardia Nacional. We have direct contact with one another, we do not have to go through any bureaucracy anymore. We have established joint patrols on either side of the dividing line.

We have also established contact with the Colombians because there was a bilateral cooperation that went dormant during the last administration where we had in terms of police training and defence training. Based on the experience we have re-established that, and we are about to send policemen to get some experience in Colombia to deal with issues that are common to our own jurisdiction here in Trinidad and Tobago.

Lord Ahmad, the British Minister of State responsible for the United Nations Commonwealth Affairs, on 17<sup>th</sup> November last year we signed an MOU to effect

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security arrangements, security training, security exchanges with the United Kingdom.

We continue to relate to Canada. We continue in terms of Canada, we have a very good partnership with Canada right now with respect to our prison system. The correctional service of Canada is now partnering with us, in fact, we signed that MOU, partnering with us, to move from prison to correction in order. In other words, to move to restorative justice and rehabilitation of prisoners because they have experience in that way, but also to add in terms of construction of prisons and so on. So, we are working with the Canadians to assist us in that regard, and they are helping us tremendously. The United States, long-serving allies of us, and so we continue to work with them.

With the PISCES system, the PISCES agreement has been signed, and it will be implemented soon. Again, it will help us tremendously in our border control system, our border management system at our airports, at our sea ports and so on. It will give us additional clout, additional information, additional intelligence to share with people coming in and leaving our shores. Yeah.

And even as we do that locally, I have had discussion with the Airports Authority and they have agreed and they have, in fact, purchased kiosks so we are going to see in the not-too-distant future, kiosks where you can, just like when you go into the United States where you can go in, you can swipe your passport and coming into Trinidad and Tobago, we are also going to initiate e-gates and checking your passport when you are going out which is now done by the airlines, but we want to have real time information, so as you are leaving we can swipe, we can get that real time that you have left the country, and therefore, we know when you are coming and when you are going. That is the initiative. That is the work of the Minister of National Security. [*Desk thumping*] That is what is going to happen and it is coming.

And in fact, you know, together with the United States we held an exercise here quite recently called Fused Response. Fused Response was an exercise that was really ground breaking, you know, in terms of bilateral experience. It tells us to a large extent and, you know, what has happened with that exercise? Let me tell you something that happened with that exercise. We were able to exercise the length and breadth of Trinidad and Tobago in terms of our structure including our National Security Council was part of that exercise. I do not think that ever happened in your time, you all did not have time for that, the National Security Council did not have time for that. If something happened, it did not have a clue

it was going to happen. This National Security Council has practised and exercised, that if there is a crisis response, we know exactly what we are going to do because we have walked it, [*Desk thumping*] a table-top exercise, and we participated in an exercise.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, you have two more minutes.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can go on and on, because there is so much that this Minister has done, I do not have enough time to say it. [*Desk thumping*] So much, so much, I mean, I can go on because I can briefly talk about the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service has done yeoman service, and I want to congratulate and thank the members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service for the yeoman services that they have been doing. [*Desk thumping*] The gun retrieval strategy. [*Desk thumping*] They have been doing yeoman service. Last year they took the most amount of weapons off the streets of Trinidad and Tobago, 1,006; today, they have already crossed 5,000 rounds—they continue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to do so.

But let me spend, and I will thank the members of the defence force, also, we have had the joint patrols. [*Desk thumping*] We have made a difference in Soogrim Trace, Laventille by a joint army base. We made a difference in Enterprise. And the Member could tell you that, when we established that base in Lion's Gate, for the immediate time there was a reduction in the Unruly Isis in Enterprise. By our presence there, we have destroyed them—we are destroying them, there are still remnants, but we are going to go at them again. When we went there, we really separated them. Yeah.

We separated them in Enterprise, Soogrim Trace Laventille and we continue the joint police patrol where I have instituted, joint, not instituted, I have given directions to the Commissioner of Police and Chief of Defence Staff that we have to institute land-based coastal patrol, joint between army and police and that is being done in our rural areas.

