



JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON

# NATIONAL SECURITY

*INTERIM REPORT OF THE  
JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY  
FIFTH SESSION (2019/2020) OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT*

*On an Inquiry into Crime: the Security, Safety and Protection of  
Citizens*

**HOR PAPER NO:  
PARL NO: 14/3/43**

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# **INTERIM REPORT**

**OF THE**

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY**

**FIFTH SESSION (2019/2020) OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**ON AN INQUIRY INTO CRIME: THE SECURITY, SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF CITIZENS**

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**Date Laid in HOR:**

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## Mandate and Powers of the JSCNS

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- 2.1 The Joint Select Committee on National Security (“the JSCNS”) is established by Standing Orders 103 and 93 of the House of Representatives and the Senate respectively and is mandated to consider, from time to time, and report to the Parliament whenever necessary, on all matters related to the national security policy of Trinidad and Tobago. In particular, the JSCNS is authorized to examine:
- a) the security, safety and protection of citizens;
  - b) the working relationships between the various agencies involved in intelligence gathering, and how they collect, coordinate, analyse and disseminate information and how these functions might be enhanced; and
  - c) the mechanisms to review the performance and activities of the various agencies involved in National Security and critical infrastructure.

- 2.2 By motions approved in the House of Representatives and Senate on November 13, 2015, November 17, 2015, December 19, 2016, November 28, 2017; December 01, 2017; April 9, 2018 and April 11, 2018, the following members were appointed to serve on the JSCNS:

Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds, MP	Chairman
Mr. Paul Richards	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Randall Mitchell, MP	Member
Dr. Roodal Moonilal, MP	Member
Ms. Nicole Olivierre, MP	Member
Mr. Nigel De Freitas	Member
Mr. Robert Le Hunte	Member
Mr. Saddam Hosein	Member

- 2.3 The JSCNS has held fifty-four (54) meetings to date in the Eleventh Parliament.

- 2.4 The JSCNS has the power, *inter alia*:

- a) to send for persons, papers and records;
- b) to sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the House;
- c) to adjourn from place to place;
- d) to report from time to time;
- e) to appoint specialist advisers either to supply information which is not otherwise readily available, or to elucidate matters of complexity within the Committee's order of reference;
- f) to communicate with any other Committee on matters of common interest; and
- g) to meet concurrently with any other Committee for the purpose of deliberating, taking evidence or considering draft reports.<sup>1</sup>

### **Secretariat Support**

2.5 The following Officers were assigned to assist the JSCNS:

Mrs. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel	Secretary
Mr. Brian Caesar	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Renee Batson	Assistant Secretary
Mrs. Krystle Gittens	Graduate Research Assistant
Ms. Safiyah Shah	Graduate Research Assistant

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<sup>1</sup> Standing Orders 101 of the Senate and 111 of the House of Representatives

## Background

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3.1 By letter dated January 17, 2020, to the JSC on National Security Members, concerns were raised by two Committee members, Dr. Roodal Moonilal and Mr. Saddam Hosein, about statements made by the Minister of National Security on January 16, 2020 at a Post-Cabinet Press Conference. Of particular concern was the assertion that there are “*certain people*” involved in pushing the crime wave ‘*because they want to create a sense of fear and panic about runaway crime*’. The Members were troubled that such statements sought to “*cast blame and aspersions on private citizens*” concerning the “*upsurge in criminal activities in Trinidad and Tobago*”. The Members requested that an urgent meeting be held with the Minister of National Security and relevant National Security agencies.

3.2 In response to the concerns expressed in the letter, your Committee decided via Round Robin to hold an inquiry into *Crime: the security, safety and protection of citizens*.

## Objectives of Inquiry

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4.1 The main objectives of the inquiry were:

- i. To gain an understanding of the statement made by the Minister of National Security which was referred to in the Members’ letter; and
- ii. To obtain an update on the policy and plans in place to combat crime effectively.

## Meetings

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4.2 By letters dated January 22 and 23, 2020, invitations were sent to the following persons to participate in a hearing scheduled for *Wednesday January 29, 2020*:

- i. the Minister of National Security (by invitation from the Chairman pursuant to Standing Order);
- ii. the Commissioner of Police; and
- iii. the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Ag.) Operations.

4.3 Your Committee met on *Wednesday January 29, 2020* as scheduled and a hearing was convened.

4.4 Your Committee also held meetings on this inquiry on Friday February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and Monday February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## THE HEARING - Evidence Received

### The Minister of National Security

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#### 5.1 The Minister informed your Committee as follows –

- a) As the Minister of National Security, briefings and reports are constantly provided to him, in writing, as well as via the normal modes of communication by law enforcement, that is, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, the intelligence services and other agencies that fall under national security;
- b) A decision then has to be made as what should be communicated to the Chairman of the National Security Council. On occasion the mandate requires an address to the public on issues that would affect public order, public safety, and public security;
- c) Issues of national security require a balancing act between the public's interest and safety as being paramount and what should be told to the public;

#### ***Monitoring of Persons of Interests***

- d) Persons of Interest to law enforcement are persons who have criminal records and who are pursuing a life of crime. These persons are monitored by law enforcement agencies. Persons who interact with persons of interest may, as a consequence, fall within the radar of law enforcement agencies;

#### ***Specific statements made by the Minister concerning public safety and security***

##### *February 2019*

- e) At a Ministry of National Security press conference the Minister informed the public that, an individual with a very long list of charges appeared on the Opposition platform at a political meeting;

##### *August 2019*

- f) At public press conferences, the Minister informed the public of allegations made against the former Minister of National Security and the current Chairman of the National Security Council by a Mr. Dennie who was formerly employed at the SSA;

- g) At a press conference, the Minister also informed the public that information had reached the office of the Minister that certain relationships existed between certain politicians and those who are engaging in crime and criminality;

October 2019

- h) At a public meeting at Piggott's corner in Belmont, the Minister raised concerns about information reaching him regarding relationships between the criminal element in Trinidad and Tobago and certain officials of the Opposition;

Between October and December 2019

- i) The country was publicly informed by the Minister of certain incidents brought to the Minister's attention during his contributions in Parliament; Once again, the incidents concerned disturbing relationships between certain members of the Opposition and criminal elements in Trinidad and Tobago;
- j) The Minister was cautious not to call names on those occasions in order that ongoing criminal investigations would not be prejudiced;

January 16, 2020

- k) The Minister made certain statements at a post-Cabinet press conference, to wit, that there are "*certain people*" involved in pushing the crime wave "*because they want to create a sense of fear and panic about runaway crime*"<sup>2</sup>.
- l) The Minister indicated that he made the statement due to the public's concern with respect to the homicide rate of 2019. Names were not called nor fingers pointed.

**Events leading up to Minister's statement**

- m) Every week the Minister meets with various divisions of national security including the heads to sit and plan policy and give advice;
- n) Towards the end of 2019 there was a specific spike in the homicide rate that drew the attention of law enforcement, intelligence agencies and the Minister;
- o) However, it was noted that there was a development in shootings and even some homicides that did not fit in to the analysis of what was going on in the world of crime such as gang related homicides and criminal elements fighting for turf;
- p) The shootings were sporadic, in particular at persons who were in no way connected with crime. There was no motive of robbery, gang or domestic violence and as a result the Ministry and other agencies started monitoring this;

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<sup>2</sup> That statement is the genesis of this inquiry



- q) The last 20 days, of 2019, specifically up to **December 23rd, 2019**, the homicide rate was less than 2018. Statistically and traditionally the last seven days of December is fairly quiet. The idea was to maintain this statistic while putting certain plans and operations in place to bolster the peace in Trinidad and Tobago;
- r) However, the events of December 31, 2019, were extremely disturbing. A car with heavily armed persons randomly began shooting at a maxi stand in downtown Port of Spain;
- s) An off-duty police officer returned fire and the men tried to escape but were confronted by law enforcement. Two of them were killed and the assault rifles with double magazines found on them were an indication that they were set out to do certain serious killings and harm;
- t) After analysis, it was ascertained that there was no other rival gang, no other person of interest in the general vicinity;
- u) Intelligence was received that suggested an instruction had been given on or around the 31st of December, 2019, by a person of interest in the criminal world;
- v) The instruction given by a gang leader to his men, was to go out there and ensure that the homicide rate for 2019 crossed the previous record of 2008;
- w) The TTPS deduced and informed the National Security Council that the rationale behind this was to create panic and chaos and that the actions were politically motivated;
- x) The incident on December 31, 2019, is therefore an act of terrorism;
- y) Names of the persons of interest have not been called because investigations are continuing;

### *Reports about relationships with criminal elements -*

#### **Information concerning a Deputy Political Leader of an Opposition Party (the DPL1)**

- a) On **June 25, 2019**, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) provided information to the Minister about a certain person of interest. This individual is a senior member of the Muslim faction, in Carapo;
- b) He was approached by the DPL1 to represent the party as its councillor for the Carapo area in the (then) upcoming 2019 local government elections;
- c) This individual is involved in underhand dealings at a certain state authority such as the pilfering of equipment and had also made threats to kill people previously. The DPL1 was said to have promised this individual that a party will finance his election

- campaign and assist him in the development of the physical structure of the Carapo masjid;
- d) On **August 09, 2019**, it was revealed that that the individual was not being chosen as the candidate and expressed his dissatisfaction to DPL1;
  - e) There is a link between DPL1, this individual, and an individual in prison for murder who is one of the most notorious criminal elements in our prison system; the name cannot be revealed;
  - f) There was communication between DPL1 and the incarcerated individual;
  - g) On the **5th of September, 2019**, the incarcerated individual reportedly telephoned DPL1 and requested that the individual in question be appointed as the candidate for a specific area in the local government elections, since his chances of securing victory at the polls were favourable;
  - h) The Minister later refused to confirm that communications with the DPL1 was telephonic;
  - i) The incarcerated gang leader, also proffered that if the party was to accept this candidate, the party would be given protection along the East-West Corridor during the local government election campaign;
  - j) The individual, had a number of warrants out for his arrest, and he had been warned by Police Officers previously with a report of a threat to kill made by his common law wife;
  - k) The individual and those associated with him had threatened other potential candidates and warned them off from competing internally to become the candidates for the local government election;
  - l) Further names were provided to the Minister of persons of interest in serious criminal and gang activity being tasked with procuring funds for the person incarcerated for his defence as well as for the provision of funds of the local government campaign of this particular individual;
  - m) **November 19, 2019**, the Minister received a report that a decision was made to replace this individual by the executive of the party after consideration of his criminal record and recent detention for the attempted assassination of a prisoner outside the Maximum Security Prison, Golden Grove Arouca;
  - n) The individual expressed dissatisfaction and disclosed that as a result he cannot guarantee the safety of the party and its members in the Carapo area;

- o) A decision was taken by the party to offer him a security position in lieu of candidacy during the local government campaign.

**Information concerning another Deputy Political Leader of an Opposition Party (the DPL2)**

- a) The TTPS provided information to the Minister by way of a report that the DPL2 has been linked to particular individuals, associated with the Muslim criminal fraction in Trinidad and Tobago;
- b) The DPL2 has been observed in attendance with a person of interest dressed in a yellow t-shirt at political meetings, organized by the party, in support of the DPL2;
- c) The individual is a person of interest to the police due to his affiliations and his alleged involvement in criminal activities;
- d) The individual has been observed for the past two (2) years assisting the DPL2 while DPL2 canvassed in the constituency of La Horquetta/Talparo and surrounding areas on behalf of the party, during which they gave out certain handouts and oversaw several self-help projects;
- e) It has also been reported to the Minister and depicted in photographic evidence that the DPL2, in the lead up to the local government elections engaged in walkabouts in the Maloney area accompanied by a person of interest to the police in particular for gang activities and as a gang leader, out of Beetham Gardens. He is described as a known gang leader in his community and certain allegations were made by the Police with respect to the relationship between himself and the DPL2;
- f) While the DPL2 was the Managing Director at the HDC, this person was awarded the contract to construct the Duncan Street police post.

**Information concerning an Opposition Member of the House of Representatives (the MP)**

- a) The first incident concerning the MP was reported to the Minister in writing on **November 14, 2019**, that on **November 8, 2019**, a certain well known person of interest from the Beetham Gardens, another from Picton Road, Laventille, and another one from Heritage Road Belmont, along with two unidentified individuals and staff at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, No. 1 Wrightson Road, Port of Spain had a dispute over the non-payment of a bill;

- b) The individuals informed the Hyatt Regency Hotel staff that they were waiting for the MP;
- c) As a result, the security of the Hyatt, contacted the Police at Central Police Station and the MP, both of whom arrived at the Hyatt at the same time;
- d) It was reported to the Minister that the MP who was attending Parliament at the nearby International Waterfront Center, paid the sum of \$580 to settle the bill;
- e) The report indicated that the MP expressed surprise at the foursome's action and claimed they were supposed to meet with him at the nearby Parliament building. The Minister was informed by the Police that the MP had met with these individuals several times before at the Hyatt Regency;
- f) One of the individuals is a known drug and robbery offender who was taken into custody after the responding Police Officers were informed that there was an outstanding warrant for his arrest;
- g) TTPS informed the Minister that it is possible that the party is attempting to 'woo' support from the residents of Beetham Gardens and Port of Spain areas for both the local government and general elections;
- h) TTPS in an unofficial written report also informed the Minister that there was communication between the MP, and a gang leader from the Beetham Gardens or East Port of Spain, as well as another gang leader from Bagatelle, Diego Martin, to attend at the MP's constituency office for a meeting. This is some time in the last quarter or the second half of 2019 last year;
- i) It was reported by the TTPS to the Minister that one of the individuals the MP is communicating with was subsequently arrested under the anti-gang legislation, charged and incarcerated;
- j) There was no proximity or MP/constituent relationship between the MP's constituency and these individuals;
- k) The MP made a request to meet with the Commissioner of Police with a sense of urgency on the day that that meeting was supposed to take place, according to the TTPS;
- l) The MP proffered certain explanations to the TTPS for the meeting with these individuals at the constituency office of the MP.

