HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 27, 2021

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MA DAM SPE A KER in the Chair]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received communication from Dr. Rai Ragbir MP, Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla who has requested leave of absence from today’s sitting. The leave which the Member seeks is granted.

CONDOLENCES

(MR. EDEN SHAND)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, as you may be aware, Mr. Eden Shand former Member of Parliament passed away on Wednesday, January 20, 2021. Mr. Shand served as the Member of Parliament for St. Ann’s West in the Third Republican Parliament during the period 1987 to 1991. Mr. Shand served as Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Food Production, Marine Exploitation, Forestry and the Environment from the 12th of January, 1987, to 1st of July, 1988, and as Minister in the Ministry of External Affairs and Foreign Trade from January 12, 1987, to November 19, 1991. I know invite hon. Members to pay their respective tributes to the late Mr. Eden Shand. Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West. [Desk thumping]

The Minister of National Security and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Stuart Young): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise on this occasion as the Member of Parliament for a now combined Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West. Mr. Shand served this country and the constituency, the then constituency of St. Ann’s West at a period of time in our
history between January 1987 and November 1991. My memories of that time are limited due to the age I was at that time but I do remember the wave that had swept through Trinidad and Tobago at that time of which Mr. Shand was a part.

My understanding of the gentleman and we offer our sincerest condolences from this side to his family for a man who gave service, a man who came forward at a time, a man who lived in Cascade, he took his Oath of Allegiance as a Member of Parliament on the 12th of January, 1987. He served until November 1991. He was a Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Food Production, Marine Exploration, Forestry and the Environment of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

I recall him being very vociferous, very much oriented and very much an advocate for the environment, even though it was in those early days of the mid ’80s into the 1990s. He then went on to be a Minister of State between 1989 to 1990 in the Ministry of External Affairs and Foreign Trade for the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. He debated a number of Motions and Bills. His political career at the time was, of course, for the National Alliance for Reconstruction.

Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure and an honour, a privilege when someone is called upon to serve his or her country and to do so more so an elected Member of Parliament and at a time in our history where there were some dark days in the middle of that term.

So we thank, from this side sincerely, Mr. Shand for all that he contributed to the landscape that is Trinidad and Tobago, both as on a government perspective, as well as a parliamentarian, and importantly to his family. To let his family know that his service was not in vain, and he did sew some threads of fabric of our great twin-island State during that period of time, and we thank them and him sincerely.
May God bless his soul and may he rest in peace. Thank you. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. David Lee (Pointe-a-Pierre): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I join my colleague on the other side in bringing tribute to Mr. Eden Shand. Today, we pay tribute to a man who was not only committed to the service of our citizens but the protection of the environment which we live in. Many politicians have impeccable records of service to human development but Mr. Shand has bettered that by dedicating a major part of his life to the preservation of our natural environment.

His work was not only as a former Government Minister in the Third Republican Parliament but also as a consultant with major global agencies such as the World Bank, OAS and FAO which is the Food and Agricultural Organization. Mr. Shand’s love for our country and its welfare developed a patriot who was never afraid to undertake selfless actions to defend the causes he believed in. He would risk his own health for the protection of our nation. He wore many hats including those of author which led to many dynamic articles, as well as the book entitled The Estates Within (1992). Eden Shand’s life is a dedication to our country. We have lost a true patriot. On behalf of the Opposition, I would like to pay condolences to Mr. Shand’s family. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I also wish to pay tribute to the late Mr. Eden Shand. Mr. Eden Shand embodied service to Trinidad and Tobago. He was not only a Member of Parliament but an avid environmental conversationalist, author, newspaper columnist and youth talk show host.

Mr. Shand was a founding member of the Citizens for Conservation and ardently fought for what he believed, the protection of the environment. He lived passionately, productively and purposefully.
I take this opportunity to express my deepest condolences to the Shand family during this time of mourning and I pray that the Almighty grants them the comfort and strength needed in this time of bereavement. I now ask that we stand and observe a minute of silence as a mark of respect.

The House of Representatives stood.

Madam Speaker: May his soul rest in peace. Hon. Members, an appropriate letter will be sent to convey our condolences to the family of the late Mr. Eden Shand.

(MR. CLIFTON DE COTEAU)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, you may also be aware Mr. Clifton De Coteau, former Member of Parliament passed away on January 22, 2021. Mr. De Coteau served as the Member of Parliament for Moruga/Tableland during the Tenth Republican Parliament from 2010 to 2015.

Mr. De Coteau served as the Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, the Minister of National Diversity and Social Integration and the Minister of Gender, Youth and Child Development during the period of May 28, 2010, to June 17, 2015. I now invite hon. Members to pay their respective tributes. The Member for St. Ann’s East.

The Minister of Education (Hon. Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly): Thank you, Madam Speaker. [Desk thumping] Madam Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Government bench to pay our condolences to the family, the friends and the community of Moruga/Tableland on the passing of one their most esteemed sons, Mr. Clifton De Coteau, former Member of Parliament.

Born on the 20th of March, 1943, Mr. Clifton De Coteau served in the Parliament at the age of 67 after a distinguished career in education in his community serving so many people and being an active member of his community.
Madam Speaker, it is worthwhile to note that even as a younger person, service as a Member of Parliament and as a Minister is difficult and it is worthwhile to give him the accolades deserved when someone at 67 steps forward to serve their country in this way. And by all accounts Mr. De Coteau was a dedicated Member of Parliament to his constituents and gave yeoman service in the Parliament.

Public service is an honourable thing, and I looked very closely at the interment service for Mr. De Coteau and what was said about him, and it was all very complimentary. People from all walks of life were able to recount how he impacted their lives, how as a dedicated member of the community he was involved, he was always present, how he served as a principal and really gave his students the type of respect and service that they could be very pound of.

He also served as a school supervisor and therefore, was very valuable in terms of the service he gave to the Ministry of Education, and I think that was where he spent most of life and gave his dedicated commitment to Trinidad and Tobago.

So I as we recount the life of Mr. Clifton De Coteau, we send condolences to his family, his community, and we note that a life well lived is a life that can be recounted by so many different people in different spheres as someone that impacted them, and Mr. De Coteau was one such person.

On behalf of the Ministry of Education where he served for so long, on behalf of the Government, we say condolences to the country and to his family on his untimely passing. [Desk thumping]

**Madam Speaker:** Leader of the Opposition. [Desk thumping]

**Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC (Siparia):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. This
morning we pay tribute to a very distinguished son of our soil who not only exemplified what it was to be an elected official but displayed sincere passion on what it meant to be a servant of the people.

Clifton De Coteau, having served as a Member of this honourable House from 2010 to 2015, was more than just a politician. He was also a human being dedicated to empowering, enriching and uplifting others. His life’s accomplishments, as well as career shows a man who dedicated his entire life to developing others.

As a teacher, a school supervisor, school principal he impacted the lives of hundreds of students. Today an entire generation of professionals can relate to you that when their young lives became tough, it was Mr. De Coteau who supported them. Not satisfied with his yeoman service of moulding young minds, Clifton decided that he wanted to build the lives around him and thus he entered local government.

He was elected councillor in 2003 for Inverness/Princes Town. At that point he became a champion for better roads, better communities, better families and better lives. As he did his whole life, he pushed the bar of excellence and people-centred service higher as he aimed to serve more than at the local government area but an entire constituency.

He was elected the MP for Moruga/Tableland and he was committed to one thing, the historic transformation of his constituency, so he kept on serving and working for the constituents even after he lost that seat out of office. And between ’10 and ’15, Mr. De Coteau served the people of Moruga/Tableland valiantly.

From community events to helping families rebuild homes, Uncle Coteau or Papa Coteau, as he was called, was there helping. His passion for his country led to
his appointment as the Minister of Gender, Youth and Child Development 2013, 6th September to 17th June, 2015, thereafter, Minister of National Diversity and Social Integration, that was earlier, 23 June, 2012, to September 05, 2013. And he also served as Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, 28 May, 2010/22 June, 2012.

At the Cabinet level, Mr. De Coteau would leave his mark in the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development where he reached out to thousands of young people in our nation.

After 2015, Clifton De Coteau remained a loyal servant of the people of our country. He was appointed as an alderman and vice-chairman of the Princes Town Regional Corporation in 2016. He remained in that position up until the date of his death. He was an excellent politician. He was a true son of the soil and a patriot. But most of all, he was a genuine human being who loved humanity. Many will tell you that if you were even in a spot or bother, all you had to do was call by his gate or his office and he would help. Clifton lived a life that was geared to enjoying the simple things which fuelled his passion as a professional photographer. In fact, he would call his camera Betsie, so everywhere he went he would take that camera with him. Many times he would be seen with his camera Betsie capturing the beauty of our nation. As a matter of fact, it was his desire to always see the beauty in all things which made him a loyal servant to the betterment of all.

As a nation we have lost a true statesman but as a people we have lost a true friend, father and mentor. On the morning of that fateful day, 25th January, 2021, Clifton sent me two WhatsApp messages. He kept in touch until then. It was just later that said morning that he passed away. May God rest his soul in peace. Thank you, Madam Speaker. [Desk thumping]
Madam Speaker: During his tenure in this House, Mr. De Coteau served on two joint select committees and contributed to many debates including but not limited to the Trinidad and Tobago Cybersecurity Agency Bill, 2014 and 2015; the Adoption of Children (Amdt.) Bill, 2014; the Constitution (Amdt.) (Capital Offences) Bill, 2011; the Children Bill, 2012, and the Cybercrime Bill, 2014 and 2015.

As an educator for over 30 years, Mr. De Coteau served as dean of discipline, senior teacher and games master at Barrackpore Senior Comprehensive School and was eventually promoted to the position of principal at his alma mater St. Stephen’s College. He was a strict disciplinarian and made a significant impact on the lives of enumerable students throughout Trinidad and Tobago. He was known for encouraging his students to have pride in their school and its uniform.

Mr. De Coteau’s life was undoubtedly one of service, service to his family, friends, constituents, students and people of all walks of life. He was an active member of his community and served as the chairman on various committees established for community and socio-economic development, culture and national celebrations. Mr. De Coteau devoted his time to helping others and promoting the advancement of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

He was also professional photographer, sports enthusiast and athlete. By all accounts he enjoyed life and lived it to the fullest. I take this opportunity to express my deepest condolences to the De Coteau family during this time of mourning and I pray that the Almighty grants them the comfort and strength needed in this time of bereavement. I now ask that we stand and observe a minute of silence as a mark of respect.

*The House of Representatives stood.*
Madam Speaker: May his soul rest in peace. Hon. Members, an appropriate letter will be sent to convey our condolences to the family of the late Mr. Clifton De Coteau.

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEES**

*(APPOINTMENT TO)*

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, correspondence has been received from the President of the Senate dated January 13, 2021. It states as follows:

“Dear Madam Speaker,

Re: Change of Membership to Joint Select Committees

Reference is made to the subject at caption.

At a Sitting held on Tuesday January 12, 2021, the Senate agreed to the following resolution:

“Be it Resolved that this Senate agree to the following appointments to the Joint Select Committee:

- On the Joint Select Committee on Social Services and Public Administration – Mr. Avinash Singh in lieu of Ms. Allyson West;
- On the Joint Select Committee on Foreign Affairs – Ms. Donna Cox in lieu of Mr. Avinash Singh;
- On the Joint Select Committee on Finance and Legal Affairs – Mr. Hassel Bacchus in lieu of Mrs. Renuka Sagramsingh-Sooklal; and
- On the Public Accounts Committee – Dr. Amery Browne in lieu of Mr. Randall Mitchell.”

Accordingly, I respectfully request that the House of Representatives be informed of this decision at the earliest convenience please.

Thank you.
Respectfully,
Christine Kangaloo
President of the Senate”

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I also wish to advise that I have received communication from Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis, MP, Member for Arouca/Maloney who has requested leave of absence from settings during the period 27th of January, 2021, to the 27th of February, 2021. The leave which the Member seeks is granted.

EVIDENCE (AMDT.) BILL, 2020

Bill to amend the Evidence Act, Chap. 7:02, brought from the Senate [The Attorney General]; read the first time.

PAPERS LAID


2. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Financial Statement of the Tobago House of Assembly for the year ended September 30, 2016. [Hon. C. Imbert]

3. Value Added Tax (Amendment to Schedule 2) (No. 2) Order 2020. [Hon. C. Imbert]

Papers 1 to 3 to be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.

4. Forty-Second Annual Report of the Ombudsman for the period January 2019 to December 2019. [The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Esmond Forde)]
5. Trinidad and Tobago Housing Development Corporation (Vesting) (Amendment to the First Schedule) Order, 2021. [The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Pennelope Beckles-Robinson)]


7. Annual Administrative Report of the National Information and Communication Technology Company Limited (iGovTT) for the period October 01, 2018 to September 30, 2019. [The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh)]


9. Annual Report of the Trinidad and Tobago Civil Aviation Authority for the year ended September 30, 2020. [Hon. T. Deyalsingh]


11. Annual Administrative Report of the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the period December 31, 2014 to December 31, 2017. [Hon. T. Deyalsingh]

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**(Presentation)**

**Shipping Bill, 2020**

The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Marvin Gonzales): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present the following report:

**Constitution (Amdt.) (Tobago Self-Government) Bill, 2020**

The Minister of Sport and Community Development (Hon. Shamfa Cudjoe): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present the following report on behalf of the Member for Arouca/Maloney:


**URGENT QUESTIONS**

**Means Test**

*(Finalization of)*

Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh *(Couva South)*: [Desk thumping] Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. To the Minister of Education: In light of recent reports which have revealed that 39,861 primary school pupils and 6,091 secondary school pupils never logged on to the online platform, could the Minister inform this House when will the means test be finalized to determine which students should receive devices?

Madam Speaker: Minister of Education.

The Minister of Education (Hon. Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, in September 2020, the Ministry of Education indicated publicly that just over 65,000 students did not have personal devices and therefore, would have difficulty logging on. As we can see from the numbers, almost 20,000 of that number were able to log on whether they borrowed parents’ devices and so on, and so they were able to get on to the system.
In recognition of that fact, these students were catered for with respect to packaged information coming from their school, with respect to information being broadcast on TV, radio and in the print media.

With respect to the means test, the means test is designed for the devices that are being acquired by the Ministry. Those devices the RFP went out, the evaluation report has been completed, and so they are now at the point of award through iGovTT. The means test applies to the distribution of those devices. They do not apply to the more than 22,000 devices that have been pledged through the Adopt-a-School, and over 13,000 devices that have been delivered to these schools through this programme.

So the means test is for the devices being ordered by the Government. Those are at the point of award but I am pleased to report that the means test is 100 per cent complete and awaiting the procurement of the devices to be implemented.

Madam Speaker: Supplemental, Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Minister, could you confirm that having told this House that the means test has been finalized, has it been communicated with the relevant stakeholders such as the National Parent Teachers Association and so on?

Madam Speaker: Minister of Education.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Madam Speaker, I am not sure if I am being asked if the completion of a document by the Ministry of Education, if that needs to be communicated to the stakeholders. Why should it be communicated to them?—because they have nothing to do with the means test itself.

10.30 a.m.

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Speaker, given the information that the Minister has presented, could the Minister inform this House, taking into consideration that the
means test has been finalized, how many students have been identified through this means test to be in receipt of devices?

**Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the means test is to be applied when the devices are procured so that they can be distributed. So at this time the means test is ready for implementation. The devices are at the point of award through iGovTT, and once the devices are in the procurement stage and we are able to get the devices, then we would apply the means test and determine which child needs the devices. At this time, the devices that are being donated, the principals have indicated, through the survey that we sent out, which children require devices. And so once devices are donated to a school then the principal uses that list to be able to donate to as many students in the school as possible.

**Return of the Buccoo Reef to Hobart, Australia**

**(Details of)**

**Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh (Couva South):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, to the Minister of Works and Transport: Could the Minister inform this House why did the ‘Buccoo Reef’ ferry return to Hobart, Australia after journeying 398 nautical miles into its maiden voyage to Trinidad and Tobago?

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Sen. The Hon. Rohan Sinanan):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, in its early advisory, the National Infrastructure Company Development Limited, NIDCO, indicated that the Buccoo Reef commenced travel from Hobart, Australia to Trinidad on the 21st of January, 2021. The voyage planned for the Buccoo Reef involved only two ports of call. The first being Papeete, in French Polynesia, a distance of 3,592 nautical miles from Hobart. At the distance of 398 nautical miles from Hobart alarms were triggered. While the technical assessment concluded that the journey could have continued,
NIDCO decided that the vessel should return to Hobart, it being the closest port of call to investigate these occurrences and take the necessary corrective actions to prevent their reoccurrence. The builder Incat Tasmania PTY Limited along with the original engineering equipment manufacturers are troubleshooting and resolving the associated issues. NIDCO has requested a test of the major systems upon completion of these activities before the vessel resumes its journey to Trinidad. Thank you.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Minister, taking into consideration you indicated that the technical assessment concluded that the journey could have continued, could you advise who in NIDCO decided that the vessel should return, and on what basis that decision was taken?

Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan: These are new vessels designed and built specifically for their requirements between Trinidad and Tobago. These vessels are and do have contracts where they have guarantees from the manufacturers. In seeking the public’s interest NIDCO decided that to ensure that the warranties period is taken full advantage of and the manufacturers are doing exactly what the contract requires.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Supplemental to the Minister of Works and Transport. Minister, could you say who has responsibility, final responsibility for the vessel, is it when they leave the builder Incat and they deliver it to Trinidad and Tobago? You know, who has the final responsibility for that vessel for Trinidad and Tobago?

Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan: Madam Speaker, NIDCO took possession of the vessel, so NIDCO is in possession. However, as I indicated, the vessel does have contractual agreement with its guarantee, so the manufacturers are responsible for anything that may arise on the vessel during that contractual period. So the
responsibility is now to the manufacturers to ensure that the alarms that were raised are rectified.

**ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION**

The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, there is one question for oral answer, and it would be answered today. Thank you very much.

**Couva and Couva South/Savonetta Fire Stations**

**(Number of Fire Tenders)**

62. **Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh** *(Couva South)* asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

   Could the Minister inform this House what is the total number of fire tenders functioning at the Couva and the Couva South/Savonetta Fire Stations?

The Minister of National Security and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Stuart Young): Madam Speaker, the total number of fire tenders functioning at the Couva and the Couva South/Savonetta Fire Stations is one fire tender, and it has the support of a number of auxiliary vehicles, for example water support vehicles, et cetera.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam—

**Hon. S. Young:** Sorry, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, what they have done is they have totalled it and there are four functioning fire tenders at Couva and Couva South/Savonetta Fire Stations.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I know that probably the Minister has other things on his mind this morning, but importantly Mr. Minister, there are two fire stations, one is the Couva Fire Station and the other one is the Couva South or Savonetta Fire Station. And taking into consideration the proximity—

**Mr. Deyalsingh:** Madam Speaker, is there a question, please? [Crosstalk]

**UNREVISED**
Mr. Indarsingh:—of the Point Lisas Industrial Estate to the Savonetta Fire Station, could the Minister inform this House whether there is a fully functional hazmat fire tender attached to the Savonetta station? [Desk thumping]

Hon. S. Young: Madam Speaker, as stated, there are four functioning fire tenders. The fire service is very aware of the type of assets that they need to protect based on the jurisdiction and where the fire stations are located, so the answer is, yes.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE
(EXTENSION OF TIME)

Shipping Bill, 2020

The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, having regard to the interim report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on the Shipping Bill, 2020, First Session (2020/2021), Twelfth Parliament, I beg to move that the committee be allowed an extension of seven months in order to complete its work and submit a final report by July 31, 2021. Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Constitution (Amdt.) (Tobago Self-Government) Bill, 2020

The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, having regard to the interim report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on the Constitution (Amdt.) (Tobago Self-Government) Bill, 2020, First Session (2020/2021), Twelfth Parliament, I beg to move that the committee be allowed an extension of five months in order to complete its work and submit a final report by May 31, 2021. Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY

UNREVISED
(LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN)

Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC (Siparia): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

Whereas the Minister of National Security has unequivocally demonstrated his inability to competently execute his duties:

Be it resolved that this House express its lack of confidence in the Minister of National Security. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, by this Motion we call on Members of this august House to express their lack of confidence in the Minister of National Security, just as citizens in Trinidad and in our sister isle in Tobago, in the seats of Arima Central, Cunupia/Hindustan, St. Mary’s, just as those citizens expressed no confidence in this Government on Monday 25th January. [Desk thumping] The Minister has a track record of speaking out of turn, trying to deflect or sometimes simply speaking untruths. The Minister has tried to blame everyone else for his own incompetence. Indeed, the Minister’s favourite phrase is “unpatriotic”, and there are numerous examples of the Minister referring to persons with whom he does not agree as being unpatriotic.

Madam Speaker, if there is any Member of Parliament who is unpatriotic it is the Minister of National Security [Desk thumping] for locking out thousands of our citizens outside the country. When we look at the areas which fall under the portfolio of the Minister of National Security, and there are numerous, they are as gazetted in the Gazette of 108, 5th September, 2018, and thereafter in the recent Gazette, number 158, 9th September, 2020, numerous areas which call upon the Minister to execute duties as Minister of National Security. And given the shortening of speaking time, Madam Speaker, each Member here will deal with
various aspects of the portfolio of the Minister of National Security. And when we do that appraisal we see the Minister’s incompetence in the performance of his duties in many, many areas under his watch. [Desk thumping] And indeed we can dub the Minister of National Security as an all-round failure. [Desk thumping]

Now, it is not just some of us sitting here who are of this view. There are others who have been saying that he is an all-round failure as well. *Guardian* editorial, January 18, 2020, entitled “End the gun talk” was the response to the Minister's attempt to implicate the Opposition in gun violence in the capital city. That editorial says:

“…the Minister…news conference is nothing but gun talk from Minister Young who seems hapless to deal with crime and appears shocked that his penchant for talk can and will make no difference to reassure the population.”

It continues:

“At this stage we urge you to either bring quick change or do the honourable thing and resign.” [Desk thumping]

*Express*, 17 May, 2020 also called on the Minister to resign, stating that:

“The Venezuela incident is the culmination of a series of disasters in which the minister has been the central figure. Within the past”—six months—alone.”

It states the Minister:

“…antagonised the sister government of Barbados to the point where it was forced to issue a public statement of concern;”—the Minister—“covertly introduced private security into policing until public opinion forced the Prime Minister to instruct that the contracts be terminated;”—the Minister—
Minister of National Security (cont’d)

Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar (cont’d)

“publicly encouraged the army to exercise authority that it did not have;”
—the Minister through his insensitive management in dealing with groups of anxious citizens trapped abroad fuelled unnecessarily hostility which put the public at each other’s throat.

“All”—this really—“pale(s) in comparison”—it says—“to the Venezuela affair that has exposed this country to the risk of US sanctions. By continuing to deny any knowledge that the head of the Venezuelan delegation and the aircraft on which they travelled to this country were under US sanction, Minister Young is asking the public to close its eyes to common sense, logic, and the powerful role he has occupied in the Rowley Cabinet.” [Desk thumping]

It further states:

“As the Government’s key figure in creating this mess, Minister Young must accept responsibility.

He must go now.” [Desk thumping]

This is not the Opposition saying this. Six months later the same newspaper had this to say:

“Today, on the evidence of how the deportation of Venezuelan refugees was handled, are further reinforced in our position that Mr. Young is suitable for the office entrusted to him by the Prime Minister.” [Desk thumping]

The headline of that article was “Shame on you, Minister Young”. So there have been several of these, and there is a very rare occurrence that took place, where it is that a whole front page editorial, very rare that you get a front page editorial in a newspaper against the Minister of National Security. So, there are so many things we can talk about, I want to start with the fact that the Minister is operating under
an unlawful piece of subsidiary legislation. [Desk thumping] I say there is no legal basis for denying entry or not granting exemptions to citizens to come back home. There is no law or legal basis. Now what has happened, Madam, as many will know, is that the Minister is purporting to act under Regulation 10 of the COVID Regulations, which purports to give the power to lock down the borders, the sea ports and the airport, and the persons can only come home with the permission of the Minister of National Security. No other country has done this, Madam Speaker. No other country in the world except Trinidad and Tobago has done this. Air place restrictions—[Desk thumping]

Mr. Al-Rawi: I rise on Standing Order 48(2), please, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: That is that it is sub judice?

Mr. Al-Rawi: Very properly so.

Madam Speaker: Yes, okay. And, Madam Leader of the Opposition, if it is sub judice you understand the rule and I would ask you to not go there.

Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC: I thank you, Madam. I am not referring to any case that is before the court. [Desk thumping] I am dealing with general principles of law, and I have asked before for the Minister to tell us—

Mr. Al-Rawi: Standing Order 48(2)—[Crosstalk]

Madam Speaker: Attorney General.

Mr. Al-Rawi: Thank you, Madam. Madam Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 48(2), and by way of clarification, the issue of constitutionality is before the court, and learned Senior Counsel ought to know that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Okay, so, Leader of the Opposition while you may not have referred to a matter, if this is an issue, a substantive issue before the court, I—[Interruption]—therefore uphold the objection and ask you to move on.
Hon. Member: No, no, no.

Madam Speaker: The Attorney General takes responsibility for what he has said.

Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC: Okay, Madam. I state again that those regulations are illegal [Desk thumping] under the Constitution, under the common law, under international law, and under the rights given under the Immigration Act, and those regulations have taken away fundamental rights of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. [Desk thumping]

[Hon. F. Al-Rawi stands]

Madam Speaker: So Member for Siparia, I have already ruled and I have asked you to move on.

Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC: I will move on, Madam, and I thank you for your guidance. Coupled with that, operating under COVID Regulation 10 for under the Public Health Ordinance, made under Public Health Ordinance, we have a very strange situation where the exemption policy that the Minister has operated under has been done with different criteria. The goal post kept shifting all the time. Whilst the borders were locked down in March, it was not until June 2020 that we got a first hint of what some of the criteria would be for these exemptions. And thereafter making it up as you go along, we kept getting snippets of what the criteria would be to allow a person to get the exemption. Now, one of the things that the Government has been saying is that we do not have enough quarantine space. We cannot allow nationals to come home and go to home quarantine, because that was a suggestion, that people could go into home quarantine in order to stop the spread of the COVID. Madam Speaker, I have in my hand here, that the Government has not been consistent with its policy. And I have here a letter dated 22 January, 2021, to the Chief Immigration Officer.

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, 53(1), I am being disturbed on the other side, please.
Madam Speaker: Okay, so, I will just ask all Members to be reminded with respect to Members who are not speaking, to not disrupt the proceedings, no continuous conversations, and please, watch your volumes. Continue, Member for Siparia.


Dear Ms. Ghandi-Andrews

Exemption to depart and re-enter the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on January 25th and 27th 2021.

The Minister of National Security has granted an exemption to the current travel restrictions to allow 17 persons to depart the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on January 25, via a Caribbean Airlines flight for Guyana. The passengers will return to the country on January 27th, 2021—that is today, Madam—from Guyana, via Roraima Airways.

And it lists, and I will not give the names of the persons, but it lists 17 persons who are being granted the exemption to leave and exemption to return. Today they will return. But what is striking is that this letter from the Permanent Secretary of National Security on behalf of the Minister granting the exemptions, it says further:

Thereafter—so they will come back today—they will be allowed to proceed to their places of residence—

Hon. Member: What!

Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC: To their places of residence—

Hon. Members: What! [Crosstalk]

Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:—via a Kalloo’s vehicle, with registration number—and I will not give the number, but it is here in the letter, driven by a Mr., name is given, driver’s permit number—so they will proceed to their places of
residence to undergo a period of quarantine.

So, why are we allowing these persons to home quarantine? This is where there is inequality of treatment and discrimination in the manner in which it is being done. [Desk thumping] It ends:

Please take the necessary action to facilitate the above arrangements.

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** I rise on 48(1), requesting clarification as to whether those are diplomats or Vienna Conventions, as in response it is material to know these facts. It is—[Crosstalk]

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Madam, they are persons working in an embassy. But you know the COVID does not discriminate against nationals, diplomats. [Desk thumping] It does not discriminate whether you are a national of Trinidad and Tobago or you are diplomat or a foreigner. It does not discriminate. [Desk thumping]

So therefore, Madam, I am saying you are allowing citizens, nationals, you do not allow them to come to go for home quarantine, but you are doing it for non-nationals. [Desk thumping] What you have against citizens? What do you have against citizens of this country that you will do this discriminatory thing? [Desk thumping] Now you are telling us some people come and some could go and some could come back and go back. [ Interruption] Again, the COVID is not only for PNM people, UNC people. It is stranded nationals under PNM or UNC. They are nationals of Trinidad and Tobago. [Desk thumping]

And when you want to talk about proportionate and not proportionate, you come with this sub judice rule to shut us up, not to talk about law. But there are many other things that this Minister is totally incompetent of executing. [Desk thumping] Many other things, and this is an example, Madam, in my respectful
view, of this inequality of treatment. So look, I have no problem with who get to come and who get to go, whether it is Dr. Rai, MP Rai, or Barry, MP Barry, whether it is the Prime Minister’s daughter, or whether it is the AG’s son, or whether is Minister Young’s am—

Hon. Member: Step-daughter.

Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:—relative. I am saying, it does not matter. I am happy for those who were allowed to go and come back. I am happy for those who were granted exemptions. But again, what about the thousands of other persons who are being left stranded? [Desk thumping] They were left stranded. And when it is they were left stranded—and now this latest visa-like system. You know, the Minister took longer to create a form, an online form, than the scientists took to create a COVID vaccine. [Laughter] [Desk thumping] So that latest announcement which comes just in between, we filed the Motion, Motion coming, come Friday to say we have a new online system, and you could apply and it would be like a visa. You know how many countries I know about you cannot leave your country without a visa. It is places like Soviet, Russia before. You had to get an exemption to leave your country.

Hon. Member: North Korea.

Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC: North Korea. Is that where this Minister wants to take us? You cannot leave, you cannot come back. So I am saying, whoever get to go and come, fine for them. And I heard the Minister is reported to have said, he is feeling sorry for me. Minister “doh” feel sorry for me, you know. Feel sorry for the stranded nationals of Trinidad and Tobago. [Desk thumping] “Doh” feel sorry for me. Do not feel sorry for me at all.

So here we are with the exemption policies. The latest policy, the problem
was not in making the application, Minister. You announced this new online something. That was not the problem. The problem was the length of time that you were taking to answer these applications and to grant exemptions. That was the problem. And now you put everybody back down to the bottom of the line. Everybody now has to apply again. Again, with further delays. How is this going to help them? So, I think it was a knee-jerk reaction, with the greatest of respect, that the Minister came Friday knowing we have to do this Motion today to announce what he called some new innovative something.

So, as I said before, the time the Minister took to create an online application form, COVID, the scientists have developed a vaccine, a COVID vaccine. It took longer than that to do it. Then we have other issues with Immigration. I am told, and I am asking the Minister, was the Border Management System at the airport shut down? Was it shut down? And the question is, why? That Border Management System, IT system was shut down. From January 19, 2021, there is a memo—and I can produce it if necessary—about 15 hand-picked Immigration Officers out of about 150 were granted access to the Border Management System. Now this create problems. And I have another memo, and there were several memos written by immigration officers pointing out concern, that they were unable to access the Border Management System at the airport, and since they are processing the passengers manually without the aid of a watch list they will not be held accountable for admitting any person who may have been on a watch list or overstayed their previous entry certificate. We know this month, earlier this month deportees came into the country, Madam. Deportees were allowed entry into the country, but there was no Border Management System up and running to properly check for these people, whether they are on a watch list and what is to be done. So
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this now, I am told that today the BMS is up and running. Is that true?

**Hon. Member:** No.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** That is what I am told, it is up and running at the airport. But it was shut down. Then what it is you are hiding? Since Madam Delcy came, I am told they shut it down. You let only a few people have access, and then you cherry pick, hand pick 15 people. [*Desk thumping*] And today I got a phone call saying it is up and running. I do not know. Tell us if that is true. Why do you shut down the Border Management System? That is the IT portals to bring passengers in, to let people come into the country. What were you trying to hide, and why? Why? [*Desk thumping*] But it does not end there, you know, Madam. It does not end there at all.

**11.00 a.m.**

The Minister has responsibility for the fire service. Our colleague from Couva South just raised a question about fire tenders and so on, you know. I know the Minister of National Security came to the constituents of Siparia to open the fire station and he fell for that fire station. It was such a well-built, designed station that we had put there. [*Desk thumping*] And since then it is not operational, not operational. But there is more I want to say about the fire service. Not a single cent was released to the fire services for repairs and maintenance of equipment and training, fiscal 2020. Fiscal 2021, the Minister did not even bother to allocate funding for these essential requirements. I saw today an article in the *Guardian*, Gail Alexander and I am quoting her really that Minister Young is under fire. Well, I think he has greater reason to be under fire than just this Motion.

I will spend time and I will spend and my colleagues will be showing the failures of the Minister in execution of his duties. We are clear that the public
discharge of his duties has been characterized by incompetence and arrogance. My colleagues will demonstrate there is no area within his Ministry that has excelled or even served our people with modest performance. He has been rightly condemned in several newspaper editorials. But, Madam Speaker, there is a deeper level of distrust when in your private affairs one can be accused of abusing his office in defence of personal wrongdoing.

Madam Speaker, it has come to our attention that—which speak to possible abuse of office, endangering the lives of citizens and undermining the independence of key national institutions. Madam Speaker, there is an upscale residential condominium complex called the Towers, Westmoorings on the Sea. Residents signed a lease agreement which prohibits the use or occupation of common areas and blocking of passages and corridors which impede safe passage to fire exits in the event of an emergency. Well, this is understandable, this is common. When a safety audit was done in 2020, it found that of 126 apartments, 34 residents would not comply with this part of the lease. After requesting residents to clear corridors and remove personal items blocking the fire escape, 26 complied. Of the owners who refused to comply was the Minister of National Security and another owner known to the Minister. The Fire Prevention Unit of the fire service conducted inspection reported on December 02, 2020. The report highlighted health and safety hazards and obstructions which endangered the lives of all residents, particularly children and the elderly in the event of the fire or other emergency.

The fire services then were not aware that the Minister was a resident there and he was one of those that was not complying but noted the danger in the vicinity of his unit. I am told and I am asking the Minister if this is true, the
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Minister and the person known to him refused to clear the corridors and fire escape further endangering lives of residents. You know, Madam, I am told and again ask the Minister if this is so. The fire services issued another letter after the 2\textsuperscript{nd} of December, 2020; 31 December, 2020, Old Years’ Day, 31 December, 2020. They have a thing about doing things on Old Years’ Day. And indicating—

**Madam Speaker:** Member, in terms of—remember the nature of your Motion. So unless you could quickly tie what you are saying here, I am going to ask you to leave it, because this is not about—this is about the Minister of National Security executing his duties. So that I have given you some leeway to see where this is going but you know, I will be verged if you do not tie it quickly, that I am not going to allow it based on Standing Order 48(1).

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Madam, I am saying the Minister has responsibility for the fire services. And if it is true that the Minister did not comply with their requirements, the further question is whether the Minister caused the fire services—*[Desk thumping]*

**Madam Speaker:** Minister, Member, I am on my feet. *[Crosstalk]* And I would ask everybody to be—*[Crosstalk]* I would ask everybody to be courteous. *[Continuous crosstalk]* Member for Siparia, again, I have heard what you said and I have asked you before to tie it to the Motion. Your efforts thus far have not tied it to the Motion. And all the Members here who have a comment, I would ask them either to contain their comments and if that is extremely difficult, I will invite them to leave the Chamber where they are free to express their comments. I am on my legs and I am making a ruling. I have asked you to tie something that is not in the remit in the Minister’s responsibility as a Minister, to the Motion, if not to leave it and continue to another point.

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Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC: Certainly. I am guided, Madam Speaker. The Minister has responsibility for the fire services and the question is whether he 
[Desk thumping] incompetently instructed them—[Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker: Member for Naparima! [Desk thumping] Member for Naparima! I would like to hear your Member. You may know what she is going to say, I do not know. I would like to hear. Member for Siparia, the fact that the Member has responsibility for the fire services and the matters that you have disclosed thus far in my ruling do not apply to the Motion and I rule them irrelevant, please go on to another point.

Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC: I will move on Madam, the point is made, I will take your ruling. I am guided by your ruling. So the Minister has several other responsibilities and one has to do with forensic services. The Minister promised scientific and evidence based investigations strategy, we got forensic sciences failure, Madam. The Minister’s failure to maintain and improve forensic sciences facilities and services is an indictment on the dereliction of duty. Now, there was a Joint Select Committee report in this Parliament in 2017, dealing with the forensic services and DNA. And at that time we were told the DNA database created by the DNA Act, Chap. 5:34 was empty. At this time we have no reports so the Minister is in breach of duties under that Act, Madam. Firstly, section 13, for samples to be taken from suspects, detainees accused; section 15, persons employed or applying for employment as officers of the protective services, Minister, police, supplemental police and so on, and section 16, deportees they also have to—samples have to be taken from them at the airport.

Now, the Minister has not caused this to happen and the JSC report indicated that the implementation of this Act, that the taking of these samples to create the database was not happening, there is a backlog, a tremendous backlog of samples

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to be analyzed and to be dealt with and just not happening. So is it that too, the incompetence of the Minister which will be developed by another Member given the shortness of time that we have for this debate. The Minister also has a duty under section 11 of this Act to lay in the Parliament a report that he will receive from the Custodian, and by the way I am told the Custodians are no longer there, the Deputy Custodian is acting in their place. And I am also told that the Forensic Science Centre even though, since the JSC report, a committee was set up to get the centre accredited, the centre is still not accredited as we speak today.

So that DNA Act passed in 2012, amended in 2014, came with regulations by this Government during the last Parliament, not being implemented at all. And you know, when they came with the Regulations, Madam, they were like the best thing since sliced bread, DNA is the way to go, this is like rocket science, this is the way to solve crime, this is the way to help. Madam Speaker, the science centre and the whole DNA data bank is not there. So even if you have samples from suspects and convicts and so on, what do you match it against, you have to match it against a data bank and the purpose of that law was to create the national data bank, the DNA data bank by taking samples from a whole wide range and pool of people.

So that is where we are, it is underfunded, understaffed with inadequate accommodation. And then we were told, just one day less than a year ago, in January 2020, the hon. Prime Minister told the nation, look, we have got a $100 million-loan to build a new centre. We were told by members in the joint select committee—on the Select Committee on Evidence (Amdt.) Bill that we will get a new centre down at Mount Hope—many, many times, and so on; none of this has happened. In this regard as well the Minister has been a failure. [Desk
thumping and crosstalk]

One minute. Thank you, Khadijah.

**Madam Speaker:** Member for Siparia, you are asking what is your time? You will stop at 11.11 a.m.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Madam, I say look, every zip line—time has a zip line too. Every rope has an end [*Desk thumping*] and we believe that the incompetence of this Minister must come to an end, he should resign. And by the way, I have a draft letter of resignation for you, if you do not have time to print it and write it, we will pass the draft to you, Minister of National Security. I thank you, Madam Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Speaker:** Whip, Whip. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Lee:** Sorry, Madam Speaker. I beg to second this Motion and I reserve my right to speak at a later time.

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of National Security and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Stuart Young):** [*Desk thumping*] Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, over the past few weeks I think the population has looked on, the population has observed and now the population can conclude the warnings that I gave, the submissions that I made along the way were all meant with a great degree of empathy and sympathy. But what I have seen here today is very sad as I have said throughout. [*Desk thumping*] The complete struggle, the complete struggle for relevance by someone who calls themselves Senior Counsel. I thought back to myself, six years ago, how that would have gone down in a court of law. But today, Madam Speaker, it is about the court of public opinion. Today is about the court of public opinion and none other than the Leader of the Opposition...
who is obviously in a state of absolute desperation, not only for relevance, but looking around and hoping that those around her would support her.

What I heard there today would fail even in a Petty Civil Court of law and would be struck out on a preliminary point of a—it does not even meet the standard of pleadings. Nevertheless, I have come here today and I start by thanking, thanking the members of my constituency of Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West; thanking the population who as I sat there kept sending their messages to me, the thousands of messages that I have received of support; thanking my family; thanking those in my party; thanking my colleagues; thanking the Prime Minister, but unfortunately we are brought here today to waste useful parliamentary time and I say that with the greatest of respect. Because you see, when someone who leads a party and leads a whole Bench, someone who is the Leader of the Opposition constitutionally, fails and flounders in the way that we have just witnessed it is sad to hear the continued desperation, the lies, the deceit—

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Speaker, 48(4).

Madam Speaker: Okay, so—

Hon. S. Young: I withdraw the word “lies”—continued desperation and the naked attempts to mislead, not the population because you see the good citizens know better. Madam Speaker, I thought about it and I realized having listened, what the reason is. I thought about why is there so much focus, so much time, so much energy being spent on me by those who are opposed to me. And this is what it is. You see, I say this without fear of contradiction; I am in no one’s pocket. I do not owe anyone anything. [Desk thumping] There is not a single financier in the world, not only Trinidad, a single contractor in the world, not only Trinidad, a single
criminal in the world. There is no one that can say that Stuart Young owes them anything or that Stuart Young will do what they ask them to do. So you see, that is why, Madam Speaker, that—[Crosstalk]

[Madam Speaker stands]

**Hon. S. Young:** So you see, Madam Speaker, that is why—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I seek your protection, the Member, the Minister of—Laventille, Hinds is threatening me across the floor; is threatening me across the floor, Madam. I seek protection. [Crosstalk]

**Madam Speaker:** Members, Member for Siparia and Member for Diego Martin North/East—[Crosstalk] Okay, so Members, I realize this is the first occasion we are back here since Christmas and we may all have a sort of volting energy. I would ask everyone to keep their energy under control, to remember the provisions of Standing Order 53, Standing Order 48, Standing Order 44(10). And take this as my last warning to us generally as a body.

**Hon. S. Young:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. You see, Madam Speaker, what I understood is when the mover of a motion comes, that person is charged with the responsibility of securing the success of the Motion. That mover is charged with the responsibility of laying the foundation for the success of the Motion. You cannot turn around and say well, this one will talk, that one will talk as you read from a script, but nevertheless every single thing I have done during my time in office for the last six years I say without fear of contradiction, I have always done because I believe, believed and continue to believe it is what has been right for Trinidad and Tobago. My job is to do all that I can within the law to protect Trinidad and Tobago and I genuinely discharge that without fear or favour, malice or ill-will. So I will start off with the exemption system and the border
First point, Madam Speaker, the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago took a decision in March of last year to appoint a three-man sub-Cabinet team chaired by the hon. Prime Minister, including the Minister of Health and the Minister of National Security to deal with the global pandemic that is COVID. I am a part of that team. There is no decision that is made by the Minister of National Security with respect to how we deal with the COVID and with the pandemic that is still raging throughout the world, that is made by me personally. And I play my part and I take it very seriously and I have done so from day one. What I would like to remind, Madam Speaker, the population, through you, is that as I look at it I refer to an article from the BBC, 21st of January, this is from the United Kingdom because this is what we are facing. Those on the other side have consistently since January, since March of last year behaved as though there is not a global pandemic and COVID is not deadly, potentially. You would recall they talked about building a dome, none other than the Member for Siparia came out, build a dome, COVID will be killed in sunlight, et cetera, but this is what we are facing now, currently and why border protection and border control remains a consistent pillar of how this country deals with COVID.

“Priti Patel says UK should have closed borders in March 2020.”