But let me also end, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I cannot not end without asking my constituents of Point Fortin who have worked to understand and to thank them for their support, because in Point Fortin we turned the sod for Mahaica Oval recently; thanks to the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. [*Desk thumping*] In Point Fortin, the hospital is coming. In Point Fortin, the highway is coming on stream. This Minister, in addition to his ministerial duties, the largest

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Ministry, we are also making, doing work in his constituency. [*Desk thumping*] So, I reject outright that Motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, shelve it, put it in the garbage. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I recognize the Member for Chaguanas East. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Fazal Karim (Chaguanas East):** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. [*Interruption*] What we have—let me first of all congratulate my colleague the Member of Parliament for Naparima [*Desk thumping*] for bringing this Motion, a very timely Motion, in fact, it might have been long in coming, it should have been here long before now, because the amount of people who would have lost their lives, as the Member of Parliament indicated, over 1,300 persons and more during the time that this Government has been in office.

I also want to compliment the contribution of the Leader of the Opposition [*Desk thumping*] but I think it is important the short time that I have here this evening to correct some of the things. And I want to say that, you know, I never thought that, and let me just say, let me just repeat what the Leader of the Opposition said. The Member for Point Fortin is a good man, but he just cannot perform well. [*Desk thumping*] And I will tell you some of the figures because he quoted extensively and I want to reply to those figures as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the murder toll, I have a data sheet here from CAPA, the same sheet that he is using. For the period 1985 to 2018—and the hon. Leader of the Opposition indicated that there was a statement that was made by a journalist that whenever the PNM is in government the crime rate increases [*Desk thumping*] and I am going to show the statistics here, I am going to be giving the statistics.

In the period 1996 when the UNC was there, it was 107, the murder toll. In 1998, it went down to 98, and in 1999 it went down to 93. Let us examine what has happened under the PNM. Under the PNM in 2008 we had 550 murders. In 2009, we had 508 murders, and then came in the People's Partnership in 2010. For 2010, 473, so it went down immediately; 2011, 352; 2012, 379; 2013, 407. Let us see what has happened for the last two years under the PNM: 2016, 463; and 2017, 494. What kind of performance is that?

And I want to also indicate, the hon. Member, the Minister of National Security stated figures with respect to total serious crimes reported, and I have the same data as well, from 1970 to 2017. Under the PNM in 2009, total serious crimes reported was 22,162. In comes the People's Partnership under Mrs. Kamla



Persad-Bissessar and in 2010, we took that down immediately to 20,126. [*Desk thumping*]

In 2014, it went for the lowest figure in 31 years to 12,055. [*Desk thumping*]  
In 2015, it went down to 11,135. [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Member:** Say that again.

**Mr. F. Karim:** In 2017, it has gone up to 11,477.

**5.30 p.m.**

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understand the kind of support that the Member for Point Fortin says he has. And when I came in here to the Parliament this evening, I saw hundreds of persons outside, with numbers. But you know what I saw, the Member of Parliament walked with six persons in red jerseys to support him. If that is the kind of support that this Member of Parliament and Minister of National Security has, this Motion is one that we should support and vote in support of. [*Desk thumping*]

But since we are dealing with statistics, and in the time I have allocated, I think the hon. Member mentioned Enterprise and I hope that the people in Enterprise are listening, because he said he got rid of the gangs in Enterprise. And I will repeat that. I am going to get the *Hansard*. I am going to repeat that again, and I want the people of Enterprise to listen, and listen carefully— [*Crosstalk*] Unruly Isis. But I also want to say to the people of Enterprise, I hope they remember when I walked with the hon. Minister in 2017, and he promised— and the *Hansard* is here, I have the copy of the *Hansard*—when he said yes, he will put a police station in Enterprise. He subsequently came back to answer the question in 2018 to say that he does not have the land as yet, and he has to get state lands. But there are people who are getting state land, you are seeing it in the papers regularly. There are people who could get state land.

How come the Minister of National Security, a Member of the Cabinet, cannot get state land, a small piece of state land, to build a police station in Enterprise? [*Desk thumping*] I want to know, and I want to give some statistics as well to the Minister of National Security, and we are talking about performance. I am going to quote here, serious reported crimes, and I am using the area in which I am from, and also my colleagues, because only recently the Member of Parliament for Caroni Central, in response to the murders taking place in his constituency, and the other MPs in the area: Tabaquite, and Pointe-a-Pierre, and Couva North, Couva South, Caroni Central, and Caroni East, all of these people are

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experiencing. You know, if people listen carefully to this Minister of National Security today, we will feel we have no problem at all. [*Laughter*] The place is safe. You take a poll. You ask anybody, is it safe to go out into your homes, to your mosques, to your mandirs, to your churches?