## The Commissioner of Police and the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Ag.) Operations

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### 6.1 The Commissioner of Police informed your Committee as follows -

- a) There was a reduction of every violent crime, inclusive of homicides between 8 to 15 %, from August 2018 to August 2019;
- b) Based on comparative statistics, the homicide rate would increase with all other major crime. There will be a pattern/trend;
- c) The first six months of 2019 there was a 12 or 13 % decrease;
- d) Examination of the pattern showed that 450 homicides per annum was in line with what is standard. The TTPS was looking at a 10% decrease every year which meant that in four or five years homicides will be less than 300 or 200;
- e) At the end of the year this continued, nothing had changed, pertaining to all of the other violent crimes and serious crimes there was a reduction for all except homicide;
- f) Homicide was the only one that changed, so there was a break in the pattern. Upon analysis of CAPA, intelligence agencies found that something was not right;
- g) It should be considered that one reason for this could have also been the use of the 5.56 rounds;
- h) In 2018 there were more wounding/shootings than homicides in 2018 than 2019, even though the homicide rate was higher because 5.56 were not used;
- i) In the last three years, 323 persons have been arrested for firearms and released on the first hearing;
- j) TTPS intelligence reveals that there are just about 800 shooters in this country. The 800 shooters have been the persons who have been involved in the majority of the homicides in this country;
- k) Even though in 2019 there were about 30 or 40 less wounding and shootings and homicides, the homicide rate increased;
- l) Up until October, September thereabouts, the pattern was continuing. Then there was a spike and the TTPS realized something was amiss and started looking at intelligence;

- m) The TTPS deduced it was not gang related activity or reprisals;
- n) On December 23, 2018, there were 515 homicides and 516 on the same day 2019. Generally, that week of the year is usually the lowest number of homicides;
- o) So in 2018, 23rd of December it was 515, it went to 516 after just one week, so it went up by one. In 2019 it went up by 22 and therein lies the difference. The bulk of that information actually came after the Old Year's Day shooting;
- p) The TTPS received intelligence that a gang leader had stated that their mission was to increase the homicide rate to 550. The gang leader sent in his two most senior persons for this;
- q) There is no intelligence to verify that the act was politically motivated, and that there are a number of different variables that the Police are still verifying;
- r) The Commissioner indicated that intelligence reports about the shootings and statements about politicians are two separate matters which he said should not be intertwined at this time;
- s) The intelligence for that time and that day indicate that there were no persons from the opposing gang. No one individual from that gang was anywhere near that area when the shooting took place;
- t) A large number of persons were on Prince and George Street at the time the incident occurred;
- u) This then takes it away from it being related as a gang-related shooting to terrorism;
- v) The TTPS does not possess the intelligence to verify the perpetrators or who were the persons that would have influenced the individual or that gang to commit such an act;
- w) Investigations into this matter continues;
- x) The incident was designed to cause as much damage and fatalities as possible at that specific time, and it matched the TTPS information that the homicide rate had to increase over 550. This was deliberate;
- y) Usually with this type of act, the expectation was a retaliation, but there was none. Immediately when it happened Sea Lots was blocked off;

### Reports about relationships with criminal elements -

- a) The Commissioner concurred that an individual who was well known, with a serious criminal record appeared on the platform at a meeting of a political party in February, 2019;
- b) There is no link between this individual appearing on the party platform and the sporadic shootings;
- c) There is information that a senior member of that political party allegedly approached an individual to go up as a councillor for a certain seat in the local government election;
- d) That individual has some degree of affiliation with a very notorious gang leader who is presently incarcerated and who is involved in a major case that is being dealt with at this time pertaining to the assassination of a senior attorney and the intelligence before the TTPS is that it was on the condition that the individual provides protection for the supporters during the campaign;
- e) The individual has a history of criminal activity. That individual was removed from the selection process after the party was made aware;
- f) A previous Minister, also had meetings with major criminals, notorious gang leaders with promises of a \$40 million state contract on ascension into office, as well as another \$2 million contract to build Sherwood Park;
- g) This previous Minister was not in Cabinet, he was a Member of Parliament and a junior Minister in the 2010 to 2015 administration;
- h) The TTPS has reports of a female politician *walking the ground* and affiliating with certain gang members on par with what would have taken place nine years ago prior to the 2010 election in the Carapo area;
- i) That person was a Managing Director of the HDC;
- j) An Opposition Member of the House of Representatives (the MP), was the Minister responsible for the HDC during that time;
- k) That person was closely linked with senior gang members and gave a state contract to the gang member to build a police station;
- l) The intelligence the TTPS had prior to 2010 went along the same lines as what happened with LifeSport;

- m) TTPS records show that over 70 persons have been killed because of LifeSport and it continues because of the strength that was given to that gang because of the affiliation and hundreds of millions in state contracts given;
- n) Links between politicians and gang leaders have proven to be the catalyst towards homicides in this country;
- o) The profit acquired from the State in these contracts, whether LifeSport, CEPEP, HDC, Colour Me Orange have been used to purchase more firearms, hiring more gang members and putting hits on other gang members to get their state contracts;
- p) This has gone on for the last 12 years and it is still ongoing. It is present in the regional corporations and in spite of the change in administrations, the pattern continues;
- q) The result is that the Police Service is demoralized because the Government, the Opposition, the State and politicians, want the police to reduce crime but criminals are given more funding than the TTPS to purchase more sophisticated weapons, hire more persons, get more profit, pay more persons in the community to tip them off so that if a raid is done, nothing is achieved;
- r) These individuals are even protected by the State;
- s) The Commissioner confirmed that the Special Branch reported an incident at the Hyatt Regency Hotel involving the MP and individuals known to the police and the payment of a bill by the MP;
- t) The Special Investigations Unit confirmed a planned meeting between two major gang leaders and the MP at the constituency office of the MP;
- u) It was brought to the Commissioner's attention and the Special Investigations Unit was going to do surveillance because that is what they normally do to verify what the individuals (criminals) would be doing;
- v) The MP apparently was made aware of the surveillance on the individuals' meeting with the said MP. The said MP brought that to the attention of the Commissioner;
- w) The meeting between the MP and the gang leaders did not take place;
- x) The Commissioner indicated that he could not recall if it was a call or text to him from the MP, but either way he met with the MP as a result of that contact;
- y) The Commissioner and the MP had a conversation in which the MP informed him of being aware of the surveillance of the planned meeting;



- z) The Commissioner confirmed it was the said MP who brought to his attention the planned surveillance of the meeting;
- aa) The Commissioner indicated that this matter was concerning to him because such matters are supposed to be very confidential and this indicated that there was a leak; and
- bb) The Commissioner confirmed that he spoke to the Minister of National Security about this breach in the Special Investigations Unit.

## Report

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7.1 The necessity to report at this stage arose because a procedural issue has interrupted the work of your Committee requiring the intervention of the House. In making a recommendation to the House by way of this report, your Committee is obligated to apprise the House of the information before it that supports the importance of the inquiry and to inform the House on the status of the inquiry.

7.2 Your Committee is in the process of evidence-taking and therefore in this report no findings nor conclusions have been presented. Having regard to the evidence before your Committee, there is further work to be undertaken in relation to this inquiry. Upon resumption, the process of evidence-taking will include both oral and written submissions. However, your Committee is of the view that, given the evidence presented, Dr. Roodal Moonilal has a personal and direct interest in this inquiry and should not be allowed to participate any further in this inquiry as a Member of your Committee.

7.3 Your Committee notes that a minority report has been prepared by two of its members, one of whom is the very Member who in the view of your Committee has a direct and personal interest in this inquiry and, for that reason, was asked to recuse himself from this inquiry.

7.4 On account of his refusal to recuse himself, your Committee was constrained to suspend its work and refer this matter to this Honourable House in anticipation that the House will approve the recommendation in paragraph 8.1 below, so that the inquiry could continue.

7.5 Notwithstanding the suspension of deliberations, your Committee notes that the said Member who it was determined has a direct and personal interest in this inquiry and whom, by his own admission agreed with the suggestion by one Member that his continued involvement at this stage could make other Members uncomfortable to the point of negatively impacting the work of your Committee has, in his minority report, embarked upon a consideration of the evidence received thus far by your Committee and without more, has ventured into conclusions that your Committee considers speculative and exculpatory, in the absence of your Committee's full inquiry into the relevant issues given the suspension of the inquiry in the aforementioned circumstances.

## Recommendation

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8.1 Your Committee therefore recommends that Dr. Roodal Moonilal should not serve as a Member of the Joint Select Committee on National Security during the Committee's *Inquiry into Crime: the Security, Safety and Protection of Citizens*.

Respectfully submitted

Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds, MP  
**Chairman**

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

## APPENDIX I

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# Minutes of Proceedings

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY**

**MINUTES OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH MEETING HELD (IN CAMERA) IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, LEVEL TWO, CABILDO PARLIAMENTARY COMPLEX, ST. VINCENT STREET, PORT OF SPAIN ON WEDNESDAY JANUARY 29, 2020.**

**PRESENT**

**Committee Members**

Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds, MP	Chairman
Mr. Paul Richards	Vice-Chairman
Dr. Roodal Moonilal, MP	Member
Mr. Nigel De Freitas	Member
Mr. Robert Le Hunte	Member
Mr. Saddam Hosein	Member
Ms. Nicole Olivierre, MP	Member
Mr. Randall Mitchell, MP	Member

**Secretariat**

Mrs. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel	Secretary
Mr. Brian Caesar	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Renee Batson	Assistant Secretary
Mrs. Krystle Gittens	Graduate Research Assistant
Ms. Safiyyah Shah	Graduate Research Assistant

*[Chairman in the chair]*

## **COMMENCEMENT**

1.1 The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 1:43 p.m.

## **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

2.1 The Committee considered the Minutes of the Fifty-Third Meeting held on Friday December 6, 2019.

2.2 The motion for the confirmation of the Minutes was moved by Ms. Nicole Olivierre and seconded by Mr. Nigel De Freitas.

2.3 The Minutes of the Fifty-Third meeting were approved.

## **PRE-HEARING DISCUSSIONS**

4.1 The Chairman informed Members that the following stakeholders were invited to appear:

- the Minister of National Security; and
- Commissioner of Police.

4.2 The Chairman reminded members that:

- By letter dated January 20, 2020 the continuation of the inquiry into Prison Security originally scheduled for today was deferred; and
- The Committee agreed to hold an inquiry instead into Crime: the security, safety and protection of citizens based on the concerns raised by two Committee Members, Dr. Roodal Moonilal and Mr. Saddam Hosein.

4.3 The Committee agreed to the following inquiry objectives:

- i. to gain an understanding of the statement made by the Minister of National Security which is referred to in the Members' letter; and
- ii. to obtain an update on the policy and plans in place to combat crime effectively.

4.4 Brief discussion ensued on the format for the public hearing.

- i. By majority decision the Committee agreed that the Chairman should not voluntarily demit his chair on the basis of his alleged affiliation with the matter.

**HEARING: *Crime: the security, safety and protection of citizens***

5.1 The following officials joined the meeting:

**THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY**

Hon. Stuart Young, MP

Minister of National Security and Minister in  
the Office of the Prime Minister

5.2 There were introductions.

5.3 The Chairman informed the Minister of National Security that the proceedings were being recorded for subsequent broadcast, subject to the decision of the Committee.

During the hearing, the following key issues/concerns were highlighted:

**Minister of National Security**

- As the Minister of National Security, briefings and reports are constantly provided in writing as well as via the normal modes of communication by: law enforcement, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, the intelligence services and other areas that fall under national security;
- A decision then has to be made as what should be communicated to the Chairman of the National Security Council. On occasion the mandate requires an address to the public on issues that would affect public order, public safety, and public security;
- Issues of national security require a balancing act between the public's interest and safety as being paramount and what should be told to the public;

***Monitoring of Persons of Interests***

- Persons of Interest to law enforcement are persons who have criminal records and who are pursuing a life of crime. These persons are monitored by our security agencies. Persons who interact with persons of interest may, as a consequence, fall under the radar of law enforcement authorities;

## **Specific events concerning public safety and security**

### **February 2019**

- At a Ministry of National Security press conference the Minister informed the public that, a person with a very long list of charges appeared on the Opposition platform at a political meeting;

### **August 2019**

- At public press conferences the Minister informed the public of allegations made against the former Minister of National Security, Minister Dillon, and the Chairman of the National Security Council, the Prime Minister, the Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley by a Mr. Dennie who was part of the intelligence service, the SSA;
- Information also reached to the office of the Minister that certain relationships existed between politicians and those who are engaging in crime and criminality;

### **October 2019**

- Public was informed about concerns with relationships between the criminal element in Trinidad and Tobago and the Opposition at Piggott's corner in Belmont;

### **Between October and December 2019**

- The country was publicly informed of certain incidents brought to Ministers attention during contributions or specific questions asked in Parliament;
- The incidents concerned disturbing relationships between certain members of the Opposition and the criminal element in Trinidad and Tobago;
- The Minister was cautious not to call names on these occasions in order that ongoing criminal investigations would not be prejudiced;

### **January 16, 2020**

- Statement made by Minister at a post-Cabinet press conference which is the subject the hearing;
- Statement made due public's concern with respect to the homicide rate of 2019; Names were not called nor fingers pointed;

## **Events leading up to Minister's statement**

- Towards the end of 2019 there was a specific spike in the homicide rate that drew the attention of law enforcement, intelligence agencies and the Minister;

- On accepting the office of Minister in August 2018 the statistics show that from middle of October 2018 to about the middle of 2019, the homicide rate had actually been less than the previous year and the country was heading in a good direction;
- Every week the Minister met with various divisions of national security including the heads to sit and plan policy and give advice;
- However, it was noted that there was a development in shootings and even some homicides that did not fit in to the analysis of what was going on in the world of crime such as gang related homicides and criminal elements fighting for turf;
- The shootings were sporadic, in particular at persons who were in no way connected with crime. There was no motive of robbery and as a result the Ministry and other agencies started monitoring this;
- The last 20 days, of 2019, specifically of **December 23rd, 2019**, the homicides rate was less than 2018. Statistically and traditionally the last seven days of December is fairly quiet. The idea was to maintain this statistic while putting certain plans and operations in place to bolster the peace in Trinidad and Tobago;
- However, the events of December 31, 2019, were extremely disturbing. A car with heavily armed persons randomly shot at a taxi stand in downtown Port of Spain;
- An off-duty police officer who returned fire and the men tried to escape but were confronted by law enforcement. Two of them killed and assault rifles with double magazines were an indication that they were set out to do certain serious killings and harm.
- After analysis, it was ascertained that there was no other rival gang, no other person of interest in the general vicinity;
- Intelligence was provided thereafter.

#### **Information concerning a Deputy Political Leader of an Opposition Party (the DPL1)**

- On June 25, 2019, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) provided information about a certain person of interest. This individual is a senior member of the Muslim faction, in Carapo;
- He was approached by the DPL1 to represent a party as its councillor for the Carapo area in the upcoming 2019 local government elections;
- This individual is involved in underhand dealings at a certain state authority such as the pilfering of equipment and had also made threats to kill people previously. The DPL1 was said to have promised this individual that a party will finance his election campaign and assist him in the development of the physical structure of the Carapo masjid;
- On August 09, 2019, it was revealed that that specific person was not being chosen as the candidate and expressed his dissatisfaction to DPL1;
- There is a link between DPL1, this individual, and a person in prison for murder who is one of the most notorious criminal elements in our prison system, the name cannot be revealed;
- There was communication between DPL1 and the incarcerated prisoner;



- On the 5th of September, 2019, the incarcerated individual reportedly telephoned DPL1 and requested that the individual in question be appointed as the candidate for a specific area in the local government elections, since his chances of securing victory at the polls were favourable;
- The Minister later refused to confirm that communications with the DPL1 was telephonic;
- The incarcerated gang leader, also proffered that if the party was to accept this candidate, the party would be given protection along the East-West Corridor during the local government election campaign;
- The individual, had a number of warrants out for his arrest, and he had been warned by Police Officers previously with a report of a threat to kill made by his common law wife;
- The individual and those associated with him had threatened other potential candidates and warned them off, and warned them off from competing internally to become the candidates for the local government election;
- Further names were provided to the Minister of persons of interest in serious criminal and gang activity being tasked with procuring funds for the person incarcerated for his defence as well as for the provision of funds of the local government campaign of this particular individual;
- November 19, 2019, the Minister received a report that a decision was made to replace this individual by the executive of the party after consideration of his criminal record and recent detention for the attempted assassination of a prisoner outside the Maximum Security Prison, Golden Grove Arouca;
- The individual expressed dissatisfaction and disclosed that as a result he cannot guarantee the safety of the party and its members in the Carapo area;
- A decision was taken by the party to offer him a security position in lieu of candidacy during the local government campaign.

#### **Information concerning another Deputy Political Leader of an Opposition Party (the DPL2)**

- The TTPS provided information to the Minister by way of a report that the DPL2 has been linked to particular individuals, associated with the Muslim criminal faction in Trinidad and Tobago;
- The DPL2 has been observed in attendance with a person of interest dressed in a yellow t-shirt at political meetings, organized by the party, in support of the DPL2;
- The person is a person of interest to the police due to his affiliations and his alleged involvement in criminal activities;
- The individual has been observed for the past two (2) years assisting the DPL2 while DPL2 canvassed in the constituency of La Horquetta/Talparo and surrounding areas on behalf of the party, during which they gave out certain handouts and oversaw several self-help projects;
- It has also been reported to the Minister and depicted in photographic evidence that the DPL2, in the lead up to the local government elections engaged in walkabouts in the Maloney area accompanied by a person of interest to the police in particular for gang activities and as a gang leader, out of Beetham Gardens. He is described as a known gang

leader in his community and certain allegations were made by the Police with respect to the relationship between himself and the DPL2;

- While the DPL2 was the Managing Director at the HDC, this person was awarded the contract to construct the Duncan Street police post.