This is the Home Secretary in the United Kingdom coming out and saying that the United Kingdom should have closed its borders in March 2020, in light of the Coronavirus pandemic. Trinidad and Tobago does not have to face what unfortunately other countries around the world including next door, are unfortunately facing now. The article goes on to say:

“In a video call obtained by Guido Fawkes, the home secretary told Tory
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supporters she was an ‘advocate’ of closing the borders 10 months ago. Between mid March and June, the UK did not impose a ban or quarantine restrictions on international travellers arriving in the UK.”

Compare that to Trinidad and Tobago today.

Last night, minutes after midnight the airline industry was sending me messages that the United Kingdom today may very well announce everyone coming into the United Kingdom will go into a cluster of hotels for quarantine. To stand up here and with the typical dishonesty, it sickened me as I listened to the Member for Siparia read a letter and say that 17 persons are being allowed to go to Guyana to come back and go home to quarantine and to create this cloud. It is because they are diplomats. But it showed, Madam Speaker, it showed that the Opposition does not understand the Vienna Convention, because you see the Vienna Convention says when diplomats arrive in Trinidad and Tobago the Government cannot quarantine them, but what we have come up with, along with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Foreign and Caricom Affairs is that diplomats arriving in Trinidad and Tobago will be allowed to home quarantine, they present their test results before arriving here and that is how we protect Trinidad and Tobago and the population but respect international laws and obligations. So to listen to the attempt to mislead the population, “Oh, Young let 17 people go and come and they can go home”. Complete dishonesty. They are diplomats.

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker, 48(6). The reference to complete dishonesty is imputing improper motives. [Crosstalk]

Madam Speaker: You know, if Members—[Crosstalk and laughter] I have been on my legs for at least three seconds. Member for Siparia, Member for Diego
Martin North/East, I think I will invite—I am so happy to see the comradery between you all, but I think that I am at a stage that I will invite the both of you all to leave the Chamber, continue your comradery and then return. Because this is the second time I have stood and you all have continued as if maybe—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam, I ask under which Standing Order I leave the Chamber?

Madam Speaker: If you can kindly sit please, I am standing. [Desk thumping] Could you kindly sit, please. Please continue.

Hon. S. Young: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, very quickly despite the interruptions, the second article I draw the population’s attention to is one dated the 25th, two days ago, none other than the Prime Minister of Canada. And it stated in the National Post:

“Canadians who travel outside Canada could be stranded abroad, Trudeau warns.

The government has had travel advisories warning against any non-essential travel since the beginning of the pandemic, but some Canadians have not heeded the call.”

And what the Prime Minister, what the Prime Minister of Canada has said:

“Prime Minister Justine Trudeau warned Friday…anyone travelling outside of Canada could face considerable trouble getting back home, as new evidence suggests some COVID-19 variants are both more transmissible and more deadly.”

He is quoted as saying:

“‘No one should be taking a vacation abroad right now. If you’ve got one planned, cancel it. Don’t book a trip for spring break,’ Trudeau said outside
of…”—the—“cottage. ‘We could be bringing in new measures that significantly impede your ability to return to Canada at any given moment without warning.”’

This is what is happening now. Trinidad and Tobago whilst having closed borders has managed the repatriation, has managed the repatriation of our nationals back and that has resulted in us being able to carry out the business of Trinidad and Tobago as we are currently doing. The next one:

“Ardern Says New Zealand Won’t Open Border to The World This Year.”

The Prime Minister of New Zealand.

Right here closer to home, Madam Speaker, the 26th, which was yesterday, Barbados Today, page 3, public health official:

We—“…may have dropped the”—COVID—“ball on return to tourism.

In an interview with Barbados TODAY, Executive Director of the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) Dr Joy St John said people across the region had been lulled into a false sense of security.”

And she talked about tourism and opening the borders, et cetera. We see what is going on in Europe, what has happened in the United States.

So, Madam Speaker, the border control was something that was decided by the Cabinet on the advice of our medical public health experts and the scientists and it continues. The new exemption process must evolve. I have listened incredulously over the last few days including a few moments ago, the Member for Siparia attacking an evolution of a process, obviously criteria will change. What was taking place in March of last year, April of last year, May of last year is vastly different from now. Our people who were stranded outside, who may have gone for a two-week, a three-week vacation and been stranded, those were the priorities
then. It must shift now. It is evolution, it is normal to criticize a form and to try and say it is visa. It is not a visa application. The point that was made is that it is a form, an online form that is similar to what every single Trinidadian must fill out if they have to go to the United States or Canada only in terms of how the form is structured. There must be a way to manage the border system.

Now, to get into what were the achievements of National Security during my tenure. I was appointed on the 6th of August, 2018. Carnival 2019 and 2020 were the safest carnivals in decades. That is a fact. We were able to introduce the bottle ban that had never been done before; that is a fact. The demonetization exercise. So I thought about it, demonetization was handled by national security. There were three people in the country who knew it was going to take place, national security was one of the pillars. Is it that those opposite are upset because they are part of who was stuck with 500 million cotton bills? It is now one of the most successful demonetization exercises ever done in the world. When we were studying how to do it and looking at other jurisdictions, we did not have a single hiccup in carrying that exercise out that other jurisdictions had.

We appointed a Commissioner of Police, we appointed a Chief of Defence Staff with sufficient years at the helm to make meaningful difference. The UNC style of national security was to grant a contract to a Chief of Defence Staff and extend it; that is UNC-national-security-style. We appointed a qualified SSA director who is the same batch as the Commissioner of Police and Chief of Defence Staff; qualified, carrying out his role and his responsibility without fear or favour, not a telephone operator. This has brought significant benefits. We have established the National Operations Fusion Centre, the National Intelligence Fusion Center. There has been significant planning and sharing of intelligence and
assets in national security, because you see, this Minister of National Security is not about giving out contracts.

This Minister of National Security is about doing what we can with the limited resources we have and doing it without fear of anyone. We have—national security has changed the way and led the charge with how we have dealt with some crises. Not only in Trinidad and Tobago with the flooding, with the earthquake, national security led the charge on the direction of the Cabinet to help Dominica, to help the Bahamas when they suffered significantly, seamlessly without any interruption. Even in times of limited resources we have completed important infrastructural projects and below cost, on time, without there being any inflation of cost, the Shirvan and Roxborough Police Stations, the Roxborough and Penal Fire Stations. We cut cost significantly in these things by using the same floor plans, not giving out a contract to somebody. The 200 motor bikes for the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, we received that gratis based on the relationship we built and we nurtured with the People’s Republic of China. So it was not a contract. Nobody was given a contract for the supply of those bikes and now we have been able to provide to the fire service, to the defence force and prisons out of that. We negotiated the state-of-the-art DNA centre and I just heard the Member again try to mislead, saying the Prime Minister said a $100 million loan. It is not a loan. It is again going to be gratis from the People’s Republic of China. I hear they are coming with helicopters. Let us talk about helicopters.

11.30 a.m.

When the UNC came into office they cancelled the OPVs but they kept four AW139 helicopters. That is more than sufficient for national security. So do not come here today and try and pin vertical leases on me. I am the one who is trying
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to save the taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago [Desk thumping] and someone will remind the UNC of the two corrupt leases that they got into for those helicopters. The helicopter, I heard the Member for Oropouche East talking about national security, use of the helicopter for national security. It was never conformed for national security. It was the executive limousine service from South Trinidad to Port of Spain, and all over when the Member for Siparia wanted to fly all over. That is UNC style national security. Right? Border control.

We ordered two Cape-class vessels, you know how? From the Government of Australia being paid for through a fund of the Government of Australia. I have here a report from the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force dated the 8th of January. The border security UNC style was a Chinese vessel and some Damen vessels on their way out of office. The Chinese vessels—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: 48(8).

Hon. S. Young:—we all know how that Chinese vessel was procured for border security.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: There is not a substantive Motion against the UNC or Members on this side. This is a Motion—48(8). Standing—

Madam Speaker: Overruled.

Hon. S. Young: You see, Madam Speaker, you brought a Motion, Member for Siparia. You brought a Motion to talk about national security, let us talk about national security. Take the heat. [Desk thumping] This letter from the Trinidad—this, Madam Speaker, population of Trinidad and Tobago, this letter from the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force is now complaining about the Chinese vessel because they cannot procure parts. That is one of the things you consider when you are purchasing vessels. It is not stumbling on a jetty saying I want one of those.

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Hon. S. Young (cont’d)

So now what they have said, issues we experienced which include the delay in obtaining supplies, as the supply chain required to support this capital asset, was firmly embedded in the Asian market. This is of critical concern as it pertains to the major mechanical equipment such as engines, generators, gearboxes due to the following: lack of original equipment, manufacture support hinders the sourcing. In other words, the defence force is saying we have a vessel that was procured and we cannot get the parts now. What did we do? You want to know what we did in national security on this side. We sent two officers, the Chief of Defence Staff and the highest level engineer of the coast guard to Australia to go and look at the Cape-class vessels. We got a report from them in writing saying that these vessels are appropriate for Trinidad and Tobago. We have negotiated to get the parts, the maintenance, et cetera, because it is not about giving a contract, it is not about just acquiring so money could pass. That is not national security under me, I am sorry.

[Desk thumping]

We will talk about the Damen vessels that were procured with no financing in place that is now the subject of an international criminal investigation. That is national security UNC style, not my style.

Mr. Hosein: Madam Speaker, that is absolutely not true. 48(6), please. 48(6).

Madam Speaker: Overruled.

Hon. S. Young: You want to talk about border control and always talking about the Venezuelans and how porous the borders are. Well, I am waiting to hear who declares a conflict of interest today. But what we had in 2013, [Desk thumping] in 2013 under the UNC Government there was an ACP, African Caribbean Pacific Report on invisible migrants. Not a single recommendation out of this in 2013 was implemented by the UNC. It starts off by saying, talking about Trinidad and
Tobago in 2013. This country has also experienced—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** On Standing Order 48(1) and 48(6), 48(8), Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay. So I will take them in order. Overruled on 48(8). 48(6), overruled on 48(6). 48(1), overruled on 48(1).

**Hon. S. Young:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, this is why I am saddened and the population looks on. You bring a Motion here today to talk about me and national security. I am giving the population [Desk thumping] my record as Minister of National Security. You have to take it. And what it says is this country has also experienced a regular migratory flow which includes trafficked persons and smuggled migrants in 2013. Not a single thing in the recommendations implemented by the UNC, but when we found this report last year someone blew the whistle and said, “Do you know that under the UNC they got this ACP Report?” And we pulled the report and looked at it. The Prime Minister had a whole press conference on it. We were pleased to see that even without sight of the report the vast majority of recommendations how to deal with the migratory problems had already been implemented by us. That is how you deal with border security. [Desk thumping]

There was talk about challenge, challenge to regulations. I want to tell the country today, through you, Madam Speaker, without offending any sub judice rule, I saw in the newspaper over the last three days a certain person claiming she had put in an application. I felt sorry for her. Seventy-something years old, put in an application, being led. The legal team, when I received the letter being led by an MP for the UNC. When we checked the—

**Mr. Hosein:** Check 48(2), Madam Speaker. 48(2). This is—

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Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: You prevented us from talking about the law and now you want to do exact that by citing the matter. [Desk thumping] You are citing a—

Madam Speaker: Continue.

Hon. S. Young: You know this is what saddens me. Senior Counsel, sub judice is a matter before the court, not a letter. And listen, but the point I want to make so that the population understands the continued dishonesty, when we searched the system, do you know there was never an application by that woman in the system? There was not an application ever made, but they want to go to court on that. Regardless, I instructed that an exemption be granted. Not an application made. We checked the system twice, but that is the dishonesty of the Opposition trying to mislead the population. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Hosein: Madam Speaker, Standing Order 48(4) and 48(6).

Madam Speaker: Member for Barataria/San Juan, maybe if you address me now I might hear you.

Mr. Hosein: Madam Speaker, 48(4) and 48(6).

Madam Speaker: Overruled on both. Please continue.

Hon. S. Young: “Doh bring to the House what you cyar handle.” [Desk thumping]

Under me, as Minister of National Security with the support of all of my colleagues in the Cabinet—because you see I remind the population they had five Ministers of National Security, one who is currently wanted by the US Department of Justice. That same Minister of National Security towed a truck, a fire truck. The Member for Siparia want to talk about fire—towed a fire truck for $6 million.

Let me tell you all about the prison, Madam Speaker, what has gone on in the prison because I asked two questions. I said we are trying to achieve a lot with the prison service under my tenure. We are fixing the Remand. We are upgrading the Remand finally. This should have been done decades ago at a cost to the
taxpayers of $60 million. There is a fence that is offensive, built by the UNC around the prison that surrounds absolutely nothing that cost the taxpayers $87 million. So I am fixing Remand for $60 million, they put up a fence that protects nothing for $87 million. That is national security Siparia style. [Desk thumping]

Under the Member of Parliament for Siparia they took $277 million of our taxpaying dollars, $277 million in cash and bought a warehouse called the Eastern Correctional Rehabilitation Centre. If we had $277 million now we would reform the whole of the prison service. Nevertheless, what we have done is we have upgraded the CCTV, the alarm system. We are now putting in place new fence at Golden Grove, when they took $87 million for a fence surrounding nothing. Last year—and my colleagues will speak about some of it. Last year—they always want to talk about homicides and what the homicide level is. I have never engaged that conversation publicly. That is not for the Minister of National Security to engage publicly, but in the year before when the homicide rate had gone up, call for Young’s head. The homicide rate last year was 396. First time in years I hear nothing about it.

Do not come here and try to tell the population about national security. Do not come here and try to mislead this population and tell the population about national security when you, the Member for Siparia, told your whole team in the Senate and in the House to block the Anti-gang legislation, to block the bail amendment. By blocking the bail amendment let me remind the population that was the UNC saying anybody with an automatic firearm or a grenade you should get bail. Whereas we were saying no, stay inside for 120 days and you will be charged.

The border control: We implemented a successful Venezuelan migrant
registration that has not been done anywhere else. We received accolades for that. Right? The coastal radar system working operational, multiagency teams on land. Madam Speaker, the list goes on. Madam Speaker, the population made its decision already, but what I found interesting is the amount of time, effort, energy, including here today being taken to bring this type of Motion and to target one Member specifically. But I stand here without fear of contradiction that I have the support of my Cabinet colleagues and my Prime Minister. [Desk thumping] I have the support of my constituency and the population of right-thinking people. And I, through you, Madam Speaker, continue to give my assurance that whatever portfolio I hold I will continue to do so to the best of ability without fear or favour, malice or ill will.

**Madam Speaker:** Member, your time is now up. [Desk thumping] Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Rodney Charles** *(Naparima):* Madam Speaker, first of all I would like to congratulate the Member for Siparia for bringing at this time the Motion that we on this side have—that the Minister of National Security has unequivocally demonstrated his inability to competently execute his duties. [Desk thumping] And:

> “Be it resolved that this House express its lack of confidence in the Minister of National Security.”

Madam Speaker, this is the worst Minister of National Security in the history of Trinidad and Tobago. [Desk thumping] And today, I make a public apology to former Minister Edmund Dillon because I moved a Motion in this House asking for his resignation, but little did I know that worse would befall the destiny of my country in the form of this current Minister. Madam Speaker, when I listened to the hon. Minister of National Security making the meekest defence that one could find
for his tenure, I know that we on this side we have to go to the scriptures. And I say what we heard today that we on this side wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places. Because, Madam Speaker, what we heard today? We heard today a series of excuses for performance.

Let me say today that President Biden on the 25th of this month, he ordered a travel ban on most non-US citizens who have travelled to South Africa and to the UK. He excluded citizens of the United States. Madam Speaker, let me explain to this Minister what citizenship means. This is your home, your final area of solace, but the Minister feels that he has the God-given right to determine who comes to Trinidad and who does not. [Desk thumping] Madam Speaker, nobody on this side is talking about open borders and bringing people to Trinidad without the necessary medical protocols. What we are saying is that citizenship means something for heaven sake [Desk thumping] and not even the Minister could change that.

Canada has warned its citizens that if they travel they may have difficulty coming back, but they have not said that Canadians outside the borders cannot return to Canada. I have friends who returned weeks ago, and I know of people who returned Saturday to Canada. So do not come here to make excuses for your incompetence, for your cruelty, for your inhumanity and put it on other [Desk thumping] countries.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to make the point that the Minister said in his debate that the UK Government might ban everyone from entering the UK. They are banning people who are not UK citizens or residents, and who are entering from the 22 red listed countries yet to be announced. Do not come here
and fool people. It seems as if this Minister will only allow people who are sanctioned to come to Trinidad, and he has yet to give an explanation for the Vice-President of Venezuela coming to this country recently. Madam Speaker, he could fool some of the people some of the time, not all.

Madam Speaker, there is a UN Report not yet acknowledged by this Government in which the Maduro Government was accused of committing—and comes under the responsibility of this Minister as he allowed the Vice-President to come into Trinidad under questionable circumstances. That UN report has accused that Government to which Mr. Vice-President Rodriguez belongs of committing egregious violations against humanity including extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances and torture. That is the company that this Minister of National Security—that is company that he wants the Prime Minister to keep, and I see the Prime Minister is not yet here today. Every time I talk he is not here, but I wish to tell the Prime Minister that he is misadvised by this Minister of National Security. And our friendship with Guyana, as a result the country that is growing, they have the largest energy economy, they have reduced their mission in Trinidad and Tobago to—

**Madam Speaker:** Member, remember this debate is about the Minister of National Security. So where you are going I am cautioning you that you are offending Standing Order 48(1). Okay? Talking about missions and so is not under the remit of national security. All right?

**Mr. R. Charles:** It is not under the remit of the Minister of National Security? He allows who comes into this country and who does not. [*Desk thumping*] He did allow the Venezuelan Vice-President who was sanctioned internationally to come to the country.
Mr. Deyalsingh: Madam Speaker, Standing Order 48(1), please.

Madam Speaker: Well, the point about it is, I was going to rule on the point that you are repeating to my mind something you have already said. So I am guiding you about tedious repetition with respect to going back to allowing the Vice-President of Venezuela. Okay. So continue.

Mr. R. Charles: Okay, Madam Speaker. The point remains is that our diplomatic representation between Guyana and Trinidad has been downgraded. I go on. Every—

Madam Speaker: What I am saying that I am ruling on Standing Order 48(1) as irrelevant.

Mr. R. Charles: Every area of this that comes under the remit of this Minister is failing. Madam Speaker, the coast guard for which he is responsible is a problem not because of the competence of the officers, but because of the policy, guidance and the resources that are made available to them. The prison service, the Minister came here and said he is doing A, B and C. Let him talk to the head of the association that represents prison officers. He said it is the worse in his lifetime.

Immigration problems: We have heard where officers cannot access the information that has changed today. Madam Speaker, the Immigration Detention Centre which is his responsibility is in chaos and, in fact, residents have gone on hunger strike in that area. Madam Speaker, lifeguards are—we listen to their complaints daily. The fire service. If you listen to Power 102 you will hear the head of the fire services second division officers, talking about that they have appliances only for decoration. Madam Speaker, nothing works under this Minister of National Security, and he could come here and preach to high heavens, the truth will eventually come out.

Madam Speaker, this Minister, our airports are locked to our nationals who
need special permission to enter from this gatekeeper, and I ask sincerely who gave him the authority? The only Minister of National Security in the whole wide world that makes it difficult, if not impossible, for citizens to come to our country. Madam Speaker, when you read the cries of our citizens—Newsday, 13th July and it is entitled, “Rowley: Entry to”—Trinidad and Tobago—“not based on emotion”. And he says—the Prime Minister then says, and he is guided here by the Minister of National Security:

“The policy cannot be who get on television first and who cries on television…”

Well, for heaven sake these are citizens of our country crying. Express, 30 July, 2020, a day after a Trinidadian woman heart-breaking appeal from the United States to Prime Minister, Dr. Rowley, and to the Minister of National Security, to let her back into the country, he then responds to say that in treating its citizens we cannot afford to be emotional. Well, if you cannot afford to be emotional to our citizens, who else can we appeal on? And that is why in Tobago they have shown us that uncaring Government must be put in their place and told where to get off. [Desk thumping] Newsday, June 06, 2020, I learnt of a woman who is hospitalized in Trinidad who is at death’s door, and her daughter in Orlando and her son in the UK cannot find their way to meet and see and touch their mom before she passes.

Madam Speaker, it is heart-rending that we cannot even in the face of human trauma that we cannot develop policies that reflect the citizens of our country. But, Madam Speaker, it is not only that we lack a refugee policy, or a migrant policy, or an asylum seeker policy because first of all we in the UNC we have called on this incompetent Government and this incompetent Minister to implement a refugee migrant policy that is humane, that considers our absorptive capacity, that complies
with our international treaty obligations and considers the skills that these persons may add to our labour force. Madam Speaker, that information is not available to this Minister because he is not data-driven. So we have PDVSA, First World energy experts in Trinidad pumping gas. For heaven’s sake, if we were competent we would have tapped into that resource to help our energy sector. Incompetent!

But, Madam Speaker, not only is there not a refugee policy, or a gender policy, but UWI lecturer Dr. Marlene Attzs highlighted, I think it was yesterday’s Guardian, that Venezuelan women are not only disrespected, those who come to Trinidad, and this Minister cannot tell us whether it is 20,000, 16,000, 40,000 or 100,000. We are operating by guess. That is what drives policy making by those on the other side, and we on this side have to say heaven help us. But Dr. Attzs said that we need a gender policy and an immigration policy. Everybody who looks at our dilemma understands that this Minister needs to get up and act, but he is not. He is concerned with other things, other problems.

Madam Speaker, the Minister is even breaking the law because we have children in Trinidad—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Madam Speaker, Standing Order 48(6), please. Thank you.

Mr. R. Charles: I withdraw the statement. What I would say is that there are children right now being detained and supervised by military officers in Trinidad and Tobago at the heliport. Madam Speaker, the laws of Trinidad and Tobago, in particular the Children’s Authority Act, section 3A states:

“The object of this Act are”—and I quote:

“(a) to promote the well-being of all children in Trinidad and Tobago;
(b) provide care and protection for vulnerable children; and
(c) comply with certain obligations under the United Nations Convention
on the Rights of the Child.”

Madam Speaker, this law applies to all children within our borders, whether they are migrants’ children, or whether they are children of residents, or children of refugees. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, what we doing today will have untold consequences for diplomatic relations down the line, our relations with Venezuela. How we treat Venezuelans, how we treat them in Trinidad and Tobago will impact significantly on our relations. But, Madam Speaker, I want to judge the Minister by his own words and I am reading from the Appropriation (Financial Year 2019), dated 19th of the tenth, 2018. The Minister said, quote:

We are identifying at some of our seaports the improvements of the systems and the use because the Government does not have its head buried in the sand and knows that what is happening in our neighbouring country of Venezuela is somewhat affecting us, and we prefer to be prepared and dealing with the issue than waiting.

That is what the Minister said. He said to judge him by his capacity to close our borders and to bring to some kind of satisfaction the way we treat our Venezuelan citizens.

Madam Speaker, there are some questions. According to our International Treaty Obligations and the Children Act, we are supposed to educate the children of refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, whatever they call them, are we putting in place plans to deal with that? What is the end game—

Madam Speaker: Member—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Madam Speaker, the Minister of National Security does not educate people.

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Minister of National Security (cont’d)

Ms. Ameen: What Standing Order is that?

Mr. Deyalsingh: 48(1).

[Hon. Member sucks teeth]

Madam Speaker: Apparently if—who just sucked their teeth? It is so unparliamentary.

Mr. Deyalsingh: The Member for St. Augustine.

Madam Speaker: Member for St. Augustine, you know, I think you should apologize. You are too senior for this.

Ms. Ameen: My apologies, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

I uphold your objection. Remember, what we are talking about is the Minister of National Security.

Mr. R. Charles: We are dealing with an immigration migrant policy, but I go on. What is the end game after all the extensions are concluded? Madam Speaker, I have to think about these things before. You do not react to them when they occur, and we know they are going to occur. What plans are in place to repatriate the 80,000 or so Venezuelans if no decision is taken to grant them citizenship? What happens to the children born in Trinidad and Tobago who are entitled to all the rights of citizenship? Will we keep the children and repatriate the parents? Those are decisions that fall squarely in the lap of the Minister of National Security.

12.00 noon

What are the plans to integrate them into our society if indeed, citizenship is one of the options in the foreseeable future? Madam Speaker, we have already seen demonstrations against Trinidad, against our embassy. I do not want to go there but I am saying that we are being set up for a long-term problem with handling our Venezuelan citizenship.
Is this Minister burying his head in the sand amidst reports that Venezuelan authorities managed to dismantle a human trafficking network for sexual exploitation connected with Trinidad and Tobago? Reported in Newsday, January 19, 2021, the AG of Venezuela indicated that alleged ringleaders of the scheme were in Trinidad and Tobago and the Venezuelan Government who are awaiting the cooperation of the Trinidad and Tobago authorities for their capture and extradition. When asked, Minister Young said he was not aware of the incident. This Minister has failed, has failed in his remit. He has failed to justify spending of over a billion dollars on the SSA who cannot tell us which fishermen and others are facilitating the illegal taxi service between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela. I understand they have “ah PH service” and all in the waters. He has failed to tell us how many Venezuelans are actually here.

He cannot tell us whether the coastal radar systems are working efficiently or why under his stewardship the coast guard is unable to secure the 214 illegal ports of entry. He cannot tell us whether there is 16, 14 or 100,000 Venezuelans. He will not tell us how many children are among the thousands of illegal Venezuelans here and subject to the rights afforded by our law. [Desk thumping] He will dance around telling us whether immigration—

**Mr. Deyalsingh:** Standing Order 55(1)(b), tedious repetition.

**Mr. R. Charles:** He as Minister of National Security—

**Madam Speaker:** Member for St. Joseph, I overrule. He is summing up. Continue.

**Mr. R. Charles:** Thank you. The Minister with responsibility for our coast guard vessels has not heard about scheduled staggered maintenance of vessels. You cannot have all your vessels tied up one time waiting for maintenance.

**Madam Speaker:** Member for Naparima, your time is now spent.

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Mr. R. Charles: Thank you very much.

The Minister of Youth Development and National Service (Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds): [Desk thumping] Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Member for Naparima asked a whole lot of questions about illegal immigrants, particularly Venezuelan women. He should direct that question to the Member for Caroni Central. He will be better able to answer “ah lot ah dat” [Desk thumping] and another one of his colleagues in this House.

Mr. Charles: I rise on Standing Order 48(6).

Madam Speaker: Please, continue.

Hon. F. Hinds: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Put differently, the problems they come here and complain about, sometimes those who complain the loudest are the ones who directly contribute to the problem in Trinidad and Tobago. [Desk thumping]

The Member for Siparia who moved this Motion, Madam Speaker, incoherently said to us towards the end of her presentation, “every rope has a zipline and every zipline has a rope”. Well, I could only add to that, that every vial has its last drink and I ask when will this madness and insobriety end. That is my question in relation to the one she asked.

Madam Speaker: In relation to one the hon. Member asked.

Hon. F. Hinds: That the hon. Member alluded to.

Madam Speaker: Thanks.

Hon. F. Hinds: Madam Speaker, I am not taking the Member for Siparia seriously on this question of COVID-19, the exemption policy and the way it was managed by the Minister of National Security on the directions of the Cabinet under the Public Health Regulations and other laws in Trinidad and Tobago. I am not taking her seriously because the average citizen in this country understands full well that
all that we have done, evidenced by the statistics that Trinidad and Tobago could boast of today, had to do with the responsible management of our borders and the responsible management of this challenge inside of Trinidad and Tobago. [Desk thumping] Everybody knows that.

All that is happening here is that the hon. Member for Siparia in her usual populist way, she is trying to tap into the pain and inconvenience that some of our citizens who live abroad, some for 40 and 50 years and who have been complaining publicly on social media and otherwise, she is trying tap in, the Member for Siparia, to that for cheap political reasons. But the right-thinking citizens of this world and those in Trinidad and Tobago would tell you that all of this inconvenience was not contrived by the Government but in an attempt in the public interest to save lives. So I am not taking the Member for Siparia seriously.

The Motion tells us:

“Whereas the Minister of National Security has unequivocally demonstrated his inability to competently execute his duties:”

I, Madam Speaker, as a reader of English, as an attorney-at-law, understand that to include personal reflections on the Minister of National Security in terms of his ability or otherwise, his inability. So I am duty bound to compare and contrast his ability with that of others, especially the Member for Siparia in the context of this Motion.

Madam Speaker, firstly, the Minister of National Security is only that, a Minister. He does not operate the computers in Immigration. So the Member for Naparima talking about the computer and “who getting benefit and all ah this”, the Minister outlines policy and provides resources. The Minister “doh operate no computer down there”. He would have given the Immigration Department, which
is known like many other departments and many other organizations, including political organizations, meaning as well including the UNC, to clean up their act, cut out corruption. But there are those in the system—and this is a known fact to this Government—who will prefer things to go the way they have already gone because it affords them an opportunity to benefit from certain things. For example—

**Mr. Rambally:** Madam Speaker, as far as I am aware, the law says you have to wear the mask to cover your nose as well, please.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay, so all Members are guided that the mask is to cover your nostrils and your mouth completely. Members are also given the option, if they wish, to speak without the mask from the podium.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. What you are hearing now is the ghost of a dying breed. Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister chooses his Cabinet. The Minister of National Security did not choose himself. The Prime Minister chooses his Cabinet and as he always made us to understand, how you choose as a Prime Minister, who you choose is very important to your functioning as Prime Minister and the Minister of National Security is and for good reason by virtue of his performance, his ethic, his work, his honesty, his integrity and his capacity in this country and he stood up here today and he told us “I am in no nobody’s pocket, I am in no business’s or individual’s hands, I am a free operator on the advice of the Cabinet” and I challenge the Member for Siparia and all of them on that side to get up and say so. Not one of them might be able to tell us that by way of contrast.

**Mr. Hosein:** Madam Speaker, 48(1). What is the relevance of this nonsense this man is speaking?
Madam Speaker: Member for Barataria/San Juan, in raising an objection, I would ask you to also be parliamentary. Okay?

Mr. Hosein: Yes, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Member for Laventille West, please continue.

Hon. F. Hinds: Thank you very warmly, Madam Speaker. [Desk thumping] The records from the police department will show that murders in the last year have gone down, thankfully; serious crimes statistically, demonstrably have gone down, thankfully and that is as a result of the Minister of National Security dispensing to the Police Service good policy implications and directions [Desk thumping] providing them with the resources so that the police could get on and do their job. That is what the Minister of National Security takes credit for.

On the other hand, as he reminded us when he spoke, the Member for Siparia hired Jack Warner as her Minister of National Security, but that was not the only tragedy. What was worse is that when the Prime Minister at the time, the Member for Siparia did it, she did it when the whole world knew that he was an international scalper and the police were looking for him. That is what she did. Brought him in the Cabinet of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Speaker, Standing Order 48(8), the Member for Siparia is not the subject of this substantive Motion.

Madam Speaker: And while I understand that, I believe the Member is making a certain comparison with respect to the characters appointed. I will allow you some leeway but remember the substantive Motion.

Hon. F. Hinds: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We had the Member for Naparima present a moment ago. I am told that he is the shadow Minister of National Security. That is the kind of choice the Member for Siparia makes, a man who nobody in the country will on national security issues and others take seriously.
Madam Speaker: Member, please, I will not allow you to make personal reflections of that nature, please.

Hon. F. Hinds: I am obliged. The Minister of National Security does not investigate crime, it is the police that have the responsibility for that. So for an example, if a former Cabinet Minister was found in room 201 smoking weed with Venezuelans or other persons, the Minister of National Security does not investigate that. The fact that that matter is probably still under investigation is outside of his control, but that was in the Cabinet of a previous government.

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, 48(1). What is the relevance, please?

Madam Speaker: Member for Laventille West, I uphold the objection in terms of this is about the Minister of National Security. Please, confine your comments that way, please.

Hon. F. Hinds: Thank you very much. Madam Speaker, I was simply making the point because they have alleged that in demonstration of the incompetence of the Minister of National Security, crimes proliferate, the borders are loose and I am making the point that it is the police and the Defence Force and the Immigration and others who are directly responsible for that, I gave an example of it, not the Minister of National Security.

But you see, while that was known to the Member for Siparia, today, the nation is faced with that same prospect all over again. So when we are talking about incompetence and inability, we know where the arrow has to be properly pointed because it was the Member for Siparia demonstrating her alleged ability, oversaw as Prime Minister the very horrendous experience this country had in terms of LifeSport.

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, 48(1). LifeSport is not part of this debate.

Madam Speaker: Member for Laventille West, again, I ask you not to go down
that road and please whatever you present, please make it relevant to what we are speaking about which is with respect to the abilities of the Minister or inabilities of the Minister of National Security.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. So, Madam Speaker, the Member for Siparia told us about the DNA legislation. She told us that the Minister was incompetent because that legislation, he came and we put regulations in the Parliament and the legislation was not in all respects given effect in Trinidad and Tobago. But that law, the Administration of Justice DNA Act was passed in this Parliament in 2012, that is to say, during the time when the Member for Siparia led the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, it remained on the books.

I chair the Joint Select Committee on National Security of this Parliament which by the way, we had to chase a certain—well, not chase, we had to for good reason ask a member of that Committee selected by the Member of Siparia to sit there, to be recused from that Committee and just like with the Jack Warner story, the Member for Siparia offered that to us again. But the point I am really making, Madam Speaker, is that we went to that Joint Select Committee and we took that legislation because our business is to iron out the rocks and sort out the problems, so we took that legislation, we looked at it.

**Mr. Rambally:** Madam Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 48(1). What is the relevance of all these matters to the Motion? We are on this side attacking the competence of the National Security Minister. What does that have to do with a Committee hearing? [*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Speaker:** So, Member for Laventille West, I will give you a little leeway because you started off by saying you were answering something. Could you quickly make the connection or if not, move on, please?

**Hon. F. Hinds:** I thank you. Madam Speaker, it was the Member for Siparia who
presented this Motion, used the DNA legislation and platform to demonstrate the incompetence of the Minister of National Security and I am demonstrating in response to that that when they had the opportunity from 2012, they did nothing about it. As a matter of fact, it took the Joint Select Committee under this Government of which the Minister of National Security was a member, to address the issues of DNA, to advance the legislation, to put the registry, to put the officeholders in place in order to administer that law. That is the point I am simply making. Yes.

So, Madam Speaker, the Minister of National Security, as the world knows, is a highly energetic and hard-working focused Minister under the guidance of the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago. And the Motion that is before us is merely designed by the Member for Siparia, as I said, in a populist way hoping to get the support and to piggyback into something that the Member perceives to be a problem in the national community dealing with the question of the exemption policy.

We have made it clear that COVID-19 came upon us and the world and we reacted to it in the way this Government did with proud statistics as we speak. [Desk thumping] Many countries who opened their borders early—because we have been hearing from them “open the border, open the border, open the border”. Many countries who did that long before they started to shout are now forced to close them again.

**Hon. Member:** Not to citizens.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** To close them again, and whether citizen or not, the virus is transmitted from one human being to another. [Crosstalk] And, Madam Speaker, there are hotspots in the world and when we are coming from those hotspots, we
Minister of National Security (cont’d)  
Hon. F. Hinds (cont’d)

are more likely to be super-spreaders and therefore from a medical, biological, scientific standpoint, all are to be scrutinized similarly. So we understand the pain and the inconvenience and the difficulty that some persons of necessity will undergo. There are many of us who are here in Trinidad who would like to go abroad for various reasons and we too have some issues.

So instead of locking the border down altogether, this Government said in extenuating and certain circumstances, you will have exceptions. So we did not just lock it down, we said you will have an opportunity in certain circumstances and in those circumstances, you will need an exemption and the process was established and then there are those who start to complain about the process. You heard the Member for Siparia try to demonstrate that there was this big discrimination but the statistics show that while all of this was happening, over almost 10,000 persons were granted exemptions and allowed to either come or leave or both, Trinidad and Tobago. So we set that system up.

The Minister has recently announced in response to some of those criticisms that he has put in place an online application system which would be dealt with in those terms. The system has started to roll out because I am familiar with some of the complaints. I followed them on social media and they are now acknowledging that the Minister has responded to it. And that hopefully will take away some of the personal elements because the way they behave as though it is the Minister who is personally dealing with all of this, which of course, they ought to know is not the case.

So, Madam Speaker, we support the Minister of National Security. [Desk thumping] We stand in defence of his hard and good, sincere work in Trinidad and Tobago and as I began, we contrast that with the behaviour of those who now stand
here to criticize the Minister of National Security. So, Madam Speaker, we on this side of the House, we are very proud. The Minister of National Security belongs to a government that won the elections recently and the one before that. [Desk thumping and crosstalk] I heard the Member for Naparima shamelessly telling us when he was speaking, shamelessly telling us, Madam Speaker, that you get this message from the population when you are at this, they got that message in general elections twice on the trot and as for the Member for Siparia, she got it about 12 times on the trot. [Desk thumping and crosstalk]

So, Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to have presented in this debate and conclude by saying that those who are loudest in their criticism against the Minister of National Security, they need to direct a lot of that on to themselves because when they had the opportunity, their record is horrendous, whether it was in terms of the economy, whether it is in terms of national security, whether it is in terms of their management of the public purse, Madam Speaker—

Mr. Hosein: I rise on 48(1), Madam Speaker, and 48(8) please.

Madam Speaker: I rule on 48(1) that you are out of order. [Desk thumping]

Hon. F. Hinds: I am obliged.

Madam Speaker: And Member, your time is now up.

Hon. F. Hinds: I am obliged. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity.

Mr. Saddam Hosein (Barataria/San Juan): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to join this debate to support the Motion brought by the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Siparia, [Desk thumping] expressing no confidence in the Minister of National Security and Madam Speaker, on behalf of the constituents of Barataria/San Juan, we commend the Leader of the Opposition for a powerful, a
sterling [Desk thumping] and well-informed presentation in this Parliament to expose the incompetence of the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West who is the Minister of National Security and other things.

Then, we heard the Member for Laventille West come with some failed weak presentation in defence of the Minister. Not a single achievement he could have boasted about to defend the competence of the Minister of National Security, [Desk thumping] not a single achievement. Maybe if he had a piece of rope, he could have tied together and pulled together a proper presentation. [Desk thumping] Nothing new.

Madam Speaker, after I listened to the Minister of National Security attempt to defend himself, I thought to myself we should apply for judgment on admission because he has certainly admitted his failure and incompetence as the Minister of National Security. [Desk thumping] He has, and he came with a lot of points but it made no sense. There was nothing new. Absolutely nothing new. The Minister desperately tried to defend himself by talking about contracts between 2010 and 2015, not what he did between 2015 and 2020. [Desk thumping]

And he tried to make this debate about COVID, about COVID. We on this side remain and we remain resolute that you have acted in a discriminatory, ad hoc, wishy-washy, hodgepodge manner when it comes to exemption. [Desk thumping] Because you have persons in this country—and we are saying we are glad for persons who have gotten exemptions but when you lock out citizens from this country for over 300 days, you have breached the Constitution and your social contract to those citizens. [Desk thumping] You have removed them from their families, you have removed them from their country and you have removed them from the protection of the law of their land.
And then he comes to say that the justification for the borders, well, look, Canada is now shutting down the borders because the Prime Minister Trudeau is saying well, if Canadians leave Canada, they would not be able to come back in some instances. Well, Madam Speaker, Canada was carrying home their nationals since last year, they did not at any point in time lock out their nationals. It was only Trinidad and Tobago [Desk thumping] under this wicked Government, under the incompetent Member for Port of Spain North/St Ann’s West, he locked out the nationals. He is the only one who gave himself the power through the Minister of Health to lock out our nationals. These persons here have a birthright. They have now converted a document of pride which was your birth certificate to an irrelevant piece of document. [Desk thumping] That is what this Government has done. That is what they have done.

Madam Speaker, at the end of this sitting here today, all of us in this Chamber have to take a vote and we have to take a conscience vote and I challenge all of my colleagues who sit in the Government Bench, remember the oath of office that you took when you came into this Parliament, that you will uphold the Constitution and the law and I challenge all of you all to put away “yuh balisier tie and put on yuh red, black and white”. [Desk thumping] Vote for your country. Save yourself from the embarrassment. We think that your constituents deserve better and today, you show them that you think so too.

Today, we must express a vote of no confidence in the Minister of National Security. I am asking you all, be bold and brave enough. Look Robert Le Hunte did it. Today, when you vote, I want you to remember that it is Minister Stuart Young who presided over 1,100 murders. Will you vote for that? He crashed our maritime borders and allowed illegal immigrants to flow in like water. Will you
vote for that? He has locked out thousands of our citizens. Will you vote for that? And some of them who are locked out are your own constituents. And while all of us—and he complains about a lack of resources, he has recused himself 53 times from the Cabinet where his family members were involved in billion-dollar deals. Will you vote for that?

Minister Young is a local, he is a regional and an international embarrassment to Trinidad and Tobago. [Desk thumping] He is an all-round failure. [Desk thumping] He is an all-round failure. If he had spent the last five years instead of obsessing over the Opposition and doing his work, today he would not have had to face this Motion of no confidence. He is obsessed with the Opposition. It had one time I believe he was somewhere down in Penal where he fell for the Leader of the Opposition. [Desk thumping] Imagine under this Minister of National Security, you have a coast guard that cannot sail, you have an air guard that cannot fly, you have police cars that cannot drive, you have a Minister that cannot administer, and a government that cannot govern. [Desk thumping] And you expect us in this Parliament to support Minister Young? Say no, no to Minister Young, Minister Young must go. [Desk thumping]

And, Madam Speaker, today I want to spend some time looking at some of the issues relating to Minister Young’s portfolio and I will focus on the coast guard in particular. At the Standing Finance Committee in the Appropriation Bill for 2021, we learnt that there were 44 coast guard vessels that the coast guard currently has. Out of those 44 coast guard vessels, you only have two supply vessels working; two. And you then wonder why it is we have illegal immigrants flowing through the borders, our porous borders. It is because of the mismanagement, it is because that they did not conduct proper maintenance on
these vessels that you have them shutting down. You have three patrol vessels stationed between Trinidad and Tobago. There are some very serious and some very concerning and alarming questions that we have to ask the Minister of National Security when it comes to the coast guard.

12.30 p.m.

Because, Madam Speaker, we left—when we left the Government we left them with 12 fully functional operational Damen vessels, state of the art, state of the art. [Desk thumping] There was protection for Trinidad and Tobago borders 24/7, 24/7. As soon as this Government got into power and as soon as Minister Young was appointed the Minister of National Security, all hell break loose, the coast guard gone haywire, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I want to ask the Minister whether or not—and he would come to say that we are being unpatriotic for exposing his incompetence, he will say that. [Desk thumping] But I would remind him of the Sunday editorial and if you allow me to read, November 28, 2020, “Govt’s illogical border control”. And I quote them, it says:

“The absurdity of National Security Minister Stuart Young telling the Opposition to ‘stop coming and exposing what may be a perceived weakness’ in relation to the virtual collapse of the Coast Guard’s fleet of patrol vessels must surely be one for the record books. As if this brazen disregard of his responsibility to account for this serious national security failure were not bad enough, he then invokes the spectre of ‘ties with the human traffickers’”.

That is what he will come to say and that is what they have said.

Every time we expose them they will come and say that we are being
unpatriotic. Today we are being responsible, [Desk thumping] we are doing the right thing by exposing the incompetence because we on this side care about the protection of our country and our citizens. [Desk thumping] That is what we care about.