**Hon. Members:** No.

**Mr. F. Karim:** There are some churches that are no longer having night services, and “doh” talk about Old Year’s night and so on, and Christmas. Why? And if you want to prove what I am saying is correct, look at the score card of this Government in the last two years as reported in the newspapers, and you will see the significant percentage of people who are saying they have no confidence in the Minister of National Security and the Government of the People’s National Movement. [*Desk thumping*]

So, I said I want to give you some figures, because these figures are a part of the Central Division. And the hon. Minister is quoting figures, so I want to tell him about the figures in Central, and this is something that is very important for us. If he is saying that everything is so well, I want to show him what the reality on the ground is. And this is for the period June the 09<sup>th</sup>, 2017 to 2018—most current period. And, I am quoting from SRC Status Check, January 01 to June the 09<sup>th</sup>, 2017 versus 2018.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the period 2017/2018, for the Central Division, murders went in 2017 from 39, and in 2018 it went up to 49. So, for the two years, what we found happening, is that we had an increase, and for two years, there were 88 murders in two years for the Central Division. Woundings and shootings: 38 in 2017, 83 in 2018, which gives us a total of 121 woundings and shootings in Central Division. The hon. Minister just made mention about women and children, and for rapes under the heading, Rapes, Incest and Other Sexual Offences: 19 in 2017, 34 in 2018, giving us a total in two years of 53.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a new phenomenon taking place, and I am sure we are experiencing this throughout the country. But in the Central Division, I want to give you the figures, and I will tell you what we are doing about it. For burglaries and break-ins: in 2017 there were 141 reported cases, in 2018, there were 139. So, for the two years, we experienced in the Central Division, 280 burglaries and break-ins. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will know, there are many persons who may have experienced burglaries and break-ins, and who are scared, who are afraid to go and report. These are only what have been reported to the police.

But something that will startle you here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, robberies in Central Trinidad. Robberies: in 2017, 173 reported cases, in 2018, 207 reported cases; for two years, giving you a total of 380. Does that sound like something that requires a song and a dance, and fury, and celebration, and plans? I want to ask the hon. Minister of National Security—you are boasting that you have a strategic plan—tell us, what are your KPI's? And tell us—give us the projections—of what you intend to reduce crime, and robberies, and criminalities by? I hope we could hear that; I hope we could see that in the strategic plan.

General larceny, Mr. Deputy Speaker, general larceny: in 2017, 119; in 2018, 127, giving us a total of 246. Larceny of motor vehicles—some people are afraid, you should see how they put bars, weld bars onto the posts of their homes, so scared that they would lose their vehicles. Larceny of motor vehicles, 59 in 2017, 36 in 2018, a total of 95. The hon. Minister made mention about the possession of firearms and firearms related crimes; possession of firearms and ammunition, in Central Trinidad went up. It was 65 in 2017, and 81 in 2018, giving us a total of 146.

I want to ask some questions with respect to getting these firearms. How come, when you read the newspaper articles—and what happened in the Caroni Central constituency recently, firearms are being found where? In the bushes; in dark areas. What about how many firearms have been found in motorcars? Or in people's homes? Or in places of work? Illegal firearms, are we hearing anything about that? Whenever you find a firearm, I am advised that you get a \$500 reward. A \$500 reward. So, we want to find out, how much money has been paid to persons who are supposed to be doing their work under normal circumstances, as an incentive?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to conclude the data and the citizens by saying that the total serious crimes reported for the Central Division for 2017 and 2018; for 2017 was 757, 2018 was 916, which gives us a total of 1,673. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Motion has to do with loss of confidence, or no confidence in the Minister of National Security, but I think one of the things that we need to bring to bear here today, is when an employer says that I have lost confidence in an employee, and in this case when the electorate says that we have lost confidence in you who we have voted for, who we have placed there, as the Minister of National Security now, let me tell you—[*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence!

**Mr. F. Karim:** Let me tell you some of the criteria that people look at in

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terms of “loss of confidence”. Among the things that people take into consideration for loss of confidence is dishonesty, which includes distortion of the truth, misleading information. I would not even use the word “lying” because that is unparliamentary. They also say that a person may lose confidence in someone else because of incompetence, because of poor performance, because of trust, and because of questionable character among other things. I say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I think we must ask the question: Are these all appropriate criteria by which we must conclude that this Motion is well-placed, and the fact is that the country has lost confidence in the Minister of National Security. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need, and persons in office need to have the moral authority, and all moral authority is lost with this Minister. I want to use a terminology that the attorneys use, it is called “elderly abuse”. How could a Minister of National Security, without moral authority, manage a police and military force? I want to say something as well, and I want to resonate this with the national community. The hon. Minister of National Security indicated today that he is a true patriot. In fact, when you listen to the contributions from the Member for Port of Spain/North St. Ann’s West and from the Member for Point Fortin, it seems as though the debate has been skewed into the direction of a Motion on patriotism.