### **Information concerning an Opposition Member of the House of Representatives (the MP)**

- The first incident concerning the MP was reported to the Minister in writing on November 14, 2019, that on November 8, 2019, a certain well known person of interest from the Beetham Gardens, another from Picton Road, Laventille, and another one from Heritage Road Belmont, along with two unidentified persons and staff at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, No. 1 Wrightson Road, Port of Spain had a dispute over the non-payment of a bill;
- The persons informed the Hyatt Regency Hotel staff that they were waiting for the MP;
- As a result, the security of the Hyatt, contacted the Police at Central Police Station and the MP, both of whom arrived at the Hyatt at the same time;
- It was reported to the Minister that the MP who was attending Parliament at the nearby International Waterfront Center, paid the sum of \$580 to settle the bill;
- The report indicated that the MP expressed surprise at the foursome's action and claimed they were supposed to meet with him at the nearby Parliament building. The Minister was informed by the Police that the MP had met with these individuals several times before at the Hyatt Regency;
- One of the individuals is a known drug and robbery offender who was taken into custody after the responding Police Officers were informed that there was an outstanding warrant for his arrest;
- TTPS informed the Minister that it is possible that the party is attempting to 'woo' support from the residents of Beetham Gardens and Port of Spain areas for both the local government and general elections;
- TTPS in an unofficial written report also informed the Minister that there was communication between the MP, and a gang leader from the Beetham Gardens or East Port of Spain, as well as another gang leader from Bagatelle, Diego Martin, to attend at the MP's constituency office for a meeting. This is some time in the last quarter or the second half of 2019 last year;
- It was reported by the TTPS to the Minister that one of the individuals the MP is communicating with was subsequently arrested under the anti-gang legislation, charged and incarcerated;
- There was no proximity or MP/constituent relationship between the MP's constituency and these individuals;
- The MP made a request to meet with the Commissioner of Police with a sense of urgency on the day that that meeting was supposed to take place, according to the TTPS.
- The MP proffered certain explanations to the TTPS for the meeting with these individuals at the constituency office of the MP.

***Other key points to note***

- Intelligence was brought that suggested an instruction had been given on or around the 31st of December, 2019, by a person of interest in the criminal world;
- The instruction given by a gang leader to his men, was to go out there and ensure that the homicide rate for 2019 crossed the previous record of 2008;
- The TTPS deduced and informed the National Security Council that the rationale behind this was to create panic and chaos and that the actions were politically motivated;
- The incident on December 31, 2019, is an act of terrorism;
- It was reported by the TTPS to the Minister that one of the individuals Dr. Moonilal is communicating with was subsequently arrested under the anti-gang legislation, charged and incarcerated;
- At the end of the day, it comes down to successful convictions. Individuals may be arrested, and charged, but then there is the issue of bail. Murder is the only non-bailable offence;
- Names of the persons of interest have not been called because investigations are continuing;
- All information stated by the Minister, which were reported in the newspapers were provided by the arms of National Security;
- There is an anecdotal suggestion that government (PNM) officials have awarded contracts to known gang leaders. The Minister does not possess evidence and information with respect to these matters; and
- All reports were provided by the various arms of National security and not the Minister himself. The Minister never requested the reports.

*[meeting suspended at 4:07pm]*

*[meeting resumed at 4:14pm]*

**OFFICIALS FROM THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE**

Mr. Gary Griffith

Commissioner of Police

Mr. Jayson Forde

Deputy Commissioner of Police

5.1 There were introductions.

5.2 The Chairman informed the officials that the proceedings were being recorded for subsequent broadcast, subject to the decision of the Committee.

During the hearing, the following key issues/concerns were highlighted:

### The Commissioner of Police

- There was a reduction of every violent crime, inclusive of homicides between 8 to 15 %, from August 2018 to August 2019;
- Based on comparative statistics, the homicide rate would increase with all other major crime. There will be a pattern/trend;
- The first six months of 2019 there was a 12 or 13 % decrease;
- Examination of the pattern showed that 450 homicides per annum was in line with what is standard the TTPS was looking at a 10% decrease every year which meant that in four or five years homicides will be less than 300 or 200;
- At the end of the year this continued, nothing had changed, pertaining to all of the other violent crimes and serious crimes there was a reduction for all except homicide;
- Homicide was the only one that changed, so there was a break in the pattern. Upon analysis of CAPA, intelligence agencies found that something was not right;
- It should be considered that one reason for this could have also been the use of the 5.56 rounds;
- In 2018 there were more wounding/shootings than homicides in 2018 than 2019, even though the homicide rate was higher because 5.56 were not used;
- In the last three years, 323 persons have been arrested for firearms and released on the first hearing;
- TTPS intelligence reveals that there are just about 800 shooters in this country. The 800 shooters have been the persons who have been involved in the majority of the homicides in this country;
- Even though in 2019 there were about 30 or 40 less wounding and shootings and homicides, the homicide rate increased;
- Up until October, September thereabouts, the pattern was continuing. Then there was a spike and the TTPS realized something was amiss and started looking at intelligence;
- The TTPS deduced it was not gang related activity or reprisals;
- On December 23, 2018, there were 515 homicides and 516 on the same day 2019. Generally, that week of the year is usually the lowest number of homicides;
- So in 2018, 23rd of December it was 515, it went to 516 after just one week, so it went up by one. In 2019 it went up by 22 and therein lies the difference. The bulk of that information actually came after the Old Year's Day shooting.
- The TTPS received intelligence that a gang leader had stated that their mission was to increase the homicide rate to 550. The gang leader sent in his two most senior persons for this;
- The Commissioner indicated that intelligence reports about the shootings and statements about politicians are two (2) separate matters which he said should not be intertwined at this time.
- There is no intelligence to verify that the act was politically motivated. There are a number of different variables that the Police are still verifying;

- The intelligence for that time and that day indicate that there were no persons from the opposing gang. No one individual from that gang was anywhere near that area when the shooting took place;
- A large number of persons were on Prince and George Street at the time the incident occurred;
- This then takes it away from it being related as a gang-related shooting to terrorism;
- The TTPS does not possess the intelligence to verify the perpetrators or who were the persons that would have influenced the individual or that gang to commit such an act;
- Investigations into this matter continues;
- The incident was designed to cause as much damage and fatalities as possible at that specific time, and it matched the TTPS information that the homicide rate had to increase over 550. This was deliberate;
- Usually with this type of act, the expectation was a retaliation, but there was none. Immediately when it happened Sea Lots was blocked off;
- The Commissioner concurred that a man who was well known, with a serious criminal record appeared on the platform at a meeting of a political party in February, 2019;
- There is no link between this person appearing on the party platform and the sporadic shootings;
- There is information that a senior member of that political party allegedly approached an individual to go up as a councillor for a certain seat in the local government election;
- That individual has some degree of affiliation with a very notorious gang leader who is presently incarcerated and who is involved in a major case that is being dealt with at this time pertaining to the assassination of a senior attorney and the intelligence before the TTPS is that it was on the condition that the individual, provides protection for the supporters during the campaign;
- The person has a history of criminal activity. That person was removed from the selection process after the party was made aware;
- A previous Minister, also had meetings with major criminals, notorious gang leaders with promises of a \$40 million state contract on ascension into office, as well as another \$2 million contract to build Sherwood Park;
- This previous Minister was not in Cabinet, he was a Member of Parliament and a junior Minister in the 2010 to 2015 administration;
- The TTPS has reports of a female politician *walking the ground* and affiliating with certain gang members on par with what would have taken place nine years ago prior to the 2010 election in the Carapo area;
- That person was a Managing Director of the HDC;
- An Opposition Member of the House of Representatives (the MP), was the Minister responsible for the HDC during that time;
- That individual was closely linked with senior gang members and gave a state contract to the gang member to build a police station;
- The intelligence the TTPS had prior to 2010 went along the same lines as what happened with LifeSport;

- TTPS records show that over 70 persons have been killed because of LifeSport and it continues because of the strength that was given to that gang because of the affiliation and hundreds of millions in state contracts given;
- Links between politicians and gang leaders have proven to be the catalyst towards homicides in this country;
- The profit acquired from the State in these contracts, whether LifeSport, CEPEP, HDC, Colour Me Orange have been used to purchase more firearms, hiring more gang members and putting hits on other gang members to get their state contracts;
- This has gone on for the last 12 years and it is still ongoing. It is present in the regional corporations and in spite of the change in administrations, the pattern continues;
- The result is that the Police Service is demoralized because the Government, the Opposition, the State and politicians, want the police to reduce crime but criminals are given more funding than the TTPS to purchase more sophisticated weapons, hire more persons, get more profit, pay more persons in the community to tip them off so that if a raid is done, nothing is achieved;
- These individuals are even protected by the State;
- The Commissioner confirmed that the Special Branch reported an incident at the Hyatt Regency Hotel involving the MP and individuals known to the police and the payment of a bill by the MP;
- The Special Investigations Unit confirmed a planned meeting between two major gang leaders and the MP at the constituency office of the MP
- It was brought to the Commissioner's attention and the Special Investigations Unit was going to do surveillance because that is what they normally do to verify what the individuals (criminals) would be doing;
- The MP apparently was made aware of the surveillance on the individuals' meeting with the said MP. The said MP brought that to the attention of the Commissioner;
- The meeting between the MP and the gang leaders did not take place;
- The Commissioner indicated that he could not recall if it was a call or text to him from the MP, but either way he met with the MP as a result of that contact;
- The Commissioner and the MP had a conversation in which the MP informed him of being aware of the surveillance of the planned meeting;
- The Commissioner confirmed it was the said MP who brought to his attention the planned surveillance of the meeting;
- The Commissioner indicated that this matter was concerning to him because such matters are supposed to be very confidential and this indicated that there was a leak; and
- The Commissioner confirmed that he spoke to the Minister of National Security about this breach in the Special Investigations Unit.

*[meeting suspended at 5:30pm]*

*[meeting resumed at 5:37pm]*

5.4 The Chairman indicated that he was of the view that Dr. Moonilal should voluntarily vacate his chair during the inquiry and ought not to be allowed to question the Police, given his direct involvement and personal interest in matters which came out in evidence.

5.5 Dr. Moonilal indicated that he wished to enquire for the purpose of the record, whether any of these witnesses indicated that he arranged, organized and called a meeting with anyone linked to the criminal underworld or with criminal ties.

5.6 Dr. Moonilal further indicated that he had serious questions to raise with the Commissioner linked to what he termed the Minister's outlandish and reckless statement, which could prove that based on the evidence of the Commissioner, the Minister was indeed reckless and outlandish.

5.7 However, by a majority, the Committee agreed that Dr. Moonilal should vacate the meeting given the evidence by now before the Committee.

5.8 Dr. Moonilal indicated his unwillingness to vacate the meeting.

*[meeting suspended at 6:20pm]*

*[meeting resumed at 6:22pm]*

### ***Closing Comments***

6.1 The Chairman thanked all officials for attending and informed them that they will be invited to a subsequent hearing to continue deliberations on the inquiry in question.

6.2 The meeting was suspended at 6:22 p.m.

*The Officials left the meeting*

### **POST-HEARING DISCUSSIONS**

7.1 The meeting reconvened at 6:22 p.m. and the Committee engaged in brief post-hearing discussions in relation to the issues raised during the public hearing.

### **Next Meeting**

7.2 The Chairman advised that Members will be notified of a rescheduled meeting and that a report be presented to the House on the information obtained.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

8.1 There being no other business, the Chairman thanked all Members and adjourned the meeting.

8.2 The adjournment was taken at 6:24 p. m.

I certify that these Minutes are true and correct.

Chairman

Secretary

*February 5, 2020*



**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY**

**MINUTES OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH MEETING HELD (IN CAMERA) IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, LEVEL TWO, CABILDO PARLIAMENTARY COMPLEX, ST. VINCENT STREET, PORT OF SPAIN ON FRIDAY FEBRUARY 7, 2020**

**PRESENT**

**Committee Members**

Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds, MP	Chairman
Mr. Paul Richards	Vice-Chairman
Dr. Roodal Moonilal, MP	Member
Ms. Nicole Olivierre, MP	Member
Mr. Randall Mitchell, MP	Member
Mr. Nigel De Freitas	Member
Mr. Robert Le Hunte	Member
Mr. Saddam Hosein	Member

**Secretariat**

Mrs. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel	Secretary
Mr. Brian Caesar	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Renee Batson	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Safiyyah Shah	Graduate Research Assistant
Mrs. Angelique Massiah	Parliamentary Legal Officer

*[Chairman in the chair]*

## **COMMENCEMENT**

1.2 The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 11:06 a.m.

## **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

2.1 The Committee considered the Minutes of the Fifty-Fourth Meeting held on Wednesday January 29, 2020.

2.2 The Committee agreed to the following amendments:

- i. Paragraph 5, on page 3, the sentence should read, “*At a Ministry of National Security press conference the Minister informed the public that, a person with a very long list of charges appeared on the Opposition platform at a political meeting.*”
- ii. After paragraph 7, on page 5, insert, “*The Minister later refused to confirm that communications with the DPLI was telephonic.*”

*[Meeting suspended at 11:49 am]*

*[Meeting resumed at 11:50am]*

2.3 There was a long discussion on the Minutes during which the following concerns were raised:

- The identification of persons as reported by law enforcement agencies at this early stage in the inquiry;
- The fact that the Committee is proceeding with an interim report at this stage before all evidence was heard;
- The need to call persons whose names were identified in the evidence received so that they can be allowed the opportunity to respond; and
- The question of Dr. Moonilal continuing to participate in the inquiry.

2.4 The Chair informed the committee that:

- The interim report is confirmation that the inquiry is incomplete;
- The interim report is necessary to bring the House/Senate up to date on the work thus far and to get agreement that Dr. Moonilal should not serve for the duration of the inquiry given that he has a direct and personal interest in this inquiry, based on the evidence received to date; and

- Insofar as the Committee's inquiry, when resumed, will involve the calling of additional witnesses, Dr. Moonilal should voluntarily vacate his Chair.

2.5 Dr. Moonilal indicated his unwillingness to vacate the inquiry.

2.6 The motion for the confirmation of the Minutes was not carried.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

3.1 Given the fact that a sitting of the House was scheduled to commence at 1:30 p.m., the Committee agreed to adjourn to Wednesday February 12, 2020.

3.2 The adjournment was taken at 12:14 p. m.

I certify that these Minutes are true and correct.

Chairman

Secretary

February 14, 2020

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY**

**MINUTES OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH MEETING HELD (IN CAMERA) IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, LEVEL TWO, CABILDO PARLIAMENTARY COMPLEX, ST. VINCENT STREET, PORT OF SPAIN ON MONDAY FEBRUARY 17, 2020**

**PRESENT**

**Committee Members**

Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds, MP	Chairman
Mr. Paul Richards	Vice-Chairman
Dr. Roodal Moonilal, MP	Member
Ms. Nicole Olivierre, MP	Member
Mr. Randall Mitchell, MP	Member
Mr. Nigel De Freitas	Member
Mr. Robert Le Hunte	Member
Mr. Saddam Hosein	Member

**Secretariat**

Mrs. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel	Secretary
Mr. Brian Caesar	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Renee Batson	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Safiyyah Shah	Graduate Research Assistant
Mrs. Angelique Massiah	Parliamentary Legal Officer

*[Chairman in the chair]*

### **COMMENCEMENT**

1.3 The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 2:48 p.m.

### **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FIFTY FOURTH MEETING**

2.1 The Chairman reminded members that the Minutes of the 54<sup>th</sup> meeting held on Wednesday January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 had not been confirmed. Members were also reminded that during the 55<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Committee had agreed on the following amendments to the Minutes of the 54<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- (a) Paragraph 5, on page 3, the sentence should read, *“At a Ministry of National Security press conference the Minister informed the public that, a person with a very long list of charges appeared on the Opposition platform at a political meeting.”*
- (b) After paragraph 7, on page 5, insert, *“The Minister later refused to confirm that communications with the DPLI was telephonic.”*

2.2 The motion for the confirmation of the Minutes of the 54<sup>th</sup> meeting, as amended, was moved by Mr. Paul Richards and seconded by Mr. Randall Mitchell.