And, Madam Speaker, when you look at what has happened now—and I am going to ask this question directly to the Minister of National Security who is not in the Chamber. I want to ask the Minister of National Security, whether or not in October 2020, one of the Damen patrol vessels, CG26 caught afire off Gasparee Island and the fire extinguishers on that vessel were all out of date?

**Hon. Member:** Wow!

**Mr. S. Hosein:** I want to ask the Minister, whether or not it was due to a lack of maintenance on that particular vessel that the engine room caught afire on that vessel and today that vessel is out of commission? I also want to ask the Minister, whether or not CG25 in September 2020, also had a fire on board that vessel? Then I want to ask the Minister another question, whether or not one of the interceptors that was patrolling the Tobago borders, around Tobago, whether or not the console fell off and that boat had to be transported on the Cabo Star?

That is what I want to ask the Minister. Why it is that you are running down the vessels, over working the vessels, not give them enough rest time, having them now encountered all of these difficulties, and then come to the Parliament to say that you have no resources? You think that two Cape-class vessel that you are going to purchase—this year they should arrive—you think they have staff to man those vehicles? Are they going to do the same exact thing and run down those vessels? Are they going to do that, Madam Speaker? We have enough vessels, if you have maintained the vessels you would not have the need to acquire any more.
[Desk thumping] We have enough vessels to patrol and man the borders, but what they have done, Madam Speaker, is they have in fact crashed the coast guard. That is what they have done. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, there are also reservations with respect to these Austal vessels. Imagine there were six Austal patrol vessels that were acquired by the former PNM administration that did not work but yet you are going back Austal to buy two more with the same type of hull that Trinidad and Tobago had issues with. Is there some sort of connection with this Government and Austal? Is there some kind of connection? Because every time they are in power they buy boats from Austal that cannot sail, and they end up parking them down in Chaguaramas doing absolutely nothing and just wasting the taxpayers’ money, just wasting it.

Madam Speaker, then I hear the Member for Laventille West talking about we are saying to open the borders. I have to address this frontally, we have said, “Open the borders to our nationals”. [Desk thumping] And in case he was closing his fridge door and did not hear me, the UNC has said, “Reopen our borders to the nationals.” [Desk thumping]

And then he talks about the border security, how they managed the borders, yes they have managed the borders fine. They were able to lock out our nationals and allow sanctioned persons on sanctioned aircrafts to come to Trinidad and Tobago. That action shows that Minister Young is a danger to the stability of our country.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Madam Speaker, Standing Order 48(6) please, “Minister Young is a danger to…our country.”

Madam Speaker: Member from Barataria/San Juan, I think you could find a better way to say that please.
Mr. S. Hosein: He posed a threat, Madam Speaker, to the stability of our country.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Madam Speaker, Standing Order 48(6) please.

Madam Speaker: Again, I uphold the objection, please—either find a proper way to say it or leave it.

Mr. S. Hosein: Madam Speaker, then I hear one of the achievements of the Minister of National Security was that he assisted Dominica during a natural disaster. But where was he when the persons from south Trinidad were flooded out in 2018? Abandoned our citizens of this country from the southlands, Madam Speaker, where was he? It shows that there is failure and the manner in which he conducts his work is on a discriminatory manner, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, they have crashed—

Hon. T. Deyalsingh: Standing Order 48(6), the Minister of National Security—

Madam Speaker: So, again, Member for Barataria/San Juan, a particular word I think you should withdraw it and find another way to say it.

Mr. S. Hosein: I withdraw, Madam Speaker. Other persons have received preferential treatment.

Madam Speaker, I move on to the prisons. With respect to the prisons, the Minister of National Security boasted that in 2018 that he was going to upgrade the prisons with respect to videos, video conferencing. How many cameras and rooms that they have outfitted already for video conferencing at the prison? How much? Tell us, if that is an achievement you would have told us today, you would have defended your tenure.

Then you hear that they talk about special courts, right now, Madam Speaker, there are no courts being built by the prison although he promised this in 2018. We are three years later and not a single courthouse was built. Madam Speaker, when we look at what is happening in the prison with respect to the
prison condition, there are judgments in this court condemning the prison conditions. Justice Gobin was one of them, in one of the matters that condemned the inhumane treatment of prisoners in the prison. Madam Speaker, when you look at the welfare of the prison officers of this country, the Prison Officers Association President, Mr. Ceron Richards, is on record, he is on record to saying that this Government and in particular this Minister is undermining the prison in a plot to privatize the prison. So is this the policy of the Government that you create crisis in state enterprises and state-owned—in state assets in an attempt to privatize? This has happened—

Madam Speaker: Member, I am asking you to find another way to say that. Okay, because I find that it is offending Standing Order 48(6). Find another way to say that. If not, withdraw it and move on.

Mr. S. Hosein: Madam Speaker, let me withdraw. But is there a plot or is there a plan in fact to privatize the prison by this Government? Because you have virtually created a collapse of the prison. The prison officers are complaining that there are no proper working vehicles. They have complained that they have not received their firearms, their stab vests, Madam Speaker, their life is under threat, they have been promised that they would have been given State accommodation, they were promised that they would have been in secured locations when threats are on their lives. Madam Speaker, you have the prison officers of this country suffering all due to the neglect and the incompetence of the Minister of National Security. That is what you have.

Madam Speaker, they have in fact—and I want to quote this under this Minister of National Security, Madam Speaker, we have a report of interceptions, there were over 500,000 intercepts being made by the SSA, 500,000 intercepts,
Madam Speaker, but you cannot start up the jammers and grabbers in the prison.

In fact, there is an article here in the Trinidad Express dated the 14 February, 2020 where the Ministry of National Security said:

“…a prisoner contacted Stuart by phone…”

Well, Madam Speaker, I know as a lawyer that sometimes your relatives who are in the prison have a free phone call. So I do not know if that is the call he was getting. But Madam Speaker, we have to look at what the Minister is doing to the prisons. Why are you not grabbing and jamming the signals when in fact you are now coming to intercept everybody’s calls. You passed various pieces of legislation to intercept communication through the prison, when in fact, Madam Speaker it has borne no fruition, and that is another one of the plans and policies by that Minister of National Security that has in fact failed. [Desk thumping] It has failed. He has virtually created a collapse of the intelligence agencies in this country. I may not have the amount of time that I would like to go into that, but they have shut down the NOC, and then five years later you create something called the National Fusion Operation Centre.

Madam Speaker, these are all issues which show that this Minister has totally mismanaged the national security apparatus of this country. Madam Speaker, in fact this Minister he cannot find a single achievement to defend himself. Madam Speaker, he behaves in an absolute and arrogant manner. Sometimes I wonder if the Minister feel as though he has the Deed for Trinidad and Tobago, because that is how he behaves [Desk thumping] as though he is the owner of this country. Madam Speaker, that must stop. And I call upon the Prime Minister to revoke the appointment of Minister Stuart Young, Madam Speaker, because on this side we express that we have no confidence in the Minister of
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Mr. Hosein (cont’d)

National Security, and I thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: The Attorney General. [Desk thumping]

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (Hon. Faris Al-Rawi): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity to address this most important defense of a colleague of mine who I have utmost regard for and confidence in, not only in the discharge of his functions on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, [Desk thumping] but certainly in the manner in which he has approached this exercise and indeed achieved results.

So let us dive directly into the chase. In my short 11 years in Parliament I can say without fear of contradiction, that the Member for Siparia delivered the most feeble, aimless, meandering Motion of no confidence that I have ever seen. [Desk thumping] It was so difficult an exercise that nobody rose without prompting from this side to second the Motion. When Pointe-a-Pierre eventually found the courage to second the Motion it was some two minutes after the Leader of the Opposition had sat down. [Desk thumping] It reminded me almost of the manner in which Pointe-a-Pierre tries to find his way around his own seat when I am often visiting him, he is my good friend. But it was a hard exercise, Madam Speaker, to watch that in gear. So let us deal with the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, 48(1). What is the relevance of calling me into this debate? [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker: Please continue, Attorney General.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Yes, Madam Speaker, if the seconder of the Motion does not know the relevance, God help us all. Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition started her contribution by relying swiftly upon excerpts from the Guardian newspaper and the Express newspaper and gave us a copious amount of

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information from those papers. The hon. Leader of the Opposition stood and said that the Minister of National Security should heed the cry for resignation because a few editorials were written in respect of certain matters relating to national security. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition was so confident in those recommendations which are now dated recommendations, because facts have come to take us way from the matters discussed then, how then, does the Leader of the Opposition address the fact that the Express newspaper and the Guardian newspaper have on several days in successive runnings of the newspaper, published the statistical wins in law enforcement and crime fighting for the people of Trinidad and Tobago? [Desk thumping]

You see, Madam Speaker, we heard the Member for Barataria/San Juan in his contribution tell us that there is nothing to show. Maybe the UNC believes there is nothing to show but statistics tell the truth. So let us go to the fact that governance, policy creation, financial underwriting and support, coming from the Ministry of National Security under the hand of the Minister of National Security delivers the performance factors in areas such as crime fighting.

Let us go to the statistics. Let us go to what the Guardian published, let us go to what the Express published, let us go to what the Newsday published, let us go to what Loop published. Is it lost upon us in Trinidad and Tobago that for the last 20 years, we have just witnessed the lowest output of crime in 20 years? Whilst that might be folly for Members opposite, whilst Members opposite might find that irrelevant, the people of Trinidad and Tobago consider it relevant. [Desk thumping]

The Minister of National Security in discharging his functions as capably as he has, must be commended because when we look to the report of the Trinidad
and Tobago Police Service under the energy and direction of a Commissioner of Police that works with the National Security Council that deals with the Minister of National Security on a daily basis, let us look at the statistics.

Number one, let us compare, in the year 2000 serious crimes was 17,134; in 2012 under the Member for Siparia, it was 17,841. Today in Trinidad and Tobago serious crimes are down 17,000, down to 10,188. Perhaps Barataria/San Juan does not think that when in 2015 murder stood at 420, perhaps Barataria/San Juan thinks that that is no achievement when it now stands at 397. Perhaps, Barataria/San Juan thinks in reflecting on the Minister of National Security that when kidnappings were at 106 in 2015, that it is some joke that it is now down at 84. Perhaps, the Leader of the Opposition thinks that when in 2014 sexual offences stood at 829, that today there is no relief for this country, under the Minister of National Security when sexual offences are now down to 563. It is the same for violent crimes in 2014, 4,641 down to 3,606. Serious indecency down from 2014 at 80, down to 2020 standing at 20.

Now, Madam Speaker, let us tie this into the lives of people under the Minister of National Security. Madam Speaker, serious indecency as it relates to children with a figure of 80 down to 20 in 2020, perhaps Barataria/San Juan does not think that protecting children against indecency and serious indecency is a serious matter, but for 60 children and 60 people that is a life changing event. [Desk thumping]

And whilst technical data may be arid, when you connect it to the human experience, it is this Minister of National Security, the hon. Member Stuart Young, that had stood as Minister of National Security under this Prime Minister as head of the National Security Council. Burglaries, in 2014 at 2,500-odd down to 1,600;
robberies moving from nearly 3,000 in 2014 down in 2020 to 2,000; fraud, 1,031 down to 483, comparing UNC versus PNM tenure under the Minister of National Security.

So, Madam Speaker, in answering the Leader of the Opposition’s point that the *Guardian* say resign, if you thought so hon. Leader of the Opposition, through you, Madam Speaker, then why “yuh didn’t do it yuhself”? Umpteen calls have been made in that regard, the statistics as we talk about crime demonstrate the lowest criminal activity in Trinidad and Tobago in 20 years.

So, Madam Speaker, let us get to the point of the Leader of the Opposition. Yes, it is true that there is extreme difficulty and hardship when loved ones and citizens of this country are kept out of their country and managed through a system of admission. Our borders are not closed as a matter of law and record. Our borders are being managed in similar fashion to other jurisdictions so that we can balance the equation between lives and livelihoods. Whereas states of emergency exist in the Caricom Caribbean, whereas the United Kingdom, Spain, Ireland, Italy, Canada, other parts of the world, The Netherlands, is experiencing rioter circumstances for lockdowns going on, Trinidad and Tobago is democratically with ease of movement such so, that 20 paid supporters in yellow T-shirts could be outside protesting outside this Parliament in an arranged affair.

You see, Madam Speaker, we ought not to take our successes lightly. And in looking at the performance of the Minister of National Security as part of the team constructed by the hon. Prime Minister to manage the preservation of livelihoods and lives in this country, I wish to salute my colleague the hon. Minister of National Security [*Desk thumping*] for taking the licks.

You see, Madam Speaker, it is not an easy thing to be the man who has to
make a decision or participate in a decision, you are never going to please everyone. It is not an easy situation. The hon. Minister of National Security when you catch him and he speaks to you will tell you of the anguish that he feels as a father, as a Member of Parliament, as a Minister in not being able to meet all the demands put to him on a daily basis. And there are days when I genuinely rise, Madam Speaker, and say a prayer for my colleague so that he can survive, with fortitude, the attacks, undeserving attacks such as this Motion brought to us so feebly put by the Member for Siparia. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, let us deal with the big bomb. You know, in every debate in a Motion of no confidence, they have a bomb to drop. The UNC famous. Well, let us put this into context. This is a debate, a Motion piloted by no less an individual than learned Senior Counsel, the Member for Siparia, the Leader of the Opposition, past Attorney General, past Minister of Legal Affairs, past Minister of Education, Head of the National Security Council, the hon. Leader of the Opposition piloted this Motion. Not here to listen to it, but piloted the Motion.

So let us go on. The Leader of the Opposition, ably assisted by the Member for Naparima, absent from the Chamber, stood up to make the big bomb, the big drop, hear the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Leader of the Opposition refers to a letter, “Madam Speaker, I have a letter, 21 January 2021”. When I heard that letter, my immediate suspicion was aroused. I had to intervene to ask the hon. Member under the relevant Standing Order to indicate whether diplomats were involved? Why? Madam Speaker, there is something called the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago, published by the people, paid for by the taxpayers, and certainly gifted for free, not only on the Internet but to every Member of Parliament. The Leader of the Opposition has a paid research staff, paid for by the taxpayers of this
country. The Member for Naparima stands up and says, “There will be untold consequences for diplomatic relations” in relation to the Venezuela enquiries that the hon. Member presented.

Yet, the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Siparia, learned Senior Counsel, stood up in defiance of the English language, so put into writing by the taxpayers of this country in the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago and had no regard to the Privileges and Immunities (Diplomatic, Consular and International Organizations) Act, Chap. 17:01. It is not a recent Act of Parliament, you know, Madam Speaker. This is Act No. 23 of 1965.

Madam Speaker, in this Act diplomatic privileges and immunities are provided for members participating in the Vienna Convention. In this Act consular privileges and immunities are put into the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago for consular relations. In this, privileges and immunities are granted for specialized agencies in the United Nations. Privileges and immunities of other international organizations and agencies are provided for. It is not too long, it is a whole 13 sections long. It is not too hard to even look at it on your way to Parliament.

But, Madam Speaker, we had to be regaled by the big bomb dropping of the Leader of the Opposition in deceiving the people of Trinidad and Tobago by—sorry—in misleading, I withdraw. In misleading in a very material and draconian way the people of Trinidad and Tobago by failing to indicate that there can be no greater savagery to international relations than to put quarantine provisions and mandatory state quarantine provisions into diplomatic relation.

You see, Madam Speaker, it has to be a position that either you agree or you do not agree. You cannot be saying that the diplomatic relations will be put under strain and it would be a “travesty” as Naparima said, and ignore the Vienna
Convention 1961, Article 34, which provides for the freedom of movement of diplomats. The Articles of the Vienna Convention would say that you cannot quarantine or subject to quarantine, when interpreted, the members of the diplomatic corps.

So, Madam Speaker, I say to the Leader of the Opposition shame on you for misleading the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [Desk thumping] This is not an ordinary contribution. This is from the learned Senior Counsel, past Prime Minister and Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago who has in my humble and respectful opinion carried out a deceit of intellect and fact. In the law—

**Mr. Hosein:** Madam Speaker—

**Hon. A. Al-Rawi:** You wish me to rephrase? I will rephrase. This is a deceit of the law in regard to the duty that is owed to the people of Trinidad and Tobago to be frank and honest as to what applies or what does not apply. Not everyone is subjected to the similar positions because the law sometimes tells you that there are exceptions as diplomats have.

So let us get to—Madam Speaker, may I ask what time is full time?

**Madam Speaker:** 1:01:09.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Much obliged. Let us get very quickly, Madam Speaker, to the issue of the vessels raised by the Member for Barataria/San Juan. Madam Speaker, I find it ludicrous intellectually that the Member for Barataria/San Juan could stand up here and tell us about the Damen vessels, and in answer to the hon. Member, and without going into areas that I ought not to under law, what I can say, Madam Speaker, that when one has regard to the facts that the then Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, the Member for Siparia, presided over the expenditure of $1.4 billion, let me repeat that, $1.4 billion of associated procurement coming from
the authorities that manage the Damen vessels, and that it is public knowledge without breaching any confidence, that it is now public knowledge that there is a worldwide investigation into corruption surrounding that matter. “Dem is people to watch ‘cokey eye’”, and let me explain that.

Madam Speaker, we are not speaking about $1 or $2, we are not speaking about small sums of money. We are not speaking about procurement outside the office of the then Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago held by the Member for Siparia as the Chair of the National Security Council, we are talking about $1.3 billion in combined expenditure that is the subject not of the hon. Dr. Keith Rowley “say so” or the PNM “say so” investigation, but the investigation of international authorities. So let me leave that there before I trip too much into the law, and let us get to the issue of the helicopters raised by my learned colleagues.

Madam Speaker, there is a definite credit to be paid to the Minister of National Security for having engaged in millions of US dollars in savings for the people of Trinidad and Tobago, in managing the issue of the helicopters and I specifically refer to the two helicopters leased by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Number one, the first lease involved a helicopter that never arrived. Procured by the UNC, $30 million of payments expended by the last Government for a helicopter that stayed in Delaware.

The second helicopter which arrived was one in respect of which the Airworthiness Certificate and the Certificate of Registration could not be procured and therefore fell into difficulties, but in short order I would say it is the Minister of National Security that is engaged together in part with the Office of the Attorney General in ensuring that the taxpayers of this country are spared the expense of
unnecessary largesse.

I am sure one of our colleagues will treat with the cost of helicopter flying. But suffice it to say, it is no small cost to take a helicopter every morning from Palmiste to travel to the Office of the Prime Minister in Port of Spain, Madam Speaker, back and forth $12,000 in gas alone per trip.

1.00 p.m.

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, 48(8), this Motion is not about—

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Madam Speaker, I would wrap up as I move now.

Madam Speaker: Just let me rule. Overruled.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Much obliged. Madam Speaker, I will come quickly as I have one minute to say it. The litigation brought on by the Members of the UNC, and let me repeat that, the United National Congress Members who participated in litigation now at an end—I would not speak about the hundreds in existence—have cost, in the COVID management, millions of dollars. Fortunately, they have lost in the matters now concluded on every single matter. [Desk thumping] And, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Lee: 48(1). Madam Speaker, 48(1) the relevance of—

Madam Speaker: Please continue.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: And, Madam Speaker, insofar as those costs are to be obtained for the taxpayers’ benefits, I give a commitment in the exercise of my office to deal with the Members opposite, if necessary, in recovery of costs.

Madam Speaker: Member for Princes Town. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Barry Padarath (Princes Town): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to the Motion currently before the House. Madam Speaker, in the outset, I would like to say that I support this Motion
wholeheartedly brought by the Leader of the Opposition, [*Desk thumping*] who has
done a resplendent job in terms of highlighting the inefficiencies with the Minister
of National Security during his tenure.

Madam Speaker, I listened very carefully to the argument put forward by the
Member for San Fernando West. And the hon. Member indicated that the Leader
of the Opposition was being less than honest, and that she needed to be frank and
honest when she brought information to the Parliament. Madam Speaker, I hope
that the hon. Member for San Fernando West can take some of his own advice
after I highlight the level of hypocrisy coming from the Member for San Fernando
West [*Desk thumping*] on the issue that was raised by a Member for Siparia in
relation to 17 non-nationals being granted re-entry into Trinidad and Tobago
without having to go through any quarantine provision at state facility.

Madam Speaker, the hon. Member for San Fernando West said that we must
be frank and honest, and I agree. Let us be frank and honest because the Member
hinged his defence on the Vienna Convention. But, you see, Madam Speaker, the
hon. Member for Siparia had a copy of the letter. And the letter lists the passport
details of the 17 non-nationals. And, Madam Speaker, when you look at the letter
from the Ministry of National Security to the Chief Immigration Officer outlining
the passport details of those 17 non-nationals, those nationals are not all covered
by diplomatic immunity under diplomatic passports. [*Desk thumping*] Madam
Speaker, in order to benefit from the immunity, one has to fall within the category
of being a diplomat, under the very same convention the Member for San Fernando
West spoke about.

Madam Speaker, several members who have been granted re-entry into
Trinidad and Tobago, who are non-nationals, who will not face state quarantine,
but will be quarantined at their homes, Madam Speaker, are not holders of diplomatic passports. They fall into a separate category and, Madam Speaker, that separate category does not allow them the immunities and privileges of a diplomatic officer. So, let us be frank and honest, Member for San Fernando West, [Desk thumping] there are few persons on that list—Madam Speaker, there are a few persons on that list—the letter provided by the Member for Siparia—that do carry diplomatic passports. But each member must be granted an exemption one by one. It is a case-by-case basis, as we were told by the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West. Where is the case-by-case basis now?

Madam Speaker, the hon. Member for San Fernando West is not being frank and he is not being honest as it relates to this particular matter. But, Madam Speaker, it does not stop there. The hon. Member for San Fernando West gives the impression that blanket coverage of diplomatic immunity and privileges is covered under the Vienna Convention and that every signatory—every signatory country, Madam Speaker, is bound by what is contained in the Vienna Convention. Madam Speaker, I will share with you a few instances of countries who have signed on to the Vienna Convention many decades ago, that today, in their domestic legislation and as part of the COVID-19 measures, this is what they say to diplomats.

Madam Speaker, on August 08, 2020, in Cambodia, in one of the areas that has one of the highest levels of COVID-19, it says all diplomats and international organization officials holding diplomatic visas, official visas of Cambodia, will be required to test for COVID-19 when they arrive in Cambodia and their samples will be taken at a special venue at their arrival terminal. Health Minister Mam Bun Heng said in a statement, he said they have to wait for the testing results for at least
24 hours at a hotel or accommodation identified by the State or, if required by public health measures, they will be quarantined for 14 days at that location.

**Madam Speaker:** I know it is difficult to see from there. The Attorney General is on his legs.

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Hon. Member, Madam Speaker, I rise cautiously on 48(1) as to the laws of Cambodia being relevant to this debate, if even in reply.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay. So, Member for Princes Town, I will give you a little leeway to develop the point that you made and this is supposed to support it.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Certainly, Madam. Madam, I understand the challenge the Member for San Fernando West has because the Member knows very well that there are countries who have changed their regulations as it relates to diplomatic officers coming in, whether those diplomatic officers belong to the host country or they belong to a foreign country, Madam Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I properly—

**Mr. B. Padarath:** And in defence of the Vienna Convention—

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Excuse me, you know the rules.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Oh, sorry.

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** I properly now rise on 48(1), the point having been confirmed to be irrelevant.

**Madam Speaker:** And I do uphold the objection. What you have just explained really shows what you are developing here is offending Standing Order 48(1) as not being relevant.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Madam Speaker, what is relevant about the information that we are providing in the public domain is that there are persons—

**Madam Speaker:** One minute—
Mr. B. Padarath:—on the letter—

Madam Speaker: One minute. I do not want an explanation. I have ruled that what you are developing is not relevant, so if you would go on, please.

Mr. B. Padarath: Certainly, Madam Speaker, except to say that these persons on the letter—

Madam Speaker: Member—

Mr. B. Padarath:—are not all covered by diplomatic immunity.

Madam Speaker: Member, there cannot be any “except to say” after I have ruled.

Mr. B. Padarath: Madam Speaker, I will move on. The hon. Member for San Fernando West spoke about the 12 Damen vessels that were purchased by the People’s Partnership during 2010 to 2015. Madam Speaker, those 12 vessels costed the Trinidad and Tobago approximately $1.5 billion. The hon. Member, together with the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West and other government officials, parrot that we cancelled the OPVs. Madam Speaker, those offshore patrol vessels have been deemed by several national security experts, when we came into office between 2010 to 2015, as being outdated. That those longshore, offshore patrol vessels could not man the borders of Trinidad and Tobago because they were long-range vessels, Madam Speaker.

And, Madam Speaker, Trinidad and Tobago benefited from being able to restore and recover over $1 billion for those offshore patrol vessels. [Desk thumping] And that was for two—two offshore patrol vessels for $1 billion. We got 12 Damen vessels that they have parked up down Staubles without gas, without diesel, leaving our borders totally open—Madam Speaker, $1.5 billion for 12 vessels. Today those vessels sit idly there when it could have been utilized, the arsenal of Trinidad and Tobago’s border security. [Desk thumping]
Madam Speaker, I want to turn to the issue of the diplomatic wars that the hon. Minister of National Security has waged and lost again and again. And I am reminded about the issue related to Barbados and the United States in terms of the Rio Treaty. You see, Madam Speaker, instead of proper friendly diplomatic channels between Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago, the hon. Minister on several occasions has chosen to draw diplomatic swords with the USA and Barbados, in particular. Diplomatic blunder after blunder, faux pas after faux pas, that has stained, bludgeoned and brought Trinidad and Tobago into disrepute, that falls squarely at the feet of the Member Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West in his capacity as Minister of National Security.

Madam Speaker, two main instances: one, deals with the Rio treaty; two, the comment that was made by the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West that got him into hot water, when he told Barbados do not allow themselves to be used as a springboard for Trinidad and Tobago nationals coming back in.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Madam Speaker, Standing Order 48(1), the Rio Treaty is not the domain of Ministry of National Security, that is Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Member: Properly.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Squarely.

Madam Speaker: Member, I am going give you a little leeway with respect to the matter you are raising here. Let us just see where you are going with that.

Mr. B. Padarath: Certainly, Madam. Madam, when the hon. Member made his comments with respect to the Rio Treaty and the spring boarding of nationals from Barbados, he did so in his capacity as the Minister of National Security. He did so in his capacity as Minister of National Security in terms of dealing with the borders and the border protection. But these issues, Madam Speaker, created diplomatic
faux pas and diplomatic blunders that [Desk thumping] fall squarely at the feet of the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West. You see, Madam Speaker, it was not UNC, it was not the Express, it was not the detractors of the Government. This is an issue that involves sovereign nations who refuse to bow to the deceit and bullying of the Minister of National Security, [Desk thumping] who believes that if he barks the loudest, everybody else would back down.

**Madam Speaker:** Member, Member, I will ask you to withdraw the word “deceit”. And I ask you, maybe if you position yourself in this way, you would see when I rise. Member, I am speaking to you and the very thing you are doing is what I am cautioning you about. Please withdraw the word.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** I withdraw, Madam and, move on. Madam, I refer to April 24, 2020, the Barbados Today. The headline read, “What is wrong with Stuart Young?” And that is a question that many people have been asking for years. What it says, Madam Speaker—and I will quote from Nelson Mandela who once said:

“The mentality of retaliation destroys states, while the mentality of tolerance builds the nations.”

The Minister is only concerned about retaliation, Madam Speaker, I want to read an excerpt from the Barbados Today, headlined, “What is wrong with Stuart Young”, April 28, 2020, and it says:

“As any good neighbor would do, Prime Minister Mia Mottley and her Cabinet offered the elderly Trinidadians refuge here. At the same time, appeals were made on behalf of the group to their own government…

Last week, the youthful Minister…full of sound and fury, shocked many with his broadside against Barbados, suggesting that our Government may
have been tactically colluding with Trinidadians, no less, to breach its border during the lockdown.

Using such an inflammatory and accusatory word as ‘infiltrated’ describe Barbados’ humanitarian effort”— no—“one would have thought that Prime Minister Motley was teaming up with Yasin Abu Bakr for another attempt to remove the duly elected government in...”—Trinidad and Tobago.

It goes further, Madam Speaker. This is the Barbados Today:

“Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago have enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship reaching into the depths of history.”

But back to the mouthy Minister. This is not the UNC, this is not the Express, these are not detractors, Madam Speaker. This is the international and regional reputation that the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West has developed over the years.

Mr. Al-Rawi: Madam Speaker, as a matter of privilege, there is no Standing Order for shouting but there is a general privilege. [Crosstalk]

Madam Speaker: Okay. So, Member, please, please continue.

Mr. B. Padarath: Madam, I think the hon. Attorney General probably read this Barbados editorial and he really wanted to hear what was the other point they made. So to punctuate and amplify for you, hon. Attorney General, through you, Madam Speaker, the editorial says we do not know how much of this rubberized sabre-rattling is Young’s own attempt to raise his profile in the Rowley Cabinet, or whether his angst with Barbados is an appeal to the political base in an election year. And he wants to—the hon. Minister that is—wants to speak about relevance? We do not have answers but we find his handling of the matter offensive to the
spirit of practical application of regional integration among two of Caricom’s founding members.

Madam Speaker, this is the very language—this was the very language that was used to describe the hon. Minister of National Security on the international stage: sound and fury, infantile and not coming from Trinbagonians, as he is accustomed to, but coming on the international stage, bringing Trinidad and Tobago into an international and diplomatic faux pas.

Madam Speaker, I turn April 28, 2020, the Trinidad Express, which says, if this is not a row, then I do not know what is. Madam Speaker, this article was published on April 28, 2020, and it says:

But it is not about the Minister of National Security in Port of Spain. Their issue is a depth of feeling in the Government in Bridgetown, which caused the decision to issue this statement we got. Taking offence, the Barbados Minister was deeply disturbed about statements attributed to the Trinidad and Tobago Minister of National Security.

The Barbados foreign Minister said in his statement, he found it regrettable that such an illusion could have emanated from Port of Spain. If the Government of Bridgetown was not deeply hurt and felt sufficiently offended by what it accused the Minister of National Security in Port of Spain of having said, it would not have issued the statement.

Madam Speaker, the hon. Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West, Minister of National Security is constantly engaged in a tit for tat. And this was no different with the former US Ambassador Mondello. Again, another diplomatic blunder that has tarnished the image of Trinidad and Tobago undermine our diplomatic relations. The hon. Member, Madam Speaker, in the Trinidad Express
on May 28, 2020, was described as one who engages in semantics. Their words, Madam Speaker, not mine, but it was printed. It was deceit and misleading.

Madam Speaker: Member, whether it is their words or yours, you are speaking it in here, so it is your words. I have already ruled that that is not allowed.

Mr. B. Padarath: Sure, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: So, not just “sure”. You withdraw it.

Mr. B. Padarath: I withdraw.

Madam Speaker: And as I will ask you not to try that again.

Mr. B. Padarath: Certainly. Madam Speaker, I refer you to May 18th, Trinidad Express, headline—Stuart Young and Rio Treaty—

“Did Stuart lie?”

That is the 18th. The 19th:

“‘I never said that…’”—says Young.

20th—Madam Speaker, if we do a chronological order of diplomatic blunder and faux pas, let us look at May 13th. The Minister told the nation in the Senate that he did not raise the Rio Treaty—“he” meaning Mondello, the then Ambassador.

May 18th— that was on the 13th, Madam Speaker. May 18th, Mondello indicated through a press release that they did discuss the Rio Treaty. And that is what brings us to the headline of the Trinidad Express and the Trinidad Guardian which says: Did Stuart Young lie to the Parliament and the people of Trinidad and Tobago?

Madam Speaker: So, so, so Member, you know, I was not sure that I heard you properly before, but certainly I am hearing you now. Okay? And it is the same caution I gave you. Regardless of the fact that you are quoting a source, if it is unparliamentarily, you cannot use it.
Mr. B. Padarath: I withdraw, Madam.

Madam Speaker: So you withdraw it. And again, do not let me rise on that again.

Mr. B. Padarath: Certainly. Madam, I withdraw. So Madam, if we do the chronological order, May 13th, Minister told the Senate that he did not—“he” meaning Mondello—did not raise the Rio Treaty. May 18th, the Ambassador then comes out and tells the country, yes, the Rio Treaty was discussed with the Minister. But, Madam Speaker, it was really what occurred on May 26th, one week later. One week later, several government officials, as the young people will say, “they jump out of their whole self”. And you know what they said, Madam Speaker? Trinidad and Tobago is not bound by the Rio Treaty. And that is the shifting of the goalposts. That is today is today and yesterday is yesterday.

1.20 p.m.

So the Minister says, “No, Rio Treaty was not discussed.” The ambassador comes out and he said, “Yes, it was discussed,” and then May 26th, to distract the population from the blunder after blunder, the diplomatic faux pas and the incompetence of the Minister of National Security, the entire Government comes out and then says, “Trinidad and Tobago is not bound by no Rio Treaty.”

Madam Speaker, today, we continue to see the incompetence of the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West who has tarnished, who has bludgeoned the image of Trinidad and Tobago on the national stage, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, on just this May issue alone, it warrants the resignation or the firing from the Cabinet of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago of Minister Stuart Young.

Madam Speaker, when you go into the immigration woes, the computer border system that the Member for Siparia spoke about, today I have in my hand a memo, a memo, Madam Speaker, from the Chief Immigration Officer to officers in the immigration department dated January 19th, where, Madam Speaker, out of 150...
officers, only 12 of them have access to the border management and security system. Madam Speaker, therefore, when persons are coming in to Trinidad and Tobago with criminal records and so on, they are unable to check and advise the relevant authorities. And, therefore, Madam Speaker, if all these systems are crashed, if all these problems are occurring on the international stage, then—

Madam Speaker: Member for Princes Town—

Mr. B. Padarath:—it is at the feet of the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West—

Madam Speaker: Member for Princes Town, your time is now spent.

Mr. B. Padarath: Thank you, Madam Speaker. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker: Prime Minister. [Desk thumping]

The Prime Minister (Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I came here today, out of a sense of curiosity, having been pre-warned by my colleague from Siparia that she was coming to light up the Parliament today, energized by the results of the elections yesterday, and that there will be tempo in the House, because she is coming to burn the Minister of National Security into ashes. So, Madam Speaker, as leader of the Government, I was interested, but I can conclude right here and now that this Motion, as presented, and the substance of it is tantamount to nothing but a waste of valuable Parliament time. [Desk thumping] And I predict that for the rest of the day, the Motion having been so incompetently presented and with less than honesty, all we are going to get is repetitions and Standing Order interjections because, Madam Speaker, this Motion is incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial, [Desk thumping] if I am to borrow a phrase from the famous Perry Mason series. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, I have no doubt that the job that we are doing involves
annoying some people or, in some instances, aggravating some people or, in some instances, providing opportunities for mischief on the part of some people. Because, Madam Speaker, in trying to protect this country from the pandemic—from a virus which has been declared a pandemic—the actions that this Government had to take, they were not very pleasing. They were very inconveniencing and sometimes hurtful, but such was the medicine, Madam Speaker, that we had to take.

But permit me, Madam Speaker, without—and I ask my friends in the media not to describe it as “boasting”, but just pointing out a statement of fact that notwithstanding the fright that we had, notwithstanding the nervousness that continues, notwithstanding the irresponsibility that we have as Government to protect the population, if we look around the world today, Madam Speaker, we in Trinidad and Tobago are in a much better place than many other national populations. [Desk thumping] And, Madam Speaker, that is only so because we have swallowed our own bitter medicine and we have refused, on a consistent basis, the irrelevant advice and the self-serving politics of our colleagues on the other side.

Madam Speaker, we have had to do a number of things, but interestingly, Madam Speaker, this Motion coming from my friend from Siparia, I as Prime Minister, led a Government in this country from September 2015 to now in a very difficult period where a lot of difficult issues arose. And we have been accused all along the way of all kinds and manners of evil, but my colleague from Siparia, as Opposition Leader, never once—she very carefully, never once filed a Motion of no confidence in the Prime Minister or the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, notwithstanding all that she was saying outside. And that makes me wonder, why a
Motion like this, so incompetently presented, replaced a Motion of no confidence in the Government for six years? It is because, Madam Speaker, my friend from Siparia does not really believe in what she is saying. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, we told this country at the front, in January, and we did so again in March, when we closed our border—and we knew that closing the border would have a certain kind of effect, which is to leave some of our people on the outside in protection of those on the inside. But we also told the country that there are 330,000 people outside Trinidad and Tobago who live—and I want to repeat that—who live outside in another country, many of them holding two passports, dual citizenship. The bulk of those people live in the United States or the United Kingdom, two of the countries that are most heavily infected with the virus we are trying to avoid. And we said to the country that those persons have a right to return to Trinidad and Tobago by virtue of the fact that they are Trinidad and Tobago citizens who live abroad.

What we have said to those persons, since you live abroad and since we have been forced to close our borders to protect the 1.3 million here today, we are asking you, if you live abroad that, hold your position for the moment and if you have to come home, we are managing the return of people. And I am speaking here of a different category of persons, to those who actually had gone out intending to come back immediately and got caught when the border was closed.

And, Madam Speaker, also, there are people who were asked, do not travel unless it is absolutely essential, emergencies of one kind or another, and if that is the case, then it falls to the management of the border to handle it, as we have been doing on a case-by-case basis. So a person who wants to come home because they are accustomed coming home at Christmas or they are accustomed coming at
Carnival, as against a person who is seeking life and death medical attention, somebody has to make that call. And, unfortunately, that somebody is the Ministry of National Security. But, Madam Speaker, the responsibility of what the National Security Ministry does, let me make it very clear here today, that unlike the UNC Government, the Minister does not act on his own. And as head of the Cabinet with responsibility for the Government and as the Minister chairing the three-man committee, which is Prime Minister’s Office, Ministries of Health and National Security, your Motion is misdirected. I take responsibility for what the Ministry of National Security [Desk thumping] does and what this Government does on these matters. I take that responsibility. So come file a Motion in me. That is what my friend in Siparia should do. Come and file a Motion in the Prime Minister or in the Government for what we are doing in defending the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [Desk thumping] And I want to make the point—

**Mr. Charles:** Madam Speaker, 48(1). This is not about the Prime Minister. This Motion is about the Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Dr. K. Rowley:** What it is?

**Mr. Charles:** It is 48(6) and 48(8). [Desk thumping]

**Madam Speaker:** 48(8), overruled; 48(1), overruled; 48(6), overruled. Continue.

**Hon. Dr. K. Rowley:** Madam Speaker, thank you for your ruling. But I know it is just an attempt, Madam Speaker, to disturb my trend of thoughts. And I said this before that is what is going to go on here for the whole day, because this is a non-Motion. [Desk thumping]

The point I was making before I was rudely interrupted, under Standing Order irrelevantly, is that in this Government, Ministers do not do as they please. There is management of this Cabinet. [Desk thumping] Madam Speaker—and I can

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draw an example to tell you that this Minister of National Security who has the full confidence of the Prime Minister, does not run this Ministry as he pleases. And, Madam Speaker, I remember, coming to this Parliament and filing Motions and making requests of the Government, under the Member of Siparia, to do something in my constituency, and it had to do with allocating money, making it available to finish the Carenage fishing market, and my colleague from Siparia agreed and told the Parliament that the money was allocated, the project would be restarted—

Mr. Hosein: Madam Speaker, respectfully, 48(1), please, Madam Speaker, irrelevance.

Madam Speaker: Prime Minister, I will give you a lil leeway to tie this into the Motion. If not— if you cannot tie it quickly, I will ask you to leave the point and go on.

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: Madam Speaker, if I was not interrupted—as I said, this whole day is going to be like this in this non-Motion. [Desk thumping] I have made the point, the first part of the string to tie it, I have made the point that the Minister of National Security does not act in contravention of the Prime Minister or the Cabinet. He does not act on his own in this Government. And I am saying to you, Madam Speaker, I can demonstrate to you how that is what happens in a UNC government, where the Minister could come and do what he wants against what the Prime Minister said, because in the Carenage fishing market situation, where the Prime Minister then told the Parliament that money was available to finish the fish market—

Mr. Hosein: Madam Speaker, 48(1), please.

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley:—the Minister came to Carenage.

Mr. Hosein: Madam Speaker, 48(1), please.
Madam Speaker: Please continue, Prime Minister. [Desk thumping]

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: I am saying, unlike what is happening in this Government where the Minister does not act on his own and in contravention, in which I can demonstrate to you that is what was happening in a UNC government, because the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries came to Carenage and countermanded the Prime Minister’s instruction that was on Hansard and was never carried out and, therefore, the fish market was never restarted. That is what happens in a UNC government. It does not happen in a PNM Government. [Desk thumping] And it is that understanding why my colleague from Siparia could have come here today and file this so-called Motion in the Minister of National Security to take issue with the Government’s policy, and did not bring the Motion as a Motion of no confidence in the Government or the Prime Minister. That is the point I am making, and jumping up a thousand times like a jack-in-the-box is not going to change that point. That is a fact. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, from day one, when we responded to the virus, our colleagues on the other side had an issue with everything the Government does. Unfortunately, the Government had not been taking the advice of our colleagues on the other side. Maybe if we had taken their advice, they would not be here today with this Motion because it would have been their advice we were following. It would have been: do not close the border, do not close down rum shop, come out in the sunlight for sunlight to kill COVID, build a dome over the country, and drink Puncheon and lime. That is all the advice we have been getting.

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, 48(1)—

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: And, of course—

Mr. Lee: 48(1), again.

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: —if anybody get sick, give them hydroxychloroquine.
Mr. Lee: 48(1), Madam Speaker. The Prime Minister is going off on a tirade.

Madam Speaker: Please continue.

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: Thank you, Madam Speaker. And, Madam Speaker, I would like to ask for injury time for all these jumping up and down, eh. [Desk thumping] Madam Speaker, the main point of the Motion, the big bomb in the Motion today, Madam Speaker, was the whole question of 17 people who came into the country and were allowed to quarantine at home. That was the big bomb. Madam Speaker, you had to intervene to stop the Member for Siparia for doing what she was doing.

The Attorney General told the Member for Siparia who asked, Madam Speaker, whether it was true that these people came in and they were diplomats and they were allowed to go home, and she made the point that here it was, discrimination in favour of foreigners when nationals cannot be allowed to come home. Madam Speaker, she was told in this Parliament that it was not so, that those persons—that document that was leaked to her refers to diplomats covered by the Vienna Convention. That did not prevent, Madam Speaker, the attempt to drop bomb. Like the Member for Barataria/San Juan—no, sorry, it was the one from Princes Town. He came to prove that some of the names on the list might have been diplomats, but the others were not, and who is a diplomat and so on, and so on, and so on. Madam Speaker, all of this misinformation is meant to incite and misinform the population. [Desk thumping] But just for—you know, even after all of that in this debate, having asked a question that was answered, having sat down in the Parliament, my colleague from Siparia, hell bent on inciting the population about discrimination against them so they could refuse to cooperate with the Government in the fight against this virus, at 12.29 went out and issued under her hand—

Mr. Rambally: Standing Order 48(6). [Desk thumping]
Madam Speaker: So, Prime Minister, I think the word we are allowing is “unequal” treatment.

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: Which word?

Madam Speaker: The word we are allowing is “unequal” treatment.

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: I am not clear. What is the objection?

Madam Speaker: The Member has risen on 48(6).

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: But what am I to withdraw?

Mr. Rambally: Madam Speaker, the objection under 48(6) is that the hon. Prime Minister is saying that the Member for Siparia and others on this side, we are inciting persons to not cooperate with COVID protocols.