This is a Motion on the performance of the Minister of National Security [*Desk thumping*] and from all appearances, according to the persons who celebrated Labour Day recently too, they gave a failing grade. And my colleague, the Member for Naparima, went exhaustibly in terms of all of those kinds of analysis. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to also raise the issue, in just passing, as I am talking about moral authority, about the Mr. Piper issue in New York, as was carried in the local newspaper. The scandal over—I want to also raise, what about the scandals. We have been hearing about allegations, and I want to say what we have found here in this Parliament today is serious—[*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members!

**Mr. F. Karim:**—is serious issues—[*Continuous crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members, hold on. One second. [*Crosstalk*] Members, hold on. One second, one second. Members, hold on. Members, again—

**Maj. Gen. Dillon:** “Doh go down da road.” If I could tell him—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Point Fortin, I am on my legs. I am on my legs. Member for Chaguanas East, again, as the Deputy Speaker, I will determine the extent of how much you are going to go into whatever comment is being made, right? Whether what has been said before, or what is going to be said as the debate continues. All right? So again, let me hear what point you are going to come with and I will determine the extent of it.

**Mr. F. Karim:** Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Because we are not dealing with personality, we are dealing with regard to the office of Minister of National Security, so let us be careful. Proceed.

**Mr. F. Karim:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am only reporting what was reported. I mean no discourtesy to the Minister of National Security. I am not offensive at all.

**Hon. Member:** Very much. Very much.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Proceed.

**Mr. F. Karim:** As a matter of fact, what I was saying—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Proceed. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. F. Karim:** But this is in the public domain. This is in the public domain, and I am just moving on to another point.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members, I will determine accordingly. Proceed.

**Mr. F. Karim:** I am just moving on to another point. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have heard recently as well about allegations over contracts for unmarked vehicles. That is not an allegation against anybody. That is in the public domain, with high Government officials being a part of that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Motion, as I indicated, is not about public service or patriotic duty. This Motion has to do with the incompetence of the Minister of National Security, the Motion as defined by my colleague from Naparima. I also want to indicate that this issue is on a performance base and therefore, as I stated before, when you look at the document in terms of the KPIs, the Key Performance Indicators, we could only have gotten those from the PNM manifesto, under the section of crime, and which it speaks in some detail about what the Government now has adopted as government policy for the country.

But what we are more interested in, as I continue in this, is, the issue is on results, and so far we have seen no results except the statistics. But when you

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look at the data and you look at the reality, they construct two different things. The issue is not about only policy and strategy. What are the results, I am asking? What have you done to make a difference in the lives of citizens? And what are you going to do to make a difference in the lives of citizens? Can the Minister tell the commissioner what are the results he wants to see? How much reduction in murders? How much reduction in serious crimes? How much reduction in home invasions? Could the Minister of National Security ask the commissioner to produce these results? And, in fact, it is my view that every month we should be getting results in the Parliament, up-to-date.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is important as we continue, in terms of the data, to provide statistics to refute some of the things, or to give details which have not been given to some extent, although it would have been given by my colleague, the Member for Naparima. But to repeat some of those things: From January to April 2018, compared to the same period last year there is an increase of 15.5 per cent in the possession of firearms and ammunition offences according to the TTPS. What we have also witnessed as well, is that there is an increase in the number of gangs, and this was also alluded to by the hon. Attorney General, that between 2014 and this year, gangs in Trinidad and Tobago have increased 129 per cent, and gang members have increased 60 per cent.

And I ask the question—I think it might be a rhetorical question—are we seeing an exponential rise in gang activity? Well, we had the recent anti-gang legislation, and we are anxiously looking forward to see the impact of that in terms of the reduction of gangs and gang activity. He said—the hon. Attorney General, in piloting the anti-gang legislation in Parliament in December 2017 said—in 2014, the acting Police Commissioner had said there were 92 gangs with 1,500 members; in 2016 it grew to 172 gangs, and 2,358 members; today it is 211 gangs, and 2,458 members.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think what we are also witnessing here, is the fact that when the hon. Minister spoke he indicated that there was some emphasis in terms of the youth, the young people in Trinidad and Tobago, and I ask the question, because of my knowledge of my of that sector, how is it that we want to assist these young people to ensure that we have programmes—education and training programmes—that will assist them in a life in the future, a purpose-driven life, as opposed to reducing the opportunity of these young persons who may be inclined to pursue a livelihood through crime and criminality? And therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at some of the programmes for these young people, one could understand why you have the potential or the propensity for increases in

deviance, in violence, in indiscipline, in crime and criminality.