2.3 The Minutes of the Fifty-Fourth meeting, as amended, were approved.

### **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FIFTY FIFTH MEETING**

2.4 The Committee considered the Minutes of the 55<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on Friday February 7, 2020.

2.5 The following amendment was made to the Minutes:

- At paragraph 2.3, insert the following new penultimate paragraph:  
*- The proposed Interim Report should deal only with the Member whose presence on the Committee is an issue.*

2.6 The motion for the confirmation of the Minutes, as amended, was moved by Ms. Nicole Olivierre and seconded by Mr. Nigel De Freitas.

2.7 The Minutes of the Fifty-Fifth meeting, as amended, were approved.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

### ***Consideration of revised draft Interim Report re: Crime: the security, safety and protection of citizens***

3.1 The Chairman informed Members that a revised draft Interim Report on *an inquiry into Crime: the security, safety and protection of citizens* was circulated in Members' packages. He explained that the revision was limited to the concern raised at the last meeting regarding the reference to persons, by names, at this stage of the inquiry. He reminded members that this was an interim report and as such, the inquiry shall continue during which time all persons named will be called upon to respond either by way of written or oral submissions.

3.2 There was a lengthy discussion during which the following were considered:

- Whether certain details in the evidence revealed in the Interim Report may be sufficient to identify persons even before such persons have had the opportunity to respond by giving evidence before the Committee;
- Whether the reference to evidence identifying a "*Managing Director at the HDC*" should be removed from the Interim Report;
- Whether it was necessary to report this extensively at this stage;
- Whether it would not be prudent to report only on the aspect related to the issue surrounding the member of the Committee;
- Whether it was proper to report at a time when the Committee had not concluded the taking of evidence from a key witness;
- Whether there is precedent of a Committee presenting an interim report at such an early stage when matters had not been concluded; and
- Whether the report should include the list of questions asked.

3.3 During the discussions, the Committee noted that the report contained no findings. Members were reminded by the Chairman that any person against whom an allegation is made will be given the opportunity to respond and such response will form part of the Committee's final report. Members were asked to bear in mind that the necessity to report at this stage arose because a procedural issue has interrupted the work of the Committee requiring the intervention of the House. Therefore, in making a recommendation to the House by way of report, the Committee is obligated to apprise the House about the information before it which support the importance of the inquiry and inform the House on the status of the inquiry.

3.4 The Chairman explained that, as a subset of the House, the Joint Select Committee on National Security is empowered to report from time to time as it deems necessary. Members were invited to note the mandate of the Committee and the history regarding how the subject inquiry

reached before the Committee including the fact that concerns were raised in the public domain by members of the Committee.

3.5 The Committee agreed to amend the Interim Report on page 16 by inserting a new sub-paragraph 6.1(q) to read as follows and renumber subsequent sub-paragraphs accordingly:

*“The Commissioner indicated that intelligence reports about the shootings and statements about politicians are two (2) separate matters which he said should not be intertwined at this time.”*

3.6 By a majority, the Committee approved the revised Interim Report, as amended for presentation to the House(s).

3.7 Dr. Moonilal and Mr. Hosein expressed their disagreement with the Interim Report and indicated that a Minority Report would be submitted.

3.8 The Chairman advised that the Minority Report should be submitted to the Secretariat on or before Friday February 21, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

4.1 The meeting was adjourned to a date to be fixed.

4.2 The adjournment was taken at 3:51 p. m.

I certify that these Minutes are true and correct.

Chairman

Secretary

February 20, 2020

## APPENDIX II

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# Verbatim Notes of Evidence



**VERBATIM NOTES OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE JOINT  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY (IN CAMERA) IN  
THE COMMITTEE ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, CABILDO  
PARLIAMENTARY COMPLEX, ST. VINCENT STREET, PORT OF SPAIN,  
ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2020, AT 1.44 P.M.**

**PRESENT**

Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds	Chairman
Mr. Paul Richards	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Nigel De Freitas	Member
Mr. Randall Mitchell	Member
Ms. Nicole Olivierre	Member
Mr. Robert Le Hunte	Member
Dr. Roodal Moonilal	Member
Mr. Saddam Hosein	Member
Mrs. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel	Secretary
Mr. Brian Caesar	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Renee Batson	Assistant Secretary
Mrs. Krystle Gittens	Graduate Research Assistant

**Mr. Chairman:** A very good afternoon one and all.

**Members:** Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman.

**2.23 p.m.:** *Meeting suspended*

**2.24 p.m.:** *Meeting resumed.*

## MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

Hon. Stuart Young

Minister of National Security and  
Minister in the Office of the Prime  
Minister

**Mr. Chairman:** Members, shall we reconvene our meeting to facilitate the arrival of one of the stakeholders, a very key stakeholder, the Minister of National Security. Let me take this opportunity to reconvene this Fifty-fourth meeting of the Joint Select Committee on National Security for this purpose. Minister Young, we would like to specially welcome you this afternoon.

**Mr. Young:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Chairman:** And we would normally engage in some formalities with your own introduction and the introduction of members, but given your office and all things otherwise considered, we can easily walk past that particular formality knowing that we all know each other and we know each other quite well.

So what has brought you before us today, Minister Young, is the fact that this Committee, on the receipt of a letter dated January the 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020, signed, and at the hand of both Dr. Moonilal, the Member for Oropouche East and Sen. Saddam Hosein, writing a letter to me as Chairman of this Committee dated January the 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 as I said. Subject:

“Re: Urgent request for a meeting of the Joint Select Committee on National Security”

And I tell you that when we received this letter we had in front of us a certain enquiry, as we always do, looking into issues of the prison and prison security. As

a result of receipt of this letter we decided to abandon for the time being that enquiry and to bring about this meeting, and shaped a new enquiry because of the urgency that Dr. Moonilal asked us to respect in this.

Let me just for the record, Minister Younger, and for your benefit quote elements of this letter. In paragraph 1, it says:

“The country was in extreme”—well for the facts it would be the—“the upsurge in criminal activities in Trinidad and Tobago is a serious cause for concern, especially for members of this Committee. The country was in extreme shock, pain and anguish when 2019 we ended with 537 murders. Further, with only 17 days gone for the year, the murder toll now stand at 20.”

Down in paragraph 2 in the second line:

“This has caused a high degree fear among the population.”

And on the next page it continues:

“The inability of the agencies involved in national security to curtail and arrest the escalating murder toll and high level of criminal activities warrants an immediate investigation.”

We agreed with that and we arranged for your presence in terms. At the ending of the page, in the last paragraph which begins with “based on the foregoing”, we are looking at the second line in that which says:

“We request urgently that a meeting be convened with members of this Committee together with all heads involved in national security so that the Committee could examine the performance and activities of the various agencies.”

It goes on to say:

“Based on the outcome of the inquiry the Committee will be in a position to

make urgent recommendations relating to the performance of the various agencies to guarantee the security, safety and protection of the citizens. Our Committee may also be table immediate policy and legislative proposals to the House of Representatives to assist in the fight against rampant criminal activities.”

And when you flip the page, the last page, top paragraph, and this is critical in respect of your presence today, Minister Young, the letter said:

“Given recent statements made by the Minister of National Security yesterday”—meaning the 16<sup>th</sup>—“We are concerned that the central policy maker of the Government appears to be at a lost”—sic—should be, well you know—“as to what exactly is happening and seeks to cast blame and aspersions on private citizens rather than assume responsibility for the calamity that engulfs our Republic.”

Goes on the say:

“In light of the alarming statements and conclusions of Minister Young, members may wish to secure his attendance before our full Committee for him to explain himself by way of examination. The Minister must account to the Joint Select Committee on National Security.”

Making reference to post-Cabinet comments, Minister Young, that you would have expressed in your Ministerial function, and I observed, and members of this Committee observed, that following there was widespread public discussion on the matters you raised at that press conference, and that some of that discussion flowed from the lips of politicians and in particular the member Moonilal, who is a member of this Committee, the Member for Oropouche East.

And by article in the *Sunday Express* dated Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup> of January, 2020,

Dr. Moonilal is quoted in an article written by Ria Taitt as saying a number of things in relation to those comments. He described those comments that you made as outlandish and reckless. He is quoted as saying:

“We needed to provide information on the basis on which he”—meaning you, Minister Young—“is making such outlandish statements, time and time again...

Moonilal and Senator...Hosein are calling for an urgent meeting of the Joint Select Committee...for the summoning of Young to account for his recent statements, and provide evidence to substantiate his claim that certain people are promoting random shootings across the East-West Corridor and inciting criminal activity in order to create panic, fear and mayhem.”

He then went on to say in the last column of that article on the right hand side:

“Moonilal said that in another part of the world, Young’s statements could have triggered a war.”

And the rest of the article is in front of you.

So Minister Young it is against this background, the murder statistics of last year 537, 20 for the year as at the date of Dr. Moonilal’s letter and his description of your comments as outlandish and reckless and his insistence that you be brought us to clarify those statements and to tell us the basis on which you said them, we have asked you to come here and we are very thankful that you would have made yourself present.

In the circumstances, Minister Young, we would usually give our guests, stakeholders who come before us, an opportunity to issue a short initial comment and you are free to do so. Thereafter you will be subjected to some questions from members of the Committee for the record in relation to those matters. I thank you.

**Mr. Young:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, colleagues. As the Minister of National Security I have always taken my job, my duties and my responsibilities very, very seriously. Generally speaking, even outside of that remit, I am always cautious in my choice of words, my choice of language and everything that I say on most occasions, if not all.

Mr. Chairman, might I firstly enquire whether these proceedings are being broadcast live?

**Mr. Chairman:** Let me say that these proceedings are being recorded and will ordinarily have gone live. But, given the office you hold, given the nature of the matters that are before us, we as an experienced Committee contemplate that there may be issues that maybe said that might have some adverse effect on the national security interest of Trinidad and Tobago quite apart from what we are dealing with. In which case while it is being recorded, we are not live. We will take a determination after this meeting as to its publication or not, its excising of certain elements or not depending on it.

**Mr. Young:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Chairman:** So feel free and we intend as we always proceed to be frank and open and truthful in all respects. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Young:** Thank you very much. Mr. Chair, I would like to put on the record, recorded on the *Hansard* for the purposes of this Committee, that as the Minister of National Security and as an elected Member of Parliament for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West, I have absolutely no problem, no issue whatsoever or any hesitation if these proceedings were to be broadcast live, but I am in your Committee's hands and in particular yours as Chairman. Every single thing I have stated previously and I am about to state to your Committee is based in fact, based

in truth, and supported by documentation.

If I may start? I thought it useful, Mr. Chair, to provide your Committee, starting at the outset as the Minister of National Security appointed on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August, 2018, with the mandate under the hand of Her Excellency, and I have some copies here available for distribution, but as the Minister of National Security certain elements in our national apparatus fall under my purview and responsibility and if I may just highlight a few very briefly. The Defence Force, drug enforcement and interdiction, drug trafficking and money laundering, global security issues, intelligence, internal security, public order, safety and law enforcement, which includes our police service, fire service, prison service, life guard services, the security of Government officials and premises. National Operations Centre and the SSA also fall under me. Mr. Chair, I have copies here for your Committee as they see fit.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, we welcome them.

**Mr. Young:** To go straight to the mandate and to the invitation under your hand, Mr. Chair, as to why I am here today, and I am glad you referred to the letter under the hand of two Members of the Opposition, dated the 17<sup>th</sup> of January, and in particular the last page where you quoted from, that I seek to cast blame and aspersions on private citizens rather than assume responsibility for the calamity that engulfs our Republic.

I have done no such thing at any point in time and certainly will not be done by me here today. I have come here today prepared to tell the truth and to provide clarification on the issues as you raised as was uttered in the public domain by the Member for Oropouche East. Because on the same Sunday that this article that you quoted from the Member for Oropouche East, put out a voice recording to the media

on that evening calling upon me to appear before the Joint Select Committee claiming that I was trying, and I was casting aspersions on businessmen, the Chambers of Commerce and other persons in our society. I did no so thing. In fact the record will show, Mr. Chair, that on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, 2020, at the particular post-Cabinet media conference, I did not call any names, I did not point fingers in any direction whatsoever.

As the Minister of National Security, Mr. Chair and members of the Committee, it is constant balancing exercise when dealing with issues of national security. And you are balancing between the public's interest and safety as being paramount and what should be told to the public. As the Minister of National Security you are constantly provided with briefings, and reports throughout the course of a day and then during the course of a week, and on many occasions, those reports are provided to me in writing officially as well as via the normal modes of communication by: law enforcement, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, our intelligence services and other areas that fall under national security. I am constantly briefed and it is always a decision to make as to what should then be told to the National Security Council, the Chairman of the National Security Council, and on occasion, the mandate falls with me as well to address the public on issues that would affect public order, public safety, and public security.

Persons of interest in the criminal world are constantly monitored by our law enforcement agencies. Persons of interest who have criminal records and who are pursuing a life of crime are monitored by our security agencies. Persons who interact with those persons of interest as we call them in national security are liable to be caught into the trap and to be caught and exposed by their interaction with persons



of interest. So if, for example, I am conversing with or I am interacting with physically a person of interest, or a law enforcement and our intelligence services, whilst I might not be monitored, Stuart Young, per se, my interaction with that person who is being monitored will come up on the proverbial radar and screen and they will say Stuart Young interacted with Mr. X, on this day and this type of thing.

So, if you interact with persons of interest there is a possibility that you will be exposed in the national security apparatus.

**2.40 p.m.**

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, as I have said at the House that I have always been very, very careful and cautious as to what I say in public, but I have put down specific markers along the way as the Minister of National Security with certain things that concern the public's interest safety and security, and in the particular instance that you have called me before your committee and your membership.

In February 2019, at a press conference in the Ministry of National Security, I put down a first marker that information was brought to my attention that had me concern firstly, as a citizen, and secondly as the Minister of National Security that there appeared on an Opposition platform a person at a political meeting with a very long list of charges by the police authorities. That was in February 2019.

In October—sorry in August 2019, again, at a Ministry of National Security press conference I put down another marker. That was coming out of allegations made against the former Minister of National Security, Minister Dillon, and the Chairman of the National Security Council, the Prime Minister, the Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley by a Mr. Dennie who was part of the intelligence service, the SSA, before.

Again, at that stage I put down a marker that information had reached to me in my office as National Security Minister about certain relationships that were of concern to me, between politicians and in particular Opposition members, and those who are engaging in crime and criminality.

**Mr. Chairman:** And both those markers expressed by you in the public?

**Mr. Young:** In the public domain, absolutely. Both at press conferences—public press conferences—carried live at the Ministry of National Security. The next occasion, I had cause to put down a marker was at Piggott’s corner in Belmont in October 2019, where again I cautioned the country, that as the Minister of National Security certain information had been provided to me that had me particularly concerned about relationships with the criminal element in Trinidad and Tobago and the Opposition.

Again, between October 2019, I think it was sometime in November and December 2019, the *Hansard* record will reflect in certain contributions I made in Parliament, either in answer to specific questions asked of me or in the course of debate, I again cautioned about a certain incident—a couple incidents—that had been brought to my attention as the Minister of National Security.