Madam Speaker: So, Prime Minister, I would ask you to restate that. I believe what they are saying is improper motives.

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: Madam Speaker, okay, thank you. In an attempt to misinform the public, and it is my view that misinforming the public on a matter which is saying that foreigners were allowed to come and go home while nationals are not allowed, that could have the effect of inciting the public against the Government’s attempt at fighting COVID.

Mr. Rambally: Again, 48(6).

Madam Speaker: Prime Minister, I would ask you to rephrase that in terms of—I believe it is imputing improper motives.

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: I would rephrase it by simply saying, Madam Speaker, I have in my hand a confirmation from the Embassy of China that confirms that all those people on that list are covered by the diplomatic immunity of the Vienna Convention. The Chinese have confirmed that all those persons [Desk thumping] who travelled to Guyana and came back are covered by the immunities as described by the Attorney General. And the simple point, Madam Speaker, is all
the attempt to give the impression that foreigners are allowed in by privilege of the Minister of National Security, acting improperly, is not correct. That is all I am trying to say. Once again, the Opposition is insisting on spreading misinformation [Desk thumping] to allow the population to act on misinformation. There is no discrimination in favour of foreigners. These are people covered by the international privileges and immunity under the law of Trinidad and Tobago.

And as a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, when those foreigners, when diplomats started raising this with me and my Government, before I acted, I asked the Attorney General for an opinion on this matter, and he gave me the legal opinion that we could not prevent them even if we wanted to, because they are covered by the immunities of the laws of Trinidad and Tobago, acting as part of our position under the Vienna Convention.

So why is a former Prime Minister, why is a senior counsel coming here and filing a Motion and trying to mislead the population? And it is all just cheap politics that will get us nowhere, except to have people in the country believe that they are being discriminated against and that is not true. That is all I am trying to say, Madam Speaker.

And, of course, Madam Speaker, I was saying also that we who are managing this situation, look around the world and see what is happening in other countries, and see in Trinidad and Tobago what we are trying to do. Our next hurdle in the next few weeks—next few days, we are trying to bring out a few of our students, slightly opening the door a bit more, bringing out those students who are requiring to do lab work and other work that require their physical presence in schools. Because of how we have managed our affairs, that is what we are trying to do here.
Hon. Dr. K. Rowley (cont’d)

In many other countries fighting the same virus, with different government policies, they are going into their second and third lockdowns. Some going to lockdown for the first time. In some cases, Madam Speaker, you cannot even allow your family to come to your own home, you cannot see more than one person on the pavement. Madam Speaker, that is what is happening in the world all around us. And, Madam Speaker, in many countries with far more resources than we have, their hospitals are full and overflowing with sick people and they cannot get medical care. That is not happening in Trinidad and Tobago. We are in a much better place because of how we have managed our affairs.

We have been criticized for some of the inconveniences. We know there are inconveniences, but our colleagues on the other side, instead of standing with us in a difficult situation, they pass up no opportunity to stir the pot against the Government’s effort [Desk thumping] and even when there are no facts, they try to create those facts, and this Motion is one of those, Madam Speaker, this Motion is one of those. Madam Speaker, we do not expect anything else, you know. But what we are not going to stand for and tolerate is you fabricating stories and coming to the Parliament and trying to incite the population. We are not going to stand for that, Madam Speaker. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, imagine, we know that there are people outside genuinely complaining, but what we do know, is that the vast majority of people who were out when the border was closed, who had gone out intending to come back in short order, we have brought them back home in an orderly and safe manner. [Desk thumping] That much I know. But, Madam Speaker, we also know that there are people, some of them friends of ours in this Parliament and in that party opposite us, who have been stirring up and organizing people to come on a daily and nightly
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and on social media daily basis, to argue about how they are hurt and the Government is heartless.

Madam Speaker, if you look at page—whatever it is here in the *Express*, you will see a woman—it is page 16 in the *Express*—who not for the first time in the media, complaining about how hard it is for her and how many times she applied and how she is suffering at this exemption or non-granting of an exemption. Madam Speaker, would you believe that even as this is published today, that the records at the Ministry of National Security—

**Madam Speaker:** Prime Minister, your time is now spent.

**Hon. Dr. K. Rowley:** Including my extension?

**Madam Speaker:** Your time is now spent. We operate under COVID rules. [*Desk thumping*] Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Roodal Moonilal** (*Oropouche East*): Thank you. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to join this debate and to participate in what we believe to be a very, very, important debate on a Motion that calls on the House to express a lack of confidence in possibly the most important Minister in a Government of Trinidad and Tobago at a time like this. Madam Speaker, it is not a Motion that one would look at and speak with pleasure. It is not something that we are elated to be here to condemn, using the Standing Orders, a parliamentary colleague, in the exercise of the discharge of his official functions. It is something we take very seriously. And let me begin by congratulating the Opposition Leader for the courage, the tenacity, [*Desk thumping*] the competence [*Desk thumping*] in presenting this Motion this morning and raising substantive issues concerning the conduct. Madam Speaker, this matter, if we do not watch it, we can easily derail this, as the last speaker sought to do.
Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we are not cautious, we can derail this debate, as the last speaker sought to do on a debate on exemption and COVID. This is not a debate on exemption and COVID. This is a debate about the conduct of the Minister of National Security in the discharge of his public functions. [Desk thumping] It involves every area in his department where we can argue, in the most compelling manner, that he has failed and failed miserably to reach even modest performance targets in every specific area of his Ministry. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Prime Minister before me, asked the question and was responding by saying that it is not the Minister of National Security alone, it is the Cabinet, and we ought not to be taking on the Minister this way, it should be the Government and the Prime Minister. And we ask the question—because the Minister of National Security said this morning that there was a committee between the Minister of Health, the Prime Minister and himself and they determined all matters related to the management of the pandemic and the exemption policy. Did the Prime Minister exempt his own daughter to come into Trinidad and Tobago? [Desk thumping]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, Member, one second. Members please, remember the proper protocols. All masks must be properly worn at this time please, please.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Thank you. So, the question begs itself, were Members of the Government participating in a committee or subcommittee and then took decisions to benefit their own family members? [Desk thumping] The Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West, Minister of National Security—truly, if ever we had to take a picture and make a poster for a statement, it would be an all-round failure, [Desk thumping] an all-round failure—made a fascinating statement this morning.
He said I want to thank all my colleagues for their support. I want to thank the Prime Minister, I want to thank everybody, because what I do is not myself, you know, it is the mandate of colleagues who support me.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was shocked to hear this statement, and like a Senate colleague of mine, I almost screamed if I had his voice: What? But I do not. You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have in my hand here what is a screenshot of what is popularly called a WhatsApp chat, and this WhatsApp chat, which I got on a website a few minutes ago, speaks of Members of Parliament—I have in my hand, I am not displaying—and on June 19th—on January 19th, it is a Tuesday, at 8.41 a.m., someone by the name of Stuart Young—and I used that name because this is what is on the WhatsApp screenshot—that person says:

We are already there, except we do not keep everyone for 14 days, but seven in state quarantine and state supervised quarantine where you pay and then seven days at home. That is the difference. And someone—and this is very important—by the name of Foster Cummings—there is a Member for La Horquetta who carries a name very familiar—and that person says—I do not share the view that our citizens and permanent residents should be subject to an exemption to return home. Many of our citizens are still stranded abroad and have not been able to access the exemption almost after one year—this is by someone who carries the name Foster Cummings—although we are in a pandemic, we cannot render our citizens stateless. We can require them to have the negative PCR tests and quarantine at their own expense, but we need to allow our citizens to come home and come home now. [Desk thumping]

That is a remarkable screenshot from a chat called “Members of Parliament” and I recognize other names here as colleagues who at time and time again sit
opposite me in this House.

There is a war in the Cabinet. They are fighting among themselves in the Cabinet over exemption policy. [Desk thumping] They come and put on a brave face today—[Interruption]—yes, they resigned because of that. Today, they put on a brave face and say, all of us agree, and this is what is happening January 19th, which I believe is a few days ago. The general secretary of the party, Minister of Government, Cabinet member is saying to the Minister of National Security, you are doing something that is wrong, and I will not go and say unparliamentary word. You are doing something that is wrong.

So that in their Cabinet they are fighting over this very policy and process. But, today, they try to tell the entire population: we are united, we know what we are doing. The person calling himself Stuart Young said, he say, “But look, we cannot do nothing about this, we in it already.” That is the approach to policymaking.

1.50 p.m.

And this can be found on a website, I am sure, that we can see. Incidentally after that quarrel one Foster Cummings left the chat. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the unity they talk about when the Prime Minister says, “We make decisions together, together we make decisions”. Mr. Deputy Speaker, notwithstanding the war in the Cabinet over this matter, I will now raise another matter because, you know, in anticipation of my approach to the podium the Minister of National Security, the Attorney General, and I suspect the unprepared Minister for Laventille West, they all raised this issue before me, of the helicopter. But before I go to that helicopter I just wanted to ask the Minister of National Security—he has colleagues who will speak later, I am sure—clarify for me once and for all—now,
Mr. Deputy Speaker, from my experience of 20 years in this House, plus, I am aware that this is a substantive Motion on a Member of the House.

It is the only day in our life when this is done, it is the only time you can raise a matter that questions the conduct, the behaviour of a Member of the Government. It must be done on a substantive Motion otherwise you cannot raise issues of character and conduct. We are here today, I waited a long time for this. I waited a long time for this. And I ask the Minister of National Security, did you induce, influence, seek to bully the Chief Fire Officer or any agent of the Chief Fire Officer to write a report on Westmoorings Towers [*Desk thumping*] to clear the residents of wrongdoing, including yourself and your parents when you were blocking the corridor and creating a danger and a risk to the lives of children, elderly and other residents, that corridors and exit routes were blocked? The fire service on December 2\textsuperscript{nd} did a report and said—demanded that residents move their things and create a freeway. It was not done.

Notwithstanding it was not done, the fire service issued another report when they learnt who were the residents in question on floor eight, and if threatened further I will produce the pictures. I will produce the official reports, the record and the stamp-dated pictures to tell you the conduct of a Member of this House. [*Desk thumping*] I notice nobody responds to that one. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know, all of that is bad; it is bad, I must say, everything about managing immigration, managing every part of that Ministry, horrible, but I focus on one matter because it is a matter that falls squarely at the feet of the Minister.

You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when they came into office in September 2015, they went on a political rampage to discredit the former administration, to discredit, to demonize, to criminalize Ministers and the former Prime Minister
from Siparia. That was their mission. Man, they took on that mission with evangelical zeal, anything they found, once it was UNC Partnership it was bad. It could be the Ramai Trace Hindu School, it could be the children’s hospital, it could be the school in Princes Town, Reform, but it was bad because the UNC Partnership did it. They came into office, informed that there was a contract signed properly, signed and entered into for the lease of two helicopters. They then told the country that no helicopter arrived, “The helicopter never arrived, it had none here”. It was left to us a few weeks ago to produce a photograph that showed a helicopter in a shed in Cumuto “park up” for five years, as we would say, absolutely nothing. All they do is they go, and in Trinidad language, “Dey rev de engine every now and then”, not using it.

Civil Aviation had no authority to enter that compound to certify or do registration so it is not flying. We produced the picture and no one has said that that is not the picture. Lo and behold, we hear now of a court case in America, sovereign immunity. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have in my hand, look here, two documents, one is a response from the Trinidad and Tobago Government through Freshfields, their lawyers. The other is, of course, the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, *Vertical Aviation v The Government of Trinidad and Tobago*. This makes for amazing reading, amazing.

What they have done—I do not have time now in this debate to tell you, but what they have done is taken the approach they did in Trinidad. When contractors sue this Government for outstanding moneys, instead of paying or negotiating or entering into an arrangement, they say, “Hello, yuh see dat, dat have bobol in it, we not paying”, you know they tried the same story in New York. When they did not pay, they defaulted on paying rent. The caution money, as we say, went to pay
rent. They did not pay insurance. They did not take a maintenance contract under the Ministry of National Security. No, what is called “tip-to-tail” maintenance contract, no insurance. You know in UWI some of us when we were there we put a caution money and if we did not pay rent the landlord took the caution money for rent. That happened—

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I respectfully rise on Standing Order 48(2). I allowed enough response but this matter is now in the court—

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** But you raised it!

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Yes. But in—[Crosstalk] Mr. Deputy Speaker, may I? Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I may, please? [Crosstalk] Mr. Deputy Speaker, I raise 48(2) in the depth and detail of defence matters that the hon. Member is going into because the matter is before the courts of New York at this point. [Crosstalk] I do accept that there was a need to reply. None of us spoke in such a fashion as to take it in any depth and I make that submission for your consideration.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, Member, Member, tie it in quickly, please.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Yes.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Tie it in and, again, no in-depth information.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Sure. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will say to—now, I am not reading from any of the documents that I have before me, I will make two points about it and end.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No. Even though you are not reading, again, I would like you to tie in the point.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Okay.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Tie in the point quickly and move on, based on the AG’s comments.
Dr. R. Moonilal: Sure. I am raising a point that squarely connects to the conduct and the performance in office of the Minister of National Security [Desk thumping] who had sole responsibility for National Security assets such as helicopters, sole responsibility. We really “cah blame nobody else”.

So the Minister went now with a cock and bull story that there is something wrong with the lease that we have to investigate. I am informed that a few days ago—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, Member, I would like you to move on. I gave you enough leeway, I would like you to move on.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Deputy Speaker, could I speak about a foreign affairs matter related?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: What aspect of it?

Dr. R. Moonilal: The Minister told us he wrote the Department of Justice, I am going to argue that he has written nothing and this is not an active matter between the United States Department of Justice [Desk thumping] and the Trinidad and Tobago—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay. You can move on now, Member. Move on now. You have made your point.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Could I argue that?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: You made your point, you can move on.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Okay. Well, then I will move on then.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, leaving that aside I will get to the next point. This Minister has also presided over this debacle with migrants and so on. I have in my hand again documents pertaining to claims made by persons and I would not get into detail. I am not calling name and court judgment and so on, but it is a fact that a High Court judge ruled that there ought to have been no more deportations at no
Minister of National Security (cont’d)  
Dr. Moonilal (cont’d)  

deportation orders pending the outcome of matters before the court on persons who were before the court. The Minister presided over a state of affairs that issued deportation orders to almost 41 persons who, if they go to court and win, can cost the taxpayer $100 million in damages. With the matter I cannot talk about, it is another $100 million in damages that we can face because of incompetence, malice, spite. [Desk thumping] This is the nature of what we are speaking about, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Minister has a habit, he has a habit of shooting from the hip, as we say in western language. When you are a Minister of National Security you cannot have that habit, you will get yourself and the Government and the taxpayer into trouble. A Minister of National Security ought not to be intemperate, certainly not arrogant. Not a person who is quick, quick, quick to open their mouth. In opening his mouth on the matter I cannot talk about, he has incurred liability, has made critical statements that undermine the interest of Trinidad and Tobago. [Desk thumping] Hypothetically, Mr. Deputy Speaker, without reference to any point, hypothetically, if you say that your lawyers tell you, you do not have a case, how will you go to court on a default judgment, to fight a default judgment when you have said in the public that your lawyers said you do not have a case to answer? You have no case, no defence.

So you said in the public you have no defence and now fighting a matter somewhere where you are fighting a default judgment against you. That is when your mouth opens and you put your country in trouble and crisis. You put your taxpayer in crisis and this is what the Minister stands guilty of today. So no amount of telling us about, you know, what the UNC did; this is fascinating today, you know, if somebody would just come in here with an exemption policy that allows
them as a diplomat to go home, if they just come in today, they would feel this is a Motion of no confidence in the UNC or the Member for Siparia. They would not know this is a Motion of no confidence in the Minister of National Security if they hear Members opposite. We challenge him, tell us one area of your department, your Ministry, that you can claim some success. [*Desk thumping*]

Today they are speaking, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about the lowest crime rate, an all-round failure if ever there was one. [*Desk thumping*] Today, very interesting, everybody is standing up; I noticed in the newspaper a few days ago, crime statistics, crime down—

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

**Dr. R. Moonilal:**—whatever year. Thank you very much. The lowest data in X year, I think the data they are using is 2020. We had a state of emergency for three months. When we told them, “murder down”, they said, “That don’t count because there was a state of emergency”. We had a lockdown and a self-imposed lockdown, the entire nation, for one year and they are saying, “The lowest crime rate ever”, but even the bandits, kidnappers, everybody “fraid” COVID so that you have reduced activity. You have reduced activity at all levels, whether it is an illicit sector or a legal sector, but you cannot boast that in 2020 when people are parked-up home, when you do not want your brother to visit your house, you say, “Well, crime down, crime down”. Who is committing the crime, COVID-positive people?

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this—and I have to search now, you know this Minister, I would tell him—I mean, I do not know how else to say but for the Minister of National Security the word “honesty” has no clear meaning, none. This is a Minister that according to a document I have before me, they say he strains credulity. I had to look up that word. So it is a Minister that defies us in so many
ways. A front page editorial of the *Express* had to point to him and call him out, a talk show host in Barbados had to make him the subject of attention day and night over statements there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So that what we are here to do is to call on this Minister to resign. *[Desk thumping]*

You cannot continue like this, you are straining the country. You are an all-round failure and you have brought this country to its knees in terms of dealing with crime. Other colleagues will yet to talk about management of assets, talk about budgeting, talk about the fact that today you go from one point to a next point and you are not sure to see National Security assets on the road because we have not maintained them. The police have not received the moneys to maintain cars, to buy cars; we have not. They made a national scandal over helicopters when today I am hearing again, they said the helicopter was bought for VIPs. Do you know it takes 15 minutes to refit a helicopter with no charge? You could use it for anything you want but today we have to—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member—

**Dr. R. Moonilal:**—listen to this sickness, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and quite frankly those on this side are well disgusted by the conduct of the Government. I thank you. *[Desk thumping]*

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

**The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh):** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is painful to listen to the Opposition in the throes of their insecurity and having to defend a Motion piloted by the Leader of the Opposition that has no substance, no skeleton and absolutely no backbone. A Motion of no confidence in a Minister needs to clear a very high bar but the bar that they have set is the lowest of the low. *[Desk thumping]* The big mark that
“buss” from Oropouche West, I believe, is that there is dissention in the Cabinet because he got a screen shot that shows somebody by the name of Foster Cummings has an opposite view. And that is the big mark, there is dissention in the Cabinet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I sit in the Cabinet and there is no one, no one by the name of Foster Cummings in the Cabinet of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, no one. [Desk thumping] So the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago, led by the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Keith Rowley, and formed by the Attorney General because you need two Members to form a Cabinet, and the rest of us, the Cabinet colleagues of Minister Stuart Young stand shoulder to shoulder [Desk thumping] with the hon. Minister of National Security, the hon. Stuart Young, shoulder to shoulder. [Crosstalk] But that is the big mark he “buss”. [Crosstalk]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to refer to the Member of Parliament for Naparima—[Crosstalk]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Please, Members—Members—

Hon. T. Deyalsingh: The Member of Parliament for Naparima said we must talk about citizenship for 80,000 Venezuelans, educate them. Is this the same UNC in 2017, when the hon. Prime Minister, stretching out a hand of humanitarianism to Dominica after hurricane Maria, asked Trinidadians to open their doors to citizens of a Caricom country for six months and we were accused of bringing in those persons to give them citizenship here to vote for the PNM—

Ms. Haynes: Standing Order—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member—

Ms. Haynes: Standing Order 48(1), relevance to the debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Overruled.
Hon. T. Deyalsingh: I am responding to Naparima.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Overruled. No need to comment, overruled.

Hon. T. Deyalsingh: I am responding to Naparima who said we should give citizenship to 80,000 Venezuelans. Right? But who it is took Venezuelans and put them in UNC shirts? [Desk thumping] Think about that, it was not the PNM.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I continue to be amazed by how the UNC must feel that for them to succeed Trinidad and Tobago must fail. They continually seek to damage our diplomatic relations with everybody, from Jamaica to China to everybody. This is not a zero-sum game. This is not a scorched-earth policy where for the UNC to look good, Trinidad and Tobago must fail. The Vienna Convention is clear, it is not to be used when we want at our discretion. Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lot has been said about COVID and a lot has been said about linking COVID and the Minister of National Security and its exemption policy to COVID. Just to recap, because when I start to reply they are going to come with 48(1), every single Member across there linked the Minister of National Security’s—and it is not his, I am a part of it and I stand with the Minister of National Security on the border policy, every one set.

The Member for Siparia spoke about borders; Naparima said, “We need a policy for repatriation”; Barataria/San Juan, “Discontinue the ad hoc exemption policy”. “Look out for our nationals. Focus on the care and protection and security of citizens and make sure we are open to nationals.” Mr. Deputy Speaker, in managing a pandemic and how we have managed, I want to draw a parallel to show you the absolute hypocrisy of the UNC in managing a pandemic. I have a Cabinet Minute of October 2014, and who was the Prime Minister then?

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Standing Order 44(8), this is not a substantive Motion on the Cabinet management, it is the Minister of National Security.

UNREVISED
Hon. T. Deyalsingh: I am responding. [Crosstalk]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Please, I will rule. Overruled. Proceed.

Hon. T. Deyalsingh: Thank you. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I predicted 48(1). I am responding—let me say it again—to Naparima, policy for repatriation; Siparia about borders; Barataria/San Juan about discontinuing the ad hoc exemption policy, “Look out for nationals, care about protection and security of citizens and to open to nationals”. I am responding to you.

When the UNC was faced with Ebola in 2014, a Cabinet Minute will show—

Mr. Lee: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 48(1), Ebola is not part of this debate. Come on.

Hon. T. Deyalsingh: I am drawing a parallel.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Overruled.

Hon. T. Deyalsingh: Thank you. [Crosstalk]

All visitors from Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo to be prohibited entry to Trinidad and Tobago.

Then it goes on:

Citizens of Trinidad and Tobago who travelled to those countries will have to be quarantined for 21 days.

How is that different to what we are doing now and we have 350,000 persons? Where are we going to quarantine them without an exemption policy? But this was your policy back then. If it was good then, it is good now. So I will leave that point alone, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I will leave that point alone because we are managing an exemption policy where 100 million people around the world have contracted COVID and 2 million people have died. You were managing Ebola with 28,000 cases and 11,000 deaths, but you were going to quarantine people, you were going to close borders; this is the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar as chairman of the
Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of National Security who is my colleague and friend has not only the full confidence of the Cabinet but my personal confidence because I have seen a man at work taking the slings and arrows of the UNC. They mentioned “recusals” 53 times. You know, this country should be celebrating the fact that a Minister acts ethically and responsibly by recusing himself. [Desk thumping] It leaves one to wonder what used to go on in the Cabinet of the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar. And they will make it sound as if where his brother works gets all these contracts. The Minister of National Security has said that company has gotten less than three per cent of the work that they have tendered for. It is honourable to recuse oneself when there is a conflict. It is honourable. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we live in an age now where truth and facts no longer matter. That is the age we live in now, where there are no repercussions for telling untruths—there are no repercussions for telling untruths. That is the type of atmosphere that pervades the global space now and it is sad. It is sad.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, serious crime is down, thank you, Minister of National Security. Thank you. Murder is down, thank you, Minister of National Security. Thank you. The people of St. Joseph, when we look at crime statistics, serious crime is down in St. Joseph, thank you, Minister of National Security. We see a heightened police presence on the roads, thank you. I think even vehicular traffic fatalities is down because we are patrolling the roads again, thank you, Minister of National Security. Thank you. [Desk thumping] So this Minister of National Security has been working even though the UNC’s personal attacks on him. You remember when it was popular in this Parliament until an editorial in the papers had to tell the UNC to stop it. It was common to pin everything on Minister Stuart
Young because of his stepdaughter.

That was the UNC’s mantra in those days, make it personal. It took a newspaper editorial to say, “enough is enough”. So the personal attacks against Minister Young, whether he recuses himself, personal attacks about his family, his integrity, will not work because we stand with him. We stand with our colleague. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the few minutes I have left I want to come back to this whole issue about managing the borders because our colleagues say, “Open the borders. Okay, to citizens”. Let me tell you what is happening in Australia. Australia—and I am quoting from a BBC article now:

“The cap on people entering was cut further last week...”

Imagine that:

“The Australian government has operated a number of repatriation flights but demand has been high.”

Australia, but it goes on, it gets worse than that. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we talk about families, yes, families are separated, we appreciate that. In Australia the State of Victoria said:

On Monday it will again allow entry to Sydney residents outside of designated hotspots. While the measures have been praised many have also criticized them for separating families.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are in the middle of a global pandemic where Trinidad and Tobago’s performance has been stellar, where other countries are looking to us for leadership, where we have been recognized by all global authorities as one of the best places to be in this pandemic.

And the last point I want to make before I close, in supporting my colleague, in supporting my friend is this. Barataria/San Juan said, “Care and protection,
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Hon. T. Deyalsingh (cont’d)

health and safety”, so I am responding to him squarely now. Trinidad and Tobago has 135 deaths due to COVID; that is 135 too much in a population of 1.4 million. If Minister Young was not the man that he was, was not the man that he is, and left the borders open willy-nilly like other countries, like the United States where you have 331 million people with 414,000 deaths—you know what is the current daily death toll in the United States?—4,000. And as I close, 4,000, prorate that down to Trinidad and tell me, Trinidad and Tobago, if you are prepared to accept that we should be like the United States with 4,000 deaths a day, prorate it down to our population, that converts to 17 deaths per day. Are you going to be satisfied with 17 citizens of Trinidad and Tobago dying on a daily basis?

I am not prepared to accept that. That means 510 people will die a month. It means for the year, 6,120 persons will die. Those are the stark figures, but be like the United States, be like Canada; 4,000 deaths per day, bring it down to our population, that is 17 a day. Would the UNC accept that? Would you be comfortable with 17 citizens dying per day, 510 per month and 6,120 per year? We on this side say, no. We on this side stand with the Minister of National Security, we condemn this Motion as being frivolous, vexatious, [Desk thumping] without a backbone and without merit, and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you. [Desk thumping]

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

2.20 p.m.

Ms. Anita Haynes (Tabaquite): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for recognizing me and giving me the opportunity to contribute to this very important Motion, as we on this side express no confidence in the Minister of National Security.

I can only describe the contribution by the Minister of Health as dazed and
Minister of National Security (cont’d)
Ms. Haynes (cont’d)

confused, all over the place. [Desk thumping] I listened as the Minister of Health attempted to throw one of his colleagues under the bus by saying he is not a Cabinet colleague so therefore his opinion does not matter. [Desk thumping] Imagine that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In an attempt to justify and to defend the indefensible, you want to tell us that your colleague’s opinion does not matter because he does not sit in the Cabinet with you, and therefore, irrelevant. Imagine that. So what does that leave for the rest of us? What does that leave for the rest of us? Perhaps I will just use the opportunity, yes, to remind the Minister of Health that he was speaking to the General Secretary of the party, of his party. [Desk thumping] So perhaps he should prepare to leave that chat, because in the same manner—in the same manner that you would want to disrespect a person who sits on your side of the Bench from holding a contrary opinion, that is the kind of arrogance we are condemning here today in the person of the Minister of National Security. [Desk thumping] [Interruption] As I continue—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Please, please, Members, I am trying to hear the Member.

Ms. A. Haynes: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So far, we have had on that side speaking, the Minister of National Security, the Attorney General, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Health and one other I cannot recall, speaking to defend the Minister of National Security, and not one person—not one person gave us why they thought he was competent. The entire defence was he is incompetent, but. He is no good, but. So the Minister of National Security, he is not doing a good job, but Jack Warner. He is not doing a good job, but the UNC. He is not doing a good job, but Siparia. Imagine you have all of these senior officials, all of these senior debaters coming here, some of them 20 years in the Parliament, and
not one person could find one good thing to speak about their Cabinet colleague? 

[Desk thumping] Not one?

The Prime Minister spoke, and 19 of the minutes in that contribution were about this side—not one good thing. He expressed full confidence in the Minister of National Security, and could not tell us why—could not tell us why. He could tell us everything else, but could not tell us why he could not express full confidence in the Minister of National Security.

But I will explain to the population, because everybody on that side, then and in the future, will get up to say why this Motion has no merit, and that is the level of disrespect they hold for this Parliament. Because this Motion—the point of this Motion is a clinical evaluation of the job performance of a Minister of National Security—and this is a job, never forget that. You are employed, you are meant to work for the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. It is the duty of this House, because the Cabinet seems unwilling, unable to evaluate your performance based on statistics, but we will do it here, and we will do it in the full view of the public, because it is your job.

Imagine today in your performance evaluation, the Minister of National Security will get up unprepared—and I will tell you how I know he was not prepared for his own debate today, because in my preparation I looked at his contribution, his first contribution as Minister of National Security in an appropriations debate, because in your first one is where you make all your promises. I looked at his second contribution. By the time the Minister of National Security started today, on the second round of his defence, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he was reading verbatim his contribution from October 2019? Verbatim.

He was reading out what he thought was his achievements in 2019, so that
means 2020 he was relaxing. Because if everything you wanted to say you did between 2018 and October 2019, you came back here today to read it verbatim, it means 2020, you did not do anything. One, we have to assume he was probably campaigning, but at the end of the day in a critical Motion where we are examining—and my colleagues here will do it point by point, a clinical, precise evaluation on whether or not you are competent and you have delivered on your duties as a Minister of National Security. The defence is weak and feeble, like the performance of the Minister himself. [*Desk thumping*]

There is a job description. There must be deliverables. There is an evaluation. There must be set targets. Anybody on that side could have gotten up and said, “Listen, in the realm of border protection, the Minister did this and we saw this effect”. They could have said that. Now, imagine, I have to come here today, to explain to an Attorney General no less, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the difference between an advertisement and an editorial. Because the Attorney General started to tell us about whether or not we saw certain things in the *Trinidad and Tobago Guardian* and—look, let us be serious here. An advertisement makes it into the papers because somebody wants to give us some information, so they put out an ad. That is very different from an editorial. We should not have to explain that in Parliament. You ought to know that before you get inside here. [*Desk thumping*]

Anyway, the Minister of Health, piggybacking on the statistics given by the Attorney General, going off of one small point made by the Minister of National Security, started to say, but look at 2020, that is the reason we have confidence. That is the reason they have confidence in the Minister of National Security, because look how well he did in 2020. Because apparently none of the rest of us
live here. None of the rest of us understood what happened in 2020.

Imagine being so boldfaced you think you could mamaguy an entire population about what happened with crime statistics in 2020, but we do have data. We have data. Minister Young sat as Minister of National Security, by his own admission, from August 06, 2018. There were numbers from 2018 until the end, but you know what, there is an entire year—2019. Mr. Deputy Speaker, 2019 stands as a matter on the public record as the second bloodiest year this country has ever faced. Nobody wants to talk about 2019, because it did not fit their convenient narrative.

Imagine that you could have an Attorney General come here and tell the population of Trinidad and Tobago, look how well the Minister did based on 2020. If you want to judge the Minister on 2020, you have to judge things that my colleagues would have spoken about: the exemptions, Delcy Rodriguez. Those were the things we were talking about in 2020. In 2019, we were talking about the murder rate. It just shows you why this Motion is absolutely necessary and has all the credit, because the Minister is a complete and all-round failure, and has been since 2018. [Desk thumping]

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when our side caucused for this debate, I was given the task of dealing with crime statistics, and I knew what they were coming with. But I honestly did not believe that they would be so boldfaced to come here and say let us pat ourselves on the back for 2020.

You know, the Prime Minister, when he was newly minted as Prime Minister in 2015, sat in a Conversations with the Prime Minister, having these informal conversations, touching base with the public, said to the people of Trinidad and Tobago that the yardstick we will use, the measurement we will use
would be how you feel. Do you as a citizen feel safe? And only when the answer to that question is yes, that they would say they could measure success.

Today in 2021, now we are being told how you feel absolutely does not matter. It is how the Minister of National Security feels, it is how the Prime Minister feels, and how they feel determines how this country is going. And that is what we have to put up with as citizens? We as citizens must say—no longer are we allowed to evaluate whether Ministers are working for us, but that Minister of Health could come here and thank the Minister of National Security for everything under the sun. The sun was not too hot today, thank you Minister of National Security. We make it to Parliament today, thank you Minister. Come on man, this is a serious debate. Somebody across there could have prepared to defend the record of their Cabinet colleague and not come here with a set of ole talk. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I still have to deal with one other thing from the contribution of the Minister of National Security, because it struck me, and it ought to strike the nation as very odd. In attempting to discredit one of our nationals who they are saying is crying all over on Facebook and the papers about not being allowed back into their home country, the Minister of National Security today in this debate, as a matter of public record said, when he looked for the application—when he looked for the application of the 74-year-old woman there was none on the system. Then he goes on to say something very curious, “But I granted the exemption anyway”; and that is precisely why we have this Motion here today. It is that arbitrariness, that you could not find an application and “grant an exemption”. What? [Desk thumping]

That you could stand up in the House of Representatives, in the full view of
the public, and admit that you are the only person in total control of this system. So exemptions are being granted at the snap of a finger. If you can stand here and say that, imagine what you would be hiding. If you could stand here and say that, and tell us that is okay, imagine the things you are trying to hide from us. [Interruption] Correct, no wonder they have Members leaving the chat.

More of you need to stand up and leave the chat, because I cannot believe—I cannot believe, [Desk thumping] the vast majority of my colleagues on the other side are really honestly standing with that position, because the position cannot be defended. It cannot be defended. You know, and that probably answered my earlier question, which is why we could have six speakers, and not one person could tell us why. Why keep this Minister of National Security, including the Prime Minister, because the Prime Minister expressed his confidence but did not tell us why he is standing resolutely next to somebody who has failed so comprehensively in every remit he has gotten.

Now, they are looking at the homicide crime statistics, and the Minister of National Security said—again, very interesting use of statistics here—that we had the safest Carnival in 2019. That was his defence for himself. But then in the same breath would not tell us that 2019 was one of the deadliest years in the history of our country. I mean, disingenuous, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You know, it was the Attorney General who stood up to speak. He opened his debate on statistics. I would really respectfully like to suggest that the Attorney General stick to the things that he knows, because it is probably not statistics. I am not sure what it is, but it is not statistics.

But, you know, the Attorney General came here to give us the importance of crime statistics. I want to say, if the Minister of National Security, if any of them
on that side were interested in doing a good job, interested truly in the service of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, they would be using these numbers differently, you know. Because crime statistics, the statistics across the bodies that the Ministry of National Security, that the Minister is responsible for, all of these statistics he is supposed to, not just come here and tell us, you know. That is not the job. That is not his job. His job is not a reporting function to come and just tell us, read out things, but it is to utilize these statistics into effective and efficient policymaking for the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

So the question you have to ask yourself: Is it they are only using the statistics to gallery. That means the Minister does not understand his basic function as the head of a Ministry.

I do not know how many of you recall, but early, early on in the Minister’s tenure we had a lot of gun talk and gallery on Facebook, an immense amount. Again, I told you, I looked through the contribution, the very first contribution that this Minister made as Minister of National Security in the Senate, a Senate I was a part of at that time. The whole first part was what he was seeing on Facebook and different aspects of “who dey coming for on Facebook, who misleading de public”. Again, this is where we are saying, if you started as a Minister, any of them, but in this case the Minister of National Security, you took a look at your portfolio, and you said these are the things I have to accomplish. You say to the public, I have to accomplish these things, this is my set timeline and target, and when I deliver this to you, I will say then I have succeeded.

Not for you to come here and tell me, 2020 was safe and we are not talking about that. When you can come to a Motion of no confidence, and if you want to express confidence in your colleague, you can say to us, but look, over the X
The number of years I have been in charge here, I have managed to do this, that or the other, maybe we could have had a debate, but we do not have that today.

What we have is Minister after Minister, MP after MP being asked to come here, wear red—apparently the Minister of Finance did not get the memo, unfortunate for him; very unfortunate that they would leave him out like that. But you come here dressed for the occasion, but not appropriately prepared for the occasion. “So yuh dress up, but yuh cyah debate. Imagine, yuh dress up for a debate and have nuttin important to say.”

But as I close in my contribution here today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the time runs out on me, I want to say that had you, had anybody on that side taken up the mantle to take the debate seriously, you had an opportunity, an opportunity to report to the public, to the people of Trinidad and Tobago on the work that you are doing. You did not do that. I can only assume, it is my opinion that you were incapable of doing that, because you were not doing any work, so you have nothing to report on.

So, therefore, the population will stand right now with the United National Congress to express zero confidence in the Minister of National Security. [Desk thumping] And to the Prime Minister, who asked: When will the Motion come of no confidence in the Government? It is coming. Be careful what you wish for, because we have no confidence in the Government either. [Desk thumping]

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say to those on the other side who have yet to speak—

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

Ms. A. Haynes: Thank you. I will say to those on the other side who have yet to speak, the population is listening intently. They are looking at you. This is a
Minister of National Security (cont’d)
Ms. Haynes (cont’d)

performance evaluation on your colleague. Those that have spoken before have failed him. One of you find something good to say, because they are listening, they are paying attention. Find something to say, that you express confidence, other than ole talk about the UNC because that is not good enough in 2021. Thank you very much.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I recognize the Member for Tobago West.

The Minister of Sport and Community Development (Hon. Shamfa Cudjoe):
Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am thankful for the opportunity to contribute to this Motion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was really excited to show up here today, and I was looking forward to what the Opposition was going to bring. So I kept checking the papers. I was out of the country in the month of December, so I said it must have been something I would have missed. So I came and I kept looking for what is it they are about to say. What is the Opposition about to say? Do you have a bomb to drop? I must say I am very, very, very disappointed. [Desk thumping] As I sat here and I listened to the Member for Siparia, I am very, very disappointed.

I want to respond to what the last Member would have spoken about, because her position when she started her contribution was incorrect and she tried to twist the facts. We all as Members of Cabinet, as Members of this Government, you may have different opinions, but then you caucus, you get the necessary advice and so on and then we agree on what we do in going forward.

So to say Member Foster Cummings having a different opinion and we did not value his opinion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this whole COVID situation is new to all of us, all over the world, and different people have different opinions.

For instance, I felt that because I live alone, when I return on a flight I could
stay home and quarantine for the whole 14 days. I felt like I could do that, but one thing that I respect about this Government is that we continue to be advised by the technical gurus, the people in the health department, the CMO and so on, [Desk thumping] and it is not based on what we want to do personally. It is not a political decision, and that is why we have been doing better than other countries because we do what we have to do based on the scientific direction of those who know better than we do.

So yes, I live alone. I want to quarantine at home for 14 days by myself, but that is not the directive, that is not the advice of those who know better than we do, and we will abide by that, despite what any Member inside or out. If we took advice from them, the bars would be open, the borders would be open, all that kind of nonsense. But we are taking advice and instruction and direction from the CMO and his team, and those who know best. Anyone among us who has a different opinion, you can have a different opinion, but what the CMO says and what we are directed to do by those who know better than we do, that is what we do as a government, and that is what it is to be responsible. [Desk thumping]

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must say I am pleased to stand here to support MP Stuart Young, the MP for Port of Spain North. The Member for Siparia could not convince herself. She could not convince her followers, and could not convince anybody in this Parliament that he was inadequate or unfit for the job. As a matter of fact, I think that this Motion today is a fraud. This Motion is a sham. This Motion is an SOS. It is a cry for attention and relevance of those opposite. The only inadequacy that was shown up today is that of the Member for Siparia and all her followers. This is an embarrassment.

I never believed I would stand in this Parliament any day and miss Ramona
Ramdial. The experienced people in the UNC are looking on with shame. [Desk thumping] Because this is not about MP Stuart Young’s performance of his duties, him honouring his Oath. This is about them scoring cheap political points for political expediency.

I have had the opportunity of working with MP Young from since the days of Opposition. He was a temporary Senator, and I remember looking forward to the days that he would be there, because he was always well researched, always very passionate. And though he came from a business and the legal fraternity, he was always about putting the country first and he connected so well with the common man. So he is somebody that I look up to, and I think he is a distinguished son of the soil that is most suited for this position. [Desk thumping]

I am pleased to serve in a Cabinet alongside him. He is pragmatic, he is reasonable; he looks out for the younger Members of the Cabinet and of the Government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I am impressed by the work he is doing in St. Ann’s West/Port of Spain North, the work in his constituency. The work that he is doing giving tablets and laptops to his constituents, and working with the schools and the young people; partnering with the private sector like Digicel to provide technical opportunities and so on to the community. Homework centres, you name it. And he does so while being an outstanding and very helpful, very resourceful Member of our Cabinet, as Chairman of the F&GP Committee, member of the National Security Council, and member of several joint select committees. He has made stellar contributions, and he has always chosen the best interests of the people of Trinidad and Tobago over the party and over his personal interest, Mr. Deputy Speaker.
I looked as to why would the Opposition bring a Motion of no confidence, because this is a very serious Motion. When you lose confidence in a Minister or in a government, that means you want them to go, but you have to have sound reason. I tried to look at the yardstick as to what is it that the Opposition is looking for, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

That being said, the role of the Minister of National Security is a very important one, and he must be able to strike a good balance, and be able to properly protect the citizens of this country over anything else. So as I looked for the yardstick, what could the UNC be looking for? What could the former Prime Minister and former head of the National Security Council be looking for?

I said to myself—I went back to her term of office to look for the yardstick. What is it that she is expecting from this Government, from this Member of Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s East? I wonder: Is this the same former head of the National Security Council and former Prime Minister who should know better, that had five different Ministers of National Security? The same former head of the National Security Council that denied Tobago fire station in Shirvan, no police station in Shirvan, police station in Roxborough, fire station in Roxborough also. Those items were delivered by the hon. Stuart Young in his capacity as Minister of National Security.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, is this the same former head of national security that utilized $6 million of taxpayers’ dollars to move a fire truck? Is this the same former member of the National Security Council where Mr. Jack Ewatski and Dwayne Gibbs left with $2.4 million ex gratia payment, and told that former government that it was not ready, it was not serious? Is this the same former head of the National Security Council that dismissed and sent home the experienced and
qualified members of the SSA to promote a telephone operator to being Director of the SSA? Is this the yardstick that we are being measured by, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

I could remember the same former head of the National Security Council would have sat as head of government, head of the National Security Council where the Minister of National Security of that day, Mr. Jack Warner, would have banned the circulation or the publication of national security details and information from the population. That is the same head of the National Security Council and former Prime Minister under her watch that gave us an SoE and locked up over 100 young men, and then had to let go every single one of them.

This is the same Opposition that failed to support Government’s legislation and efforts that were geared to safeguard our people, the same Opposition that circulates untruths and then they ask the questions after. I have been a recent victim. I came home to all this blitz and drama in the newspaper ran by the Opposition about me getting the okay to travel. I applied, got my necessary approval, went there, came back, did my 14 days quarantine, but yet you have an Opposition Senator on social media, egging on Ian Alleyne, and egging on the rest of them, stating that I am out and about and should be in quarantine. They know very well that it is not true because it is the same UNC, the same Members opposite who the day after I returned said that I was given special treatment and allowed to come off the aircraft first.

2.50 p.m.

Well, of course, if you are sitting in row one and we are exiting the airplane one by one, I would get off the aircraft first. [Desk thumping] So this is their big “mark to buss”, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I travelled on the same flight on December 16th with the MP for Cumuto/Manzanilla Mr. Rai Ragbir, and no
questions about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

As a matter of fact, let me share with you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I got off the plane because when I travel, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not utilize protocol if I am going on my personal business. When I got off the plane, protocol in the USA was waiting for a Member of the Opposition, Mr. Rai Ragbir. So due to his request I got special treatment, based on Mr. Rai Ragbir who went on personal business also, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And they forgot to mention that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I would not stay any longer on that point.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our business as a Government is to protect our nationals especially amidst this whole COVID-19 situation. Their plan as an Opposition team when they were planning to get back in government or hoping to get back in government, their biggest hit for national security policy was to give us a dome, to put Trinidad under a dome to protect them from COVID.