For the OJT programme, for the period 2016 to 2018, you had a reduction in the allocation from \$348 million to \$223 million in 2018. That was a decrease of \$125 million. The MIC Craft programmes were reduced in 2016 from \$26 million to \$12 million, a reduction of \$14 million. The NESC programme moved from \$52 million in 2016, to \$18 million in 2018, a reduction of \$34 million. The YTEPP programme saw again, a very drastic reduction from \$103 million in 2016, to \$55 million in 2018, a decrease of \$48 million. But one of the programmes that were run through the Ministry of National Security—well, there are two programmes, well, in fact the NESC had responsibility for the MYPART programme, but that programme moved from \$14 million to \$7 million, a reduction of \$7 million. The MuST programme, again, which involves a number of young people, moved from \$50 million in 2016 to \$20 million in 2018, a reduction of \$30 million. And the HYPE programme, Helping Youth Prepare for Employment, moved from \$38 million in 2016 to \$14 million in 2018, a decrease of \$24 million.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know it is very hard for persons who would have lost their loved ones and they need to be comforted in many ways, and I think it is important for us—and this is not to do it theatrically or to use theatre or drama. Again, I am just reporting what was reported in the newspaper. And some of the things that were said, and I quote from the Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> of June, 2018, and this is a mother speaking on her murdered teen, she said, “I want back my child”. In another headline we saw in May 2018, May 19<sup>th</sup>, “Gunmen riddled car with bullets”. But this one I am sure touched the hearts of many people, “Uber driver dad gets eerie message, ‘your son sleeping and he can’t wake up’”. “Teen among three gunned down in Laventille.” And the question that was being asked by one of the persons related to this teen was, “Oh God, we have to stop this, when?”

We also had a situation in Malabar where there was great grief, where bandits slit the throat of a woman and a teenager, and a Chinese mart owner was killed after resisting bandits. I ask the question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is this any indication that things are going good? That based on the contribution by the hon. Member for Point Fortin, the Minister of National Security, that citizens in this country can have comfort, even when we leave this debate today, when we go to our various homes and our communities, that things are improving?

And I want to give an example, in the constituency of Chaguanas East, we have been seeing a good response to meetings called by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service in the Central Division, and with councillors, and one particular

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councillor in the Montrose area, where we are forming neighbourhood crime watch-groups. So far 18 meetings have been held, and there are 30 more meetings to be held, and in every case people are responding to these and they are telling you how scared they are. And what is happening is that we are developing a mobile application where people can be in touch with each other to call and say something if you see something.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think one of the other important aspects I want to raise, and I did so in terms of trust, I spoke about trust or breach of trust being one of the circumstances in which someone may lose confidence in another person. And I am just going to be quoting from the Police Complaints Authority, location of complaints by divisions:

- In Northern Division there were 52 instances of reports;
- In the Central Division 45;
- Port of Spain 35;
- Tobago 35;
- Northern Eastern 30;
- Southern 23;

—and so on, and so on.

And with respect to the Central Division, the number of complaints against the police from the Police Complaints Authority—from their official data that I have—reveal that in Chaguanas there are 16, and this is for the most recent period, and in Cunupia there were eight.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is important for us as well, to examine the workload as it were. Sometimes when persons have a difficulty in performing, one might want to consider the amount of things that they are responsible for, and I think it is important for us to record the role and responsibility of the Minister of National Security. And again, I am just reporting from the *Gazette*. It is not an indictment, and I hope my friend does not take that as if it is, and it was not mentioned to be like that. I am just giving the facts. The Minister of National Security, as of September the 09<sup>th</sup> 2015, has been bestowed with the responsibility of administering the following:

- 18 divisions of national security;
- Eight committees;



- Four programmes; and
- Seven statutory boards and other bodies.