**Mr. Chairman:** Certain incidents regarding?

**Mr. Young:** I will get to them in a short while Mr. Chair. Certain incidents regarding again a very disturbing relationship between certain members of the Opposition and the criminal element in Trinidad and Tobago. I was cautious on those occasions again, not to call any names. Because you see in part of the balancing exercise one must not prejudice ongoing criminal investigations but you are balancing it, Mr. Chair, members of the Committee as well, with the public’s interest, their personal safety and security, and for them to have contextual markers

as it develops in Trinidad and Tobago.

The last occasion that I had cause to lay down a marker after very serious contemplation was on the 16th of January of this year, Mr. Chair, at a post-Cabinet press conference. And that came out as a result of what was being generated and rightly so, in the public's conversation and the public's concern with respect to the homicide rate of 2019. Because you see, towards the end of 2019 there was a specific spike in the homicide rate that draw the attention of our law enforcement our intelligence agencies and myself as the Minister of National Security, charged with the responsibility of safety and security of Trinidad and Tobago. It was a trend Mr. Chairman that we had seen starting the take place towards the end of the second quarter of 2019. Because the statistics would show, I came into office in August 2018 as did the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Griffith, and the statistics would show that from middle of October 2018 to about the middle of 2019, the homicide rate had actually been less than the previous year and we were heading in a good direction.

Every week I meet with various divisions of national security including the heads and we sit down and plan policy, and I give them certain advice. And what we saw, was the beginning of some shootings and even some homicides that just did not fit in to the analysis of what was going on in the world of crime. Because you see, Mr. Chair, members of the committee, over 70 per cent of the homicides are gang related and are the criminal elements fighting for turf and other things. But we saw some sporadic shootings, in particular at persons who were in no way connected with crime. There was no motive of robbery et cetera, and I told them look at that. We need to start monitoring this.

The last 20 days, Mr. Chair, of 2019 in fact it was at the 23rd of

December 2019, we were actually still behind the homicides rate of 2018, and the Commissioner and I spoke, and he said statistically when you look at the month of December traditionally and that period, the last seven days of the year, it is fairly quiet. So, we said, okay let us maintain that and we put in place certain plans, certain operations, to just bolster the peace in Trinidad and Tobago.

What you had happen on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2019, was extremely disturbing. You had a car with persons who were heavily armed go to a very busy place in downtown Port of Spain, and just open shooting, randomly it appeared at a taxi stand. Thankfully, there was an off-duty police officer who drew his firearm, a side arm, a pistol, returned fire. Those men then jumped in the car. In trying escape Port of Spain they were confronted by law enforcement, two of them killed and type of firearms we found assault rifles with double magazines they were set out to do certain serious killings and harm.

In analyzing that incident it was ascertained that there was no other rival gang, no other person of interest in the general vicinity. So the question became, well; why would you go with such heavy arms automatic firearms with that amount of ammunition to just start shooting at a maxi stand in downtown Port of Spain? And we began analyzing that and looking at the various element as we do in national security.

What then happened, is intelligence was provided thereafter with respect to that. Now, Mr. Chairman, I have come here today to assist your Committee, and on the calls as you have outlined it to substantiate what I have said. I am going to be very cautious as I proceed, but I want your Committee to understand clearly and through you, the population of Trinidad and Tobago every single thing I said on those occasions that I have listed, were supported by information provided to me by

the law enforcement agencies and the intelligence services of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service provided me with information in June 2019, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June 2019, of a certain person of interest. I am not going to call the names of the persons of interest for obvious reasons because there are investigations going on. But this individual is a senior member of the Muslim fraction, and in particular, in Carapo, and he was approached by (name given) a Deputy Political Leader of the United National Congress to represent the party as its councillor for the Carapo area in the upcoming 2019 local government elections. This individual is involved in underhand dealings at a certain State authority such as the pilfering of equipment and had also made threats to kill people previously. (Name given) was said to have promised this individual that the UNC will finance his election campaign and assist him in the development of the physical structure of the Carapo Masjid. That was followed up, that is in June 2019, followed up to me. As the Minister of National Security I get numerous reports.

On August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019, it was revealed that that specific person was not being chosen as the candidate and he was very upset about it, and he told (Name given) this. And the link between (Name given), this individual, and a person in prison for murder who is one of the most notorious criminal elements in our prison system. I will not call his name, but he is a person who grinds us to a halt very often in Port of Spain. The link began to be revealed.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2019, the individual who is a senior member of that mosque who was rejected by the executive the United National Congress as a prospective nominee for their local government elections.

**Mr. Chairman:** What date was that?

**Mr. Young:** This is the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2019, Mr. Chair. The incarcerated

individual reportedly telephoned Opposition (Name given), the UNC's Deputy Political Leader, and requested that the individual in question be appointed as the candidate for a specific area in the local government elections, since his chances of securing victory at the polls were favourable. The incarcerated gang leader, incarcerated for murder, also proffered that if the party was to accept this candidate, the UNC would be given protection along the East-West Corridor during the local government election campaign. The individual, I was informed had a number of warrants out for his arrest, and he had been warned by police officers previously with a report of a threat to kill made by his common law wife. It was then told to me that the individual and those associated with him had threatened other potential candidates and warded them off, and warned them off from competing internally to become the candidates for the local government election.

Further information was provide to me, Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, with names called who are persons of interest in serious criminal and gang activity being tasked with procuring funds for the person incarcerated for his defense, as well as, for the provision of funds of the local government campaign of this particular individual.

November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019, I then received a report that there was a decision made to replace this individual by the executive of the UNC after they considered his criminal record and his recent detention for the attempted assassination of a prisoner outside the Maximum Security Prison.

**Mr. Chairman:** One moment please, what date was that?

**Mr. Young:** The 19<sup>th</sup> of November 2019.

**Mr. Chairman:** Now you are saying that—

**Mr. Young:** Sorry, the decision to replace the individual—

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. Young:**—as a prospective candidate was made by the party’s executive after considering his criminal record, and his recent detention in August 2019, for the attempted assassination of a prisoner outside the Maximum Security Prison, Golden Grove Arouca. The individual expressed his disappointment with the decision to said (Name given), Deputy Political Leader of the United National Congress, and also disclosed to her that as a result he cannot guarantee the safety of the party and its members in the Carapo area. As such, a decision was taken by the party to offer him a security position during the local government campaign.

That is one example of information provided to me in my portfolio and my ministerial capacity as the Minister of National Security. Another one I am choosing to share with you—

**Mr. Chairman:** So the information that you got there Minister Young, just for clarity, was that they did not accept him as the candidate but they offered him—

**Mr. Young:** Eventually.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, a security arrangement.

**Mr. Young:** The information provided to me, Mr. Chair, was initially.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. Young:** Discussions were to have him as the candidate, he was not accepted. He was then accepted and others were threatened off, and then eventually he was not put as the candidate.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. Young:** And he expressed dissatisfaction as did the incarcerated person—

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. Young:** —in conversations it appears with a Deputy Political Leader of the

Opposition, and as a result of that, a certain offer was made to him to provide security services.

**Mr. Chairman:** And do you know—okay thank you very much.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Chairman, could I just like you, ask one question? Just for clarification?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much. Mr. Minister, you indicated before, just for my clarification, that you had intelligence reports that someone in prison charged for murder and so on, had conversations—presumably telephone conversations—with the particular (Name given)?

**Mr. Chairman:** Member direct questions through me please.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes, through you Chairman, to the Minister, just to repeat really because I may not have heard him properly. That the Minister is saying that he has intelligence reports from the authorities that someone incarcerated for murder, while incarcerated, would have had telephone conversations.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am not dealing with evidence, but I do not think I heard the word telephone at all.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Would have had—that is what I want the explanation for. Really to clarify because would it be telephone—just to be clear.

**Mr. Young:** I am very clear, very pellucid in my use of language and I am actually reading from a report provided to me. At no point in time did I say “telephonic conversations”.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So could you tell us what was the report, you can read from the report again, just for the record. I am very concerned that someone incarcerated for murder would have had some correspondence or communication. What was the mode of



communication?

**Mr. Young:** As am I. As the Minister of National Security I am very concerned that anyone in prison would be having conversation with a Deputy Political Leader of any party.

**Dr. Moonilal:** You are saying conversation Mr. Minister, it has to be telephone. What other conversations you can have?

**Mr. Young:** I do not know if anything has to be conversation.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Could you tell us the mode of communication? That is all.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Moonilal, the Minister said he was reading from a report and at no time did I hear him and he said at no time did he use the word “telephone”. And just for your information as a member of this Committee. A party overhearing a conversation between two persons can give information to the police well as well. “It doh have to do nutten with telephone.”

**Dr. Moonilal:** I will get back to that.

**Mr. Chairman:** All right, thank you very much, just by way of information. Minister Young may you continue.

**Mr. Young:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Chairman:** What I wanted to get clear is that according to the report you got, there was a promised in lieu of the candidacy for security work?

**Mr. Young:** Correct.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Young:** The second matter of concern is with respect to another Deputy Political Leader of the United National Congress, (name given). I have been provided by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service with information that (name given) has been linked to particular individuals, once again, associated with the

Muslim criminal fraction in Trinidad and Tobago, and that has been observed that her and this one particular individual are often seen in attendance at political meetings, organized by United National Congress clad in yellow t-shirts in support of (Name given). Notably, the person is a person of interest to the police due to his affiliations and his alleged involvement in criminal activities. The individual has been observed for the past two years assisting (Name given) while she canvassed in the constituency of La Horquetta/Talparo and surrounding areas on behalf of the UNC, during which they gave out certain handouts and oversaw several self-help projects.

It has also been reported to me that (Name given), in the lead up to the local government elections engaged in walkabouts in the Maloney area accompanied by a person of interest to the police in particular for gang activities and as a gang leader, out of Beetham Gardens. He is a known—described to me as a known gang leader in his community and certain allegations were made with respect to the relationship between himself and (Name given), and that while she was the managing director at the HDC, this person was awarded the contract to construct the Duncan Street police post.

I was provided with photographic evidence depicting what the report stated.

**Mr. Chairman:** In other words you were provided with photographs of them—sorry—thank you very much. In other words, am I to understand that what you just said is that, you have actual photographs of them together at a political meeting?

**Mr. Young:** At political meetings and walkabouts.

**Mr. Chairman:** And walkabouts, thank you very much.

**Mr. Young:** The last individual, Mr. Chairman, I was provided information in my capacity as the Minister of National Security, the last one that I am prepared to bring

to the attention of your Committee here this evening, provided with information by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is with respect to (Name given), the Member for Oropouche East. And I was told of an accident—there are two incidents that I will report to your Committee. The first one is an accident I was told in writing on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2019, that on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2019, a certain well known individual from Beetham Gardens, and again I will refrain from calling names, another individual from Picton Road, Laventille, and another one from—and then Heritage Road Belmont, along with two unidentified persons and staff at the Hyatt—

**Mr. Chairman:** Just for—I am familiar with the Belmont area.

**Mr. Young:** As am I.

**Mr. Chairman:** Is it Heritage or Hermitage Minister?

**Mr. Young:** This one is Heritage. They have it as Heritage, but there is Hermitage Road in Belmont as well.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, thank you.

**Mr. Young:** Along with two unidentified persons and staff at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, 1 Wrightson Road Port of Spain, had a dispute over the non-payment of a bill. They—meaning the individuals who are named—informed the Hyatt Regency Hotel staff that they were waiting for (name given). As a result the security staff of the Hyatt, contacted the Central Police Station and (name given), who both went to the location. So, the Hyatt staff contacted both the police and (name given), and both the police and (name given) arrived at the Hyatt location on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2019.

It was reported to me that (name given) who was attending Parliament at the nearby International Waterfront Center, paid the sum of \$580 to settle the bill. He expressed surprise at the foursome's action and further claimed they were supposed

to meet with him at the nearby Parliament building. I am told it was revealed however, that he had met with them several times before at the Hyatt Regency. They then go on to call the name and describe him to me as a known drug and robbery offender who was taken into custody after the responding police officers were informed that there was an outstanding warrant for his arrest.

I was then informed by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service that it is possible that the United National Congress is attempting to woo support from the residents of Beetham Gardens and Port of Spain areas for both the local government and general elections. And I was informed that the inclusion of questionable characters into pre-election activities has a tendency to promote exploitation and violence.

I was then also informed, Mr. Chairman, by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service that there was communication between the (name given), and a gang leader from the Beetham Gardens or East Port of Spain for that individual i.e. the gang leader, as well as another gang leader from Bagatelle, at the end of the road in Diego Martin, to attend at his constituency office for a meeting. This is some time in the last quarter or the second half of 2019 last year, and it is the police service that informed me of this.

I was informed that (name given) constituency office is in (area identified), and these gang leaders were from East Port of Spain, Beetham, and Diego Martin. So, there was no proximity, there was no—between the constituency of (area identified) and these individuals.

I was then informed that --.—

**Mr. Chairman:** Just let me understand before you go further, hold your thought. Your last sentence, you mean that there was no—it was obvious based on where they

were from and where his office was, that there was no MP/constituent relationship.

**Mr. Young:** As far as I am aware.

**Mr. Chairman:** As far as you are aware. Thank you.

**Mr. Young:** Because they were not constituents of (area given). I was then informed that (name given) made a request to meet with the Commissioner of Police with a sense of urgency on the day that that meeting was supposed to take place. And that the member (area identified) proffered certain explanations to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, as to why he would be meeting with these individuals at his constituency office.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, with those examples and there are more, provided to me as the Minister of National Security, I obviously had serious cause for concern. Because we have been working assiduously under my tenure since August 2018 on a weekly basis in targeting certain criminal elements throughout Trinidad and Tobago and going after criminality, and in particular, under the anti-gang legislation, and to be told by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and other arms of national security, these matters, it disturbed me. And I thought it important at those marker points that I told you at the outset, to let the population know that there were certain things taking place, brought to my attention as the Minister of National Security without calling names, that had brought me great cause for concern.

**3.10 p.m.**

Fast forward now to this year, and what happened after the 31<sup>st</sup> of December last year, in sitting and analyzing with the Police Service, and the other arms of National Security as to what we saw as a spike in the murder rate last year, and that the fact as at the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December, 2019 we were still behind the murder rate of

2018. But on the last day of the year, individuals armed with automatic firearms went to an area in Port of Spain to commit the most heinous of acts, and thank God and off duty police officer drew his service firearm and sent them on their way, and there were subsequently two of them killed in a shoot-out with police. They started looking and analyzing. Maybe through a bit of luck, intelligence was just then brought that suggested an instruction had been given on or around the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2019 by a person of interest in the criminal world—

**Mr. Richards:** And what date was that?

**Mr. Young:** On or around the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2019, an instruction was given by a gang leader to his men to go out there and ensure that the homicide rate for 2019 crossed the previous record. That information was provided to me as the Minister of National Security. That information was also brought to the attention of the National Security Council.

**Mr. Richards:** And that is the record of 2008?

**Mr. Young:** Yes, the previous record. The record for the most amount of murders in Trinidad and Tobago is either 2008 or 2009—

**Mr. Chairman:** 2008.

**Mr. Young:** I am not quite sure. But the instruction was given, go out there and ensure that we pass that rate. Questions began to be asked, analysis began to be done, and at a National Security Council meeting information was provided to the members of the National Security Council by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service of what I have just spoken about, which is this intelligence that an instruction was given to drive the murder rate up to a new record in Trinidad and Tobago on the last day of 2019.