Mr. Lee: Mr. Deputy Speaker—

Hon. S. Cudjoe: That was their national security policy.

Mr. Lee:—48(1).

Hon. S. Cudjoe: That cannot be the yardstick that my dear colleague is being assessed on.

Mr. Lee: I tried to get the relevance for a little while now, it is very difficult, very difficult.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the point, excuse, on the point that was now made?

Mr. Lee: Well, yes. This point has nothing to do with the Minister of National Security.

Hon. S. Cudjoe: That was your national security policy. That was your national security policy.

Hon. S. Cudjoe: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is an Opposition, Members opposite who told us, who cancelled the OPVs under their watch, Mr. Deputy Speaker, telling us that the land, that this country is not at war out in the seas. The war is on land in the streets so therefore, they cancelled the OPVs, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And to make matters worse, I heard the Member for Princes Town when he spoke about they ordered the Damen vessels during their watch from 2010 to 2015. Mr. Deputy Speaker, they secured those vessels after their time was up because election was due in May and those vessels were secured in June. So from 2010 to 2015 our borders were naked and did not have those Damen vessels that they boast about that they ordered during their time. It was one month after their time was up and three months before election, and they procured that vessel or those vessels without having any type of arrangement for financing.

It was our Government that had to come in, in place [Desk thumping] and pay for those vessels, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it is the procurement of those vessels, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that have them now in trouble because the Dutch law enforcement authorities are undertaking a criminal investigation and [Desk thumping] a forensic probe for those opposite, the People’s Partnership or should I say the UNC for their acquisition of the Damen vessels, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I am pleased that this Government had seen it fit to place priority on providing infrastructure and proper equipment for the coast guard. So we have reached out to the Australian Government, and we are having built two Cape-class vessels, patrol boats for the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard. And this is a case where experts from the coast guard had the opportunity to go out to Australia for
one week and look at what was being done, ensured that it was up to standard and to ensure that it was fit for our seas, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

They will tell us that the former head of the National Security Council and former Prime Minister, the mover of this Motion, went to China and got a vessel. It was a case of whim where she said, “Oh, I want one”. There was no coast guard expert there to say, this is fit for us or not fit for us. For all you know it was a fishing boat, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And now this country, this Minister of National Security, Mr. Stuart Young, the MP Stuart Young has now done the work to get us the type of vessels that we so deserve.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we the people of Tobago we say a special thanks to the MP Stuart Young for giving us that security and that assurance that we are going to have vessels protecting Tobago, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am thankful for the work that he has done, working along with the Prime Minister and going above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that we have two first-class vessels being ordered from Incat and from Austal to service the Trinidad and—to service between Trinidad and Tobago for sea transportation. [Desk thumping]

We were pleased just last week when the A.P.T. James came sailing into Tobago. We remember the confusion and how much they made so much fun and they were excited when things were going wrong, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But today because of our hon. Stuart Young, MP Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West, we are in a different position and the people of Tobago are well pleased.

We are also very well pleased for the work that he has done in giving us for the first time our Child Protection Unit in the police. And that unit helps to treat matters relating to children in a very special way, ensuring that it gets—ensuring that those issues get the proper priority and the handling that is needed for children.
and to engage—and they engage stakeholders. They go out to the schools throughout Tobago, they speak to the parents and the PTA, they help principals and the different safety officers. We thank hon. Stuart Young for the work that he has done and continues to do. We thank hon. Stuart Young for working with our Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister to ensure that we have the Children’s Authority unit here in Tobago for the very first time, and for working with the Attorney General we thank MP Stuart Young for bringing us the Family Court to Tobago [Desk thumping] and the list goes on and on and on.

In my capacity as the Minister of Sport and Community Development we have the mediation unit, and it is now working with the Ministry of National Security in utilizing mediation to help with crime in the communities. And our project, our project here in Trinidad and Tobago that was pioneered by MP Stuart Young is the project that is being used as the template for the entire Caribbean region.

Last year we had a training session and a seminar to educate the rest of the Ministries and the Governments throughout the Caribbean. That is the work, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of my colleague with whom I am very well pleased, hon. Stuart Young. So as we await the Buccoo Reef which will make its way into Tobago—

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

**Hon. S. Cudjoe:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to say thank you on behalf of the people of Tobago and the people of Trinidad and Tobago. MP Stuart Young, Member of Parliament for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West has come to lead national security at a time when we are grappling with crime, the whole Venezuelan situation. But the international community gave him and gave our Government recognition for how we would have handled the Venezuelan situation.
And it is the same way the international community had ranked us as number one for how we are handling the COVID situation. Sometimes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we try to strike that good balance in serving all the people and protecting the people that we took the oath to serve, you make friends and you lose some, but at the end of the day we are doing what is in the best interest for the people of this nation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I want to thank hon. Stuart Young [Desk thumping] for his courage, for his confidence for standing in the gap for the people of Trinidad and Tobago and doing what he is supposed to do. And if you do not thank us now, you are going to thank us later. But I am thankful for the work that he is doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we look forward to many, many, many more years of your intelligent and inspiring leadership and we are happy to stand here [Desk thumping] with you and for you. I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I recognize the Member for St. Augustine. [Desk thumping]

Ms. Khadijah Ameen (St. Augustine): Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no doubt that the Minister of National Security has unequivocally demonstrated his inability to competently execute his duties. For this reason I rise in support of this Motion for this House to express its lack of confidence in the Minister of National Security, a Motion brought by the Leader of the Opposition and hon. Member for Siparia.

I stand in support of the contribution made by my previous colleagues. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the duty of the Opposition to shed light on issues and stand up for citizens. We are the voice of citizens in the Parliament [Desk thumping] and I want to put on record that any government, any government who tries in any way to silence the Opposition borders on being a dictator. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Members on the other side who spoke are clearly so disconnected from what the reality in Trinidad and Tobago is, [Desk thumping]
from what the sentiments of the public is.

[MADAM SPEAKER in the Chair]

I am amazed to see or to hear the speaker before me, a representative of the people of Tobago, speaking with confidence after getting so much licks in the Tobago elections. [Desk thumping] The fact that the PNM lost so many seats in Tobago is a reflection of people’s lack of confidence in this Government.

Mr. Al-Rawi: I rise on Standing Order 48(1). I do not know what the THA election has to do with the Ministry of National Security.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Member, I will give you a little leeway as your introduction, but please get to the debate.

Ms. K. Ameen: Thank you. Madam Speaker, my point is that the votes against the PNM in Tobago, the votes against the PNM in Arima, the votes against the PNM in the by-elections reflect a lack of confidence of the people of this country.

Madam Speaker: Okay. So, Member, I think you have made the point and therefore if you could please move on.

Ms. K. Ameen: This Government cannot turn a blind eye to the citizens’ lack of confidence in them anymore. I just want to put on record—

Madam Speaker: So remember I said, we are not going on about elections and the lack—

Ms. K. Ameen: Correct.

Madam Speaker:—of confidence in the Government. We are dealing with the Minister of National Security. Yes?

Ms. K. Ameen: That is it. Yes, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I also want to warn Members opposite, do not try to create divisions on this side of the House. “Study what going on in allyuh WhatsApp chat right now”. The Member of
Ms. Ameen: Parliament, the former Member of Parliament for Couva North, her proper name is Ramona Ramdial and she served her constituents with distinction and we recognize her service. Please, pronounce her name correctly. [Desk thumping] I move on.

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Madam Speaker, [Interruption]  

**Madam Speaker:** But, Member for San Fernando West, even though I was not sitting here, I did hear a former speaker speak about the Member for Couva North, so I allow the Member for St. Augustine. [Desk thumping]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. A third matter that was raised by the speaker before me that I want to clarify. From the very first speaker in this debate, the Opposition is very clear. We have no issue with which government Minister, which Opposition Member, which financier or friend of the Government gets an exemption, our issue is the discrimination of citizens who have applied and are still stranded and we are calling for equality in the approval system [Desk thumping] for returning nationals of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Speaker, I just want to strongly endorse the point made by the Member for Tabaquite who in observing that the Members on the other side are yet to indicate what the performance of the Minister of National Security is that warrants them to defend him in this Motion of no confidence.

Another area, Madam Speaker, that I—sorry. Several of my colleagues because of the shortened speaking time have selected various areas that fall under the national security portfolio, and so far Members of the Opposition have clearly illustrated the failures, the incompetence and the all-round lack of performance by the Minister of National Security in every single sphere identified. [Desk thumping]

I want to use my shortened time, Madam Speaker, to share one of the areas
of national security that has an impact on lives in a time of disaster, that is disaster management and the ODPM. Disaster management, disaster response and the protection of our citizens in a time of disaster.

Madam Speaker, there are responsibilities and steps that are employed to mitigate disasters, to respond and to protect our citizens that this Minister either refuses to take action out of spite or it is just sheer incompetence. Some of these include setting up emergency shelters, preparing evacuation plans, training and equipping community emergency response teams, setting up hotlines for emergency response, enabling the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management with proper funding, qualified personnel and—

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Madam Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 48(1). The gazetted responsibilities of the Minister of National Security do not include the ODPM.

**Madam Speaker:** Well, Member for San Fernando West, I believe the—if the Member is referring to the Gazette of 9th September, 2020, I am almost certain the ODPM is there.

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** No, Madam Speaker, that is rural development. The aspect I am speaking about falls under the different Ministry, as the Member has just laid it.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do not need to respond. I think you clearly indicated that ODPM is included in the Gazette. Madam Speaker, there is in fact a part of the responsibility in disaster response that falls on the regional corporations but the ODPM itself and the coordination of the protective services in a time of disaster falls squarely under the Ministry and the Minister of National Security, and it is an area that the Minister has failed miserably in. [*Desk thumping*]

These responsibilities also include, Madam Speaker, assessing the
possibility of permanent relocation of residents. When you see massive landslides, when you see matters that jeopardize lives, all these assessments are the responsibility of the ODPM to recommend this type of permanent relocations. And what you have in 2020 in the financial statements, we observed that there was revised allocation from 13 million to 5 million for this body. And what happens now is that the responsibilities of disaster management and planning for disaster response is being thrown on the regional corporations when it comes to these matters.

So the failure of the Minister is now actually having an impact on the regional corporations who are not given the funding, who are not given the resources and are now expected to magically find a way to deal with these issues. And I just want to point out to some examples that are seared into minds, our memories, those of us who lived through the flooding of 2018, for example. That, Madam Speaker, was a national disaster.

In the Senate at the time, I was a Member of the Senate and the Opposition walked out of the Parliament during the budget debate. You know why?—because we felt and we pleaded with the Government to allow three days for all Government Ministers, all Members of Parliament—

Madam Speaker: So, Member, in terms of 48(1)—

Ms. K. Ameen: Yes.

Madam Speaker:—while I allowed you to deal with ODPM in so far as it comes under the Ministry of National Security, I am not going to allow you to deal flooding and all that sort of thing. You have to tie whatever you want to say about the ODPM within the province of the Ministry of National Security and the responsibilities of the Minister. If not, I am going to stop you on Standing Order

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Ms. Ameen: Thank you, Madam Speaker, that is in fact my intention. And, Madam Speaker, I indicated about the Opposition walk out but the Opposition at that time also called on the Minister of National Security and called on the Government to activate the protective services, to activate the—well at that time we had the national—we had the NOC which would usually work alongside the other agencies in a time of disaster, and that was actually dismantled by this Government. The Opposition having to call on the Minister to utilize the protective services during this particular flood, Madam Speaker, in 2010 when the entire country was—

Mr. Al-Rawi: Madam Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 48(1). 2010?

Ms. K. Ameen: This is 2018.

Madam Speaker: Member, you said 2010.

Ms. K. Ameen: Sorry.

Madam Speaker: And just now. Okay? Remember we are talking about a no confidence Motion today, so be careful with what you say. I uphold the objection raised by the Attorney General.

Ms. K. Ameen: Thank you. It was a slip of the tongue. But we all know I am speaking of the flood of 2018 and the failure of the Government, the failure of the Minister of National Security to utilize the protective services to protect the citizens during a time of disaster. Another failure by the Minister of National Security. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, I just want to mention another instance where we saw the failure of the Minister to act in this disaster management capacity impacting on the regional corporations. Sometime ago the Piparo mud volcano was getting active.
The Member of Parliament for Princes Town who represents the constituents in the surrounding area, MP Barry Padarath, for weeks calling—publicly called on the Minister to initiate the measures in that area to protect citizens in the event of an eruption. And it was only after two weeks of these calls, these public calls, an embarrassment to the Minister, that those systems were activated. But then they very quickly threw everything back on the regional corporations. And I am saying, this is another example of the failure of the Minister of National Security that is having a negative impact on the regional corporations that do not have the capacity to do the job that you are failing to do.

Madam Speaker, I very quickly want to mention a special instance. Other Members would have spoken of the migrant situation, the influx of Venezuelans to Trinidad and Tobago and the porous borders. What I want to introduce, Madam Speaker, is for us to think about what happens in communities where these illegal immigrants settle and operate.

The Minister’s inability to prevent these illegal entries are causing a strain on the local services in this area or in these areas. So, for example, our local health centres, because the Government does not have a system to acknowledge these immigrants as asylum seekers, many of them cannot access food and in particular education for their children. This is a human rights issue and I do not intend to delve into it—

Mr. Deyalsingh: I stand on Standing Orders 48(1) and 55(1)(b) because the Member for Naparima already addressed that and Siparia. Yes, and Princes Town.

Ms. K. Ameen: As I was saying—

Madam Speaker: Okay. So, Member, in terms of—I understood the point that you are trying to say, that there are other consequences. Okay?
Ms. K. Ameen: Yeah.

Madam Speaker: But I am not going let you go into any detail with respect to education, health, anything like that. Okay?

Ms. K. Ameen: Madam—

Madam Speaker: So you have made—

Ms. K. Ameen: Thank you.

Madam Speaker: We are not having a conversation, please.

Ms. K. Ameen: Thank you.

Madam Speaker: So you have made the point that there are some sort of other effects and therefore I am going to limit you to that. We are not going into the other things. Proceed.

Ms. K. Ameen: Madam Speaker, that was end of my indication on that matter. It was simple to say that and not to go into the issues. And I ask the Minister of Health to stay calm a little bit and stop deliberately trying—I feel you are deliberately trying to deprive me of my short, few speaking minutes left. Madam Speaker, so one has—

Mr. Deyalsingh: If you ruled on 48(1) and 55(1)(b)—

Ms. K. Ameen: Oh man, sit down. What happen?

Mr. Deyalsingh:—do not bring me into it.

Madam Speaker: Well, Member. Member, please, kindly have a seat. Let us get on with it. Continue.

Ms. K. Ameen: Yes, Madam Speaker, the strain on the resources, the human rights issue and the impact on communities also have to be taken into consideration. While we talk about the big-ticket items, we very rarely talk about the trickle-down effect it has on communities. So when we talk about human trafficking and prostitution and the spread of STDs, what impact does that have on
the community? When we talk about the narco trade because of the failure of the Government to protect—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Madam Speaker, respectfully and regrettably, Standing Order 48(1). You cannot blame the Minister of National Security for STDs. Gosh!

Madam Speaker: Member for St. Joseph, one minute please. The point, Member for St. Augustine, and I thought that was what you indicated, you accepted that there are trickle-down effects and therefore you have made that point, that is what you have told me and you were moving onto something else. That is what you told me about three, four minutes ago. So please move on.

Sen. K. Ameen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, as I wrap up, Madam Speaker [Desk thumping] I just want, in the two minutes I have left, to underscore the importance of the national security in playing a role in coordinating and sustaining multi-level, multi-stakeholder spaces to promote disaster risk reduction in Trinidad and Tobago for specific hazards that we are prone to [Desk thumping] and to outline the Government’s failure to do so. In many cases comprehensive disaster risk reduction measures are languishing and are not being implemented. The leadership in—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Madam Speaker, Standing Order 44(10), please. Reading, reading, reading.

Madam Speaker: Okay. So as I have cautioned all Members, this is our 13th Sitting and the provisions of Standing Order 44(10) apply. And while some of us might have voluminous notes, I think having regard to even the nature of the debate, this is one where we can really exercise and develop our skills to sort of move away a bit from the heavy reliance on our notes. Continue, Member.

Ms. K. Ameen: Thank you. Madam Speaker, another failure of the Ministry of
National Security where disaster management is concerned is to effectively engage local communities and citizens with disaster risk reduction activities, and to link their concerns with Government’s priorities. The Minister has also failed to strengthen the institutional capacities and to implement practical disaster risk reduction by actions of those bodies responsible for response. The Minister of National Security has also failed to devise and implement innovative tools and techniques for disaster risks reduction which can be replicated elsewhere—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Standing Order 44(10) please. Again, it is a debate, come prepared.

Madam Speaker: Okay. So, Member for St. Augustine, your speaking time is now spent. [Desk thumping]

3.20 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Hon. Member: Yes, man, yes. [Desk thumping]

The Minister of Finance (Hon. Colm Imbert): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I took note of what one of the Members said on the other side. I think it was the Member for Tabaquite, where that Member alleged that we on this side in our contributions were not expressing our support for the Minister of National Security. While that is completely untrue, and every Member who has spoken has indicated full support and confidence for the Minister of National Security, let me indicate my full confidence and support for the Minister of National Security, [Desk thumping] as is the case with every single Member of the Government and the PNM.

Let me deal first with a story that needs to be ventilated properly. There is an article in the Daily Express, January the 19th, 2021. The headline is “Stranded
Mom, 74, takes Stuart to court”. And it speaks to an elderly person that the article indicates was stranded in Canada since last year, who has threatened legal action against National Security Minister Stuart Young. The name of the person is indicated in the article, and that person is one Ms. Radhikar Ramoutar. I have in my possession, Madam Speaker—and let me make it crystal clear, this is not a matter that is before the court. I have in my possession a letter written by a State Counsel in the office of the Chief State Solicitor, dated the 25th of January, 2021, and that letter is written to the attorney for the person involved. And what is relevant about that matter is that in this letter written by the State Counsel in the office of the Chief State Solicitor to the attorney of Ms. Ramoutar, the State Counsel makes this point:

From what you have revealed, your client falls within the priority group of persons who left Trinidad and Tobago to go abroad just before the pandemic struck and the borders were closed.

And this is the most important part of this paragraph:

This is why we asked to be provided with a copy of your client's exemption application, which you implicitly agreed to provide in paragraph seven of your letter dated 18th of January, 2021.

So this letter is being written to the attorney for Ms. Ramoutar one week after, reportedly, the attorney for Ms. Ramoutar agreed to provide a copy of the application for the travel exemption.

We have passed on the email between Geeta Ramoutar-Maraj and ramoutar007@yahoo.com, which you provided us on the cover of your letter dated 22, January 2021. We note that this is not—let me repeat—we note that this is not an email sent to travelexemption@mns.gov.tt. And we are
instructed that a search of the Ministry’s system has not turned up any email from Geeta Ramoutar-Maraj or ramoutar007@yahoo.com. Nevertheless, because the Minister was anxious to deal expeditiously with what he views to be a deserving case, whatever may be the outcome of the proceedings which you plan to bring, he gave instructions yesterday, having considered what you said in your letter, that an exemption be granted to your client. We are instructed an email to that effect was sent on 24th January, 2021.

The point of all of this is that here you have a story in the Express, scandalous controversial story, talking about a citizen who is trying to come back, indicating this citizen has applied so many times to get an exemption, and here you have evidence that no application was ever made. It is reprehensible that people are being used in this way to damage and tarnish the character of the Minister of National Security. This is a disgrace. Why would you go to court and take the Minister to court about a non-existent, imaginary application? It is just wrong.

Now let me deal with some other facts. The Minister of National Security, the current Minister, was appointed Minister of National Security in 2018. He has been Minister of National Security for just under two and a half years, from my research. I am subject to correction. But the date I saw was August of 2018 or somewhere around there. So let us see what has occurred since that Minister came in. Because, if I go to the Motion, it says:

“…the Minister has unequivocally demonstrated his inability to competently execute his duties:”

So how do we measure the Minister’s performance, and before in the two years or so that he has been there? And, before I get to that, let me simply say that my experience and knowledge with respect to the flooding that took place in
Greenvale in La Horquetta in 2018 is completely different to the picture painted by the Member for St. Augustine, I believe, because I saw the Minister of National Security in Greenvale for almost 48 hours non-stop. I saw him myself working hard to protect the people of Greenvale. I saw that. That is the first time I have seen a Minister of National Security out in the field, in the middle of flooding, for 48 hours straight. That is what I saw, Madam Speaker.

So I reject the opinion of the Member for St. Augustine. [Desk thumping]

This is one of most hard-working, diligent, committed and caring Ministers of National Security I have ever come across. [Desk thumping] But let us go now to the facts. I refer you, Madam Speaker, to an article published by Loop and in other media houses, October 2020, and this was coverage of a press conference held by the Commissioner of Police, Gary Griffith, and I read from the article:

“Police Commissioner Gary Griffith said there have been 100 fewer violent crimes this year compared to the corresponding period last year.

…Griffith said that contrary to naysayers, there is no evidence that the decrease was due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which he said can actually lead to an increase in crime.

Griffith noted that for the period January to September 2020, there was a 20-25 per cent decrease in crime compared to the same period in 2019.”

Those are facts. Let me go to the actual statistics themselves, Madam Speaker, and let us see what really happened in 2020. From my information, the number of murders in 2020, 396; from my information, the number of murders in 2014 was 403; in 2010—2015, 410; in 2013, 408. And when I look at the pattern, I see the Minister of National Security taking up office in second half of 2018, settling down in 2019, getting an understanding of the portfolio and the challenges that he
faced in that Ministry, and I see a severe reduction in murders in 2020, Madam Speaker. [Desk thumping] Those are the facts. I see a significant reduction in murders and I see a significant reduction in serious crimes. Those are the statistics. And I do not have to listen to the Member for Oropouche East talk about COVID. I am listening to the practitioners and I am listening to what the Commissioner of Police said. And it is factual that in many other countries, there has been an increase in crime because of COVID-19, whereas in Trinidad and Tobago, we have seen a decrease in crime. So I have to deal with what is before me, not the wild speculation and the allegations made on the other side that have no basis whatsoever, Madam Speaker.

I have also looked at the relationship between this Minister of National Security and the various arms of the protective services under his purview: the defence force, the coast guard, the army, the air guard, the police service, the fire service, the prison service. I can give you a personal anecdote. Just this weekend, I thought the Minister was working a lil too hard and I said to him, let me invite you for a beverage. And the Minister said, no, I cannot come. I said, why? He said because the fire service, I believe it was, is consecrating its colours—this is the flag—and he is taking his weekend and taking two hours of his weekend to be with men under his purview in the protective services, to be with them in this ceremonial function. [Desk thumping]

That is commitment, Madam Speaker. That is commitment. The man works 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And Members opposite could say what they want. He has never paid $6 million to remove a fire truck, and I use that by way of example, that you cannot put a truthful allegation of malfeasance or corruption in any form or fashion at this Minister of National Security. You “cyar” do it. This
particular Minister of National Security has never abused his office. This particular Minister of National Security has never engaged in nepotism, favouritism or anything of an immoral character, such as human trafficking. I am not sure everybody can say that they have never engaged in that, but I can tell you, this particular Minister has never engaged in anything of a criminal nature or anything of an immoral nature, Madam Speaker.

I have looked at him as he has come into the Parliament. He has taken on an extremely difficult job and I am satisfied that he has risen to the occasion. I am satisfied that the Minister is extremely competent, and with respect to these matters, with respect to procurement that the Member for Oropouche East raised, the Member for Oropouche East has missed the point. What the Minister found when he got into that Ministry was a number of claims made by contractors and suppliers, all of whom were engaged by the former UNC Government, to supply very expensive pieces of equipment—helicopters and other very expensive pieces of equipment. And what the Minister of National Security discovered when he came in is that you have these claims in the million, sometimes in the hundreds of millions of dollars, because what happened is that the former administration either procured defective equipment, useless equipment, equipment that could not be used, equipment that never arrived. There are helicopters here that we had to pay for that never reached Trinidad and Tobago, helicopters that came here that could not fly. They were not airworthy, they were not certified. And the type of contractual arrangements that the former administration entered into was so bad, was so badly written, was so badly done, that even now this Government is struggling to deal with these claims coming at us for defective and useless equipment.
And that is what that Minister has to deal with. And every time he takes up his—the situation to deal with one of these highly irregular suspect—and I do not want to say, I do not want to cast aspersions on these contracts because some of them are, you know, entering into litigation. But every time he has to deal with it, the way he deals with it, is to protect the public interest, to get value for money, and to try to recover what can be recovered from the situation. And, by way of example, before he became Minister of National Security, through his diligence, his acumen, his experience and his skill as an attorney, he was able to recover, for this country, almost $1 billion in the OAS highway matter; almost $1 billion. [Desk thumping]

So, Madam Speaker, I have heard nothing from Members on the other side that would lead any reasonable person to conclude that this Minister is not competent. He is one of the most competent Ministers of National Security that I have ever come across in my 30 years in this Parliament. And let me just—before I close, let me just deal with this whole concept of travel restrictions. If you Google “travel restrictions COVID-19”, which I have done, and I have travel restrictions for every single country, from Afghanistan all the way down to the countries that begin with Y and Z. And, Madam Speaker, when you go through all of the travel restrictions—let me pull out Australia—limited international commercial flights are available. Australian citizens—“ah hearing de ole talk, you know, they cyar help yapping”. Australian citizens are restricted from travelling overseas. Australia has restricted its own citizens of travelling overseas until the 17th of March. If you are in Australia, you have to keep yourself there, you cannot move, whether you are a citizen of Australia or not. And I have just pulled that out as one example, Madam Speaker.
Just the other day, there was a report about Canada, where Canadian citizens have gone overseas and they are trying to come back, and the Prime Minister of Canada said quite plainly, “We told you not to leave the country and you may not be able to return until we remove these travel restrictions.” That is just a couple days ago I was reading that in the international media. And if you go through all these countries, you would see there are severe restrictions. There are certain countries, it does not matter if you are a citizen or a visitor, once you are coming from that country, you cannot enter a whole host of countries in the world. So, with the—

Mr. Charles: Would the Minister give way?

Hon. C. Imbert: Madam Speaker, what is going on?

Mr. Charles: Would you give way?

Hon. C. Imbert: What is going on? I am sorry. I did not hear him. Could you help me, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: The Member is asking you to give way.

Hon. C. Imbert: He is no friend of mine and I am not giving way.  

And the point I wish to make, Madam Speaker, if you do a simple Google search and you check the board and 170 countries in the world—170-plus countries in the world, you will see there are a number of countries that have restricted travel by their citizens because they recognized how dangerous this COVID-19 virus is.

And the Prime Minister made the point the Minister does not act alone. He acts under the authority of the Cabinet and under the authority of the Prime Minister. So it is unfair, it is just wrong to place any confusion relating to travel exemptions at the foot of the Minister. That is just wrong. It is government policy.
I thank you, Madam Speaker. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh (Couva South): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, as I take the opportunity to join this debate this afternoon. And in my response to the Minister of Finance, who was the previous speaker, I found the Minister of Finance to be going all over the place in his attempt to defend the tenure of his colleague, the Minister of National Security, and really had little or nothing to say as it relates to the performance of the Minister of National Security. [Desk thumping] And that has been the trajectory, the line from those on the Opposition side—not the Opposition, sorry, but the Government, this afternoon or since this debate has begun, Madam Speaker.

And, Madam Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition, who clinically and in a very decisive way, piloted this Motion here today, [Desk thumping] and all of my colleagues who have been able to dismiss whatever defence that has been presented by those on the opposite side in this Motion. And, Madam Speaker, if we can recollect—and I do not have the exact date—but the Prime Minister, in attempting to sell the Minister of National Security to the population of Trinidad and Tobago, said that the Minister of National Security can be categorized, or he can be referred to as the “Gary Sobers of the Cabinet” or the “Gary Sobers of the Government”. Sad to say, not even the Prime Minister, the Attorney General or the Minister of Finance, who is the Chairman of the People’s National Movement, has been able to hit a boundary, or a maximum on behalf of the Minister of National Security here today. [Desk thumping]

And I am sure that if Gary Sobers was looking on at this debate, he would have confined the Minister of National Security or relegated the Minister of

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Mr. Indarsingh (cont’d)

National Security to being the twelfth man or the water boy after his contribution here in this Parliament, Madam Speaker. [Desk thumping] And the Minister said that he got a number of telephone calls and he got a number of WhatsApp messages, and so on, from his constituents in rallying behind him and rallying in relation to his stewardship as the Minister of National Security. But sad to say, Madam Speaker, my sources tell me that not even outside of the Parliament, a member of the constituency executive of Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West, turned up to give their support to the Minister of National Security. [Desk thumping]

And, Madam Speaker, if we are to really examine the Minister of National Security, since he has been appointed in this particular Ministry, the Minister has been what we would call, very long on words and very apt at what we may call engaging in a public relations campaign, but has been very short on delivery, very short on delivery when you examine his role and function. And, in fact, in this very House, in throwing some political jabs and so on, I could recollect that the Minister, Madam Speaker, boasted on many occasions that he has been the practitioner at the Industrial Court. He has been a friend of the labour movement and a friend of the Oilfield Workers’ Trade Union. And I do not know, after the review of that successful bid and so on, whether he is still a friend of the OWTU.

And today I will take the opportunity to examine some of the issues that are confronting workers, confronting the labour movement from the perspective of the responsibility that falls within the purview of the Minister of National Security, in relation to the different arms or the different entities which fall under the Minister of National Security. And, Madam Speaker, I know that my colleague, the Member of Parliament for San Juan/Barataria paid some attention to the prison service of
Trinidad and Tobago. And in passing, I will just want to reiterate that he indicated that apparently the operations of the Ministry of National Security and, by extension, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago seems to be one where there is an orchestration on the part of those on the other side to privatize the Prison Service of Trinidad and Tobago.

And, in that regard, the Minister has made a number of pronouncements when he would have met with the Prison Officers’ Association of Trinidad and Tobago, led by one Ceron Richards, and it is out in the public domain. It is out in the newspapers and so on, Madam Speaker. And in that regard, Madam Speaker, I am yet to hear from the Minister of National Security, since he has assumed his tenure, what has happened to the Government’s commitment to deal with the construction of a prison in Tobago? Madam Speaker, we have been told, and the concerns of the association, and the concerns of the prison officers in Tobago, especially, Madam Speaker, is that the prison is on the verge of falling into the sea. And today I ask the Minister of National Security, in terms of the leadership that he has offered to the prison officers and the association, what has prevented him from ensuring that the sod has turned or has been turned to construct this particular entity on behalf of the prison officers? And I ask the Minister whether his leadership and his commitment is being cramped by someone who has lands next to where this particular prison was initially to be constructed?

Because, Madam Speaker, my sources tell me that the initial location was in Hope in Tobago, and it was earmarked where 50 acres of land was to be utilised. And someone very prominent, my sources tell me, has lands where this prison was supposed to be constructed. And because of the lands, the possibility of the construction of the prison being next to this piece of land, it was shifted, Madam...
Speaker, and the Minister failed to provide that decisive leadership. And it moved from Hope in Tobago to an area that is called Bacolet, where the plans have been downscaled from 50 to 10 acres, and again, it is up in the air, because the lands in Bacolet, where the prison is to be located, is located adjacent to lands that are owned by a PNM financier in Tobago. And is this cramping the leadership style of the Minister of National Security to deliver the prison in Tobago? And I hope that the Minister of National Security is not tied up or roped in, or pandering to this financier and has zipped his lip, Madam Speaker. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, and I know that the Minister or someone on that side may attempt to rise and speak about the issue of relevance, but on the 7th of July, 2020, an article was written by one Derek Achong in the Trinidad Guardian, which was headlined, “Police, fire, prisons association seeks Young’s help in salary talks”. And I thought that the Minister of Finance, in his delivery and his attempt to defend the Minister of National Security, would have stood up and said to us that he collaborated with the Minister of National Security, based on the representation of the Minister of National Security, to address the collective bargaining process on behalf of the police officers, the prison officers and the fire officers association, all which fall under the purview of the Minister of National Security.

And, Madam Speaker, you see, it is good, because the Minister of Finance told us that he could personally testify to the commitment and the duties of the Minister of National Security to the point where he saw the Minister of National Security in the floods of 2018, speaking or working tirelessly for 48 hours. I am forced to recollect, Madam Speaker, as I reflect on the Minister or the Member for Diego Martin North/East, that was the same gentleman who told an EBC enquiry that a man was dead and the man turned up before the EBC enquiry. [Desk
3.50 p.m.

So anything you hear from the Minister of Finance, the Member for Diego Martin North/East, you must take it with a pinch of salt. Because, Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance has the experience and if he saw his colleague working for 48 hours non-stop, he should have advised him on the implications to his health and safety and so on. And he said that he invited the Minister of National Security for a beverage and he could not attend the friendly comradery or the invitation because the Minister of National Security told him that he had to attend the newly consecrated colours or the consecration of colours to the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service.

And, Madam Speaker, it is always good for any Minister of Government to be present, whether you have the line responsibility or not to give support to events such as this to lift the self-esteem, the morale of the officers who served, but we must go beyond the call of duty in terms of what we say, in terms of public relations stunts and so on. Madam Speaker, that is why I will say that the Minister of National Security has been long on words but little or short on delivery [Desk thumping] to all law enforcement officers in Trinidad and Tobago. Because it is good to tell them and make all kinds of commitments but at the end of the day, Madam Speaker, I think the Minister of National Security should be the first one to realize that in 2021 all law enforcement officers are existing on 2013 salaries [Desk thumping] and what has happened to the collective bargaining—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Madam Speaker, Standing Order 48(1), salaries and wage negotiations are not the remit of the Minister of National Security but that of the Chief Personnel Officer and the Member knows that. [Desk thumping] He knows
that. He is a trade union leader.

Madam Speaker: Okay, Member. All right. I uphold the objection.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Madam Speaker, I move on, on the issue of the state of affairs as it relates to the prison officers and I want to turn my attention to the issue of the Fire Services of Trinidad and Tobago. Because, Madam Speaker, there is a common thread, as I said, as it relates to a number of issues affecting these very important entities under the purview of the Minister of National Security. And, Madam Speaker, the Fire Service Association, again, has attempted to ventilate a number of issues. In fact, they have met the Minister of National Security and as I continue to listen to their programme on Power 102FM, under the term or the tag line “Fire Call”, there are a number of issues that, again, have been left wanting, whether it is from vehicle acquisitions, the state of dormitories and so on. And, in fact, I want to elaborate, because on the 18th of April, 2019, the President of the Fire Services Association said and stated: We have no fire trucks. In fact, the exact words were: If you live on the north coast, your house is on fire, chances are your house and the entire village you live in could burn to the ground while you wait for a fire truck to respond to your call, Madam Speaker.

And that is the state of affairs. This has not changed because, again, we are being told that there is no fire attender at the Mayaro Fire Station, there is none at the Santa Cruz, Morvant, Woodbrook and so on, and we could go on and on, and in the constituency of Couva South, at the Couva South Fire Station or the Savonetta Fire Station, this is the state of affairs. And recently, Madam Speaker, we were told that there was a massive fire in central Trinidad and at that fire, in the constituency of my colleague, Caroni East, over 100 fire officers responded to that particular fire. And I am told that out of the 100 fire officers who turned up there

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and fought that blaze, only two had what we would call hazmat suits and could have really engaged in what we would call very thorough firefighting and to save lives.

So today, under the Minister of National Security, the business community and the hundreds of thousands of households in this country are vulnerable because of the sad state of affairs, whether it is from a manpower point of view, an equipment point of view and so on, in response to dealing with fires that may occur within the length and breadth of Trinidad and Tobago. And the Minister of Finance, in attempting to defend his colleague, was very disingenuous when we spoke about the murder statistics in 2020 and so on. But he did not tell you that there were 500—he did not tell this House that there were 538 murders. And whilst he might be comforted just like the Member for St. Joseph, the headlines in the constituency of Couva South is different since this Minister has been in charge and, in fact, since the PNM has been in charge since 2015.

Madam Speaker, the constituents of Couva South are under siege, they are under attack and the headlines continue to read, such as:

“Double murder in California”
“Pan’ killed in Couva”
“Wife murdered outside Couva…place”
“Man slain after prayers in Central…”
“Man shot dead in Couva”

And even the KFC delivery driver is not safe under the People’s National Movement and Minister Young. The KFC delivery driver and all informal workers within the economy, such as doubles men, such as those who sell on the roadside stalls and so on, trying to eke out a living, are indeed vulnerable because of the
failure of this Government to deal with crime in a very decisive manner. Couva is covered in blood and the constituents of Couva are in a state of siege under Minister Stuart Young.

So, Madam Speaker, from a national and a labour-based and a constituency-based perspective, it is quite clear for all to see why the Opposition has no confidence in the Minister of National Security. Prison officers are imprisoned in a plot to privatize the prison service; lifeguards are drowning in the Minister’s ineffectiveness as the former lifeguards failed to guard the guards; fire officers feel the heat as they are thrown into the flames by the Minister; the Minister is holding the economy of Trinidad and Tobago hostage by refusing to let 8,000-plus nationals, who are workers, back into the economy. Couva is covered in blood. Madam Speaker, like the people of Tobago, on the 65th anniversary of the PNM—

Madam Speaker: Member for Couva South, your time is now spent.

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—we have lost confidence in this Government, and the uncaring and lazy and incompetent Minister of National Security. [Desk thumping]

The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Marvin Gonzales): [Desk thumping]

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, let me first say that, just like my colleague from Tobago West, I came to Parliament this morning anticipating and waiting to hear the evidence and the prosecution of my colleague, the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West and Minister of National Security, in his capacity as Minister of National Security on this Motion of no confidence. I took note that this is a Motion that is being piloted by the Member for Siparia, in her capacity as Leader of the Opposition, and I convinced myself that such Member, such experienced Member who held once the office of Prime Minister and head of the National Security Council, that she would come to this
Parliament and conduct herself in a way that is befitting of the office for which she currently holds and for which she held before.

As a young Member of Parliament, Madam Speaker, I must say that I was terrified. I was emotionally distraught to hear the contribution of this former Member and this former Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition. I regard her presentation to be utterly disgraceful. [Desk thumping] I think it was a gross disrespect to the people of Trinidad and Tobago—

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Speaker, 48(4), I rise. [Cross talk]

Madam Speaker: So Member, I would ask you to withdraw that word and rephrase.

Hon. M. Gonzales: I withdraw, I withdraw, Madam Speaker. But, Madam Speaker, let me say that it was very, very disappointing, not only in my capacity as a Member of Parliament but as a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago, that such Motion can be brought before this Parliament on absolutely no evidence, absolutely nothing to ground this Motion, and I think that the Leader of the Opposition, the Member of Parliament for Siparia, has a lot of self-introspection to do because it is an embarrassment to the people of this country. [Desk thumping] It is an embarrassment.

Madam Speaker, in preparing for this Motion, I took note of the official website of the Australian Parliament, and in referring to these types of Motions, a Motion of no confidence, I quote, it says:

“If a motion of no confidence in, or censure of, a Minister were successful and its grounds were directly related to government policy, the question of the Minister or the Government continuing to hold office would be one for the Prime Minister to decide. If the grounds related to the Minister’s
administration of his or her department or fitness otherwise to hold ministerial office, the Government would not necessarily accept full responsibility for the matter, leaving the question of resignation to the particular Minister or to the Prime Minister.”

Such is the seriousness of a Motion of no confidence. Please allow me to quote, Madam Speaker, from the House of Commons, Procedure and Practice in Canada.

“An essential feature of the parliamentary government is that the Prime Minister and the Cabinet are responsible to, or must answer to, the House of Commons as a body for their actions and must enjoy the support and the confidence of a majority of the Members of that Chamber to remain in office.”

It is also referred to as a confidence Motion.

And therefore, Madam Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition comes to this House and now invites us, Members of Parliament, to declare our lack of trust and confidence in the Ministry of National Security. She was given a clean ball as the opening bowler, if I am to refer to cricketing terms. And every single ball that she bowled was wide, no ball, stepping over the line, and up to now, not one single valid delivery was bowled. Not one. An absolute and a very abject failure for what we have witnessed a short while ago.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Speaker, Standing Order 48(8), this is not about the Member for Siparia.

Madam Speaker: Okay. So, Member, I understand that you are responding but I would ask you to move on to the Motion.

Hon. M. Gonzales: [Inaudible]

Madam Speaker: Yes, please.
Hon. M. Gonzales: Madam Speaker, we have listened to what the Opposition has come to this Parliament to prosecute against the Minister of National Security, but, Madam Speaker, let me say that I have known and I have witnessed the Minister of National Security in my previous job in the public sector. I have taken careful note of the manner in which he has continued to execute his national and public duties with passion. I was privileged to have sat on an evaluation committee with the Minister of National Security for the procurement of two fast ferries. I have noticed how he went about prosecuting his cause and dedicated himself to public service of Trinidad and Tobago. And, Madam Speaker, I must say, not knowing that one day I would have been his colleague, I must say that Trinidad and Tobago is very fortunate to have someone in the position of the Minister of National Security to come forward and give public service to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, not only we in the Government. We must say that we are very fortunate to have someone like the Minister of National Security serving in the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

But this, Madam Speaker, where we live in a time, where we always wish to call upon our young people to come forward and give public service, as difficult as it may be, as ungrateful as it may be, we have to conduct ourselves in such a way that we do not turn off young, bright, energetic people from coming forward and giving public service to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. And when we look at the way in which the Minister of National Security goes about his public duties, serving at all levels in the Cabinet, sub-committees of the Cabinet, giving guidance to his colleagues in the Cabinet—Madam Speaker, I must say when you listen to the voices on the other side, it does not encourage young people to come forward and give public service to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. And I want to encourage and I want to ask Members of the Opposition, especially the Leader of

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the Opposition, that we have a duty and, yes, there might be reasons from time to time to file Motions of no confidence and censure against each other, but it cannot be done, it cannot be done, Madam Speaker, for political and ill-conceived purposes. It cannot be done to score political points because we have a responsibility in this House. We have a responsibility in this House to the people of Trinidad and Tobago to conduct ourselves in such a way where we do not turn off young people from coming forward and giving national service.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Standing Order 48(8). This is a Motion about national security, not about all Members and all—this lecture he is giving at this time.

**Madam Speaker:** So, again, Member, as I say, I understand the context I would ask you now to deal with the matter as it pertains to the Minister of National Security.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Madam Speaker, we are certainly not living in ordinary times. This country, like every other country in this world, we are grappling with this COVID pandemic. Madam Speaker, when you look at what is taking place in the world with respect to this pandemic, we are seeing that countries that were deemed more sophisticated than us, grappling, grappling. Just today, almost 4,000 deaths have been registered in the United States. Almost one death per 14 seconds. To date, 435,000 people have been dead in the United States of America. Globally, 2.16 million people died as a result of this pandemic. And the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West, the Minister of National Security, working together with his colleagues in the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, doing our best to preserve and to stabilize this country in difficult circumstances.