He is also responsible for: air space and territorial waters, the cadet force, citizenship, the defence force, regiment, coast guard, air guard, and defence force reserves, drug enforcement interdiction, drug trafficking and money laundering, global security issues—and as I am talking about security issues, I know the hon. Minister mentioned that there was a cybercrime unit. My information is that unit has not been formed. It is before the Attorney General, and therefore we await that as well, and that is something that has not been delivered as has been promised.

Global security issues, supplemental police, immigration, intelligence, internal security, management of illegal immigrants and deportees, national emergency disaster, ODPM, probation services, public order and safety, and I could go on and on. The point I am making as well, is that it is a lot of responsibility for the Minister of National Security—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Member, just for the record, your initial 30 minutes have expired, and you have an additional 15. You care to avail yourself?

**Mr. F. Karim:** Very well, sure.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** For procedural purposes it must be done.

**Mr. F. Karim:** Could you say how much more time I have?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** We shall adjourn at 6.00.

**Mr. F. Karim:** At 6.00, okay. Okay, thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was at the point where I was talking about the amount of responsibility that the Ministry of National Security is placed with. And in this circumstance the Minister of National Security has two other persons who assist him; Parliamentary Secretary, the Member for Toco/Sangre Grande, and also the Minister of Caricom and Foreign Affairs, who is a Minister in the Ministry of National Security.

Well, whenever the Minister of Caricom and Foreign Affairs comes to this Parliament, we look forward to his presence, and sometimes we engage in some amusement. The Member for Toco/Sangre Grande spoke last Wednesday, and I would have liked to say something more on that, with respect to her contribution,

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but what I wanted to indicate, is that on the Anti-Terrorism Bill—and it goes as well in terms of the leadership of the Ministry of National Security. You have a person who is assigned to that Ministry, who would have flown thousands of miles and would have given us a contribution of 10 minutes in terms of the Anti-Terrorism Bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that my time is about to expire here, in terms of my contribution. I wish I had more time, because—as far as Private Members' is concerned. But, I would like to ensure, again, as I conclude that we support this Motion of my colleague, the Member for Naparima. And I want to say as I conclude, there is a popular saying, “Lead or get out of the way”. And since it is clear to all of us that the Ministry of National Security, and the Minister of the National Security is unable, incapable and incompetent, you are left with only one alternative: to get out of the way. And that you must do as quickly as possible, and free our beloved country from your excruciating incompetence, and as was said before, you can “slide out”.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I support the Motion wholeheartedly, and I ask all of us to support this Motion. [*Desk thumping*]

**6.00 p.m.**

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Monday, the 25<sup>th</sup> day of June at which time we would meet at 1:30 p.m.; at which time we will be doing the Corporation Tax (Amdt.) Bill, 2018; and we will also be doing the amendments to the land package that came from the Senate.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, there is one matter that qualifies to be raised on the Motion for the Adjournment of the House. I will now call on the hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan.

#### **Nursing Council of Trinidad and Tobago (Registration of Nurses/Returning Citizens)**

**Dr. Fuad Khan (Barataria/San Juan):** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I take no joy in bringing this Motion to the House today. I am not here to offend the nursing council or anyone, but sometimes for a process to go forward a system has to work efficiently and the system working efficiently has to be determined equality for all. I have been in my constituency office and certain matters of the nursing council, registration

of nurses and also enrolled nursing assistants have been brought to my attention, and I have brought it to this honourable House to indicate to the Minister of Health if he could enter this process and assist rather than it going to the length of legal action.

You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what had happened when I was the former Minister of Health, these matters came to the office of the Minister where registered nurses who were qualified in foreign jurisdictions and were also Trinidadians tried to become registered in Trinidad and Tobago. And we came and we had this debate on the Nursing and Midwives Registration Act, a new Act basically called the nursing personnel Act. And the Member of Parliament for San Fernando West would remember it quite a lot and also the Member for Diego Martin North/East. We changed the method of approach but to make it easier, however, with the proper grievance process for people who have applied to become registered nurses in Trinidad and Tobago, who were also registered in a foreign jurisdiction, and also, the enrolled nursing assistants to be on the roll.

You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what had come to our attention in those days, once a council was there to do the registration, the council somehow becomes a law to itself. You have the dental council, the medical council, you have the professions related to medicine, that council who refused to give the Ayurveda registration in this country. So we are looking at another nursing council and when I put in the Motion, the unprofessional conduct, I know it would raise some eyebrows. But what I would like to say and I will use an example of a young lady who came to me called, Miss Shadik Niomi Day, and she was a registered nurse from Florida and I have here her nursing licence. She is a registered nurse and the licence which is, licence No. RN 9446784. She graduated with a BSc from the University of Florida and also was offered jobs in Florida and this says:

The registered nurse name below has met all the requirements to laws and rules in the State of Florida.