**Mr. Richards:** By a gang leader?

**Mr. Young:** By a gang leader. The question was then asked—

**Mr. Richards:** Was the gang leader known?

**Mr. Young:** Yes. The question was then asked at the National Security Council, what is behind this? And this stage, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service informed, in no uncertain terms, the National Security Council of Trinidad and Tobago of who they believe stand to benefit from this spike in crime, the spike in homicides, and who stands to benefit from the creation of a sense of panic, a sense of chaos, a sense of crisis with respect to a runaway crime rate. The Chair of the National Security Council asked the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service at that meeting, maybe in some sense of disbelief as to what we have just been told, if that is the position of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service when we were told, in no uncertain terms, that they believe it is politically driven, and the answer was, again, in the affirmative.

**Mr. Richards:** And just to be clear, through you, Mr. Chair, and you are speaking about the alleged instruction to push the murder rate on December 31, 2019, that instruction by the gang leader was politically motivated? Is that what you are saying?

**Mr. Young:** That instruction by the gang leader is what was brought to our attention, and then the question was asked, because then the discussion went to some of what I have discussed before, which is, that there were these incidents on the second half of 2019 where there seemed to be no plausible explanation for certain shootings. Fortunately, most of them did not result in homicides but just random— but appeared to be random shootings of persons, for example, and I described a couple of them on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January at post-Cabinet, people speaking outside a house at a gate, and a car stopped 100 metres down the road and they just started

shooting at them. Police officers on their way home but not known to be police officers were shooting in certain areas along the East-West Corridor. These shootings along the East-West Corridor were taking place in the second quarter of 2019. So the conversation was, what could be behind these? We were then told of the intelligence with respect to this gang leader who had given the instruction on the last day of the year or around the last day of the year to ensure that the murder rates surpass all of previous years, and the question was asked, well, what do you, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service believe is behind this? And we were told they believed it is political motivated.

**Mr. Richards:** Did they give a reason for why they believed that? Because the absence of a plausible reason and the connection to the suggestion of a political motivation, to me, it seems that there is a distance there that I am hoping there is some evidence to bring them together.

**Mr. Young:** Sen. Richards, I could only report what was told to us. I believe that the Police Service are also coming before the Committee and that question may be better directed to them.

Mr. Chair, members of the Committee, at this stage, the information that I have provided you with is the information that I feel comfortable enough to provide your committee as per the explanation as to the utterances I made, the very careful utterances I made on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, 2020 at a post-Cabinet press conference. I was very careful when I made my comments. I did not call a single name. I was also very careful when I made my comments. The media tried to pull me down the road of, do you think it is the Opposition, et cetera? I drew no such commentary at that stage. I said that is better directed to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. What I will say here, having shared a little bit of what I have provided to me by the



Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and our intelligence services, is obviously I was aware of all that I have told you all, and having not called any names, I looked on with great interest at the furore that took place thereafter that has brought me to appear before your committee here this afternoon, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you. And before I give way to my colleague for further question, that furore of which you spoke following your comments on the 16<sup>th</sup> and since you mentioned, in your submission to us, the UNC, in that furore of which you spoke, did you hear any comments coming from the UNC on your bland comments on that 16<sup>th</sup> of January, 2020?

**Mr. Young:** Absolutely, Mr. Chair. They were first out of the blocks and, in fact, the two members of your committee were the most vocal, in addition to Sen. Anita Haynes. The first two out of the blocks were Sen. Saddam Hosein and Ms. Haynes, I think supported by Mr. Sobers. I think that was on the Friday.

**Mr. Chairman:** Supported by whom?

**Mr. Young:** Sen. Sobers, I believe is his name. On the Friday after the post-Cabinet, using all sorts of insulting, derogatory type of language. I smiled, because I know what I have in my possession, and then following very shortly thereafter is the Member for Oropouche East, as I have said, likes to do a lot of communicating.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much. Members, through me, the Minister is with us. He has issued his statement and, therefore, he is now open to your questions. Sen. Richards.

**Mr. Richards:** Thank you, Chairman. Minister Young, based on what you have said, and you can correct me if part of your quotation I am using is wrong, that “certain people have been using crime to inflict fear and panic across the population in a bit to destabilize the country”. Is that part of your quote in an accurate manner?

Did you use the word “destabilize”?

**Mr. Young:** I may have used the word “destabilize” and I do not have a problem with using the word “destabilize” if that is attributed.

**Mr. Richards:** And the random nature of that, do you think—and you made some very startling statements today with some significant implications—in the absence of what one would consider crime motives and using words like “destabilize”, do you think that these alleged activities may be a threshold for terrorism?

**Mr. Young:** Sen. Richards, with the greatest of respect, that is not for me to determine. Maybe if I were wearing a different cap at a different time as a legal advisor, I would do that, but as the Minister of National Security, I have been very careful in my choice of language. I have heard the Commissioner of Police use that type of language, and the Commissioner of Police in speaking to me has said, not that which I referred and I read out to you all, but certainly in the random acts of shootings, certainly what happened on the 31<sup>st</sup>—I would say this. What happened on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2019, in my view, is an act of terrorism, yes. Persons taking those types of firearms, those assault weapons and going to shoot and kill innocent civilians is an act of terrorism.

**Mr. Richards:** With that said, is there a particular national security protocol that should have been activated, given that crime is crime and it is bad enough, but when the National Security Minister is comfortable escalating that assessment to terrorism?

**Mr. Young:** What happen, you have to look at the incident in particular. So it is not that they are acts of terrorism or any planned acts of terrorism to be carried out. That particular act that took place on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2019, and is being analyzed afterwards, you can say, okay, you have found out the intent that was an

act of terrorism. However, you would recall how it ended. The perpetrators, the ones who set out to commit these acts of terror on our population were killed, so it ended with them there. The other one I believe was held and one had escaped and it was only afterwards that the police then brought this further intelligence as the instruction that was given according to them.

**Mr. Richards:** You have made some statements and imputations about alleged associations between (names given) and the alleged association with—and I hope I am not using the wrong term—known gang leaders and gang members. What are the implications for that legally? The population hearing this would have concerns about if these individuals are known gang leaders and gang members why, one, have they not been detained arrested? Maybe intelligence has not translated to evidence to detain them, but in the case of Sen. (Name given) and the statements that you made and the allegations of association with a known person of interest and the allegations that have been suggested against him, the population looking on may have some serious questions about the State’s ability to apply laws to translate evidence and allegations against people into evidence to bring them to justice. You have just identified, in my estimation, at least three or four known gang leaders or gang members who are running about the streets.

**Mr. Young:** And what I can tell you, Sen. Richards, is out of that and in particular one of the individuals, it was reported to me, (name given) is communicating with and asking to come and meet him, was subsequently arrested under the anti-gang legislation charged and incarcerated. You have to understand, at the end of the day, it comes down to successful convictions. So, most of these individuals have been arrested, have been charged, but then the issue of bail becomes very relevant. So understand that the only non-bailable offence is that of murder. So when you are

charged with other things, you can apply for bail and most of these individuals are out there on bail. But do not for a moment—and why I have been very careful and I have not called their names, et cetera, the police continue to do their work along with the support of the intelligence services to bring them to justice. More charges, whatever it may be, and then hopefully successful convictions.

**Mr. Richards:** Now, I am a legislator, I am not by any means an attorney, but my understanding of several of the Bills that we have passed into law and the amendments of the anti-gang, to the general public looking on and listening, the suggestion of anybody associating knowingly with alleged gang members and gang leaders has particular implications. With the greatest of respect, you put into the records here, significant political entities and individuals who are now officially, through your words, linked to gang members or activity.

**Mr. Chairman:** Well, in fairness to the Minister, he reported to this Committee that which the police reported to him. That question is a relevant one, but it is better for the Police Commissioner when he shows up.

**Mr. Richards:** Noted. I understand. Thank you.

**Mr. Young:** Thank you. And I want to make that point, Mr. Chairman, because very often, in particular, certain persons like to try to spin the words out of control. All the information I have provided to your committee here this afternoon was provided to me by the authorities. So the first cry that I heard made by the Opposition—you asked me a short while ago and, in particular, by Ms. Haynes or whatever her name may be was, report it to the police. But I was very careful to say that I got this information from the police. There are investigations ongoing. I do not interfere with police investigations, and I would leave it there.

**Mr. Richards:** I have one final question before I defer to my colleagues. If the

information transmitted to you by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is correct, related to instructions or given to certain elements of gangs and gang leaders to raise a murder rate past a record, what has been put in place to protect the population from the possibility of that happening at any point moving forward if that could have been done on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2019 to achieve a particular “suggested political purpose” or otherwise moving forward? Because these are now national security and safety concerns—the political element of it aside—concerns for the population, because if shootings are random and not a particular crime motivation behind them, then the general public, members of the public are at risk for drive-by shootings, et cetera. I hope I am not being alarmist.

**Mr. Young:** So, Sen. Richard, you begin to understand why I am always very cautious. At the end of the day, that again is something, perhaps, you best pose to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, because as the Minister of National Security, you can provide policy direction, you can assist with strategy, you can assist in conversation and discussions, but I cannot direct. I cannot go out there and do the work myself, unfortunately.

**Mr. Chairman:** And I mean, if I make this comment here to this Committee, the business of terrorism is designed to disrupt the normalcy of the society. So if they get you putting the—even officially warning and, therefore, frightening the population who go out of their normal thing and stop shopping, staying home, lockdown indoors, that is a successful terrorism. So as the Minister told us, there is always balance between what the public should know, their right to know and the national security interest and to keep the society—am I, I mean—

**Mr. Young:** Absolutely right. And what I can assure Sen. Richards and members of the Committee, if we have any intelligence, many of that type of activity, et cetera,

and there is a need to caution the public, we will do so as was done, for example, in the terror threat of Carnival 2018 which was very real.

**Mr. Richards:** You mentioned Minister—thank you for the clarification—a certain very dangerous individual who is incarcerated, very often shutting down Port of Spain. Why is that such a difficult thing to inhibit?

**Mr. Young:** Because there is an ongoing police investigation.

**Mr. Chairman:** Members?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Minister, of course, you could understand I would have a good few questions to ask, not only because I was 50 per cent of the reason why the meeting was called, and you were asked to join us this afternoon. I would have several matters to raise with you, but the first, for the record, I just want to clarify yet, again, in your statement, your opening statement, you indicated to the Committee—and I just want to be absolutely clear on what exactly you are saying, that the intelligence agencies supplied you with information that suggests that there was communication between someone incarcerated for murder—there was communication with a xxxxxxxxxx and Deputy Political Leader of the United National Congress. When I asked earlier, you were quite clear to say that you had never suggested telephone communication. May I ask you, in the intelligence report, based on your own statement that what you are doing is really repeating what has been giving to you, you are adding no more information than what you have received? Could you tell us the mode of communication between what you alleged to be the incarcerated murder accused and a xxxxxxxxxx ?

**Mr. Young:** First of all, I want to be very cautious. That information was provided to me by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and the information was that there was communication between the incarcerated prisoner and (Name given).

**Dr. Moonilal:** So, they did not provide you with the mode of communication, they just indicated communication?

**Mr. Young:** There was communication between (Name given) and the incarcerated prisoner.

**Dr. Moonilal:** What was the mode of communication?

**Mr. Chairman:** Oh, Member Moonilal, you—

**Mr. Young:** You may ask that question a million times, you are going to get the same answer. I was informed and it was reported to me that there was communication between those individuals.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Could I ask another question? You outlined, of course, what you selected and believe to be the more important examples to support some of the claims you have been making. Are you aware of police reports concerning alleged contact with persons known to the police involved in criminal activities? Are you aware of police reports involving other members of Parliament at this time?

**Mr. Young:** If I am aware of police reports between persons of interest and other Members of Parliament at this time?

**Dr. Moonilal:** That you have not yet named to us?

**Mr. Young:** Yes.

**Dr. Moonilal:** You are aware?

**Mr. Young:** Yes.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Minister, with great respect, are you aware of any report that the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service involving ties, contact, association between anyone known to the criminal underworld involved in criminal activities allegedly before the courts and yourself?

**Mr. Young:** No.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you. I just want to go to the other area now. One of the concerns that we have is—

**Mr. Young:** Who is “we”?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Myself and Sen. Hosein and other persons I have spoken to, is the position that you take both in public and before this Committee that you have before you information and intelligence, particularly from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. Could I ask you first, this information that you have shared with us now today in some detail, and you have by way of the record in the public domain newspaper articles, you have indicated that you have received information from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. Could you indicate whether the information that you are referring to today in some detail but, of course, in the public domain as well, this has come to you via the Commissioner of Police?

**Mr. Young:** I am not going to provide any level of details as to the source that is Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Minister, it is my understanding, is it your understanding that as the Minister of National Security, you interface and receive reports via the National Security Council and otherwise from the Commissioner of Police?

**Mr. Young:** I interface with the Commissioner of Police on a daily, on an hourly basis as do you.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Do you interface with other branches and units and individuals in the TTPS that supply you with information?

**Mr. Young:** I am provided with information by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and I will not provide any particulars of that source of information.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Could I put it to you that the information you received is only from the Commissioner of Police?



**Mr. Young:** No.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you. I would indicate as well, Minister and I am concerned—

**Mr. Young:** That “no” should not be misinterpreted. That “no” means that my position is, I am provided with information from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and I have identified no source.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Minister, I like the clarification. Could you indicate whether you are provided with information from any other source in the TTPS apart from the Commissioner of Police?

**Mr. Young:** I am not providing that clarification. I get information from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

**Dr. Moonilal:** That is fine. I would leave it there. In an article by Shaliza Hassanali, Friday, January 17, 2020, “Acts of terror and lawlessness”. It is a report on your statement to the post-Cabinet press briefing and you indicated then, and I think you indicated here in more detail, the concern that was expressed to you via intelligence reports on the homicide rate and random shootings of a day before, I believe it was. You indicated that you were informed that this was random and the authorities, the police, could not pinpoint the cause of it. It appeared to be random, unreasonable, without logical explanations, sporadic and so on. Could you confirm that you received this information from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service?

**Mr. Young:** You are referring to a report in the newspaper?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Correct.

**Mr. Young:** So what is it exactly that you are referring to?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Could I quote?

“Young questioned why there were shootings of civilians and police officers who were not linked to anything illegal.”

Minister, if you are questioning this and if someone has informed you that these persons were not linked to anything illegal, they were random, they were civilians not involved in crime as you have repeated today, were you provided with this information from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service?

**Mr. Young:** I was provided with that information by the arms of National Security.

**Dr. Moonilal:** You go on to make reference here to the police, and I am quoting from the newspaper:

“He said”—meaning you—“the police have been investigating the links of certain people and criminals who have been pushing crime in a particular way...”

Were you informed of this by the police, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service?

**Mr. Young:** I was informed of that information by the arms of National Security.

**Dr. Moonilal:** The said article—and, you again, you did us a good favour today, I must say, by outlining in some more detail this issue. Do you have in any way any evidence at all that Members of the Opposition are responsible for the increase in crime?

**Mr. Young:** Do I have any evidence? I am not required to have any evidence.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Do you have any intelligence reports that suggest to you that Members of the Opposition are responsible for the increase in crime?

**Mr. Young:** I have been provided with information by the arms of National Security, and I have read some of it and there has been that suggestion by the arms of National Security to me as the Minister of National Security, yes.

**Dr. Moonilal:** You are suggesting to us that the arms of national security have suggested to you that they have evidence that Opposition MPs are responsible for the increase in crime?

**Mr. Young:** I did not use the word “evidence” and, again, I am not respectfully going to be drawn in to that, because there are active police investigations taking place.

3.40 p.m.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Minister, do you think by outlining here incidents and names, and so on, are you not undermining what could be ongoing police investigations, yes or no?