As the Prime Minister said earlier on, Madam Speaker, some may not be happy with some of the policies put in place by the Government, but at the end of
the day, when you look at our statistics and our circumstances in Trinidad and Tobago, as difficult as it may be, we stand tall and we are far better than other countries, [Desk thumping] than those that are deemed better than us. And, Madam Speaker, and that is because we have dedicated public servants like the Minister of National Security, [Desk thumping] dedicated public servants doing what they can do every single day tweaking government policy, all in a view to protect the national and the public interest. And the evidence bears it out. We have been blessed that the problems that other countries are experiencing, we do not have it here. Our health sector is freed from what is transpiring in Europe and the United States because of the Member for St. Joseph and because of the Minister of National Security, because of the Minister of Finance and other Members of the Government leading this charge to protect the Government’s interest—

**Mr. Rambally:** Madam Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 48(1). This Motion is not against any of the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Health or any of those sectors.

**Madam Speaker:** Member for Lopinot/Bon Air West, I uphold the objection raised by the Member for Chaguanas West.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the point—and I would close on this point, that the Minister of National Security is a Member of the Government and he has not pursued any policy in his personal interest, as the Prime Minister said earlier on. Everything that was done, be it the exemption policy, be it everything that was done to protect the national interest was in fact the policy of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. [Desk thumping] And therefore, if we are invited into a debate, a Motion that was filed against the Minister of National Security for pursuing government policy, then we have a duty
to stand on this side, not only to defend the Minister of National Security, but to defend the policies of the Government \([Desk thumping]\) which were put in place to protect the public’s interest.

Madam Speaker, in addition to the global pandemic, the COVID pandemic, we have been faced with a situation that is taking place in Venezuela, where thousands of their citizens are leaving and trying to come into our borders, coming into our country in search for a better life. Madam Speaker, the Minister of National Security, a dedicated and a loyal public officer, a patriot of this country, doing his part, working together with his men and women in the national security sector to protect the borders of this country and yet still, the Minister was under attack, both externally and locally, for doing what has to be done to protect the public’s interest. And you see it coming out even from Members on the other side, almost singing from the same hymn book with Opposition forces in Venezuela, and you have to ask yourself: Are we defending ourselves against external forces but are we also defending ourselves against persons inside—

**Ms. Haynes:** Standing Order—

**Hon. M. Gonzales:**—of Trinidad and Tobago who are—

**Ms. Haynes:** Madam Speaker, respectfully, 48(1). I cannot see the relevance.

**Madam Speaker:** I overrule on the issue of the objection on Standing Order 48(1). I, however, would like to caution that these are matters that we have heard and that this repetition is bordering on tedious repetition. So I would ask the Member to please develop another point under the portfolio of the Minister of National Security.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. And, Madam Speaker, let me remind the national population who are listening to this debate that
we are not going to be distracted by persons with alternative agendas. Madam Speaker, the Minister of National Security, a loyal and are good public officer, continues to be a tremendous asset to the people of Trinidad and Tobago working with his colleagues in the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to protect the interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago despite what they have to say. And, Madam Speaker, as I have said, I came into this Parliament with an open mind waiting to hear what the Leader of the Opposition has to say and up to now, we have heard absolutely nothing on that failed Motion that requires our support. And therefore, Madam Speaker, this Motion is almost desperate [Desk thumping], almost a cry for help, almost a cry for national attention.

Madam Speaker, I wish to ask the Leader of Opposition a couple of questions before I close off on this, a couple of questions, because perhaps I might be open—Madam Speaker, before I go on, how much more time do I have?

**Madam Speaker:** Your time expires at 4.19 p.m.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I have enough time to ask some relevant questions. Because, Madam Speaker—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Speaker, with great respect, 48(8). This is not to put questions to another Member of the House. It is about the performance of one Member. [Crosstalk]

**Madam Speaker:** Overruled.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Madam Speaker, I want to ask the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Siparia, is the Minister of National Security guilty of dismantling the Special Anti-Crime Unit and other national security apparatus in Trinidad and Tobago? [Desk thumping] Is the Minister of National Security guilty of, Madam Speaker, guilty of firing the head of SAUTT and the head of the SSA?
[Desk thumping] I wish to ask the Member for Siparia and the Leader of the Opposition, is the Minister of National Security guilty of firing employees in the Strategic Services Agency that resulted in the State having to pay millions of dollars to these people who were illegally fired? Is the Minister of National Security guilty of putting an unqualified technician in the sensitive position of the Director of SSA?

Mr. Rambally: Madam Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 48(1) and 48(6). These questions that the hon. Member is—[Crosstalk] These questions that are being asked are irrelevant to the debate and they are imputing improper motives.

[Crosstalk]

Madam Speaker: Okay. So on 48(6), I overrule. [Crosstalk] On 48(6), I overrule. On 48(1), I also overrule.

Hon. M. Gonzales: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I wish to ask the Leader of the Opposition, is the Minister responsible for a failed state of emergency that saw the arrest of 500 young men? [Desk thumping] Is the Minister of National Security responsible for pursuing a programme that saw the deaths of young men in the East-West Corridor and perhaps linked to the death of a senior counsel in Trinidad and Tobago? Is the Minister of National Security responsible for promoting some of these people whose names are perhaps the subject of criminal investigation with senatorial appointments anywhere in the world? [Desk thumping] Those are very simple questions. Is the Minister of National Security, Madam Speaker, guilty of being indicted for international crimes whilst he sits as the Minister of National Security? Has a warrant of extradition been issued for his arrest so that he can come answer crimes in the United States? Was the Minister of National Security involved in witness
tampering and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice?

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Speaker, 48(1) — [Desk thumping and crosstalk]

Dr. Moonilal: No one has accused the Minister of witness tampering.

Madam Speaker: And Member for Oropouche East, again, I overrule. No one is saying that you or anybody here accused him. The Member is asking certain questions and I am allowing it. He may conclude in a particular way. Please continue.

Hon. M. Gonzales: Is the Minister of National Security guilty of coming to this Parliament and voting against anti-crime Bills? And, Madam Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition is prepared to answer this question, then I will decide how I am going to vote in this Motion. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

4.20 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. David Lee (Pointe-a-Pierre): Thank you, Madam Speaker. First let me start off by saying that the Leader of the Opposition brought a very timely Motion of no confidence against the Minister of National Security and I would like to compliment her in her speech and her presentation, and all the other Members on the Opposition who would have spoken before. Madam Speaker, I listened to Lopinot/Bon Air West and coming to his end of his contribution or his debate he asked several questions, and I want to ask him, I thought as a new Member of Parliament he would have been enthused to at least come here this afternoon and highlight the Parliament of the—supposedly on their side, the good work that this Minister of National Security has been doing for the last two and half years.

Now, when I looked at the Gazette, Madam Speaker, of September 09, 2020,
I would have thought that all the Government Members, including the Minister of Finance, would have come and talked about what the Minister of National Security would have done. When I looked at the *Gazette*, what his responsibilities are in airspace and territorial waters: cadet force; citizenship; defence force; drug enforcement interdiction; drug trafficking and money laundering; global security issues; immigration; intelligence; internal security; probation services; public order safety and law enforcement; security of government officials and premises—that is part of his duty; supplemental police, the SRP; victims of crimes; and something that I will be touching on this afternoon, the witness protection care and support programme.

I would have thought that anyone on the Government side would have at least highlighted, especially their senior Members, the work that the Minister of National Security would have done over the last two and half years, but we are still waiting on the Opposition side to hear anything of positivity from that Government—Members who spoke. *[Desk thumping]* So this debate is turning to attacking the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition brought a Motion of no confidence, and they have yet to defend their Minister of National Security when each of their Members who would have stood up and talked. Now, I thought the Minister of Finance when he stood up to debate would have raised that he would have given the Minister of National Security over the last two budgets, including this budget coming, everything he would have asked for as far as funding is concerned, and we would not have issues of low hanging fruits for funding that is happening now in the Ministry of National Security especially in the TTPS.

So I will elaborate a little bit further, Madam Speaker, in my contribution, but I want to turn to a little bit of rebuttal to the Minister of Sport and Community
Minister of National Security (cont’d)  
Mr. Lee (cont’d)

Development. She talked about—the Minister talked just in a general term of the praise for the Minister of National Security. She also did not know his position, his constituency. She kept calling him Port of Spain South when it is really Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West. So I hope the Minister of Sport and Community Development gets it right at some point in time.

Madam Speaker, I want to turn my short time here on the witness protection care and support programme. Now, this is a very important business area that the Minister of National Security has responsibility for. Because over the last three years or four years, even though he was not the Minister of National Security but in his capacity as a legal individual, a lawyer, both himself and San Fernando West would have stood up here in Parliament time and time again saying that witness protection and witnesses coming forward is something that it is commendable, that they are employing that people come forward to be able to solve crime and to be able to have a higher conviction rate. But what really has happened under this Minister of National Security over the last two and half years within the witness care and support programme?

Madam Speaker, as I said the Witness Protection Programme is very important and for witnesses to come forward, and the Minister of National Security has an important role to play in ensuring that the policies, the funding is in place, and these witnesses are protected. And also, he has to also ensure and monitor and audit that programme to ensure that witnesses are not intimidated and they are really given the kind of care and protection that they deserve. Because if they are coming forward as witnesses to solve crime, to help the detection rate come down or solve the detection rate, then the minimum that the Minister of National Security should do is to ensure their protection.
Now, the witness protection area falls under the Justice Protection Act. This governs the witnesses, Madam Speaker, and I just want to quote in the Justice Protection Act, section 4, the administering of the programme. Section 4(1):

“The Minister shall establish a programme to be known as the Justice Protection Programme, for the purpose of providing to participants, subject to this Act, protection or assistance or both.”

And this is to the witnesses.

4(2) of that Act, Madam Speaker:

“For the purposes of administering the Programme,”—and I quote—“the Minister shall, by Regulations made under section 26, provide for the establishment of the following Agencies:

(a) an Administrative Centre;
(b) an Investigative Agency; and
(c) a Protective Agency.”

So it is important responsibilities that the Minister of National Security has under this programme.

Also section 5 of the Act and I quote, provides for the:

“(1) Subject to this Act, the Administrative Centre shall develop, manage and maintain the Justice Protection Programme and shall be responsible for deciding whether a prospective participant is to be afforded protection or assistance or both, under the Programme.”

Section 6 of the Act:

“(1) The Administrative Centre may offer protection or assistance or both under the Justice Protection Programme in respect of the offences set out in the First Schedule.”
And what are those offences, Madam Speaker? Under the Witness Protection Programme offences like murder, manslaughter, treason, sedition, kidnapping, et cetera. So it is very, very serious offences, Madam Speaker.

Now, over the last two and half years witnesses’ safety in Trinidad and Tobago is a major issue, Madam Speaker. There have been so many articles written in the newspapers, articles calling for improvement of the Witness Protection Programme. So I really when they, I hope whoever is responding after me, can be informed what the Minister of National Security has done to improve the Witness Protection Programme which is critical for the police service in solving crime and bringing down the detection or have a greater detection rate.

We have seen so many newspaper articles and I just want to quote a few articles that people have been calling for improvement of the Witness Protection Programme. There is an article of November 19, 2019, in the Trinidad Newsday:

“Is the witness protection programme in TT safe?”

That was the article. And I quote:

“The Editor: Yet another state witness has been gunned down, which may be a sign that vast improvements need to be made to the witness protection programme.

Trust needs to be restored so that people would feel safe and be encouraged to seek the protection of the programme and bring more criminals to justice.”

That is the role of the Minister of National Security, bringing more criminals to justice, working with all the different arms that fall under his portfolio.

“Is the programme safe or is this killing another case of a witness being careless and not agreeing to participate…”—
Mr. Imbert: Stop reading.

Mr. Al-Rawi: Standing Order 44(10).

Madam Speaker: Member, you heard the objection is with respect to 44(10). So I would ask you to—you know, you are another senior Member, please you know, do not be so reliant on your notes.

Mr. D. Lee: Madam Speaker, I did not hear you properly.

Madam Speaker: I say all I will ask is that you are a senior Member, and therefore, you could be less reliant on your notes.

Mr. D. Lee: Well, I am just quoting an article, Madam Speaker. So I apologize if I cannot quote from an article. On the Trinidad Newsday I will just read the headline, on June 23, 2019, that is just close before, “Restore confidence in the witness protection”—programme. Why are these articles calling for improvement in the witness protection programme? And I ask the Minister of National Security what has he done in the last two and half years in beefing up, improving that programme with the police service? Again, another headline:

    Deadly failings in the Witness Protection Programme

Madam Speaker, there are some articles again of actual witnesses being murdered over the last two and half years under this Minister’s watch, and right in my constituency of Claxton Bay on November 19, 2019, a witness was killed, after three men committed to stand trial for attempting to murder him after three years ago. Madam Speaker—

Mr. Al-Rawi: Madam Speaker, I rise respectfully on 48(1), because of the substance of the witness protection where the DPP must fashion the agreement and have the consent. So I rise on a technicality in relation to 48(1).

Madam Speaker: And I will allow it. I believe that can be cleared up by somebody else. Please proceed.
Mr. D. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just like to elaborate that the Witness Protection Programme falls squarely under the Minister of National Security. [Desk thumping] Squarely! He is responsible for it and he has come out on previous occasions when witnesses have been murdered, and I will elaborate on that.

Mr. Young: That is not true.

Mr. D. Lee: I will quote an article, Minister of National Security.

Mr. Al-Rawi: Madam Speaker, I rise again on 48(1) for the purposes of reply, insofar as you have guided us. Will the hon. Member please tell us whether these witnesses were witnesses in the programme? Very material to the response.

Madam Speaker: So Attorney General, I believe maybe what you are asking is under Standing Order 47(1), really for your friend to give way so that you can ask a question to him.

Mr. Al-Rawi: Madam Speaker, I thank you. And to the hon. Leader of the Bench: Are these witnesses that you are repeatedly referring to witnesses in the Witness Protection Programme? It is very material.

Mr. D. Lee: And I can answer, Madam Speaker, to the Attorney General? The witness I just quoted, the article, he is dead so he cannot be in the Witness Protection Programme. The Claxton Bay man in my constituency was killed after three days. [Desk thumping] So as we speak right now presently, he cannot be in the Witness Protection Programme, Attorney General. I do not know if you want me to quote it again.

Madam Speaker, there was a witness who attended their son’s graduation on June 19, 2019. A female, by the name of—I would not call her name. It is there in the newspaper article of Trinidad Express. And she attended her son’s graduation—because she is a witness to a murder—and she was gunned down at
the graduation, and I refer back to the comment that Minister Young just made across the floor. That same witness, the murder of that witness, Minister Young said that she was not in Witness Protection Programme and that was a quote on January 21, 2019, by the Trinidad Express.

The—“National Security Minister Stuart Young said yesterday the murder of State Witness…”—I would not call her name—“…Tuesday was a tragedy, but added that she was not in the witness protection programme.”

That is a quote in the newspaper from the Minister of National Security, and I will elaborate that a little bit more, Madam Speaker. And I ask the question to the Minister of National Security—the Member for Lopinot/Bon Air asked questions, so I will ask the Minister of National Security: Has the Minister of National Security done enough to ensure that the Witness Protection Programme is safe for witnesses to come forward and give evidence and they would not feel that their life has been threatened? I ask him to elaborate. I ask the Minister Stuart Young to elaborate on that, Madam Speaker. I also ask: Is the programme robust enough to ensure that all witnesses at risk are placed within the programme? Because they have to evaluate.

Based on the Justice Protection Act the Minister and his team has to evaluate the gravity of the crime that the witness has come forward to submit evidence to, and they have to evaluate that. And if it is a very serious incident, then they should on their own ensure that the witness is put into protection services. And that is why Minister Young could have stated, in that article I just quoted a while ago, that the mother who attended her son’s graduation was murdered as a witness, and the Minister of National Security could have said in that article that “she was not in the witness protection programme”.

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Now, to be in a witness protection programme, Madam Speaker, you have to sign something called a memorandum of understanding. So every witness that comes forward in the Witness Protection Programme has to sign that piece of memorandum of understanding that they are part of the programme. There have been many horror stories that a lot of witnesses that are in that programme, they are not given that memorandum of understanding paper to sign. So when something happens—I am not saying Minister Young is telling untruths or whatever—they can always say that the individual was not part of that witness protection programme because they have not signed any memorandum of understanding being in the protection programme.

Madam Speaker, I want to refer to a witness who came forward in front of cameras. He really put his life at risk as a witness in the protection programme. He came out of it because he was fed up of the witness Protection Programme, and that individual—and it is there in a Trinidad Guardian, 9th of May, 2019. His name is Jarvis Mark. And Jarvis Mark, Madam Speaker, was part of that programme and you know what happened to Jarvis Mark? In that programme wherever they placed him, according to his article, they placed him in witness—in hotspot areas. So in one particular night he was in a hotspot in the Witness Protection Programme and he was hearing gunshots outside his apartment building, not knowing if something was going to happen to him. The next morning when he came outside he heard that there was as murder outside in the streets close to where they had him as a witness protection. And what he is saying, they moved him around not in any safe area, but in hotspot zones.

So I ask the Minister of National Security if he can look into that and see what could be done to increase and beef up and make these witnesses safe. But
further more to that, Jarvis Mark as a witness in a murder, Madam Speaker, you know what happens in this Witness Protection Programme? They are only responsible for the individual in that particular crime, or witness, or evidence that they are giving evidence to. So Jarvis Mark had a matter in the San Fernando courts outside of what he is in witness protection for and he had to go to court because his matter was called, and going to court on that matter that is outside of the witness protection matter, he had to go on his own. He was not afforded witness protection. So even the magistrate in his case asked, “Well, how come you are here and you are not afforded witness protection”? So the witness protection only applies to the case that you are involved in and not any other case that you are not giving evidence to. So, Madam Speaker, I ask the Minister of National Security to really look into that.

As I end, my time is coming to an end, I want to address some low hanging fruits, pocket diaries for police officers. There had been a shortage, Madam Speaker. A police diary is so important to police officers. Whether it is lack of funding in the police service that police officers cannot get pocket diaries because—and that is part of the law that pocket diaries are submitted as evidence when police officers go on a crime scene or take evidence. I want to ask the Minister of National Security: The sound and cry about body cams for officers, what is the status of body cams? Are we looking out for our police officers? Are we ensuring that when they go out there they are protected by these body cams?

So, Madam Speaker, as I close, you know, I have not been convinced that even their Members on their side really have the confidence in the Minister of National Security. But there is yet one Member to stand up and praise other than the general terms of glorifying the Minister, of really saying what has he done in
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the Ministry of National Security in his tenure of two and a half years. So, Madam Speaker, this Motion is timely. I want to thank my other Members who have spoken and I rest. Thank you, Madam Speaker. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker: Member for Arima. [Desk thumping]

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Pennelope Beckles):
Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and, Madam Speaker, in making my contribution I first want to deal with some very inaccurate information that was recently spoken by the hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre. Because, Madam Speaker, the hon Member in his contribution, whilst he is saying that the hon. Minister of National Security is responsible for the Witness Protection Programme, let us understand very clearly the Witness Protection Programme is governed by legislation. And he is saying he is responsible for witness protection, but yet still, every single example that he gave, those witnesses that were killed were not in the Witness Protection Programme. [Desk thumping]

You see because what the public has to understand that a number of the contributions made by our colleagues opposite are misleading. You cannot come and blame the Minister of National Security for witnesses that have been killed that are not under the Witness Protection Programme. [Desk thumping] And not only that, the legislation that governs the witness protection programme is dealt with by the Director of Public Prosecutions and the police. The same MOU that the hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre referred to, those specific ingredients of the MOU are dealt with by the DPP and the police service, not the Minister of National Security. [Desk thumping] And I want to remind the hon. Members opposite that very soon there will be a piece of legislation that will be coming before the Parliament, but before I deal with that let us remember that the Witness Anonymity Order that was
before this honourable House, our colleagues opposite who are now talking about witness protection refused, refused, to support the Witness Anonymity Order. [Desk thumping]

But yet still today, they are coming spending almost—the hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre is spending almost his entire 20 minutes speaking and criticizing the Minister of National Security for the Witness Protection Programme. Well, let me say and let me put on record that during the term of office of this Minister of National Security, not a single witness has been killed under his watch. [Desk thumping] So yes, you want to come and give all these examples of all these witnesses that have been killed and you want to place it at the foot of the Minister of National Security when you know full well that is not, not, his responsibility.

I now want to speak about a couple of matters. Now, Madam Speaker, this Motion is calculated in my humble view to give the impression that the hon. Minister of National Security, and by extension the hon. Prime Minister, that they do not care about our citizens abroad. That is the impression that they are trying to give. And notwithstanding the fact that many of the speakers opposite got up and said, well, they are not concerned with who got exemption to come and who is exempt to leave and what, the bottom line is this entire Motion is calculated to have our citizens abroad believe that this Government does not care about them. That is what it is about [Desk thumping] and it is totally misleading. Because we all acknowledge that in 2020 these are unprecedented times. This COVID pandemic is unprecedented, Madam Speaker, and as a result of that we know that countries over the world, they are facing challenges dealing with this issue.

Madam Speaker, how many of us would have thought that in 2021 or 2020, we would have to be wearing face masks in the Parliament? How many of us
would have thought that I have to speak behind this glass? How many of us would realize that we are not able to celebrate Carnival this year, we would not be able to celebrate Divali this year? How many of us understand the challenges where people cannot go to school? In some instances people have not gone to work for months, and that is the challenge that this Government has faced. And when we talk about this Motion we have to understand that we have to talk about it in the context of the challenges that this Government has had to face because it is a balancing act. You are talking about saving lives, you are talking about the challenges that you face economically, and at the same time we recognized that some procedure had to be put in place to deal with the exemptions and our citizens coming into Trinidad and Tobago. But they want to give the impression to our citizens that the Government is deliberately putting in place a process to keep them abroad when that is absolutely false. [Desk thumping]

You know, do we understand what it is when people cannot attend the funeral of their parents, their grandparents? You cannot even go into the hospital. Those are real, real issues, but the mischief is you want to say that you are not concerned about who comes and who goes, but like my colleague from Tobago West, I too had to leave the country. I came into the country and I stayed initially—when the 14 days quarantine was in place I stayed for my 14 days quarantine. I had to return to the United States in order to pack because I left hurriedly. But the same Leader of the Opposition that is making all of this noise and talking about you were not interested in who comes and who leaves, they had to get into the house, how big the house was, you know, the fact that your daughter came, the fact that you took so long to return, all of those became issues. And when I returned—yes, I came on the same flight with the hon. Prime Minister’s
daughter and what became the issue? That she brought 10 other persons, and I mean, it had nothing to do with the exemption. It is all about mischief. That is what it is about. [Desk thumping]

And, Madam Speaker, one of things we have recognized about this Government is the Government has ensured that on every occasion that is possible, that the information is shared with the public. The Minister of National Security has been at pains. He has made himself available, the hon. Prime Minister has made himself available, so that they can take questions from the public, from the press and they can share the procedure, the process. So not just the people of Trinidad and Tobago, but the citizens abroad can feel comfortable that they are doing their best to treat with this issue.

Madam Speaker, to date, 12,100 exemptions have been granted, and as I recall correctly, it was just Friday that the hon. Minister of National Security in reporting indicated at that time it was 11,682 exemptions. So from Friday to today, therefore, Madam Speaker, it has been 418 additional exemptions. [Desk thumping] And I am sure that most of us would be willing to say the system is not perfect. Which country in the world has a perfect system to deal with the exemptions? None, because it is an ongoing. We now find ourselves in a situation in Trinidad and Tobago where the new strain of virus has reached Trinidad and Tobago.

Many Members on the other side spoke about what the public has to say. Well, let us interview members of the public, and the average Trinidadian and Tobagonian understands that the process that the Government has adopted has resulted in us to a large extent having a very safe Trinidad and Tobago. Every day you are given the data about how many persons have actually been able to contract
the pandemic, contract the COVID; how many people have died, and I would say that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Minister of National Security has done exceptionally well. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, many of my colleagues before me have given the data and have shared information with what has happened in some other countries that have been given the credit of what we call best practices: New Zealand, Australia. And we think of some of the other countries in the world, bigger countries, better resources, bigger economies, and they are not able to deal successfully with this pandemic.

But yet still, some of my colleagues opposite come here today and want to give the world the impression that the Minister of National Security and by extension, this Government, has done the worst job. Well, I want to say here today again, that this Minister of National Security, our Prime Minister and our Government has done an excellent job in dealing with this COVID pandemic. [Desk thumping]

4.50 p.m.

So, Madam Speaker, I listened to some of my colleagues on the other side talking about the fact that this Motion has been brought before this House and our colleagues on this side have not defended the Minister of National Security. What they seem to forget is the Motion has been placed in a way almost exclusively by the virtue of their contributions to focus on the exemption. You ask the average Trinidadian and Tobagonian what they think of the performance of the Minister of National Security, especially when we look at the data on statistics of crime, on statistics of whether or not our country is safer, on the prison system, on the issue of immigration, the passports and the fact that people can now get passports much
quicker than they took for many, many years and people would say to you that there has been a substantial improvement. So that this message that they want to give to the public that the hon. Minister of National Security has not been performing is totally and absolutely false.

And, Madam Speaker, I want to say again that I have had the benefit of being at the United Nations and I have had the opportunity to see that an organization such as United Nations actually had to close its doors for several months because of this pandemic. Ambassadors and staff members, many of them could not go to the United Nations and over time, things have changed and we have seen where the Government has continued to adapt and adjust as things improve. But the truth is that when you now look at countries like Germany and the United Kingdom, we are actually seeing where their data is saying that things are actually getting worse in those countries and they have actually had to put in place policies to restrict the movement of not just their citizens but persons coming into their respective countries.

So, Madam Speaker, as I close, I just want to express my satisfaction with the performance of the hon. Minister of National Security and the Government by extension. I join my colleagues in saying that as far as I am concerned, when we could have spent our time today debating legislation that could take this country forward, that we have spent a lot of time over the last couple of hours literally wasting our time on a Motion that I consider is of no substance. Thank you. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Arnold Ram (Caroni Central): Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to address the Chamber here today on this very important issue and I also want to thank the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Siparia, for
Minister of National Security (cont’d)

Mr. Ram (cont’d)

bringing this Motion to the House and giving us the opportunity to not only review
the performance or lack thereof of the Minister of National Security but the entire
PNM administration.

Madam Speaker, whilst we may have our grievances and our reservations
about the methods and means of the Minister of National Security, his failure to
protect the citizens of this country, his failure to address the growing rates of crime
and criminality in this country, let us not forget that it is the Prime Minister who
sits as the head of Cabinet who is also the Chair of the National Security Council
who must also share in the blame of the failure of the Minister of National Security
and his negligence. After all, Madam Speaker, the buck must stop with him.

And just to address colleagues opposite who spoke before with respect to the
witness protection care and support, I have in my possession Gazette No. 158 dated
9\textsuperscript{th} of September, 2020, and I will implore my colleague opposite to look at that
Gazette wherein “Witness Protection Care and Support” is listed under the
Minister of National Security. And I tell you, Madam Speaker, I had so much
confidence in my colleagues on this side that when this Motion was first tabled, I
thought about recusing myself from the debate because I know that they will have
ample time to ventilate many of the issues affecting this country. However, had I
done that, I would have robbed my constituents of the opportunity to voice their
concerns in this Chamber for which they elected me to provide.

And in passing, Madam Speaker, because I do not want my colleagues to
then get up on a Standing Order but in quick passing and I say that guardedly, we
have had a Minister of National Security who had to recuse himself 57 times from
the Cabinet, and we on average in this House, we meet once per week and if he had
to recuse himself 57 times from here, it would have been more than a year.
Mr. Deyalsingh: Madam Speaker, this recusal, this is about the fourth speaker. Standing Order 55(1)(b).

Madam Speaker: Okay, so I will just allow you a little leeway and you can move on.

Mr. A. Ram: I did say in quick passing. And yes, he may have to recuse himself for more than one year. And whilst we might not complain because when he speaks, Madam Speaker, his contributions—he in the person of the Minister of National Security—prove to be irrelevant because most times, they are the same “rhetoric”. It is the blame game. “Is Kamla, is UNC—”

Hon. Member: “Retic?”

Mr. A. Ram: “—is Anand, is Ramdeen”, and lately, “it is COVID”. And on the last occasion, before today—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Madam Speaker, the language of the Parliament is English. What is “retic”?

[Member sucks teeth]

Madam Speaker: Again, who sucked their teeth?

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker, I do apologize.

Madam Speaker: All right and that is enough.

Ms. Ameen: I think I will take a walk.

Madam Speaker: Yes, please. Please, I am waiting for you to take the walk quickly.

[Member departs Chamber]

Madam Speaker: Okay, so let us proceed.

Mr. A. Ram: Thank you. So as I was saying, it is the same rhetoric, it is blame Kamla, it is blame COVID, it is blame UNC and lately in the last occasion prior to today, it was reading from a script of preliminary submissions into a matter before
the court, right? And he had to be schooled by my good colleague Member for Chaguanas West to indicate that these matters are just preliminary issues before the court and that they were not substantive judgments and I would have hoped that the hon. Minister will move from this continuous rhetoric of blaming the UNC time and time again and about talking about “unpatriotism” because what is being unpatriotic in this country is to disallow citizens from entering their own country.

Madam Speaker, I will then focus my attention on issues with respect to the parole and prisoner management as well as probation services which fall squarely again under the Gazette of 9th of September, 2020, under the Minister of National Security so that that is clarified upfront. Madam Speaker, the Minister does not only fail the people in his absence by his recusal but he also fails them when he is present. For years now, the people in this country have been advocating and have been lobbying for prison reform in the form of either legislative amendments regarding the operations of the Judiciary and the courts or organizational reform in the management of the prison services and they have received neither from this Government going in five, going in six years. What we have gotten instead, Madam Speaker—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Standing Order 48(1). Legislation for the Judiciary and the courts does not fall under the Minister of National Security. That is for the Attorney General.

Madam Speaker: Okay, Member. All right. So I will allow the Member to continue because other than making that statement, nothing else has been said. Continue.

Mr. A. Ram: Thank you for your protection, Madam Speaker. What we have gotten instead is legislation that seeks to arrest more people and hold them without
charge thereby bypassing—

**Madam Speaker:** All right, so what you said is that you were dealing with parole and prisoner management and probation services, okay? Now, you made a statement on which St. Joseph stood up and it is because you made it along with another statement that I allowed you but I am not going to let you deal with legislation that deals with matters of the court and that sort of thing which is not under the purview. You have identified correctly certain aspects that are assigned to the Minister of National Security and therefore I will ask you to deal with those that you know that—not necessarily what you identified, but those that you know that are assigned to him because you have quoted the *Gazette.*

**Mr. A. Ram:** Yes, please. Thank you for your guidance, Madam Speaker. So what I was saying is that no legislation has been brought in this Parliament to relieve the burden on the Remand Yard and prisons in this country by this administration five going in six years, by the Minister of National Security since his appointment on August 06, 2018; there has been none neither before this Parliament. And the prisons remain overcrowded and understaffed or the court system is overbooked and overworked but more than that, Madam Speaker, more than anything, it does nothing to mitigate the impact of the incarceration on the psyche and culture of the poor and impoverished citizens of this country. It helps only to perpetuate a cycle of crime and violence that many are unable to escape from once they are indoctrinated into the system.

Madam Speaker, it has been known for some time that whilst imprisonment is necessary in many cases involving violent offences, it does not constitute a cure-all in the crime prevention or in the social reintegration of offenders. Moreover, in many countries, just like Trinidad and Tobago, globally, prison systems face
similar problems of overcrowding and outdated facilities that cause the prisoners to find themselves faced with deplorable conditions of detention which can have adverse effects on their physical, mental health and impede their educational and vocational training. This affects their chances of future adjustment back into society. The impact of long-term imprisonment on a person’s family is also quite considerable especially in cases where the inmate may be responsible for the development of young children or may be the only breadwinner in the family.

**Mr. Deyalsingh:** Madam Speaker, respectfully, 48(1). How is the Minister responsible for those issues?

**Madam Speaker:** And, Member, again, I am having difficulty in understanding the relevance to what you would like us to address ourselves to. Okay? [Interruption] Just one minute. Just one minute. Again, you were talking about parole and prisoner management as you have identified, and maybe what you need to do is to tie the aspects of that to the nature of this debate.

**Mr. A. Ram:** Madam Speaker, for my colleague of St. Joseph, what I was alluding to was that without prison reform, without legislation coming to this House for prison reform, they can have adverse effects on many inmates and their families and I was now indicating that some inmates or some persons may be responsible for the development of young children and/or may be the only breadwinner in the family.

But, Madam Speaker, let me turn my attention now to some stats provided by the Minister of National Security on the 7th Report of the Joint Select Committee on Finance and Legal Affairs and it says at page 27:

“According to information submitted by the Ministry of National Security, the cost of maintaining prisoners annually was seven hundred and twenty-
eight million, seven hundred and thirteen thousand, two hundred and seventy-one dollars and eighty-one cents ($728,713,271.81 TTD).”

He went on to say:

“The total population...at 2018 was three thousand nine hundred and forty-three (3,943).”

Madam Speaker, if you divide that figure, that figure being the amount spent in prisons and persons in Remand, by the number of persons incarcerated, we will get an average approximately $15,400 per inmate per month. So this Minister has not considered any cost-benefit analysis or has not provided any cost-benefit analysis of prisoner management versus keeping persons in remand. There must be a cost-benefit analysis.

Now, we know all too well about studies. We had that feasibility study and very quickly, there was a rapid rail, there was a feasibility study of $600 million or $500 million. There were three or four reports about Petrotrin. Those are reports—

Madam Speaker: Member, I am really struggling, I am really struggling and you know again, I remind you of Standing Order 48(1).

Mr. A. Ram: I was speaking about any cost-benefit analysis of prison reform in this country. Members on the other side know all too well about feasibility studies and about reports and I was just merely using two examples to indicate that the rapid rail which costs $500 million—

Madam Speaker: Let us deal with the point of the cost-benefit analysis that you are speaking about and prison reform.

Mr. A. Ram: Madam Speaker, as I move on, this is why many persons were cautiously optimistic to learn that the Minister presented two years ago or indicated two years ago that his Ministry was widening the parole system to allow early
release of inmates who have been convicted of certain crimes based on rehabilitation. This is not a new idea to this country. In fact, the first report of prisoner administration was through a task force headed by Mr. Cipriani Baptiste and what the task force found in 2002 was that:

“…overall…staffing of the Probation Department is grossly inadequate to deliver social justice as recommended in the Restorative Justice Philosophy. Therefore…”—in order—“to meet the increasing demands made on the”—probation—“department the Task force recommends…to include a Probation Parole Unit, to satisfy the goals of Restorative Justice and re-integration…policy.”

In an article appearing on March 04, 2020, in the Trinidad Express entitled “Restorative justice: transforming the system”, Dr. Don John Omale, a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime expert on restorative justice and also a Professor of Criminology indicated that:

“…retributive justice has been the classical model of criminal justice but in recent times…”

There were some deficiencies he identified and he goes on to say the deficiencies are, and I am quoting, Madam Speaker:

“…the failure of the model is seen in the delay of administration of justice…”

Something we are very familiar with.

“…prisons overcrowding…”

Again, something we are very familiar with.

“…the diminishing trust in some officials of the law…”

Again, we can say something that we are very familiar with.
Madam Speaker: This is going to be the last opportunity that I give you, okay? We are dealing here with a Motion about the loss of confidence in the Minister of National Security, all right? Right now, we are dealing with some paper delivered by an expert and you know, we are all about the place. Please come back or tie that quickly to the Motion that is before us.

Mr. A. Ram: Madam Speaker, and as I move on, the task force was of a review that the probation department needed to update its services to administer best practices in corrections. It was necessary because in all international jurisdictions, the probation service plays a key role in corrections and in establishing a proper strategy for the criminal justice system and parole is another key area involving probation.

Mr. Young: Madam Speaker, it is becoming painful; 48(1), none of this has been linked to the performance, non-performance or whatever of the Minister of National Security. We are getting a thesis. Speech being read from the room in the back. “They does hand out speeches.” Save us.

Madam Speaker: Okay, Member. So Member, do you have a link that you could make immediately? If not, I am going to ask you to resume your seat.

Mr. A. Ram: Madam Speaker, I want to quote from you as I was speaking about restorative justice and probation as I indicated very early on in my speech, and talking about the task force report, a report that was laid in this House in 2002, with respect to the recommendations of the task force.

Madam Speaker: Yes, but the Minister was not the Minister in 2002, from what I have heard in the debate. So if you are referring to that, link it quickly or I am going to ask you to resume your seat. I have given you more than five

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opportunities.

**Mr. A. Ram:** And in 2019, on Tuesday August 6th, the Ministry of National Security indicated that he was in the process of developing a parole system. He indicated again, the Minister of National Security and I quote, Madam Speaker:

> We have begun the process of parole.

**Mr. Young:** Madam Speaker, 55(1)(b), tedious repetition in his own speech.

**Madam Speaker:** All right. Member for Caroni Central, your speaking time is now spent.

**Mr. Roger Monroe (Toco/Sangre Grande):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity to join this debate where the Opposition 19 brings a Motion of no confidence in the hon. Minister of National Security, Stuart Young. Before I really go into what I came here to contribute today, let me bring some clarification to the confusion of the Members of the Opposition and the Member for Caroni Central. I will touch on one topic that he would have touched on earlier on in respect to the Witness Protection Programme.

> I am seriously concerned that Members, the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre and the Member for Caroni Central are totally confused about a witness in the programme and a witness that left the Witness Protection Programme. I want to also reiterate that they should know that witnesses do not die in the programme unless they leave the programme and they do not die in the programme under this Government and this governance. [Desk thumping] You all have the handbook for how witnesses die, where they die and when they die, check the handbook. The last witness that was killed who left the programme in 1994 was Clint Huggins, any other person was not killed during and being a part of this programme. [Desk thumping]
On the Motion at hand based on no confidence in the Minister of National Security, I wish to make it abundantly clear that I never questioned the competence of the Minister of National Security, the hon. Stuart Young and he has my full support, 150 per cent. In saying so, I want to list just a few reasons why the hon. Minister has my full support:

- Reduction in crime and serious crimes and murders.
- The registration of the migrants and skilful management of the Venezuelan situation.
- Putting systems and plans in place to protect the citizens that are here in the country through the exemption process.

And how this exemption process works, members on the other side and to protect the citizens in this country, it is because we have two sets of citizens we are speaking about and you all failed to mention the citizens that are here in the country. There are the citizens that are trying to get into the country who go through the process and speakers before me would have mentioned just recently how many persons were allowed to come in but in bringing those persons home, we also have to pay close attention to the situation not getting out of hand and making sure that the livelihood and the well-being of those who are here are also taken care of by that exemption process.

Madam Speaker, I listened to the untruth and deceit that the Opposition—

Madam Speaker: Member, I will ask you to withdraw the word “deceit” and find another word. Thank you.

Mr. Young: Misleading.

Mr. R. Monroe: Madam Speaker, I listened to the untruth and misleading statements made by the Opposition and which they tried to feed the population. I
ask the Opposition to tell us in this House and the country the truth on their reign from 2010 to 2015 in the Ministry of National Security. Tell us about SSA and Resmi. Tell us about the 2011 state of emergency and the reasons behind it. Tell us why they changed five Ministers of National Security.

Hon. Member: Standing Order 48(8), please.

Madam Speaker: So, Member for Toco/Sangre Grande, I would ask that this is really a question about the Minister of National Security and therefore, if you could focus your contribution that way. The other thing is that a lot of these issues—and this is for the guidance for everybody who is going to speak hereafter, a lot of these issues have been traversed several times and therefore, from here on, I am going to invoke the rule against tedious repetition. Okay? So I would ask you to move on to another point. All these points about SSA and LifeSport and so on, while tangential, they have been ventilated already.

Mr. R. Monroe: Thank you, I take your guidance, Madam Speaker. I stand here today in full support of the hon. Minister not because we are colleagues and we are from the same political allegiance, but I stand here today because I believe in my heart that the Minister has been bringing forward what is best to manage the affairs of national security in this country.

It has been beneficial to the people of this country.

5.20 p.m.

Based on his input along with the other Ministries, we have seen some semblance of normalcy, Madam Speaker, where persons are now able to go back out into the world of work, into their small businesses, into places that were closed during the early part of this pandemic, Madam Speaker. It is on this stance that I stand here today and fully endorse my colleague Minister Stuart Young. And I
have no doubt that he is going to continue to give us his best service, be a hard worker, and bring forth all the plans and strategies to better run the National Security Ministry and the affairs of national security of Trinidad and Tobago. Madam Speaker, as I come to a close and wind up, Madam—

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER in the Chair]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I come to a close and wind up on my contribution as to why I support the hon. Stuart Young in this debate, I want to remind the citizenry that they are not to be fooled by the untruth, the misleading statements, and what seems to be a desperate attempt for political mileage by the Opposition in trying to pull down the name of one of the best national security Ministers that we have ever seen in this country. [Desk thumping]

I ask them to end their obsession, it is no longer cute and stop the attacks on the Minister of National Security in his both capacities personally and in his Ministry. I thank you. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Indarsingh: You could have said that in a sentence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I recognize the Member for Fyzabad.

Dr. Lackram Bodoe (Fyzabad): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to this debate. First of all, I want to commend and support the Motion brought by the Leader of the Opposition in this vote of no confidence against the Minister of National Security. I also wish to congratulate my colleagues who have so ably prosecuted the case against the Minister of National Security. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Ministry of National Security holds a very important place, it is a big role, it is responsible of course—it is a critical role responsible for protecting our citizens, securing our borders, dealing with crime
and so on. And therefore, it is a tremendous responsibility one that has to be taken seriously. And of course it is much the importance of that Ministry as matched by this budget. And therefore, of course the issue of competence and confidence is important and essential in the office holder. And this is what the Motion speaks to.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to focus a little bit on the area of forensics and DNA which according to the Gazette falls under the purview of the Minister of National Security. If I may just go into the role of the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre. If you would permit me to refer to the findings of a joint select committee which was dealing specifically, it is an enquiry into the operations of the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Sciences Centre and the issue of DNA sampling in Trinidad and Tobago. And I will come back to speak just a little bit about DNA sampling because it is very important of course in the fight against crime.

So from this JSC report the—Mr. Simeon Yearwood, Permanent Secretary, who is the accounting officer stated that the role of the centre is essentially to provide two things really, amongst others but two important things. One, forensic science services in the areas of biology, chemistry, document analysis, toxicology, and firearms. That is very important.

And the second role of course was forensic pathology services, for example post-mortems in support of law enforcement agencies involved in the investigation of crime. So the question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is where are we in terms of the state of the pathology services? So if you allow me to quote and I just want to make two quotations, one in 2017, and then I will go further to what the state of the services are in 2019, just to look at where we are whether we have had improvements in performance in pathology services.
Minister of National Security (cont’d)  
Dr. Bodeo (cont’d)

So I make reference if you permit me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to a Newsday article on Monday 17 September, 2017, where Dr. Valerie Alexandrov was interviewed. He is a well-known name in forensic pathology in this country; he has since left. But he stated that:

“The United Nations Forensic Pathology Commission are saying that any forensic pathologist is not allowed to do more than 250 autopsies for the year, 275 for the most and that is under special circumstances.”

The point being that:

“If any pathologist is found to perform more than 300, they are stripped of accreditation, which means that the court can consider…”—him an—“…unreliable witness on the basis that performing so many autopsies…”

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the role of a forensic pathologist is very important. It is akin to that of pilots who are required to have certain—can only fly certain hours, and therefore, if they are overworked then their findings may become unreliable and can be questioned in a court of law. And I speak to this because we have had the shortage of forensic pathologists, it is not an easy problem to fix. You know, I recognize that it is a worldwide problem, worldwide shortage, but again, the question is whether we have done enough, and made enough effort you know, to fill that shortage? This report stated that out of the four positions only two were filled. I believe that now there are three pathologists, so it means we are still one short and therefore it means that there is still an extra amount of workload for the three pathologists.