Now, this young lady also passed the NCLEX exam. Now, that is the nursing exam that registered nurses in the United States of America, our nurses when they do go to America have to write this exam and then they are accepted to practise.

Now, this is a young lady who has a BSc in nursing and also has passed the NCLEX exam, came to Trinidad and Tobago and applied in February 2017 to become a nurse. Now, this is an example of what is occurring. She went into the nursing council and met a one, Ms. McKenzie. Ms. McKenzie told her she has to come in and bring her copies of the licence as well as the certification. After that nothing was heard, March, April and they kept going and then eventually she re-enquired and it was said that she has to bring in her original copies. So each time that she went in—after that they said you have to bring in your birth certificate.

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So each time, this young lady has reported, and other matters, kept going forward to go into the nursing council, what happened was another hula hoop that kept going. And this brought to mind exactly what was occurring when I was the Minister and I had to change the law, this type of behaviour by the nursing council.

Now, when it did occur, February, March, April 2017, nothing, no communication, no direct communication, nothing, not even a phone call and it continued like that. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would you realize that in February 2018 a letter was generated but not communicated—why?—where the nursing council wrote this young lady who had passed all her exams from a recognized university, from a recognized school of nursing and indicated:

I am directed to inform you that the council after reviewing your transcript of studies, your training in Florida—and she is a registered nurse in Florida—did not meet the required criteria for registration as a general nurse in Trinidad and Tobago.

So it happened to nurses in England coming to Trinidad, it happened to nurses from Canada, nurses from Australia, nurses from India, nurses from Nigeria, nurses from St. Vincent, all have a problem. But what I would like to say is that Cuban nurses who do not come from a recognized university or school of nursing, as well as do not speak the language to any extent, they get temporary licences. So what is good for one has to be good for all.

Now, I know I do not have much time. What I am saying is that this is the kind of conduct that we sought to dissipate when we brought in the new nursing personnel Act and the nursing personnel Act allows for grievances method. Now, when you have an applicant going to a nursing council you are supposed to be able to get a document saying that: what are the rules, what are the regulations, what are the protocols, what are the guidelines, as well as what are the grievance processes. Nothing was available and the Lay Secretary, Ms. McKenzie, indicated to the young lady that nothing was available, they do not have that in place.

We changed the composition of the nursing council—

**Mr. Deyalsingh:** Member, excuse me, could you just repeat the last part please?

**Dr. F. Khan:** Which part?

**Mr. Deyalsingh:** Part where you said just before Ms. McKenzie. I just did

not catch that.

**Dr. F. Khan:** Okay, I am saying that Ms. McKenzie, right, there were no protocols, no training materials, no application processes, nothing to be given, as well as no grievance processes, nothing.

**Mr. Deyalsingh:** Okay. Right.

**Dr. F. Khan:** Nothing. And those are the things that normally would be given to an applicant, if you search the Internet on the English website, et cetera. Now, what I am also saying, one thing that the nursing council lacked was communication with the applicants and this also goes with the enrolled nursing assistants, who, from Trinidad and Tobago who passed the enrolled nursing exam from the school of nursing, could be COSTAATT, one, Ms. Leona Dagason and another girl Akeda Flavory. They came to the constituency office and they indicated that they had passed the exam, they had applied to the nursing council, the nursing council had not seen it fit to communicate with them and at the end of the day it seemed to have handpicked certain other enrolled nursing assistants, sorry, nursing assistants from the nursing assistant programme and given them their enrolled nursing numbers, whereas these girls did not get it. And they are trying to figure out what is the cause and it has almost been about, since September 2017.

So what I am asking the Minister is to look into—now this thing, this one with the registered nurse, went to the Ministry of Health and asked for assistance and in the Ministry of Health, the legal team, the legal people there indicated to her, yes, they would look into it. They had meetings with the nursing council, and I think every month or two weeks or whatever it is, it was not brought up until after and then she was told that, you have not, your grievance was not in the guideline of 30 days or 35 days or some.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, you have two more minutes.

**Dr. F. Khan:** Yes. And what I am indicating is that I would like the Minister to look at it, look at it and see if you can come up with a system because it is happening right through the system, with registered nurses coming back to Trinidad and Tobago, be it foreign nurses or our local citizens. And also, if you could put a system in place and guidelines for the nursing council, because I think you do have the mandate with the amount of people on the board now to do it. So that is the plea I would like to do for these young ladies.