**Mr. Chairman:** One moment please, member Moonilal. Member, Moonilal, you will recall that it was your letter which raised this issue asking that the hon. Minister come before our committee to clarify and to explain what you described as outlandish and reckless statements, that is the reason why we put off the meeting or the enquiry we had in front of us to facilitate this enquiry on the basis of your call. That is why the Minister is here and he has given the information that you sought, that we sought.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much. So that is a bit of an unfair question.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Minister, do you have a sense—clearly you indicated that the police may have ongoing investigations involving these matters, and so on, is there any particular reason why the police have not reached any stage of interviewing, questioning, arresting, and so on, any of the persons you have named?

**Mr. Young:** That is a question that should be directed to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Minister, in your presentation you gave information that you have received from intelligence reports and the TTPS concerning—

**Mr. Young:** Intelligence reports can include reports from the TTPS.

**Dr. Moonilal:**—and including the TTPS of examples—assuming that they are true but not admitting—of contact between Members of the Opposition and persons known to the police, in your view does that constitute criminal conduct?

**Mr. Young:** My view in that aspect is wholly irrelevant.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Someone attending a political meeting or participating in a walkabout, is that not a constitutional right of every citizen to participate in the political process?

**Mr. Young:** As I said, Mr. Moonilal, my view is wholly irrelevant. I have opined on nothing.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Are you aware that persons known to the police have also attended meetings of the People's National Movement? They are not?

**Mr. Young:** I have no such information before me but it would not surprise me. Attending a meeting is different to being on a platform. It is different to being an active participant in the meeting, in my opinion. But I am not aware that there has been any active participant, certainly since of my involvement in the People's National Movement on a political platform of persons with criminal questions to answer.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Minister, are you aware as well that a sitting Member of Parliament was removed from her Cabinet position over a photo of his attendance at a swearing-in at the President's House, taking an oath of office as a Cabinet Minister?

**Mr. Young:** Yes. That is how we treat with these matters.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Are you prepared then to admit that contact or ties, or even associations between Members of Parliament, their constituents, or not their

constituents and persons known to the police are a matter that transcends political party?

**Mr. Young:** I am not prepared to opine or admit on that, what I have come here to do at your request is to provide the supporting information in my possession to support what it is I said on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Minister, I have in my possession photographs of you and someone who is before the courts now charged for trafficking in narcotics and firearm possession, over millions of dollars—

**Mr. Chairman:** Member Moonilal—

**Dr. Moonilal:**—do you think that I can conclude that you are involved in crime?

**Mr. Chairman:** Member Moonilal—

**Mr. Young:** Does that mean I am involved in crime?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Sorry. Sorry.

**Mr. Chairman:** One moment, please.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Sorry, I did not hear you.

**Mr. Chairman:** One moment, please. I know. I know. I know. One moment, please. I know for you this might be a joke but for—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Chairman, I am everything else but human.

**Mr. Chairman:** All right, I thought you were laughing and you sounded for a moment as though that was that case. But let me assure you, this is the Joint Select Committee on National Security which you have asked for and we are trying to conduct this business, not only in a serious manner but also we want to retain the relevance to what you wrote in a letter in front of us. So that the matter that you have just raised I can assure you the Minister, me—I do not think anybody in this room, Saddam Hosein, nobody in this room is afraid of that and we will deal with it,

but it is not relevant to what we have in front of us based on your letter. And now that you have asked a plethora of questions there are other members—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Chairman, I do have one more, it is related.

**Mr. Chairman:** Just now. Just a second. Just a moment.

**Dr. Moonilal:** One more, it is related.

**Mr. Chairman:** Just a moment, member Moonilal. There are other members, you have had the last 10, 15 minutes and there are other members of this Committee who would like to ask questions of the Minister. In fairness to all, members, anyone has any—

**Mr. Young:** Mr. Chair—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Chairman, I will come back—

**Mr. Chairman:** I will come back to you, yes.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you.

**Mr. Young:** Mr. Chair, if I may, I think it is very important at this stage that I place on the *Hansard* my response to this antic by the Member for Oropouche East.

[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Moonilal:** No, no, no, I have to respond—

**Mr. Chairman:** Member Moonilal—

**Dr. Moonilal:**—the witness is insulting and—

**Mr. Chairman:** Member Moonilal—

**Mr. Young:** I am not a witness.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member Moonilal, could you be polite and let us conduct this as a Parliament.

**Dr. Moonilal:** The witness must respond to members.

**Mr. Chairman:** As the Parliament's Standing Orders demand, please, please,

please. Minister Young, you were making a comment.

**Mr. Young:** Yes, please. First of all, I was asked to come here to assist the Committee in its deliberations as a Member of the House of Parliament and as a Minister, I am not here as a witness. I am here assisting your committee. I would like to place on the *Hansard* my response to what was just displayed by the Member for Oropouche East, because I want to place on the record here today that this is a current strategy of the Opposition. They do it on all occasions—

**Dr. Moonilal:** This a political statement.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hold on, please, Minister Young. Member Moonilal, the proceedings of this Joint Select Committee are conducted and are to be conducted in accordance with the Standing Orders of this House, please, when you had the floor the Minister never disturbed you, he politely answered your questions, could you be kind enough to accord him the same respect, please?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Chairman, could I address you?

**Mr. Chairman:** Just a moment, please. Minister Young, you were in the middle of a statement.

**Mr. Young:** Thank you very much. Yes, Mr. Chairman. I will place on the record here on the *Hansard* that the continuous attempt by the UNC Opposition to bring a young lady who is the daughter of someone that I was previously in a relationship with, who after leaving the house and many moons after, I had even ended the relationship, became the subject of criminal charge and is before the courts, the continuous use of that young lady to try and associate her with me in my current circumstances is misinformation and is along the lines of the Cambridge Analytica playbook.

So for the record and placed on the *Hansard* here today, the relationship

between myself and that young lady's mother ended in December, 2017, those matters arose in 2018, had nothing to do with me. I was not aware of it and she is currently before the courts, and hopefully that young lady will receive a fair trial despite the UNC's continuous attempts to drag her and to sully her name while she is before the courts. Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So the witness is allowed to make a statement without a question?

**Mr. Chairman:** Just a moment. You, in my view as Chairman, raised a matter that went outside of the four corners of what you asked us to be here to discuss today, on that basis I ruled it as irrelevant to the enquiry in front of us.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Chairman, can I get an opportunity to explain.

**Mr. Chairman:** Just a moment. And I so indicated to you, Minister Young was faced with you having by then raised that matter and in fairness to him he wanted to place something in response on the record but that matter—and I allowed him only for that reason, but that matter is outside of the pale of what is in front of us. Any member has any question?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Chairman, can I get an opportunity to explain why I raised the matter.

**Mr. Chairman:** Please, Mr. Mitchell.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Chairman, through you, let me say to the hon. Minister, thank you for agreeing to attend before this Joint Select Committee on National Security and for being full, frank, forthright and polite in the testimony that he has provided. Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister, I just want to clarify certain things, those reports, or you speak about being informed, the information provided to you by the



police or other agencies in the National Security apparatus, are those being provided to you in writing?

**Mr. Young:** Sorry, member Mitchell, the ones that are referred to here today, yes, are provided to me in writing, save for the one occasion dealing with the Member for Oropouche East and his communications with gang leaders from Beetham, East Port of Spain and Bagatelle and his request for them to meet him at his constituency office, which was provided to me by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Not in writing.

**Mr. Young:** Not in an official report.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, Mr. Mitchell.

**Mr. Mitchell:** But the reports of the Members of the Opposition party, two deputy political leaders and in particular the incident that you reported on with respect to the Hyatt Regency, was that provided to you in writing?

**Mr. Young:** Yes.

**Mr. Mitchell:** How often are such reports provided to the Minister of National Security in writing?

**Mr. Young:** Reports from the various agencies including Trinidad—

**Mr. Mitchell:** Yes, from the police and the—yes.

**Mr. Young:** On a daily basis I get such reports and more than one report.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Member Paul Richards described the actions as terrorism, that is to say to create panic, fear and mayhem—

**Mr. Richards:** Well, because I asked if it met the threshold of terrorism, I did not describe them as terrorism.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Okay. Well, I would describe them as terrorism. I would describe them as terrorism, and terrorism is often perpetrated on a community, on a country

to achieve a particular political aim, and, Mr. Minister, in any of those reports received by you, have the police drawn any inferences with respect to the political aims intended to be achieved by these random acts of violence along the East-West Corridor?

**Mr. Young:** The reports that I read out here this afternoon, none of them referred to the acts of violence that I then referred to thereafter, but in the reports that are provided to me that I read out some of this afternoon, yes, they did provide the opinion that the associations would be to further the Opposition's political ambitions and to—in fact, I can read it. I can reread it.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Yes, please.

**Mr. Young:** This is the one with respect to the Member for Oropouche East stated here and his paying of a bill for \$580 to settle a Bill at the Hyatt for persons that he had met there several times before, who are of interest to the police. What I was told is it is possible that the United National Congress is attempting to woo support from residents of the Beetham Gardens and Port of Spain areas for both the local government and general elections. The inclusion of questionable characters into pre-election activities has a tendency to promote exploitation and violence.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Right. Thank you very much. Members, well, we have heard extensively from the—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Chairman, we have some more questions.

**Mr. Hosein:** Can I ask?

**Mr. Chairman:** Sure.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you very much, Chairman, for indulging me. Minister, I just want to focus on the statements that you would have made in the post-Cabinet

conference in January of this year and you identified that a particular gang leader would have given instructions for the sporadic shootings in Port of Spain—

**Mr. Young:** I did not do that at any post-Cabinet, I did that in answer to Sen. Richards here this afternoon.

**Mr. Hosein:** Was that gang leader identified?

**Mr. Young:** When?

**Mr. Hosein:** Is he known to the police?

**Mr. Young:** That is a question best addressed to the police.

**Mr. Hosein:** Is that gang leader in any way involved or have any political associations?

**Mr. Young:** That is a question best addressed to the police.

**Mr. Hosein:** So as it stands now, Minister, you have no information whether or not that gang leader was politically motivated in his instructions?

**Mr. Young:** As I very carefully outlined to this Committee here previously this afternoon, not only was I told but the National Security Council was told by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service that in their opinion the instruction given by that gang leader was for the fulfilment of a political purpose.

**Mr. Hosein:** Is that political purpose—there are several political parties in Trinidad and Tobago—

**Mr. Young:** The political purpose of the Opposition, the United National Congress.

**Mr. Hosein:** Mr. Minister, you indicated to Dr. Moonilal in an answer to a question that there are other Members of Parliament who are under police investigation—

**Mr. Young:** Yes.

**Mr. Hosein:** Is there anyone from the People's National Movement under police investigation?

**Mr. Young:** I am not aware. I have seen it suggested by the Commissioner of Police in answer to certain questions that there are Members of the People's National Movement who the police need to determine whether there should be a more in-depth investigation.

**Mr. Hosein:** Minister, are you aware whether or not local government corporations that are controlled by the People's National Movement have been awarding contracts to known gang leaders?

**Mr. Young:** I am not personally aware of that. I have heard that anecdotal suggestion.

**Mr. Hosein:** So you have no evidence or information on those matters?

**Mr. Young:** I have no evidence and information of those matters. I have discussed with the authorities that if we have evidence and information with respect of those matters, it is something that must be pursued.

**Mr. Hosein:** And those matters were never of any intelligence report given to you?

**Mr. Young:** I am not here discussing all of the various intelligence reports that were provided to me, I have intelligence reports that would have been provided to me that I have not discussed here this afternoon with suggestions of members of the UNC promising contracts to known criminal elements but I have not brought that up here this afternoon.

**Mr. Hosein:** One more question, Mr. Minister, this goes back to the December 31<sup>st</sup> incident. I looked at the statistics with respect of murders only for the month of December, and these are TTPS statistics I got from the website, and from 2013 the trend has been that there has been an increase of murders for the month of December; in 2013 it was 42; in 2014 it was 29; in 2015 it was 39; in 2016 it was 43—

**Mr. Young:** Sorry, just repeat that, in 2013 it was?

**Mr. Hosein:** In 2013 it was 42; 2014 it was 29.

**Mr. Young:** That is a decrease.

**Mr. Hosein:** Right—2015, 39; 2016, 43; 2017, 49; 2018, 39—

**Mr. Young:** That is a decrease as well.

**Mr. Hosein:**—2019, 45. Mr. Minister, I do not see that the year 2019 was any anomaly in terms of what the trend is with respect to murders for the month of December.

**Mr. Young:** Sen. Hosein, with the greatest of respect to you, Sir, from the statistics you have just rehashed there, there were two declines in two specific years and I am saying that when you looked at—I was very careful as at the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December, 2019, it was lower in the last seven days, it went ahead and that led to the increase. Those questions are best asked the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. I have provided all of the information that I can with respect to that here today.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Minister, I just want to raise a couple of questions really, hopefully for brief answer because again it is just for clarification and to be absolutely clear, because I do not think you would visit us again in the distant future. Incidentally and just for the record, may I inform you that I am also one of two shadow Ministers of National Security and it explains why I would be one to make frequent comments on National Security. And by the will of God in a few months I could well be the Minister of National Security. So that all explains it.

**Mr. Young:** That certainly will not be the will of God.

**Dr. Moonilal:** That would explain my frequent trips into National Security. Minister, just for the record, you indicated that there were two incidents involving

my good office, one came via writing and another was not in a report—

**Mr. Young:** I made absolutely no such suggestion here this afternoon, nothing to do with your good office but rather to do with you as the individual.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Well, myself as the individual, as your parliamentary colleague, there were two incidents you raised and you indicted that one involved a police report and the second one was not the subject of a police report—

**Mr. Young:** Both were reported to me by the police service.

**Dr. Moonilal:** One in writing, and could you confirm that the second one was reported to you orally?

**Mr. Young:** Not orally.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So not in writing and not orally?

**Mr. Young:** Not in writing via the form of an official report.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So in writing via the form of some other kind of—

**Mr. Young:** Correct. So I get, during the course of the day, like right now I would be getting briefings on my phone.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So somebody will just WhatsApp you that and tell you—

**Mr. Young:** I did not say it was WhatsApp.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Somebody would tell you on your text or phone or email something that is happening via an unofficial source and an unofficial report and you would accept that as intelligence that you can share?

**Mr. Chairman:** I think I should—

**Dr. Moonilal:** But let me move on. I want to move on. I am going to move on.

**Mr. Chairman:** Before you go, I mean, let us keep the tone to this important meeting at the level we started it—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Chairman, you know—

**Mr. Chairman:** Just a moment, please. Just a moment, I am speaking as Chairman. Let us keep the tone of this meeting, you know, at the level that we ought to. We know the rules, it is getting raggedy and it is almost sounding, you know—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Chairman, you know, it is only respect I have for your good self and the hon. Minister. May I raise another matter? You said in your statement as well, Minister, in reference to myself that information reached you concerning some association or so with persons known to the police in the Port of Spain, Beetham, Laventille area, and so on, and that is when the Chairman asked you whether it was Hermitage or Heritage, in that incident, and you indicated that you also had information about suggesting or confirming that at the same time or the same day or day after—well, it could not be before, around that time I visited the office of the Commissioner of Police—

**Mr. Young:** No, Sir, I did not say any such thing.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Just remind me of what you said.

**Mr. Young:** The incident to which you refer was an incident dealing with persons and the Heritage or Hermitage Road was you at the Hyatt paying the bill for \$580. The other incident to which I referred, you contacted the Commissioner of Police and asked to meet with him, met with him on the day that you were supposed to be meeting with the persons from Bagatelle and East Port of Spain and Beetham.

**Dr. Moonilal:** And that was a report—

**Mr. Young:** And that was not at the Commissioner's office either.

**Dr. Moonilal:** It was not at the Commissioner's office.

**Mr. Young:** No.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Minister, may I confirm to you, because I think absolute clarity is useful because you may go and say this elsewhere, that I did meet the

Commissioner of Police at his office.