In addition to that, I just want to draw the attention of the Minister of National Security that even so, this workload is not evenly distributed because one
pathologist is based in Tobago where the numbers are obviously less than what happens in Trinidad.

The other important point that was made and I think this is a practical point this is something that needs to be addressed, and again, I quote here from Dr. Alexandrov he went on to state that:

“‘In the UK or Canada there is only one day when the forensic science centre is closed and that is Christmas.’”—Day.

Mr. Young: It is with a heavy heart, but 48(1). This is not again about a thesis about what takes place in forensic pathology, and what Alexandrov, et cetera are saying. Where is the link? What is it about? We cannot continue that whole day—[ Interruption]—hush “nah boy”.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again, I know that this service falls under the Ministry of National Security but again, in terms of the prolonged information, but I will give you a little leeway but tie it in please. Tie it in quickly.

Dr. L. Bodoe: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be guided. I was just making the point of course that because of the shortage the findings can be questioned in court. And I will move on from there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, the question really is and I said this is—I spoke about 2017, I know the Minister came on board in 2018 and so the question that arose is whether these problems have been fixed? And this is if you will allow me to quote briefly from a Newsday editorial February 2019, and this is said in the Newsday Sunday 03 February, 2019, and the editorial says “Fix forensics”—[Interruption]—the editorial says, “Fix forensics” and again this editorial speaks to several problems which have not been or were not fixed in the Forensic Science Centre.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just want to raise a few issues from the
joint select committee report which spoke specifically with regard to the challenge faced at the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre. And just to ask in a broad way, whether some of these issues have been dealt with going forward by the Minister of National Security. So if you will allow me to quote from the report, there were staffing challenges with regard to, well I mentioned about the contract positions for the pathologist. They also spoke about the administrative structure and quite a few vacant positions that were there and that is something that under the Minister of National Security has not been fixed, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, the other issue that is very important in addition to pathology services and forensic pathology of course is the issue of DNA testing, and I know that this was mentioned very briefly and touched on by the Leader of the Opposition, and I just want to expand briefly on it a few points, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And of course in this modern day and age and with the crime situation not only in Trinidad and Tobago but throughout the world, the whole issue of the role of DNA testing is very important in terms of not only identifying victims of crime, but also in terms of solving crime and using DNA as a tool, very important tool in terms of reducing the conviction rate.

Mr. Imbert: Boring. This is not a discussion about the Ministry of National Security, it is about the Minister, a vote of no confidence in the Minister, there is no link whatsoever to the Minister, none.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again, colleagues, the forensic services and also DNA services fall under the purview of Ministry of National Security, so I am giving the Member the opportunity to expound. Proceed, but tie the point quickly.

Dr. L. Bodoe: I will. I am guided, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I will tie in the point. And the point I am making is that really and truly, all the support services that
come under the Minister’s purview which includes of course the issue of DNA, I am saying that having passed legislation and so on, we are still a little bit behind in terms of populating the DNA bank because of whatever constraints there are. That is the point I am making, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that really and truly, the Minister has not paid for whatever reason, has not allowed to be put into place the things that can help in the fight against crime and therefore that is an issue that we need to raise. [Desk thumping]

And therefore of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the questions really have to be asked why you know, what is the issue? Is it an issue of resources? I know we were told that the DNA kits that came to the country that is being utilized, I think those are valid questions that can be asked. Is there an issue with resources in terms of those who have to take the samples and so on, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again I know that there might be objections in terms of the Minister is not responsible for filling the vacancies that might be there in the Forensic Science Centre. Well, of course I think it is very important as the line Minister, you know, you are responsible for putting the pressure to get those vacancies filled by the relevant authority.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just also want to raise the issue of the lack or the absence—there is a vacancy right now in terms of the DNA Custodian who I understand has been out of office since July of 2020, and of course, the DNA Custodian holds a very important role in terms of supervising and controlling, and securing the information in the National DNA Bank. And, therefore, what might be responsible for the delay in filling this vacancy in such an important position?

One of the other issues that was raised in this JSC was the issue of the accreditation of the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre. Out of the
Committee report it is reported that a committee was formed to look into the accreditation process. And again, that is very important in terms of ensuring that the samples and so on, that were taken and the evidence produced in court coming from an accredited lab is very important. So again, I ask those questions as to why and what has been the delay in getting the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre accredited?

The other issue that is on the minds of citizens as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the issue of this new forensic science centre, it is well known that the current accommodation is crammed. There is the issue of not enough—I understand that more staff was recently hired, but again, the issue there is the shortage of space. And I know the Minister has stated and promised a new forensic science centre. And again if I may just quote from the editorial of 2019, and allow me to quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

“National Security Minister Stuart Young promised a new state-of-the-art DNA and forensic science centre after the reading of the 2018-2019 national budget. It’s to be built with the support of $10 million in ‘free funding’ from China. The new facility will be built at Mt Hope and the breaking of ground was supposed to happen soon after the budget’s reading with an estimated completion in 2020.”

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I close with the question as to what is the state of this project and when can the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago expect this new forensic science centre to be available, and to be made available for the benefit of solving crime and taking us forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

So, I support this Motion of no confidence in the Minister of National Security, and I thank you for the opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker. [Desk
Mr. Deputy Speaker: I recognize the Member for Arima—D’Abadie/O’Meara, Mayor of Arima. [Desk thumping]

The Minister in the Ministry of Education (Hon. Lisa Morris-Julien): Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I enter this debate I decided to jump right in. I was enthusiastic, I was looking for fire and brimstone. I thought that they would bring it. Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the only thing they brought was besides votes of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, boring, inane, and as usual the same thing, over, and over. [Desk thumping] A Motion that is completely wasting the valuable time of the Minister of National Security and the energies of this elected and very much still in control Government.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we on this side we represent the good, the understanding, good judgment and good sense. On the other hand we have the cries, the tears and the repeat of—now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they said not to bring it here but I have to bring as the representative of D’Abadie/O’Meara they brought back LifeSport into the borough of Arima. You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I realize there is an obsession with the hon. Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West. [Desk thumping]

John Hopkins University defines an obsession:

“Is the inability of a person to stop thinking about a particular topic or feeling a certain emotion without a high amount of anxiety.”

Mr. Indarsingh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Standing Order 44(10).

Hon. Member: What! [Crosstalk]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again, Member, I will give you some leeway you are now making your introduction, but again in terms of the Standing Order, it is clear.
Hon. L. Morris-Julien: Thank you. In this particular scenario, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is an obsession in the person, there are people who cannot stop thinking about the hon. Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West on the other side. You see, I understand the obsession, the Member is a handsome young man. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, some people would not understand what handsome is because they have no choice but to look in the mirror. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

Mr. Ratiram: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Standing Order 48(1), the relevance of the Member is handsome, how does that fit in to—[Crosstalk]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Overruled.

Hon. L. Morris-Julien: I cannot fathom why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they spend so much time obsessing about the Minister of National Security. You see, I do not lie on my bed at night plotting and scheming, thinking about ways to undermine, to remove public confidence—

Mr. Indarsingh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 48(6), nobody plotting and so on. [Crosstalk]

Hon. Member: She said she is not doing it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Members, overruled.

Hon. L. Morris-Julien: You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to request that they do not put their obsession on me. [Crosstalk] The Minister of National Security is one of the most vilified members from UNC bloggers to the Member for Siparia, the obsession with him it is terrifying, it is scary, it is pathetic, and it is sad. I would like to suggest to my colleague that he wears a piece of blue to prevent him from “maljo” but the venom is so strong, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he will need an entire powder blue suit and he will have to ask one or two of the colleagues from the other side because he does not have that fashionista sense.
You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you are good you will always be resented, when you are straight you will not be liked by the crooked, when you are an intellectual superior you will not [Desk thumping] be appreciated by your intellectual inferiors. When you are the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West, you will be attacked by wolves who are howling and braying, bawling, and scheming, and screaming, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but no matter what they do we, the PNM, are standing in the gap. [Desk thumping] We protect our colleague not because he cannot protect himself, because the gentlemen has important things to do, wasting his time for this entire day on a frivolous Motion that makes absolutely no sense.

Imagine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the other side has the audacity to keep speaking about porous borders. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there certain people who benefit greatly from porous borders. There are certain people where houses of ill repute will not survive without access to these borders. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when your hands are dirty do not point to the one who is clean. [Desk thumping]

Wolves are more likely to attack a lone individual than a group of people. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the hon. Member Stuart Young is not alone. [Desk thumping] For a brief moment when I heard Oropouche East brought up a WhatsApp chat, I wondered if it is I ended up in a high school debate. Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, unless I see it with my own eyes, hear it with my own ears, say it with my own lips, I do not believe. But since we want to discuss things floating around on the Internet, let us go to a lovely space called the UNC Cabal. Dr. Rai went—

**Ms. Haynes:** “Oh gosh”. Excuse me, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on 48(1). [Desk thumping] This is not the Internet. You cannot just pick up anything you want on the Internet and bring it into the debate. [Crosstalk]
Mr. Deputy Speaker: Overruled. [Crosstalk]

Hon. L. Morris-Julien: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will gracefully not read about boys’ feuds, pink palaces, and Fyzabad office, a women scorned, a woman horned, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

Mr. Lee: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 48(8), this Motion is not about that, what she is talking about—the Member is talking about, it is about no confidence in the Minister of National Security. All right? So I ask—[Crosstalk]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Members, Members, you yourselves have all opened up to debate, I will stand here and be guided. Overruled, proceed. [Desk thumping]

Hon. L. Morris-Julien: Thank you.

Mr. Lee: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 48(8) again, when Dr. Moonilal the Member for Oropouche East [Interruption] spoke, wait—on the WhatsApp—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I need no explanation. I need—Chief Whip, I need no explanation. I need no explanation. Proceed Member, and tie it in as you go along.

Hon. L. Morris-Julien: Mr. Deputy Speaker, my point is simply to not believe everything you read on the Internet. I simply did not. So we move on because we the PNM, we do not believe in screenshot “bantons”, instead we believe in dialogue and they will not divide this united People’s National Movement. [Desk thumping] We have a strong General Secretary and we have an excellent Minister of National Security. [Desk thumping] Mr. Deputy Speaker, iron sharpens iron. There is no dictatorship here. One person did not come and make all the decisions. There is no camp divided into seniors and juniors. We are all one.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, notwithstanding the numerous attacks he has faced in the public domain by Opposition forces, Member of Parliament Young continues to work effectively, efficiently, he understands the importance of keeping our
Minister of National Security (cont’d)
Hon. L. Morris-Julien (cont’d)

citizens aware and informed, and Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is because of him and the work of the national security team we are safe from COVID-19. Our country would have been devastated if the hon. Member did not take the initiative to prevent—[Interruption] Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you for the correction.

There is a false narrative that is always dishonestly created by Opposition 19, they like to point out that crime rises under the PNM. Mr. Deputy Speaker, she who pays the piper calls the tune. If you are a criminal, would you bite the hand that is feeding you? [Desk thumping] We have a Minister of National Security with integrity, a Minister of National Security who can stand up to the criminal elements. It was not the PNM that coined the term “community leaders”; it was Basdeo Panday. [Crosstalk] It was Basdeo Panday.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** One second, one second. Members, I have no problem with the little banter but you see the crosstalk over the floor, I am not going to tolerate it. So please—proceed.

**Hon. L. Morris-Julien:** It is Basdeo Panday who coined the term with his first meeting. It is the Colour Me Orange led by the Member for Oropouche East and the then Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, where the term “eat ah food” was coined, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So we now have a Minister of National Security who owes not one soul one thing so he is able to press forward.

You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for St. Augustine spoke about human rights, refugees and I thought of concern about these women trapped in houses, forced to sell their bodies, and I wonder if she had the same care and concern?

5.50 p.m.
Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of National Security may be forced to file an injunction, a restraining order against the highly obsessive Members on the other side. Because if we are to follow the media headlines of the last couple years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would see over 75 headlines dedicated to the attacking of Stuart Young, the hon. Member. Just this year alone:

“Opposition Leader files motion of no confidence...”

“Why did Stuart shut down access to the computer system?”

“Kamla questions ‘King’ Young”—[Interruption]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Members.

Hon. L. Morris-Julien: Total injustice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: One second. Again, Members.

Hon. L. Morris-Julien: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So all these baseless attacks continue to place the security of our country at risk. It is unfair to mislead a nation with your wolf cries of lies to accuse our goodly Minister of wrongdoings—

Mr. Hosein: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 48(4)—

Hon. L. Morris-Julien:—when in fact—

Mr. Hosein:—“lies” is unparliamentarily.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again, Member, please, retract and say that differently.

Hon. L. Morris-Julien: Deceit, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Hosein: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 48(4). Madam Speaker ruled earlier on that that is also unparliamentarily. The Member for D’Abadie/O’Meara is a teacher. She should know better. [Crosstalk]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hold on, hold on. Again, Member, again, use a different term. Retract and use a different term.

Hon. L. Morris-Julien: Is it acceptable to use “strangers to the truth”? [Crosstalk]
Mr. Al-Rawi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, point of privilege. The ruling of the hon. Speaker was in relation to the reference of the word, not in relation to the word, just for your assistance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Overruled. Again, retract the statement and use it appropriately.

Hon. L. Morris-Julien: Mr. Deputy Speaker, now there is no doubt I was disappointed by the election results but I decided to take encouragement from the other side. After losing 11 times, I realize, Mr. Speaker, if they could feel so buoyed by the victory in Tobago—so they said, right? The tie, right? By their colleagues in Tobago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, right? I myself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to congratulate the new councillor and his party group 13 of the People’s National Movement, will ask me to say he is no longer a member. [Desk thumping]

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of National Security to continue because I live in fear, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I live in fear because I saw familiar faces that resurfaced that I thought were once dead, Mr. Deputy Speaker. People with nicknames such as “Fingers”, “Heads”, showed up out of nowhere, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I saw that. The last time I saw that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, D’Abadie/O’Meara was almost completely razed to the ground. So I am asking—

Mr. Ratiram: The relevance of this to this Motion?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Tie it in, Member. Tie it in quickly.

Hon. L. Morris-Julien: I am tying it in. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are supposed to be able to dine with kings and beggars, not kings, criminals and beggars. And with a Minister of National Security who does not negotiate with criminals, I feel safe in D’Abadie/O’Meara.
Mr. Deputy Speaker: Just a second. The Member who made that statement, it reached the ear of the Chair. Kindly stand, retract and apologize.

Mr. Charles: I withdraw it and apologize.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: And again, Member, from now in—from now on in, Standing Order 53 will be enforced. Proceed.

Hon. L. Morris-Julien: Mr. Deputy Speaker, men like Stuart Young are few and far between. It is in the People’s National Movement that men are men. It is in the People’s National Movement, [Desk thumping] it is in the People’s National Movement we have a Minister of National Security who is intent—

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

Hon. L. Morris-Julien:—who is intent on doing the best for his country, not for profit, he did not sell his soul. He is making sure that we are protected, even those Members on the other side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because in the People’s National Movement, we believe that the people come first. [Desk thumping] I do not weep for what has gone, I prepare, because in one year, Arima central will return to its rightful place, the People’s National Movement. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I respectfully close. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I recognize the Member for Couva North. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Ravi Ratiram (Couva North): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for this opportunity to join in this debate on the Motion presented by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the Member of Siparia, which states:

“Whereas the Minister…”—[Interruption]

“Whereas the Minister of National Security has unequivocally demonstrated his inability to competently execute his duties:

Be it resolved that this House express its lack of confidence in the Minister of National Security.”

UNREVISED
Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise in full support of this Motion of no confidence [*Desk thumping*] in the Minister of National Security. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I endorse the statements made by my colleagues on this side and by the statements made by the Leader of the Opposition, as she led off our debate today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we heard from the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Siparia, how the Minister of National Security has failed—

**Mr. Young:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, 44—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** One second.

**Mr. Young:** 44(10). It is becoming abusive. We warned the speaker on the last occasion, when you are speaking, do not come back here and read no speech—44(10).

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, Member, I know you are in your introduction, so I will give you a little leeway but remember, Standing Order 44(10) is clear. You need to seek permission in order to read your speech but you have now started. I will give you a little leeway. Proceed.

**Mr. R. Ratiram:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we have heard of the failure of the Minister of National Security to adjust the situation of our stranded situations abroad. We have heard—

**Mr. Young:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, 55(1)(b). It is the same speech. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, it has already been mentioned from the Chair with regard to tedious repetition. At this time of the day—it is now going into 6.00 p.m., we have been here since 10.00, and again, we have been hearing that topic over and over again. So again, three seconds, let me hear what avenue you are going down there. If not, you will have to move on. And that goes for all the other speakers who are going to enter the debate from now on in.
Mr. R. Ratiram: Guided accordingly, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And all I was simply making reference to is we have heard of the Minister’s failure in several different areas related to his Ministry and it is clear, by listening to this evening’s debate, it has been highlighted and compounded that this Minister of National Security has been an all wrong failure. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to take a moment to respond to some of the misleading statements made by the previous speaker, when she made reference to wining and dining with criminal elements, and remind her of the former leader of her party. He was the person who wined and dined the community leaders at the Holiday Inn hotel restaurant, Mr. Deputy Speaker. She said she came here looking to see what the UNC had to offer, looking for the blaze, looking for the fireworks, but I want to tell her that the blaze and the fireworks she “doh” have to go far to look for it. It is right there in Arima central with a young man named “Fish”. [Desk thumping] That is the young man who brought the blaze, Mr. Deputy—

Ms. Cudjoe: 48(1). What does this have to do with the Motion about Minister of National Security? [Crosstalk] I am on my feet. I am on my feet. 48(1).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again, overruled. Proceed. But, again Member, as I said, tie it in quickly, otherwise you will have to move on.

Mr. R. Ratiram: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And moving swiftly along, she also made reference to the management of crime.

Mr. Al-Rawi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 48(5), for the repeated offence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again, hon. Member, Member for the particular constituency as the case may be, not he or she accordingly.

Mr. R. Ratiram: Guided, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the hon. Member, who made her contribution before myself, spoke about crime and how well crime was being
managed under this Minister of National Security. I have in front of me here some figures that have not been presented for the entire day and I would like to present that the number of murders we saw in Trinidad and Tobago in 2015 was 420; in 2016, was 462.

**Mr. Young:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, 55(1)(b), 55(1)(b). The Attorney General gave the statistics, the Member for Diego Martin North/East gave the statistics from 2010 all the way up to 2020—55(1)(b).

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, Member, you need to move on from that particular topic. Again, that area, homicides, statistics, have been properly dealt with for the afternoon.

**Mr. R. Ratiram:** Guided accordingly, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I come into the point where the hon. Minister of National Security was appointed from the 6th of August, 2018, as the Minister of National Security in the Eleventh Parliament, and then again, on the 19th of August in 2020, in this Twelfth Parliament.

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I respectfully rise on 55(1)(b), even the fillers are repetitious of previous content.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, we have dealt with that all afternoon. Please, move on.

**Mr. R. Ratiram:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was identifying when the—

**Mr. Young:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, 44(10). They feel by not going up with the paper and reading from the iPad is not reading a speech—44(10).

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Proceed, Member. And again, remember it was mentioned before, but you have not started back your content, but proceed.

**Mr. R. Ratiram:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I am highlighting the failure and inefficiencies of this Minister of National Security. And if it is that I am
not privileged to identify the number of murders that have taken place under his stewardship—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Standing Order 55(1)(b). That has been dealt with ad nauseam.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, I know you are new to the Chamber but we are a couple months into the term. Please, you need to move on from statistics, murder figures, homicide figures, as the case may be. You are not to bring up that again. Move on to your other point in the debate.

Mr. R. Ratiram: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And at this time, I would like to refer to the constituency of Couva North. And the issues that have been affecting the constituents of Couva North. You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister has a responsibility to provide a safe and a secure environment for all our citizens, and Couva North is a place close to my heart, Couva North is a place where we matter. Couva North, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

Mr. Al-Rawi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I respectfully, again, rise.

Mr. R. Ratiram:—[Inaudible]—has failed to fulfil the responsibilities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: One second. Standing Order?

Mr. Al-Rawi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I respectfully rise on Standing Order 48(1). Even that concept has been raised ad nauseam. It is a substantive Motion on the Minister himself, and respectfully at this hour, we must focus on that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again, overruled. Member, proceed. But again, I need to hear where you are coming from, proceed.

Mr. R. Ratiram: As you see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am moving away, as guided by you, from the statistics. And I want to deal with some real issues affecting the
constituents of Couva North, where the Minister of National Security has failed in his responsibility as the Minister. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, I am giving you the opportunity, but I need to hear what you are going to say, so that I would be able to be guided accordingly.

Mr. R. Ratiram: Within the constituency of Couva North—

Mr. Young: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 55(1)(b). A Member can have tedious repetition, either of his own arguments, which we are encountering now—55(1)(b), the man has tedious repetition in his own speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Overruled.

Mr. R. Ratiram: Repetition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is when someone says something and repeats it. Tedious repetition is when they repeat it more than once. I have not even made my point—

Mr. Young: 48(1), 48(1).

[Member sucks teeth]

Mr. R. Ratiram:—and I am being consistently interrupted.

Mr. Young: He is “steupsing” now. They handing out [Inaudible] and speech. [Crosstalk]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Member. Again, Member, I have ruled. I have said proceed. Let me hear what you are coming with so that I will be able to determine where we will end up. So proceed.

Mr. R. Ratiram: And thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And where I was going with was to highlight the home invasions, the house break-ins, the robberies, and the issues that have been affecting—

Mr. Al. Rawi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Standing Order 55(1)(b). That was the entire content of the speech from Naparima.
Mr. Deputy Speaker: Overruled. [Desk thumping]

Mr. R. Ratiram: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, just last week Tuesday, I held meetings with councillors, members of the TTPS, Councillor Dubraj Persad, Councillor Allan “Taxi” Seepersad, Councillor Rajbal Ramchand-Maraj, Councillor Gangaram Persad—Gangaram Gopaul—

Mr. Young: 48(1), we did not come here to hear about the Member’s meetings. I mean, from the—[Inaudible]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Overruled.

Mr. R. Ratiram: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And coming out of these meetings that I held with the constituents of Couva North, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is information that presented itself that triggered some emotions. Information where Mr. Vinod Rajkumar lost his boat—

Mr. Young: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 55(1)(b). As the Attorney General pointed out, it is past six o’clock. We cannot keep hearing the same thing over and over and over—55(1)(b).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Overruled.

Mr. R. Ratiram: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And as I continue, Mr. Amar Ramsubhag, he also lost his 28-foot fishing boat. It was stolen, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And when these matters presented themselves—

Mr. Al-Rawi: Mr. Deputy Speaker—

Mr. R. Ratiram:—what it did, is it stimulated—

Mr. Al-Rawi:—I respectfully rise on Standing Order 55(1)(b). This very concept, most respectfully, Sir, has been raised by umpteen speakers on the Opposition Bench. It does not matter if the location has changed, the concept has been debated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Overruled.

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Mr. R. Ratiram: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think it seems this evening, that while I am here to present the facts and reality of what is taking place in Couva North and in Trinidad and Tobago, they will continue to stand [Desk thumping] and jump up on Standing Orders to interrupt my time. But if it is that they were focused on doing their jobs and protecting our citizens, lives could have been saved in this country. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Al-Rawi: I rise on Standing Order 48(1). This has nothing to do with “they”. It is the Minister of National Security, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again, Member, for the records, just identify the Members appropriately by their titles, accordingly.

6.10 p.m.

Mr. R. Ratiram: Thank you, once more, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for your guidance, and I would like to move on. I was making reference—

Mr. Young: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 44(10), 44(10). [Crosstalk]

Dr. Moonilal: This is now blatantly unfair. They are not allowing him to make his contribution. [Crosstalk]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, again—[Crosstalk] Members, we have Standing Orders. So, again, Member for Oropouche East, identify your Standing Order accordingly. So, again, 44(10), yes, I have heard you, hon. Member, but the Member has not started his new point as yet. Proceed.

Mr. R. Ratiram: Thank you. And I said, if they were doing their job, lives could have been saved. And I want to present to this honourable House, why I make such statement, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to make reference to an article from the Express newspaper, and this article was dated the 5th of November, 2018. It reported:

“Pirate attacks off Couva: ‘Where is the coast guard?’”

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What this article highlights, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that:

“Central Trinidad fishermen face pirate attacks over the weekend”.

And a young man by the name of Shiva Ramdeo was quoted in this article. I want to quote from the article:

“Fishermen in central Trinidad are under pirate attack. Four boats were stripped of engines at the weekend.
And president of the Claxton Bay Fisherfolk Association, Kishore Boodram, is appealing to the Coast Guard to increase patrols in the Gulf of Paria.”

The article continues that:

“‘We were picking up our nets when a boat came up to us. The boathad no lights but we heard the engine. We flashed a light and saw eight men on board the boat wearing masks. The man at the front of the boat was holding a machine gun’…”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I now want to move on to the 8th of November after this article was presented, and on the 8th of November, the hon. Minister of National Security, in a press release by Ms. Gail Alexander on the 8th of November said:

“National Security Minister Stuart Young announced these developments at yesterday’s post-Cabinet media briefing.
T&T Coast Guard’s will regain use of more interceptor vessels for increased border security and the police are getting premises to call ‘home’.
Commenting on the recent discovery of illegal immigrants entering T&T through Los Iros and possibly other illegal ports of entry, Young said he’d since asked authorities for structures and plans to increase border security.”—patrol.

“Young admitted there are some deficiencies in border security, hence need
for the interceptors.

He said when Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley recently visited Coast Guard headquarters, it was learnt that many of the Coast Guard’s 25 interceptors weren’t working.

The cost of getting the 14 boats back into service is…”—

Mr. Young: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 55(1)(b). Previous speakers on the coast guard, on the vessels. [Crosstalk]

Hon. Member: So what is the point?

Mr. Young: Correct. 55(1)(b).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay. Again, Member, the aspect of the coast guard was dealt with extensively throughout the day. I know you are quoting from an article. Right? You are quoting from an article but, again, with regard to the coast guard vessels and so on, that has been dealt with extensively. So, again, I will ask you to not identify that particular aspect.

Mr. R. Ratiram: Mr. Deputy Speaker, coming out of that—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: And for the records, Member, you have two more minutes.

Mr. R. Ratiram: Thank you very much. Mr. Deputy Speaker, after that a meeting was convened on the 16th of November with the Director of Fisheries, representatives from various associations, and on the 28th of November, a letter from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries was written to the PS at the Ministry of National Security.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are now into the realm—48(1)—of agriculture. You blamed the Minister of National Security for flooding, volcano, STDs and everything else. [Crosstalk]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: One second. [Crosstalk] One second. [Crosstalk] Finish
Mr. R. Ratiram: The PS at the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries brought it to the attention to the Ministry of National Security, the PS there, of the issue that took place in early November—highlighted the plights of the fisherman—and called on the Ministry to provide a higher presence and to provide patrols. From then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the 22\textsuperscript{nd} of July, 2019, the hon. Minister of National Security had failed to deliver any interceptor even up to today’s date to protect our fishermen in the Gulf, in Carli Bay—

Mr. Al-Rawi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 55(1)(b).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, your time has expired. [Desk thumping] I recognize the Member for San Fernando East. [Desk thumping]

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Brian Manning): Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you. Mr. Deputy Speaker, men lie, women lie, numbers do not lie. We have heard more than enough metrics this afternoon.

Mr. Hosein: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 48(4) please, 48(4). Again, unparliamentary language and 44(10). The Member has started to read already. [Crosstalk]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again, Members, unparliamentary language, so I need you to retract, and also you have now started your discourse, so I need to see exactly where you are going in order to rule with regard to Standing Order 44(10). But retract the statement that you would have used, please.

Hon. B. Manning: Which word, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Hon. Members: Lie.

Hon. B. Manning: “Lie” is unparliamentary, I apologize. I retract. We have heard more than enough metrics today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of why the Minister of National Security, Stuart Young, has outperformed. I know the
Minister of National Security (cont’d)
Hon. B. Manning (cont’d)

Member for Tabaquite earlier was saying that she had not heard enough numbers in support of Stuart Young. I do not know if she was not paying attention or simply did not understand, but here is a few more numbers for those on the other side.

During the time of COVID, there was several states in the USA that reported a 70 per cent increase in murders, 7-0. During that time, the Commissioner of Police has reported in Trinidad and Tobago, we are seeing a 35 per cent decrease—

Mr. Hosein: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 55(1)(b)—

Mr. Lee: Mr. Deputy Speaker, tedious repetition, 55(1)(b). That was discussed ad nauseam. [Desk thumping and crosstalk]

Hon. Member: Not those statistics.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: One second. Again, Member, statistics, I know you were referring to a different—referencing a different country but, again, tie it in quickly and let us move on.

Hon. B. Manning: Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you say “tie it in”, I am speaking about the performance of the Minister of National Security in a debate about—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Tie it in as with regard to what is the outcome you would like to achieve.

Hon. B. Manning: Minister Young has been an able manager when it comes to our travel exemption policy, and I know there are many out there—

Mr. Lee: Mr. Deputy Speaker, exemption policy, ad nauseam, tedious repetition. [Desk thumping] 55(1)(b), ad nauseam. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again, Member, you will need to move on from that particular aspect.

Hon. B. Manning: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not sure what to talk about. [Laughter] Apparently, we are in a sand box now. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am
Minister of National Security (cont’d)  
Hon. B. Manning (cont’d)

talking about Trinidad and Tobago has one of the lowest COVID mortality rates in the world.

Mr. Hosein: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 48(1). What does COVID mortality rates have to do with the competence of the Minister? This is a Motion of no confidence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again, I will give you some leeway, tie it in.

Hon. B. Manning: And that is due to the effort, the able effort of the Minister of Health and also the Minister of National Security, Minister Stuart Young. Because of their efforts, they have saved lives. I know we have citizens abroad who may be upset, and I guarantee them here today that this Government is committed to assisting them and bringing them home in an orderly and safe manner while protecting the lives of the citizens who are already here.

Mr. Hosein: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 55(1)(b), tedious repetition.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Move on to another point.

Hon. B. Manning: But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, sadly, this is not about numbers. Earlier, one of the Members brought up this issue about the sea vessels and the fishermen in Carli Bay. We have already dealt with that matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[Madam Speaker in the Chair]

We have met with the fishermen—Stuart Young did, and members of the TTPS—and it was recommended to them that they apply GPS to their fisherman vessels so that they can be tracked and assisted if they needed assistance. There are those on the other side that have been resisting this effort. Even some of the fishermen have been resisting this effort. I would like to ask—


Madam Speaker: Overruled.

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Hon. B. Manning: I would like to ask, why? Minister Young has met with these fishermen, has tried to assist them and to protect them and has offered them a solution in terms of adding GPS to their vessels so they can be tracked and found if they need help. Those on other side have resisted heavily this effort. What is it that they are hiding? What is it that they are worried about? But, Madam Speaker, this is not about numbers today.

Mr. Ratiram: 48(6), Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Overruled.

Hon. B. Manning: Those on the other side would not really dare come here today to talk about Stuart Young and national security after their time in office.

Mr. Hosein: Madam Speaker, 48(5), please.

Madam Speaker: Just for the guidance, Members in the House are referred to either by their portfolio or their constituency. Thank you.

Hon. B. Manning: I believe it was the Member for Oropouche East earlier, who was saying that there were Members on this side that were trying to criminalize those on the other side. But while they were in office, they had an actual criminal as the Minister of National Security and that is a statement—

Madam Speaker: All right. [Crosstalk] Okay. So, again, I want to bring us back to what is the substance of this debate. And while I am on my legs, I want to also take this opportunity to advise speakers who are coming after, as I did earlier. We have traversed exemptions, we have traversed the COVID and we have traversed coast guard. All right? So that I am going to invoke Standing Order 55(1)(b), when it comes to any reference to those issues. They are not all-encompassing but, particularly, those issues. Okay? So Member, please, get on with the substance of the debate.

Hon. B. Manning: The point was just that Minister Young had brought a stability
to the Ministry of National Security that was not there before, but I move on. [Desk thumping] Madam Speaker, the problem with those on the other side is that they seem to have difficulty telling right from wrong. When you can come here to accuse Stuart Young—

Madam Speaker: Again, Member, the Minister of National Security or the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West.

Hon. B. Manning:—and then come here to accuse the Minister of National Security and to criticize him for recusing himself during Cabinet discussions when issues may have been brought up that involved himself or a family member, it says something about the other side. I always thought that is what you were supposed to do. You were supposed to recuse yourself when a matter came up in Cabinet that involves you or a family member. It is called integrity, and maybe that is why those on the other side have a problem with it. [Desk thumping]

Somehow in their morally bankrupt, skewed, upside-down sense of values, they think that there is something wrong with Stuart Young doing the right thing. Is that is to suggest that they—sorry, that the Minister of National Security is doing the right thing, is that to suggest that if they were in Cabinet, they would support remaining there in an attempt to ingratiate themselves and family members and others? How can you criticize the Minister of National Security for integrity? It blows my mind.

But what is this really about, Madam Speaker? This is not really about the Minister of National Security or his performance or numbers. It is about a divisive agenda being carried out by those on the other side. If you take a look at the Government Benches, who are the individuals that they attack and their people attack and criticize the most? It is the Minister of National Security, it is the
Attorney General and, in some cases, it is the Minister of Finance. What narrative are they crafting? What agenda are they pursuing? Madam Speaker, this is the politics of divisiveness and that is why they attacked Stuart Young with such obsessive fervour. [Desk thumping] And, I mean, to top that off, Madam Speaker, they want to take it over, and when they discussed the Prime Minister, who appointed the Minister of National Security to his position, they attacked him with the same agenda. They want to describe him as an Oreo, which has to be one of the most—

Mr. Hosein: Madam Speaker, 48(1). What is the relevance of this? And 55(1)(b), everybody has spoken about what the Member is raising.

Madam Speaker: Okay. So, Member, I will give you a little more leeway but, again, I caution you with respect to what is the subject matter of this debate. We are dealing with the Minister of National Security.

Hon. B. Manning: Madam Speaker, I am simply saying that they were attacking the Prime Minister with the same agenda and narrative that they were using to attack the Minister of National Security. That was my point. It is an insidious, dishonest, divisive and destructive strategy, Madam Speaker, that is designed to damage the psyche of this country. They have gone to great lengths to demonize and villainize certain segments of this society, especially, the business class, and they see the Minister of National Security—

Mr. Ratiram: Madam Speaker, 48(6). I am seeing here bitterness and acrimony in delivering and imputing improper motives of us on this side.

Madam Speaker: Please proceed.

Hon. B. Manning: They see the Minister of National Security as a representative of that business class. But that is not the case. The Minister of National Security
Minister of National Security (cont’d)

Hon. B. Manning (cont’d)

does not represent the business class in this country. He represents the diversity of Trinidad and Tobago \textit{[Desk thumping]} and the inclusiveness of the People’s National Movement. That is what he represents. But they have gone to such great lengths. It is almost incomprehensible. What is the obsession with the Minister of National Security? And I am saying that it has nothing to do with him. It has to do with them pursuing a dangerous, divisive and destructive agenda, all in a desperate attempt to return to office for a second bite at the Treasury. That is what they are about, not the Minister of National Security.

They are advancing the rhetoric and politics of division and that is why they attack certain Members. With this same rhetoric that they are using to attack the Minister of National Security, they have attacked the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, and I am going to explain to them today exactly why what they have said has been so destructive, using that same agenda to attack the Prime Minister that they are using to attack and tarnish the Minister of National Security.

When you call a hard-working, educated family—a successful family man like Dr. Rowley an Oreo, you are sending a message—

\textbf{Mr. Hosein:} Madam Speaker, 48(1) please. This debate is about the Minister of National Security, not the Prime Minister. \textit{[Desk thumping]}

\textbf{Madam Speaker:} And Member, I uphold the objection. This is about the Minister of National Security.

\textbf{Hon. B. Manning:} Madam Speaker, it is the same agenda—

\textbf{Madam Speaker:} And I have ruled.

\textbf{Hon. B. Manning:} So, they have engaged in similar rhetoric, rhetoric that is designed to attack the Minister of National Security and others, that sets a tone in this country that is meant to divide us and that is not something that I would
suggest that we pursue.

Mr. Ratiram: 55(1)(b), Madam Speaker. It is tedious repetition of the same point he has been making for the last five minutes.

Hon. Member: What is the Standing Order?

Mr. Ratiram: 55(1)(b).

Madam Speaker: Member, one minute. I have heard you, Member, and you speak to me. I know some of us have a lil difficulty, maybe you could attach it to your glasses, let your glasses rest on top of the mask to avoid it moving down when you speak. Okay? In terms of—hon. Member, the point I think has been made about what you feel about the agenda of the other side, and I would ask you to move on to another point please.

Hon. B. Manning: But, Madam Speaker, I am here to suggest, and on behalf of those on this side, we completely and wholeheartedly reject any kind of agenda [Desk thumping] that is designed to divide the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Speaker: Member, can you move on to another point? That point has been made.

Hon. B. Manning: So, Madam Speaker, I close by saying that we on this side are about inclusion, we are about bringing people together, and I would suggest to those on the other side that this agenda that causes them to attack the Minister of National Security is not one they should want to pursue if they want to see a better Trinidad and Tobago for all. Thank you. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Devendranath Tancoo (Oropouche West): I thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to this debate on a very critical Motion today, brought by the hon. Leader of the Opposition and Member of Parliament for Siparia. Madam Speaker, I want to add my voice to the tens of thousands, no, the hundreds
of thousands of right-thinking, decent, law-abiding citizens of this country who also share our view that this Minister of National Security is an abysmal absolute failure in the execution of the duties for which taxpayers have been paying him. [Desk thumping]

I want to endorse every single word, every issue, every matter that has been raised by my colleagues on this side in support of the leader’s Motion that we are debating here today. And I am confident, Madam Speaker, that you, yourself, would have been a bit challenged to support, as we have been able to convince Members on the opposition side, on the Government and the population that this Minister is, in fact, in need of retirement.

Madam Speaker, when the hon. Member for Siparia was speaking, I noticed a lot of aggressive notetaking by Members on the Government side. And, initially, I thought that was because they were preparing issues, they were preparing to respond credibly to the comments that she was making. Alas, I have sat and listened to 12 or 13 Government Members speak and heard the same repetition of the same rhetoric, over, and over, and over, that I have heard since I have sat in this this House repeatedly. Instead of dealing with the issues that have been raised—

**Mr. Young:** Madam Speaker, 55(1)(b). We have heard this tune sung ad nauseam.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay. So, Member for Oropouche West, I take that as your introduction and, therefore, I will invite you to move on to the substance of your contribution.

**Mr. D. Tancoo:** Duly guided, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the Minister of National Security, in his contribution, gloated and boasted about the role he played in pretending to be the Central Bank Governor when he took over the role of demonetization. Madam Speaker, allow me to quote from the newspaper article, if
I may. The *Express*, December 05, 2019, I quote, and this is a quotation from the Minister himself:

“‘I can guarantee you this, it is going to assist us in the fight against corruption and the fight against the criminal elements who must now present that money and explain where that money came from,’”

Young said this will assist in the fight against criminal elements and corrupt elements as criminal elements must now present their money and explain where it came from.

Another quotation, Madam Speaker:

“Young said he advised Cabinet that in order to fight money laundering, including the financing of drugs, narcotics and illegal firearms, tax evasion and what is known as the ‘black money economy’, corruption, counterfeiting and other related problems, the Government should withdraw from circulation the current $100…issued by the Central Bank. Cabinet accepted this proposal which has been in the works for some time and receiving expert advice in partnership with the Central Bank.”

Madam Speaker, I raise this to treat with the issue that the Minister himself raised. I quote again from a newspaper article, Friday, December 13th where the Minister is now speaking about the same demonetization and issues which relate specifically to information that would have come to him as a member of the National Security Council, casting aspersions on persons who—without evidence, casting aspersions on persons who would have come to the banks, come to the banking institution as is their right, to transfer money, to change the money, as is their right. “Big money passing for new notes”. That is the headline, Madam Speaker.
“National Security Minister Stuart Young said one person, who claimed to be a barber, showed up at a bank with $1 million.”

I would not quote more on these issues, Madam Speaker, suffice it to say that it has now been one year plus, one year plus, since this magnanimous, this wonderful decision by the hon. Minister, who convinced the Cabinet that this wonderful decision would treat with the issues of drug trafficking, money laundering, et cetera. One year plus and we have heard not one single instance of a person being charged. [Crosstalk] Not one single instance of a person being charged, Madam Speaker, and the Minister was boasting that he did such a wonderful job, such a phenomenal job. He boasted about that today, Madam Speaker, making wild allegations against Members on this side that maybe we had something to hide. Madam Speaker, nobody on this side has anything to hide.

**Mr. Hinds:** Oh, is so?

**Madam Speaker:** Member for Laventille West, it is kind of late in the day and therefore I hope by now we will all comply with the Standing Orders.

**Mr. D. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I urge the Member, if you have evidence, take it to the police. If not, Sir, allow other people to speak. Thank you very much. Madam Speaker—

**Madam Speaker:** Member, remember when you are in there, you are really speaking to me. So ignore the distractions and you are speaking to the Chair.

**Mr. D. Tancoo:** Thank you. Madam Speaker, as you know, it is sometimes very difficult to ignore these ramblings.

**Madam Speaker:** And we are developing it here. We all have it.

**Mr. D. Tancoo:** Madam Speaker, the Minister boasted today that his action in demonetizing that hundred dollar bill worked well. It may have worked well for
him, it may have worked well for his friends, it may have worked well for others, but for the tens of thousands of persons—the poor, the underprivileged—this is very few people who had very small amounts of money, who had to line up in the sun and in the rain outside banks to change their money, it did not work so well, Madam Speaker. It was very, very, unfortunate. And then to have to go through all that—in fact, I believe somebody died standing in line. Multiplicities of persons fainted standing in line. Bank workers went through extreme duress and had to seek psychological support, Madam Speaker. This gentleman, this hon. Sir, this hon. gentleman seems to think that that is how he thinks things have been working well.

There are several other issues I wanted to rebut, but I think we have made the point, Madam Speaker. Members on this side have made a significant contribution to the public perception already that the Minister has been a complete failure.

Before I move forward though, I want treat with two other issues: One, the Member for San Fernando East seems to think that Members on our side have an agenda when we criticize Members opposite. I am also new to the Chamber, but I know that that is our role, our right. We are not here to be friendly to those opposite. We are here to point out their failures, and when they are incompetent, that is exactly what we will do, [Desk thumping] and in this case, the first bite of the cherry, Madam Speaker, has come.

6.40 p.m.

The hon. Prime Minister has been begging, why is he not part of this, why have we not brought the Motion against him. The time will come but the first bite of the cherry has to go to the most incompetent of them all [Desk thumping] and
that is the hon. Minister of National Security. So I want to put my colleague from San Fernando East at a little bit of a caution, every Member on the Government Bench by virtue of being on the Government Bench will be subjected to scrutiny, to examination, to interrogation, and, yes, Madam Speaker, to debate in this very House. If he does not like it he must know by now that this is what he signed up for. [Desk thumping] Madam Speaker, I want to treat with some statistics. I can see the bristling already but these are statistics, I assure you, have not yet been raised, but which point to the very same points that were raised before which was that the Minister himself is incompetent, deliberately so.