**The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh):** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I need to read into the *Hansard* verbatim the matter. The unprofessional conduct and bureaucracy of the Nursing Council of Trinidad and Tobago in registering nurses who are returning citizens during a time when there is a shortage of nurses in the public health sector. So it revolves around nurses who are returning citizens.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the past two years there have only been about 10 applicants like that who are returning, only 10. So, the way the Motion is phrased, during a time when there is a shortage of nurses, 10 over two years is not going to make a material difference. The returning nationals fall into two categories, either locally trained, so you were trained here, you went abroad and you are coming back; or, you are a national, you went abroad to train and you are coming back. So there are two categories of returning nationals, those who were trained here and those who were trained abroad. Of the 10, two are locally trained and seeking to return, two. And all they have to do is to keep up with their annual fees, pay their fees and they are registered, absolutely no problem.

For the eight, over the past two years who are foreign trained—so this is not a crisis in terms of numbers, all they have to do is to apply to the nursing council with the appropriate documentation, they write to the institution, get their transcripts, once they get—as is normal for any professional body, you write to the university to get the original transcripts, right, whether it is for medicine, whether it is for engineering, whether it is for nursing, any professional seeking to work in a country, you normally write to the awarding university to get the transcripts sent directly, not to the student, sent directly to the appropriate authority.

Once that transcript is received, it goes to the nursing council who then sends it to the Education Committee of the council who makes a recommendation. If they make a positive recommendation they are registered. If they make a negative recommendation for whatever reasons—but what we have done so far, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the old registration process used to take between eight to 12 months, to take up to a year. Now, we have taken that down to three to four months.

Now, I was not aware that the Member was going to bring a specific case with a specific person, so I did not have the luxury of investigating a specific case which can be done. But in any profession, especially that to do with medicine or allied health services, where you are dealing with the lives of persons, there is a higher duty of care as—I suppose we all could agree that when you are admitting

people to practise in your home country you have a higher duty of care to vet, to verify and to scrutinize certification. And the nursing council as a regulatory body exists to maintain the integrity of the profession as well as the general welfare of the public. I want to put that on record, unlike other professions you are talking about people who have the public lives in their hands. So if the nursing council, and I must congratulate the current president of the nursing council, President Murphy; I think he is an excellent person working under very difficult circumstances as you know, Member for Barataria/San Juan, but that is another—

**Dr. Khan:** Story.

**Hon. T. Deyalsingh:**—that is another story as you rightly say. And allied to that maintenance or the integrity of the profession, as well as the general welfare of members of the public, they have a duty to scrutinize qualifications, scrutinize work experience, find out if their work experience is actually true, valid, number of hours and so on. So I have no doubt that the nursing council and President Murphy is acting with the public's interest at heart.

As to your specific claim, if you give it to me I give you the undertaking, you know I am a man of my word, I will give you an undertaking to look at that specific claim. But I have all confidence in the nursing council, I have all confidence in President Murphy, and let me just, for the public, tell you what are some of the steps that we have to follow to get enrolled. So what we start off with—if I can get my paper going, is that originals are checked with the light according to the procedures at the fraud seminar done with ACCTT and double-checked by the Registrar who then signs it off. On return of the completed ST Form, a verification is then forwarded to the nursing council who completes it and returns it the actual council. On receipt of all documents on behalf of an applicant the file is then forwarded to the Education Committee which I spoke to earlier. Depending on the recommendations a letter is sent to the applicant informing them of the outcome of their application with the next step to be taken and then you go to the interview stage.

As happened to anyone, any Trinidadian who wants to work abroad in any profession, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry, we have to jump through the same hoops abroad. And then if they are successful at the interview the applicant then proceeds to 12 weeks pre-registration experiences or orientation. But, to speed up the registration, Member for Barataria/San Juan, this 12-week pre-registration period has been abolished. So that speeds up the process. And then on completion of the above appraisals they are then forwarded to the council

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for a response.

So, we have curtailed this long drawn-out process which used to take eight to 12 months; we now have it down to three to four months. I do not know why this particular case got caught up, maybe there were some red flags in her résumé, some red flags in her transcript, I do not know because I was not furnished with that. But you furnish it to me and I will make sure to look into it and have the matter amicably resolved in the shortest period of time. I thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 6.18 p.m.*