Madam Speaker, I quote from Loop News, “Lifeguard shortage leaves beaches under-patrolled”.

Mr. Young: Madam Speaker, 55(1)(b)—

Mr. D. Tancoo: This is August 2018—

Mr. Young:—and the Member acknowledges he is going to enter into that realm.

Madam Speaker: Yeah. So, Member, while you may try to bring another side of the information, if we have dealt with the certain portfolio in the assignment, I am not going to at this stage allow another slant of it. So when I stood up before you spoke and I pointed out certain areas it was to guide Members generally that ground that has been traversed at this stage, that ground is not going to be entertained, and from your own lips you have said that to me.

So I have asked you now to please go on to a fresh point about the assignment of the Minister of National Security, and when I mean, “fresh”, I should really maybe use the word, “novel”.

Mr. D. Tancoo: Madam Speaker, I want to speak specifically about the lifeguards today.
Madam Speaker: And I am not allowing any discussion on the lifeguards at this stage.

Mr. D. Tancoo: Madam Speaker, with your permission I would like to speak about the firefighters, has that gone, already been traversed?

Mr. Al-Rawi: 55(1)(b), Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I have been here and I believe we spoke about fire, we spoke about police, we spoke about lifeguards, we spoke about the DNA centre—

Mr. Al-Rawi: Exemption policy.

Madam Speaker: I am not allowing anybody to talk about exemptions or COVID again. Okay? And I am sure, Member for Oropouche West, because I have seen you in here and I know even when you are not here, like sometimes I am not here, I know we still hear. All right? So I do not have to guide you any further, I am sure you are quite well aware of what has been spoken.

Mr. D. Tancoo: Duly guided, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I feel a bit distressed if only because the issues and the statistics that I have to present today I know for a fact have not been raised in this honourable House today, both in terms of the lifeguards where I can prove that—

[Crosstalk]

Madam Speaker: Member—and, you know, sometimes we say things and I do not think we really mean what is said or how it comes across. While I appreciate you might have new material, many of Members of your bench started with the Gazette and identified the areas and I am saying those areas that have been traversed, I am not allowing. All right? So I am sorry that you feel distressed, and if it is having a medical impact on you we do have a medical room. Please, proceed.

Mr. D. Tancoo: Duly guided, Madam Speaker. I want to specify that I am dealing,
Madam Speaker, with the allocations by the Ministry of National Security to the agencies under them. This information has not been raised—

**Madam Speaker:** Member, I will invite you to kindly take your seat. Member for Tobago East. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Ayanna Webster-Roy):**
Thank you for the opportunity to make a short intervention, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I wish to start my contribution by responding to a matter raised by the Member for Couva South. I wish to clear up the record so that the people of Tobago would understand that this Government, this Minister of National Security prioritizes the best interest of the island’s people. Madam Speaker, the hon. Member for Couva South suggested that the proposed site for the construction of the new correctional facility in Tobago was supposedly changed to appease some PNM financier. Madam Speaker, I wish to make it categorically clear that the Member is ill-informed. Madam Speaker, I went on the site visit with a number of my colleagues and representatives from the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service and other stakeholders and I fully supported the decision to identify alternative sites for the construction of the Tobago prison.

Madam Speaker, that decision had nothing to do with pleasing any financier. That is not how our Cabinet operates—

**Mr. Charles:** Madam Speaker, Standing Order 55(1)(b), [*Desk thumping*] I have heard about prison 10 times. I heard it from the Minister—[*Continuous desk thumping*]

**Madam Speaker:** Member—[*Crosstalk*] Member, while I know you are very passionate in making your point, I would just ask you to contain yourself. I believe the Member has started off in direct reference to something that was said on this
side concerning the siting of a prison. All right? So I thank you for inviting me to rule on Standing Order 55(1)(b), I shall consider when I have heard tedious repetition. Thank you. Continue.

Hon. A. Webster-Roy: Madam Speaker, I am responding to the Member for Couva South, as I said. The decision to change the site was not based on pleasing any financier as the Member would have suggested. When we visited the site at Hope we recognized that the land would be better suited for residential use. Madam Speaker, as the Member of Parliament for Tobago East I was appalled that—

Mr. Hosein: Madam Speaker, 44(10), please—44(10), Standing Order.

Madam Speaker: Okay. So again, Member, I am sure that you can relieve yourself a bit from your notes. Okay? Thank you.

Hon. A. Webster-Roy: Madam Speaker, as the Member of Parliament for Tobago East, when we visited that site at Hope, I was appalled that prime real estate lands overlooking our forest, breathtaking views of the Atlantic Ocean was identified for the establishment of a prison, land that could have been used and set aside for the construction of homes for young families in Tobago and young Tobagonians. So when that decision was made, Madam Speaker, to move the site, to relocate, I fully endorsed that decision. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, I want to stand and support my colleague, the hon. Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West. Madam Speaker, in working as part of a team sometimes you have to venture out of your comfort zone and in my colleague I have found someone I could always depend on. When it comes to matters pertaining to the vulnerable he is always ready and willing to lend a hand. And I would demonstrate. When at the Office of the Prime Minister, Gender and Child
Affairs, we recognized that we needed to run a programme to directly impact on men and get them involved in the discourse around gender-based violence, our Minister of National Security readily availed himself to the staff at OPM, Gender and Child Affairs, [Desk thumping] to lead a session of the Barbershop initiative. Coming out of those discussions and his interaction with the men at that session, my hon. colleague would have championed the cause for the establishment of the Gender-Based Violence Units within the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, to date we have units established throughout the police service in Trinidad and Tobago. At least 48 officers recruited and trained thus far addressing this very sensitive issue. [Desk thumping] Madam Speaker, I do not mean to be long because I really wanted to clear up that particular issue about the site because I did not want the Tobago public to listen and believe that that is how we operate. However, I want to bring another point to the fore to support my hon. colleague. On matters pertaining to children, he has always stood by the children of Trinidad and Tobago and that is why he would have caused the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service to allocate resources for the establishment of Child Protection Units throughout [Desk thumping] Trinidad and Tobago. Madam Speaker, we have seen officers specifically trained to work alongside those children who may come before them and also we are seeing greater collaboration between the Ministry of National Security, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and the Children’s Authority of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Speaker, no man is perfect. The Minister is not perfect. We all make mistakes at times but, Madam Speaker, I want you to note that you never pelt stones at barren trees. [Desk thumping] My hon. colleague could have come under
constant attack because of the potential they see him, because of the fact that they are worried that his good work may cause some of them to get into serious trouble.

[Desk thumping] So today on behalf of my constituents, on behalf of the vulnerable women and men in Trinidad and Tobago, on behalf of the children who have directly benefited from your role in pushing for the Gender-Based Violence Unit and ensuring that the Child Protection Units are established, I say thank you. [Desk thumping] I commend you and I salute you. Although you are constantly attacked, you have maintained your dignity, your integrity and your grace and, Madam Speaker, for that we must commend—

**Mr. Hosein:** Madam Speaker, I just seek your guidance. The Member for Laventille West clearly is showing his nose and his mouth and everything, are we not supposed to have on our masks on in this Chamber? [Crosstalk]

**Madam Speaker:** Member for Barataria/San Juan, just disrupting is an abuse. Just disrupting is an abuse. Please, continue.

**Hon. A. Webster-Roy:** Madam Speaker, as I was saying, for that my colleague must be commended.

Madam Speaker, in service to people one thing that you must be able to do is to respond to answer according to the calls coming to you, be they unique. Madam Speaker, in Tobago East we would have had some challenges and as the elected representative I would have had cause to approach the Minister of National Security on behalf of the people of Tobago East and see the response. I could note recently the confusion in the community of Moriah and the instant response by the Minister of National Security, putting that matter to rest and bringing a measure of relief to those persons living in that police district. I, as the elected representative for the people of Tobago East, could note the fact that when persons in
Charlotteville complained about their safety on the seas, the hon. Minister responded. He came to the community, he met with the fisherfolk and he launched the high-speed interceptors. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, the people of Tobago, the people of Tobago East, we recognize the worth, the value of my hon. colleague and today it is without fear that I can stand and say that we stand behind the hon. Member. [Desk thumping] Today I can say, Madam Speaker, with pride, that I count him among my friends and those that I hold in high esteem. His integrity is impeccable. His work ethic is one to be admired and, Madam Speaker, for that the people of Trinidad and Tobago would note him as one of the best Ministers of National Security to serve. I thank you. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker: Member for Chaguanas East.

Ms. Vandana Mohit (Chaguanas East): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for your recognition. Madam Speaker, today being the first sitting of 2021, let me first state that it is a pleasure to continue to serve the people of my constituency of Chaguanas East and Trinidad and Tobago. [Desk thumping] Madam Speaker, I begin by commending the Leader of the Opposition for a very strong Motion which speaks to the voice of the people of Trinidad and Tobago in real time. Madam Speaker, I have listened all day and I must say that every MP on our side represents people, [Desk thumping] and when we speak we are not speaking by guess. Madam Speaker, we are patriotic enough to understand the cries of citizens in this country. Madam Speaker, while listening today we see fear, we see arrogance, we see denial, we see [Desk thumping] ignorance, and most of all we see incompetence. [Desk thumping] Madam Speaker, in any Government if the Ministry of National Security fails, the Government fails. [Desk thumping]
Madam Speaker, in listening to all Members we see something that is crumbling and a troop that cannot breach the code of secrecy because they will be destroyed politically. [Desk thumping] Madam Speaker, today I will deal with a few issues that have not been touched on in terms of rebutting and that issue is of domestic violence. Madam Speaker, we note on this side that our women of this country continue to fall victims of domestic violence. Madam Speaker, while we are aware that the police or politicians cannot be everywhere, the lack of initiative by this Minister of National Security who plays a major role in dealing with such a matter has worsened this situation. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, Members of this House would recall that on December 09, 2020, we asked in this august Chamber, what was the Government’s plan to deal with this untenable situation of domestic violence which came about from a report existing of over 400 women and children in need of urgent help. Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister at that time indicated that he knew of no such report but today he was in this Chamber waving an Express. This report I am referring to is from the Guardian newspaper as I did before. Madam Speaker, mind you, my colleague who just spoke from Tobago East, the Victim in the Dark organization referred to in this article would have stated in that article that they would have written to the Prime Minister and the hon. Minister who just spoke. Madam Speaker, I am saying this because it got worse a few days later.

Mr. Al-Rawi: Madam Speaker, I rise respectively on Standing Order 48(1).

Madam Speaker: Okay. So, Member, could you tie that to the actual substance of the debate.

Mr. V. Mohit: Sure, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, just 13 days ago, this which falls solely under the Ministry of National Security in relation to the Office
of the Prime Minister with the Minister who just spoke—

**Madam Speaker:** In terms of this, you are talking about domestic violence and the Ministry of National Security, I would like you to tie the relevance of domestic violence to the Ministry of National Security. Okay? That is what I want you to tie for me to determine that you are being relevant and I am giving you a little leeway.

**Mr. V. Mohit:** Will do so now. Madam Speaker, 13 days ago the TTSP reported a 300 per cent increase in domestic violence reports. [Desk thumping] Madam Speaker, yet still we have just heard that the Minister of National Security is doing an excellent job in terms of dealing with mothers, children and so on within Trinidad and Tobago, and a 300 per cent increase when they said they knew nothing about this.

Madam Speaker, the reason why I am referring to this 300 per cent increase is in an article where the police service would have stated such. You see, in this article that most—stated by Acting Superintendent Claire Alleyne—

**Madam Speaker:** Member, we have a rule against display, you could read.

**Mr. V. Mohit:** I apologize.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay? But I know that you are new. So you can read but you cannot display.

**Mr. V. Mohit:** Sure.

**Madam Speaker:** All right?

**Mr. V. Mohit:** Yes. That, Madam Speaker, most survivors do not get past the reporting stage, so is that success? Madam Speaker, that is complete failure under this Ministry of National Security. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, quickly I move again in terms of the Ministry of National Security. Bracelets for domestic violence offenders would have been promised
since 2018, Madam Speaker, and to date no update. Mind you, the Minister is very well aware of the figures arising out of this unit of the police service and those who were charged but not convicted. Madam Speaker, I ask, is the Prime Minister also taking responsibility for this lack of initiative by the Minister of National Security [Desk thumping] since he has so much confidence in the Minister of National Security?

Madam Speaker, I move to the area of community policing which helps and contributes significantly to dealing with domestic violence issues. Madam Speaker, in many police stations at this time you would hear, and I speak for the constituency of Chaguanas East being their voice in this House, that the police stations, some of them are operating on half a vehicle. So how would community policing be able to assist strongly in terms of domestic violence reports issues to assist schools in Trinidad? When we are referring we do not only refer to one area, we refer to Trinidad as well. How could they deal with these issues if they lack the resources? Is that not failure in this Minister of National Security? [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, at this time I say, if the Minister is doing what is right, I really do not want to see what is wrong. Madam Speaker, we have no confidence and we on this side describe this Minister of National Security as an absolute failure. I thank you. [Desk thumping]

**Madam Speaker:** Leader of the House.

**PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE (ADHERENCE TO)**

**The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh):** Madam Speaker, I just rise before the next speaker to sadly bring something to your attention. It has now
become common practice unfortunately by the Member of Parliament for St. Augustine while this honourable Chamber is in process, while the honourable Chamber is doing its work, to be constantly posting on Facebook, posts that bring this honourable Chamber into disrepute. I refer to a Facebook whilst this Chamber was meeting by one Khadijah Ameen, Opposition—

Madam Speaker: The Member for St. Augustine.

Mr. Deyalsingh:—the Member for St. Augustine—Opposition: He is incompetent; D’Abadie/O’Meara: He is handsome, I kid you not. This consistent use of social media by the Member of Parliament for St. Augustine, not the first, not the second, not the third time, and the constant sucking of her teeth in this Chamber, I bring that to your attention again today, Madam Speaker, for your attention. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Okay. So the Member for St. Augustine sadly is not here but I am sure that this will reach her ears. She has been warned repeatedly with respect to this and in the spirit of the new year, I again issue a warning and call upon her with her experience and honouring the office of Member of Parliament to understand that she too has a responsibility to uphold the sanctity of the proceedings in which we take place. This is the last warning that I will extend to the Member for St. Augustine, and if she continues to persist it is her right, but I am certain then other consequences will follow.

MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY
(LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN)

Madam Speaker: Member for St. Ann’s East. [Desk thumping]

The Minister of Education (Hon. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. Madam Speaker, I do not intend to spend very long
on my legs because we have spent an entire day speaking about a Motion that has been brought by the Opposition, a Motion of no confidence in the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West, and we have heard arguments from both sides. Madam Speaker, it is interesting because I listened carefully to what was presented by the Member for Siparia as I considered what this Motion could be, and as I considered what would be the compelling arguments brought and lay the foundation and that foundational speech by the mover of the Motion.

Madam Speaker, I am sorry to report that I was sorely disappointed that important parliamentary time was spent to come out here for such a Motion, and even the mover of the Motion seemed to have absolutely no vigour, no strong point, no underlying principle that could be seen and highlighted as something to dissect so that we can really consider whether this Motion was one that should have been brought or not. Madam Speaker, I listened to the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West. I listened to my colleague as he laid out data, statistics to show how the fight on crime has been progressing. I am listening on the side and I am listening to each contributor from the other side to understand where is the kernel of truth in what this Motion was brought. Where is the support? Where is the evidence? And I am listening to the Attorney General. I am listening to the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West.

I am listening to my colleagues present cogent arguments showing how the fight on crime is proceeding and I wonder why were we brought here to discuss this Motion where not even the Leader of the Opposition who brought it could stay because the Motion is so weak. Madam Speaker, I have been sitting here and getting more and more messages from the constituents of St. Ann’s East whom I represent and they are expressing their support for this Member, this young
Member that has been working diligently on reducing the crime, on doing all of the different things that are necessary under the Ministry of National Security.

7.10 p.m.

Domestic violence, I have heard that raised. Community policing, all of these areas, the exemption process, all of these broad areas that are under the remit of National Security. The lifeguards, all of this is happening—[Interruption]

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, respectfully, 55(1)(b), tedious repetition. The Member is also repeating what we have said on this side, and they have said on that side.

Madam Speaker: Member, I have allowed you some leeway by way of introduction, and I will ask you now to move on to the substance of your contribution.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Madam Speaker, at this point I want simply to express the support of St. Ann’s East for this Member. I can tell you that in our constituency we have had issues with rising crime in different areas. I want to say that in consultation with my colleague, who has been leading the charge, we have been able to reach out to the police, reach out and get the type of response—as the community police was raised, we have been able to reach out to the police in our constituency and get the type of response that brings the comfort to our area. That is what we want in a leader of national security. That is what we want, the understanding for the needs of the common man on the ground.

We have been in a very difficult COVID-19 situation. Again, many persons have reached out with respect to the exemptions, and that was one of the areas that we heard—

Madam Speaker: While I appreciate that many Members will get up and have a perspective on an issue as it relates to their constituency, we are very late in the
debate and as I have said before, when it comes to COVID, crime, the police, the prisons, fire, lifeguards, DNA and several others, we have traversed that ground. Therefore, I would ask Members to deal with other aspects of the Ministry of National Security at this stage.

**Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly:** Madam Speaker, well, at this point, I just simply want to say that on behalf of the constituency of St. Ann’s East, we support the Minister of National Security. We reject this Motion, and we thank you for your forbearance in allowing us to make this contribution. [Desk thumping]

**Madam Speaker:** Member for Mayaro.

**Mr. Rushton Paray (Mayaro):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I just want to dive straight in and address a couple of the concerns that were raised by the previous speaker. We are not wasting parliamentary time. This Motion was properly filed, and this is Private Members’ Day, we are entitled to raise any matter that we feel fit. [Desk thumping]

The second item, Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is in the Opposition conference room monitoring the debate. She is not here because of the COVID restrictions. We are alternating seating arrangements, as you would have realized during the day today.

We stand today, every single Member of the Opposition who has stood and spoken today, has spoken on a platform of truth and justice on behalf of all the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. [Desk thumping] We came here to lend support to the Leader of the Opposition as she piloted this Motion of no confidence in the Minister of National Security.

Madam Speaker, we are here today, we all gathered here today to prosecute the actions of the Minister of National Security.
Madam Speaker: So, Member for Mayaro, I take that as your introduction. I ask you to go on to a novel matter.

Mr. R. Paray: Thank you, Madam Speaker. While the Prime Minister has accepted accountability for the actions of the Minister and his Cabinet when he spoke earlier on today, we must definitely bolt the sorry state of national security to the chest of the Member of Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West. He cannot get away from this.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Speaker, point of order, 48(1), 55(1)(b).

Madam Speaker: Member, as I said, you gave the introduction. I am letting you, as I said, novel matters, and when I mean novel, not creative.

Mr. R. Paray: Sure.

Madam Speaker: I mean not traversed before. I do not even want to use the word “new”, it might be misinterpreted.

Mr. R. Paray: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Well, Madam Speaker, just allow me to tag where my contribution is going to go, based on something the Attorney General said when he spoke. The Attorney General brought the statistics of the TTPS which were published in the newspaper last week, as part of his assurance that the performance of the Minister of National Security was good. Madam Speaker, through you—

Madam Speaker: Okay, so we had statistics. We had somebody who said—somebody from your side who spoke about the statistics being used in different ways, et cetera, et cetera. Please go on to another point. We are not dealing with TTPS—we are not dealing with TTPS.

Mr. R. Paray: Madam Speaker, the reduction that was presented is a transactional reduction.

Mr. Young: Madam Speaker, 55(1)(b).
Madam Speaker: Member, out of order. Next point.

Mr. R. Paray: Thank you. Madam Speaker, I want to touch the impact that the fear of crime has made on the business community in Trinidad and Tobago. I want to anchor the fear of crime. While the police have done a fantastic job, I want to commend the Commissioner of Police, the hard-working men and women of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, the fear of crime still stands. In my respectful view, it is the work of the policy execution of the Minister of National Security that manages the fear of crime in this country. [Desk thumping] Why is the fear of crime important? Because it impacts—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Madam Speaker, the issue of fear of crime—48(1)—has been dealt by Couva South, Naparima, every single one; 55(1)(b), sorry—55(1)(b), tedious repetition.

Madam Speaker: I uphold the objection.

Mr. R. Paray: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The business sector is reeling—

Madam Speaker: I uphold the objection. I did not overrule it.

Mr. R. Paray: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to give some examples of what, not only the country, but our regional partners and the international community, how they are seeing the issues in this country that are affecting the business sector.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Speaker, point of order, 48(1). He is talking about the international community, nothing to do with the Minister.

Madam Speaker: Member, I will just give you a little leeway; let me see where you are going with this.

Mr. R. Paray: Madam Speaker, I just wanted to point out that there are several reports that have been published which speak directly to Trinidad and Tobago, and the impact that certain things that are happening in the country are affecting trade,
business, foreign direct investment—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Good Lord!

Mr. Young: 48(1), what report? Reports on what? This is a debate on—

Mr. Deyalsingh: “Get real, nah man.”

Madam Speaker: I just said, Members, that I am giving the Member a little leeway based on certain matters that are on the schedule of the responsibilities for the Minister of National Security. Please proceed, let us see where you are going with this.

Mr. R. Paray: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There is a report from the IADB that speaks that 85 per cent of private businesses in Trinidad and Tobago have to pay for private security, and it is the highest—it was the highest among 13 countries.

Madam Speaker: So you are coming back again to crime in a different way.

Mr. R. Paray: That is correct, and its impact on business.

Madam Speaker: What I am saying is, as far as crime and the resourcing of the TTPS, and all of that, I am not allowing that debate. I gave you a little leeway because based on certain things in the schedule I felt you may have been going there. That is not where you are going.

Mr. R. Paray: Madam Speaker, by any fair scrutiny, based on all the contributions that have been made today by the Members on this side, the overall report card of the Minister, in his portfolio as Minister of National Security, has been one of disaster. [Desk thumping] Should the Minister of National Security been employed in the private sector, I am sure by today his bosses would have dismissed him for a chronic lack of performance and the absence of a strategic plan, and a lack of leadership ability. [Desk thumping]

In the Cabinet of the Member for Diego Martin West, he has defended, supported and applauded the work of this Minister. Madam Speaker, in the
meantime, people, citizens are being sorely affected by a range of issues which fall under the portfolio of the Minister of National Security.

I dare say that the Member remains ever clueless as more and more people fall victim, and our fragile economy continues to reel from severe impact in the economy.

Mr. Imbert: 48(1), 55(1)(b).

Madam Speaker: So, Member, that is why I did not want to use the word “novel”, because it is coming back to the same thing: the impacts, you are talking about the COVID and the regulations and so, and the impacts again on crime, and so on. Please.

Mr. R. Paray: Sure. I will wrap up now, Madam Speaker, by throwing my support to the Leader of the Opposition for a very timely Motion in this vote of no confidence on the Minister of National Security. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Member for Port of Spain South.

Mr. Keith Scotland (Port of Spain South): Madam Speaker, I would advise the hon. Member who just spoke, not to apply to the private sector for a managerial job.

Madam Speaker, through you, I would like to say that this so-called Motion of no confidence is based on mendacity, propaganda and myths. [Desk thumping] I humbly say that that is the only way they could attack the hon. Minister of National Security.

The main myth, the first myth I want to address, and no speaker has addressed it before, is that the Ministry of National Security, the hon. Minister, and by extension the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, has closed its borders to the citizens and nationals of Trinidad and Tobago who are abroad. That is a myth.
Madam Speaker: So Member, again, we have dealt with border closure, border not closure, managing returning, we have dealt with that for the greater part of the day. All right?

Mr. K. Scotland: Yes, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: So that I am not going to allow anybody to go back on that ground, please.

Mr. K. Scotland: Madam Speaker, what I want to say on this point on another angle—

Madam Speaker: No, sorry. I have ruled, even if you think I have misunderstood, I have ruled. I have already said too, I am sure everybody could put a different angle on the same topic. Right now, we are all wearing the same lens, so we are all seeing all the angles. I am only allowing for the sake of everybody else who is going to come after, fresh matters, and as an attorney you understand fresh matters.

Mr. K. Scotland: I understand the import of fresh matters. Madam Speaker, on that score what I do have to say then is that any national who is abroad, wanting to return home, all they have to do is to apply for the requisite exemption.

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, again you just ruled. The Member is going back into what you ruled just now on tedious repetition.

Mr. K. Scotland: Madam Speaker, I am not speaking about the closing of the borders.

Madam Speaker: No, no; one minute. When one Member is speaking, the other Member cannot speak, and the unfortunate thing is that really when one Member stands, the other sits. We know that cannot happen. So I believe the Member has raised an objection and, therefore, as the gentleman as you are, you allow him to speak and then I rule, okay?

So, as I said, I have warned you please go on to something that is entirely
fresh. Okay?

Mr. K. Scotland: Madam Speaker, the next issue, the next myth I want to address, is that raised by the Member for Barataria/San Juan, who as an attorney continues to disappoint me. He has said, and this is a propaganda, that there is a breach of the constitutional rights and privileges of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago by the policy of this Government. I say to him, if there is such a breach—if there is such a breach—well, therefore, file your constitutional motion. File it and say that we have breached the Constitution of the citizens. I say to the hon. Attorney General, I will defend that case pro bono, because there is no such breach.

Madam Speaker: Okay, so Member again, I will invite you to go on to a fresh point.

Mr. K. Scotland: Yes, Madam Speaker. Also we say that the policies are aligned—the policies throughout are aligned with international policies, but most importantly, you have been asked a question from the hon. Member for Tabaquite and the hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, in that, they have said: Why have you not brought here any statistics or any information that shows the performance of the hon. Minister of National Security? You all have come here and defended him, but you have not brought any points to show what he has achieved.

Madam Speaker, I listened carefully, and I would want to put on the record of this Parliament, in this debate, the achievements of the hon. Minister of National Security on whose behalf I rise to support.

During his tenure from 2019 to 2021, 23 police stations received infrastructural upgrade as part of the police station construction programme. There has been training for over 15 officers—

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, 44(10), the Member is a seasoned lawyer, he should not be reading.
Mr. K. Scotland: No one has produced this information.

Madam Speaker: Member, Member, Member. Overruled. If a Member is giving statistics, that is a different thing. Overruled, please proceed.

Mr. K. Scotland: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Ministry of National Security under his stewardship has provided training for over 15 officers in the vehicle maintenance and video technology. There has been outfitting—the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre asked about the video cameras—of over 180 police officers with body cameras, with 1,000 more to come.

There has been a provision now for specialized training for police officers under the National Security Training Agency. The Member for Tabaquite has asked what about domestic violence. Under the stewardship of the hon. Minister of National Security, there has been the establishment of the Gender-based Violence Unit, and that is geared towards eliminating and managing domestic violence in Trinidad and Tobago.

As it relates to the defence force, they have asked about the interceptors. Under the stewardship of the hon. Minister of National Security, the 14 coast guard vessels have received repair work. There has been an increase in the coastal system and an upgrade in immigration. I tell the country, you do not have to go now in person to pick up your passport. TTPost will send it to you.

Madam Speaker, the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s East asked the question, or he put a position as to why he is under such scrutiny from the other side. I answer him with respect to an experience I had as I sat with my grandmother in our yard, watching our soursop—mango tree from people who would pelt it with stones. She said to me, “Son, people will only pelt at trees that are laden with good fruit,” and that is the reason—

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, 48(1), the relevance of a soursop tree in this debate.

UNREVISED
Mr. K. Scotland: Because, Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: Member, Member, I have to uphold the objection, please.

Mr. K. Scotland: Madam Speaker, I will draw that example only to say that people will not pelt at trees that are barren. The most important aspect of the stewardship of the hon. Minister of National Security that rings home to me as the Member for Port of Spain South, is that under his stewardship, for the last eight months, mothers and fathers from John John, Dan Kelly, Picton, Beverly Hills, Africa, Block 8, Nelson Street, Duncan Street, George Street, they are not burying their young sons. I rebuke any attempt to scuttle that holding of peace in this area that has happened and maintained itself under the stewardship of the hon. Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s East.

I say so now, as the proud representative of an area, when I go to Katanga late in the night, I can tell my constituents, no one can look at us and say, “Look how dey killing out each other”. I commend him and his Ministry and the Government for that achievement. [Desk thumping]

I am proud. So I stand firm in support of the hon. Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s East, and I would liken him to the PNM in Tobago—strong roots.

What I will say—

Dr. Moonilal: Standing Order 48(1) please.

Mr. K. Scotland: I am using something—sorry.

Madam Speaker: Okay, please continue, just do not go much further with your analogy. I think it had something in passing, please continue.

Mr. K. Scotland: Madam Speaker, I will just complete the thought by saying, just as we have been in Tobago since 1977 with County Council elections, we will be in Tobago win, lose or draw—or draw!

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, 48(1). This is not about elections.
Mr. K. Scotland: Because we liken the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s East, as the PNM party as it stands in Tobago. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker, as I come to end, I want to address the Member for Naparima directly. He has a tendency of misquoting the Bible. So today when he began, he quoted a very powerful scripture, Ephesians—

Madam Speaker: Member, today when the hon. Member.

Mr. K. Scotland: The hon. Member for Naparima. He quoted Ephesians 6. What he did however, is he started by saying that he is speaking against and wrestling against principalities and wickedness in high places. But Ephesians 6, chapter 13—

Mr. Lee: 48(5), Madam Speaker. He keeps referring to the Member—

Madam Speaker: He is responding.

Mr. Lee: He keeps referring to him as “he”.

Madam Speaker: Please.

Mr. K. Scotland: Thank you. I know the Bible will affect some of them. [Desk thumping] It will be like an anathema. But what he did not do is that he did not quote the verse before.

Madam Speaker: Member, I know it might be a little artificial to be saying “the hon. Member” all the time—

Mr. K. Scotland: The hon. Member. What the hon. Member did not do was to quote the verse before, and what it says, Madam Speaker, and I want to remind us, and I say this based on what has transpired here today. Not just to the hon. Minister of National Security who is under attack, but all my colleagues:

Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to withstand against the wiles of the wicked and the devil. [Desk thumping] Gird your loins with the truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness. [Desk thumping] Above all, take up the shield of faith wherein you shall be able to quench all fiery
darts of the wicked. [Desk thumping]

Madam Speaker: Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Dinesh Rambally (Chaguanas West): Madam Speaker, I thank you very much, and as I stand in support of this critical Motion of no confidence in the Minister of National Security—[Crosstalk]

Madam Speaker: Members, I would like to hear the contribution for the Member for Chaguanas West. Member, please proceed.

Mr. D. Rambally: Madam Speaker, as I rise to speak in this critical Motion of no confidence in the hon. Minister of National Security, Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West, I would like to first start off by saying that the constituents of Chaguanas West are in full support of the Member for Siparia, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, in bringing this timely Motion. It is a critical Motion.

I would just quickly say that I adopt and I endorse all of the contributions made from my colleagues on this side, [Desk thumping] that we have heard here today.

Madam Speaker, in terms of national security, there is an area which I wish to touch upon, and that is human trafficking. Now, we have heard some contributions but in terms of—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Madam Speaker, Standing Order 55(1)(b), the issue of human trafficking has been dealt with by several speakers on the Opposition side.

Madam Speaker: So, Member, again, I repeat what I have said. I will give you a little leeway, and ask you to go on to a—and you are also an attorney-at-law—a fresh point.

Mr. D. Rambally: Yes, please. Now, Madam Speaker, in terms of the issues I wish to raise—[Interruption]

Mr. Charles: The devil misquoting.
Madam Speaker: I am so sorry that your own colleagues would not allow you to bring your contribution with the respect it deserves. Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. D. Rambally: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In terms of the issues which I wish to raise, I know my colleagues have not raised these issues, and they really relate to what we have as reports that emanate in our jurisdiction and out of the jurisdiction, Caricom, and also international reports. What they all show is that we have an increase in human trafficking and it is getting worse please, Madam Speaker, in terms of the tenure. When we link it in terms of years, we can see that under the hon. Minister of National Security, that we have had an increase. None of the Members before, certainly on this side, have spoken to these reports or dealt with this issue of human trafficking in this angle.

So I will say in summary please, Madam Speaker, that we have the Caribbean Investigative Journalism—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Madam Speaker, you have ruled already that the same issue—Standing Order 48(1)—can be dealt with from many different angles on our own speaker. The Member is dealing with the issue of human trafficking, which has been prosecuted, persecuted, debated ad nauseam again.

Madam Speaker: I have also ruled that I was giving the Member a little leeway, and therefore proceed.

Mr. D. Rambally: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Very quickly, the Caribbean Investigative Journalism Network is one such report. There is the 5th of December, 2019, by Mark Bassant. They have referred to local hotspots in which there are reports of human trafficking. We also have the Police Complaints Authority Director who in 2019, spoke about the increase in the instances of human trafficking, and also in terms of what is taking place with, I would say, the local police officers, and the part that they play. What it shows is that you have an
increase in the instance of human trafficking, which is complicit between international players as well as local law enforcement, and this is a cause for concern. I leave that there.

The next report, as I said earlier, you have local, you have regional and you have international. I go to the US Department of State 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report, and even that had matters which were raised. I will not quote verbatim, but I will say quickly some of the direct issues which they addressed and they made findings, what they said about Trinidad and Tobago is that we had yet to secure a conviction under the anti-trafficking law, that funding for victim assistance was reduced. The laws did not provide properly for immigration relief for victims. It did not allow educational opportunities. The Counter Trafficking Unit is not adequately funded please, Madam Speaker. That the Counter Trafficking Unit’s budget was cut between 2017/2018/2019, and so it dealt with the case of funding, that the Government did not provide direct relief to immigration victims. And also when we talk about persons outside of the borders—

7.40 p.m.

Madam Speaker: So, Member, I said I was giving you some leeway because I thought you were carrying it—not leaving it within the local confines.

Mr. D. Rambally: Yes.

Madam Speaker: But I thought you were dealing with another remit under the Ministry of National Security—

Mr. D. Rambally: Yes, please.

Madam Speaker:—which this could have spoken to. But apparently that is not where you are going, so I will ask you to go on.

Mr. D. Rambally: Yes, please. And, Madam Speaker, the last report, which I
think it is critical, is that you have even the Caricom report entitled, “T&T officers involved in sex trafficking”. I will not go into that, Madam Speaker, because I have said and I have summarized what in effect is being said, that you have corruption in local law enforcement and this is all contributing to the increase in human trafficking.

So, Madam Speaker, when we look at this important issue, it falls squarely under the tenure and under the responsibility of the hon. Minister of National Security, so it is important that we raise it please, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, in terms of what I have heard before—so I move on please, Madam Speaker, from the human trafficking. That is the point which we wish to raise. And very quickly, I have heard some of the contributions made by Members earlier and, Madam Speaker, I must say that there was a particular matter which was raised squarely by the Minister of National Security. And whilst I have no direct interest in this, I have no interest in this particular matter, what we have is that we have had a certain matter brought into the debate into this House which is presently engaging the public domain. And it has to do with someone who was seeking to challenge the policies—the direct policy under the Minister of National Security. And I wish to say, Madam Speaker, very quickly, it is not a matter that is sub judice, and I simply want to say—

Mr. Deyalsingh: 48(1).

Madam Speaker: Just one minute. If I understand where you are going, that matter has been traversed. Three, four Members, in my recollection, have spoken to that matter. So I will ask you to go onto something else, please.

Mr. D. Rambally: Yes, please. Madam Speaker, we have heard a lot of attempts to essentially defend the hon. Minister of National Security. And I just conclude to
say, my colleague, before on the opposite side, the Member for Port of Spain South, he was speaking in defence of the hon. Minister.

And, Madam Speaker, I want to end with—there is a very famous—it is a popular movie called *The Godfather*, please, Madam Speaker, and I will end with this. And what you had was that in this movie, you had a famous actor, Al Pacino, and he was acting a particular role. And when they wanted to increase their boundaries in business out of their traditional jurisdiction, this is what he had to say when they wanted to get rid of the chief advisor: “You are in wartime”. So they were telling the head person, you are in war time and in wartime, you must have the proper and the appropriate conciliary.

Madam Speaker, I want to say that this Minister of Health, we have heard from the—sorry, the Minister of National Security. We have heard from the Minister of Health, and the hon. Prime Minister, and the Minister of National Security that we are in wartime against an unseen enemy. And I want to say that in this wartime that we are in, you have to send in the proper conciliary, and that proper conciliary is not the Minister of National Security. You need someone who can get the job done when we are in wartime, [*Desk thumping*] and this is not the proper person.

So with the greatest of respect to him, this is a very important debate. I did not come to speak because I have any ill will or animosity towards the hon. Minister. But we have to do—we have to account to the people, and the people in this country, Madam Speaker, they are fully in support from Mason Hall to Arima, throughout Trinidad and Tobago, [*Desk thumping*] they are fully in support of this Motion of no confidence.

And, Madam Speaker, in conclusion, again, I want to say, to urge all
Members certainly on the other side, to seriously consider whether or not we can continue with the interest of national security in hands of the hon. Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West. Madam Speaker, I thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Leader of the House.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 52(1), I beg to move that the question be now put.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, the question is that the question be now put.

Question put.

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, a division.

Madam Speaker: A division? So, hon. Members, with respect to a division has been called, under the regulations that we have put for COVID, we know that we wait three minutes for Members to come to the Chamber. Members are reminded that even when a Member—when the vote has commenced, if when a Member’s turn has passed, once that Member has come into the Chamber before the vote is announced, that Member will be allowed to vote. So we wait three minutes.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Speaker, can I seek clarification? The mover of the Motion is prepared to wind up the Motion—

Hon Member: She is not here.

Dr. Moonilal:—and is in the Chamber and present to wind up the Motion.

Madam Speaker: I do not see the Member in the Chamber.

Dr. Moonilal: It is unfair—

Madam Speaker: Member. Member.

Dr. Moonilal:—for the Government to ambush the debate like this.

Madam Speaker: Member. Member, I am sure my eyes do not deceive me. I do not see the Member in the Chamber when the question was put. [Crosstalk] The
Member has—[Crosstalk] Member for Oropouche East, the question was put, Members voted and we have reached the stage where a division has been called. [Crosstalk] Could all the Members who are standing, please sit? Has the announcement been made? [Crosstalk] Okay. [Crosstalk] Member for Oropouche East? [Crosstalk]

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Speaker, are you hearing what is emanating from the mouth of the Minister of National Security?

**Madam Speaker:** And it everybody will sit and keep quiet, then I will hear. All I am hearing is noise and shouting. And I would just like to advise all Members, when the vote has begun, I would like every Member to respect the right of the other and I would want no jeering, supporting, boos or anything like that, when a Member casts his vote.

*The House divided:* Ayes 20 Noes 18

**AYES**

Deyalsingh, Hon. T.

Al-Rawi, Hon. F.

Imbert, Hon. C.

**Clerk:** Mr. Young?

**Mr. Young:** What is that? [Crosstalk]

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** No. I am not hearing because of the intervention. Madam Chair, I would just like to hear the question, please, because there is so much crosstalk, please. [Crosstalk]

**Madam Speaker:** Member, I have already put the question. Please let the vote proceed.

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** So the question is—no, Madam Speaker, it is only because of the
crosstalk and the clarification that—-[Crosstalk]

**Madam Speaker:** Attorney General. Attorney General, I have already put the question, we waited three minutes for Members to come into the Chamber and the vote is in process.

**Ms. Cudjoe:** Excuse me. Madam Speaker, I was out of the Chamber and did not hear the question. I was one of the Members out and I did not hear the question. I would like to hear the question, please, Madam Chair, and for the Members who were out.

**Madam Speaker:** Regrettably, I am not putting the question again. Please proceed.

*Division continued.*

Young, Hon. S. [Crosstalk]

**Clerk:** Ms. Beckles?

**Ms. Beckles:** Madam Speaker, can I be clear on what is it—what is the question? Madam Speaker, I have the right to ask. I do not know why—[Crosstalk] I am speaking to the Speaker. I am not speaking to you all. Madam, I want to be clear, I ask your guidance please.

**Madam Speaker:** What really has me so amazed is that a question was put, a vote was taken and a division was called, so are we in the process of taking the vote on the division. I cannot put the question again.

**Ms. Beckles:** Okay. For the division. Yes. [Crosstalk]

*Division continued.*

Beckles, Hon. P.

Hinds, Hon. F.

Forde, E.

Webster-Roy, Hon. A.
Minister of National Security (cont’d)  

Cudjoe, Hon. S. 
Gadsby-Dolly, Hon. Dr. N. 
Gonzales, Hon. M. 
Mc Clashie, Hon. S. 
Cummings, Hon. F. 
Richards, K. 
Manning, Hon. B. 
Leonce, Hon. A. 
Morris-Julian, Hon. L. 
de Nobriga, Hon. S. 
Scotland, K. 
Monroe, R. 

NOES 
Lee, D. 
Persad-Bissessar SC, Mrs. K. 
Ameen, Ms. K. 
Charles, R. 
Moonilal, Dr. R. 
Paray, R. 
Indarsingh, R. 
Bodoe, Dr. L. 
Hosein, S. 
Padarath, B. 
Haynes, Ms. A. 
Tancoo, D. 
Mohit, Ms. V. 

UNREVISED
Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, I want to get clarity on how did the Member for Diego Martin North/East voted because I did not hear anything from him.

Madam Speaker: Members, on a division, 20 Members voted for, 18 Members voted against, there are no abstentions.

Question agreed to.

Madam Speaker: And therefore, hon. Members, I now put the question. And the question is:

*Be it resolved* that this House express its lack of confidence in the Minister of National Security.

Question put.

*The House divided: Ayes 18 Noes 20*

AYES

Lee, D.
Persad-Bissessar SC, Mrs. K.
Ameen, Ms. K.
Charles, R.
Moonilal, Dr. R.
Paray, R.
Indarsingh, R.
Bodoe, Dr. L.
Hosein, S.
Minister of National Security (cont’d) 2021.01.27

Padarath, B.
Haynes, Ms. A.
Tancoo, D.
Mohit, Ms. V.
Benjamin, Ms. M.
Ram, A.
Ratiram, R.
Rambally, D.
Seecharan, Dr. R.

NOES

Deyalsingh, Hon. T.
Al-Rawi, Hon. F.
Imbert, Hon. C.
Young, Hon. S.
Beckles, Hon. P.
Hinds. Hon. F. [Crosstalk]

Madam Speaker: One minute. My original statement about the vote being taken in silence also applies.

Division continued.

de Nobriga, Hon. S.
Forde, E.
Webster-Roy, Hon. A.
Cudjoe, Hon. S.
Gadsby-Dolly, Hon. Dr. N.
Gonzales, Hon. M.
Mc Clashie, Hon. S.
Madam Speaker: Members, on a division, 18 Members in favour, 20 Members voted against, there were no abstentions. The Motion is not carried.

Motion negatived.

Madam Speaker: Leader of the House.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh): Thank you. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this honourable House do now adjourn to Friday 05 February, 2021, at 1.30 p.m. At that time it is Government’s intention to debate and put through its paces the Evidence (Amdt.) Bill, 2020. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, before I put the question on the adjournment, there are four matters that qualify to be raised on the Motion for the Adjournment. Whip, are we proceeding with any?

Mr. Lee: No.

Madam Speaker: Okay. All right. So I have observed that this will be the seventh time that these matters are being deferred. Do you all intend to proceed with them at all?

Mr. Lee: I have to discuss with the other Members who filed, Madam Speaker.

Question put and agreed to.
House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 8.00 p.m.