**Mr. Young:** No, it was at Town Restaurant.

**Dr. Moonilal:** No, Sir, I may have met there too. There may have been two meetings, but I did meet the Commissioner.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member, member Moonilal—

**Dr. Moonilal:** No, no, no, this is very important.

**Mr. Chairman:** One second, member Moonilal—

**Dr. Moonilal:** The Minister has raised a critical issue concerning me.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member Moonilal, I want to make an intervention here, maybe you may see the value of it later to protect you, we do not want you revealing your personal business here and your personal meetings and all of that. You have raised issues in front of this Committee—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Chairman, I am just clarifying—

**Mr. Chairman:** No, but hold on, when the Commissioner comes here hopefully you can raise those matters with him, he will know about all your meetings and your private arrangements. But let me say to you, let us confine ourselves to what is in front of us and I will not allow us to just stray.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Okay, I will ask two or three very brief questions.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, I will count them.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Minister, I just want to get back to the incidents that you have raised and you have put before us today involving my—

**Mr. Chairman:** This is pitiful.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Chairman, please, the witness and Minister has raised a very critical matter involving myself, I have a right, if not a duty, to follow-up with the Minister those specifics. The xxxxxxxx and the other person named are not in this



room, they cannot respond to those issues raised. I am here—

**Mr. Chairman:** So are you proposing to raise it on their behalf?

**Dr. Moonilal:** No, no, no, I am dealing with a matter the Minister raised concerning me.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay. Please, ask your question.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yeah. And I just wanted to ask the Minister, in those matters, given the reports you have had from the police, and so on, did the police or the intelligence report suggest to you at any time that there was any, any telephone communication or any other communication between myself and any gang leader in Port of Spain?

**Mr. Young:** Mr. Chairman, I cannot answer that question.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Could I ask the second question? Do you have in a report before you any confirmation by the police or other intelligence agency that I on that day in question went to the Hyatt and paid any bill?

**Mr. Chairman:** Please, hold on. The Minister—please, Mr. Moonilal, the Minister told us, among other things, that he received a number of reports from the police, some of which he read for us and shared with us today and some by virtue of its sheer number and circumstance he did not or could not reveal.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Sure.

**Mr. Chairman:** The Minister has made himself very clear as to what has been reported to him and that was relevant to what is in front of us. You are now asking him about other things.

**Dr. Moonilal:** No, it is the specific issue he raised. The Minister said that he had information that I visited the Hyatt on that day, I am just asking him to confirm whether or not you have received that information from the Trinidad and Tobago

Police Service, yes or no?

**Mr. Young:** Yes.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you. That is all I ask at this stage.

**Mr. Chairman:** Ask your question.

**Dr. Moonilal:** And my final question, given your entire statement to us today and all the issues raised concerning the names you chose and selected, given the issues, to put on the table, Mr. Minister, do you consider that your duties now take you into the realm of being a spy chief on the United National Congress?

**Mr. Young:** No.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much. Right. Members, on your behalf I would like to sincerely thank the hon. Stuart Young, the Member of Parliament, the Minister of National Security, for responding—

**Mr. Young:** Mr. Chair, if I may—sorry to be so rude as to interrupt, but understanding how things unfold in this country, this small country of ours, I would like to respond to the last question put to me more fully and to place—

**Dr. Moonilal:** I get to ask a question?

**Mr. Young:** Well, you can ask what you want.

**Mr. Chairman:** It is quite normal for us to allow our guest a final closing comment.

**Mr. Young:** Correct.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Not respond.

**Mr. Young:**—allow me to close, Mr. Chair, and to place very clearly on the *Hansard* and for public consumption, none of the reports that I have referred to here today before your committee were requested by me. As the Minister of National Security, not a single report that I have referred to here today and provided this

Committee with the evidence of, was requested by me. The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, the intelligence arms, the defence force all provide me with a host of reports throughout the course of the day, so any suggestion that there was utilization of the National Security apparatus, because that is where they are going, to spy on anyone or to spy on the UNC is wholly rejected.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Could we ask a follow-up question because that was a political statement—

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much.

**Dr. Moonilal:**—a political statement.

4 . 1 0 p . m .

**Mr. Chairman:** Therefore Minister Young on behalf of this Committee, we will sincerely, genuinely thank you for your attendance at what is really short notice. We appreciate your candour. We appreciate your forthrightness and we would like to wish you well in your continued endeavours as the Minister of National Security of Trinidad and Tobago, and in your mandate to provide security and well-being to our people.

We thank you very much and you are now relieved.

**Mr. Chairman:** Shall we call the Commissioner of Police please, and of course his Deputy Commissioner Mr. Forde. Thanks a lot Minister Young.

*[Interruption]*

*[Minister Young exits committee room]*

*[Mr. Griffith and Mr. Forde enter committee room]*

**Mr. Chairman:** Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner we welcome you. Thank you very much, Mr. Commissioner. We are very happy to have you, in that, you have responded to our invitation, you and Deputy Commissioner Forde. Thank you very much.

You have been here before, but for the record and for the formality let me invite you to introduce yourselves to members of this Committee. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Griffith:** Good afternoon Chairman again, take two, other members of the Committee, Gary Griffith, Commissioner of Police.

**Mr. Forde:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, other members of the Committee. My name is Jayson Forde, I am the Acting Deputy Commissioner of Police with responsibility for operations in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very warmly, and I should now invite members of this Committee to introduce themselves beginning with Miss Olivierre on my left.

*[Introductions made]*

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much. Let me indicate, Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner Forde, that this is an in camera meeting. The public is not with us nor are elements of the media. But the proceedings are being recorded, and this Committee will decide, most likely we will, on its publication on the usual Parliament channel and so on hereafter. So that is just for the record.

I would like to remind you that this special meeting was called on the request of member Moonilal by letter to this Committee, and that on the basis of that we formulated an enquiry the purpose of which is to gain an understanding of the

statements made by the Minister of National Security on the 16th of January, 2020, at a post-Cabinet conference—I will detail a little more on that—and also to obtain an update on the policy and plans in place to combat crime in accordance with your, the police’s mandate, respectively.

We received a letter, to which I just referred, dated the 17th of January, 2017, on the letterhead of Dr. Roodal Moonilal, the Member of Parliament for the constituency of Oropouche East, which letter was signed by both Dr. Moonilal and Sen. Saddam Hosein, both of whom are members of this Committee. The heading of this letter or the subject was the urgent request for a meeting of this Joint Select Committee on National Security. Among other things in this letter, Dr. Moonilal raised the issue of the 537 murders—[*Interruption*] excuse, members please. Dr. Moonilal and Mr. Hosein raised the 537 murders reported for year 2019, and expressed the view, and I quote, that the country was in extreme shock, pain and anguish when the year ended in those figures. And pointed out as at the date of this letter, the 17th of January, 2020, the murder toll for the year stood then at 20.

Indicated in this letter, and I quote:

This has caused high degree of fear among the population.

Further quoting:

The inability of the agencies involved in national security to curtail and arrest the escalating murder toll and high level of criminal activities warrants an immediate investigation...—meaning, of this Committee.

The letter goes on to say:

We request urgently that a meeting be convened with members of this

Committee, together with all heads involved in national security—you Commissioner and you Mr. Forde are representing the police in this respect—so that this Committee can examine the performance and activities of your agency.

Based on the outcome of the enquiry, the Committee will be in a position to make urgent recommendations relating to the performance of the various agencies to guarantee the security, safety and protection of all of our citizens. Our Committee may also table immediate policy and legislative proposals to the House of Representatives to assist in the fight against rampant criminal elements.

Almost finally, in Dr. Moonilal and Saddam Hosein’s letter, I quote, they having said and written:

Given recent statements made by the Minister of National Security yesterday, we are concerned that the central policymaker of the Government appears to be at a loss as to what exactly is happening, and seeks to cast blame and aspersions on private citizens, rather than assume responsibility for the calamity that engulfs our Republic. In light of the alarming statements and conclusions of Minister Young, members may wish to secure his attendance before our full Committee for him to explain himself by way of examination.

The Minister must account to the JSC on National Security.

The comments as I indicated earlier were issued by Minister Young on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January in the normal Government’s post-Cabinet conference. Mr. Young made certain statements, and I might tell you Minister Young was immediately before

us—before you and before us. He told this Committee of those statements and the basis on which they came to his attention. So he was cross-examined by this Committee on those.

In the course of his submissions he did make many, many references to issues and matters and facts and circumstances which he Minister Young claimed were told to him, reported to him routinely by heads of national security and the agencies of national security and, in particular, from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

So this Committee would have heard Minister Young's clarification, explanation, *raison d'être* for the statements that Dr. Moonilal alleges that he has made, and he in the course of his evidence, Minister Young that is, told us that the basis essentially on which he made those statements was on the basis of information issued to him by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

I might let you know that after Minister Young spoke on the 16th, he told us here today that there was widespread public commentary on his statements, some of which came from Dr. Moonilal. I have an article here dated Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2020, where Dr. Moonilal describes those statements issued by Minister Young on the 16th, as outlandish and reckless, among other things. Dr. Moonilal said, in another part of the world those statements could have triggered a war.

I take it Commissioner that you would be familiar with the statements made by Minister Young on the 16<sup>th</sup>. But in the event that you are not, let me as best as I can share with you what they may have consisted of. He essentially, according to the report, that Minister Young claimed that certain people, and he called no names on that occasion, but today he did, are promoting random shootings across the East-

West Corridor and inciting criminal activity in order to create panic, fear and mayhem.

We needed to provide, according to Dr. Moonilal in the article of which I spoke, meaning the Committee, information on the basis on which he is making such outlandish statements. So let me begin Commissioner, having welcomed you, by asking whether you had heard the statements as issued by Minister Young on the 16<sup>th</sup>, or whether you want them in greater detail rehearsed to you?

**Mr. Griffith:** No Chairman, I am aware. Mr. Forde?

**Mr. Forde:** I did not hear the two statements in its entirety.

**Mr. Chairman:** Well for your benefit, essentially Minister Young in a post-Cabinet conference said to the country that there were certain persons in the national community who were promoting and inciting and encouraging criminal elements to get involved in random shootings around the East-West Corridor, with a view to creating panic and mayhem. He told us other things—other things. He identified several incidents by dates where he Minister Young speaking to the national community—at least four or five different occasions, where he Minister Young speaking to the national community put down markers, to use his word, warning the public that there were certain persons in the national community who were encouraging criminal elements to create panic and crime in the society.

Now, before we proceed it is customary that we allow—so now that you have an understanding of what is in front of us, I will now allow you Commissioner to issue any opening comments before we expose you to specific questions on this matter. Thank you very much.



**Mr. Griffith:** Thank you Sir. So I am aware of the comments made by the Minister of National Security. As I mentioned a few days ago and to everyone here, I will try my best to explain or to try to clarify anything that Minister Young would have stated, but I have to be very careful that the line I need to draw is that I must not in any way make any comment that can expose someone, and I am speaking about persons who may have been giving information to us via informants and so forth, or if there are matters that are presently under investigation by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. As much it is that I am before here, we must do anything that can affect an ongoing investigation. So I will be very careful how it is I come about with what I have to say.

I think I would be able to say a lot that can clarify many matters, but please excuse that I would have to be very guarded, both myself and Deputy Commissioner of Police Mr. Forde, as to what and how much we can and should say so as to ensure the protection of certain individuals. Because we say too much, we are speaking about certain individuals can very well be targeted, likewise it can also affect any ongoing investigation pertaining to any perceived matter of individuals who may be involved in aiding and abetting criminal activity. I do not know if you want me to expand immediately, Sir, on what was stated by Minister Young or if it will just be open—

**Mr. Chairman:** We have some specific questions. What we will do is tell you what he said and ask for your response to it for the most part.

But before that I must let you know two things. One is that these proceedings are being recorded but are not live. They are being held in camera. So that it is only

after these proceedings we will decide whether it is worthy of publication or otherwise. If there are any things that we can consider even getting expert advice that is harmful to the national interest in the context in which you raised it, we will either not publish it or we will excise from the record those elements. So I trust that will bring you some comfort, and that should implore you to speak accurately, truthfully and frankly to this Committee.

The second thing I must have you know is based on the oath that we have taken as parliamentarians and based on the Standing Orders that guide this Committee, Members are not free to share issues from this, other than in particular circumstances. So you can feel free to express yourselves, subject to the things that you as police will treat with as you have explained.

So let me get this ball rolling, just to get the things going. Minister Young would have outlined that at several events, February 19<sup>th</sup>, October 2019, the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2020, he in speaking to the national community and in trying to find that balance between what the public has a right to know, and at the same time not creating undue panic in the national community, and yet at the same time not wanting to say too much for the reasons you have just outlined, he had put down certain markers but altogether he told us here today that he was signalling to the national community that there were persons, influential persons in the society who were encouraging and promoting and encouraging the conduct that we saw. He told as well that when he took office it coincided with about the time you took office and that the statistics had shown that the murder, the homicide rate had begun to slow down, and from the perspective of national security things were heading in a pretty

favourable direction.

But towards the end and the last quarter of 2019, you, the police, analysing the statistics, began to observe some strange phenomenon with the statistics. That is to say, you observed some spikes, and that is to say you observed some shootings with assault weapons, particularly he told us on December 31<sup>st</sup>, in the city of Port of Spain, in a busy crowded area by a taxi stand, a carload or so of heavily armed gunmen with assault rifles came and fired into the public area causing the loss of life and other people being shot. You would be more familiar with this. And following that, the investigations that flowed, Mr. Young told us today, intelligence revealed a number of things which you, the Police Commissioner, would have reported to him in his capacity as Minister of National Security, and which you, the Commissioner, reported on a specified date to the National Security Council.

On that basis it was gleaned he told us that that particular shooting and a few others were random, meaning they could not be classified as you normally do, as gang-related or domestic violence or robbery. It appeared outside of the box in that respect, and that triggered your intelligence and your understanding of things along the lines that you briefed them.

So I think I have said enough in terms of what he has said to give you an understanding of where we are and what we are interested in finding out here today.

Did Minister Young's statements properly described as outlandish? He assured us that everything he said on those particular occasions, and in particular on the 16<sup>th</sup>, was against the background of information shared by the TTPS and in some cases in writing to him. And on that basis he was able to make to make the comments

he did.

In the course of his submission, just to conclude, he mentioned certain reports that he had about some politicians, and in that context he named three politicians who Minister Young told us the TTPS informed him, in the course of their briefs to him as National Security Minister, had dealings with, relationships with, contacts with, planned meetings with, and the specifics will come later. He called three names. Just to jog your memory and to test, I will call them for you now: (Name given), on one occasion, (Name given) and Member Moonilal, who is with us in this Committee here today.

So Commissioner, with all of that said, I would like to invite my colleagues to begin questioning in respect of what we have heard today, and any particulars we would like to raise with the Commissioner. Who will go first? Thank you very much.

**Mr. Richards:** Thank you, Chairman. Thank you Commissioner and Acting Deputy Commissioner for joining us today. A lot of questions, but I will try to be brief in the first round to give my colleagues an opportunity. First of all, Commissioner, can you indicate—because Minister Young was before us for quite a while earlier and he transmitted information that the change in what would have been established trends, or trends that they would have noticed changed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December I think it was he said, and seemed to have a different and even more sinister presentation on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December. Where he said he had information from the TTPS that gang leaders had instructed their cohorts to increase the murder rate past the previous record I think—I do not want to say established—that happened in 2008. He made the assertion that the TTPS, in the absence of what they would have

seen in terms of the motivation for these shootings, like the one we saw in downtown, a political dimension to it as assessed by the TTPS. Could you expand on that for us? Is that accurate?

**Mr. Griffith:** Chairman, now I notice there are two different lines of questioning. I know the first one pertaining to Minister Young's statements and then there is a second that you spoke about, and I would prefer if it can be done separately, because then you spoke about politicians. If we can deal with the first, Vice-Chairman, as you spoke about, because they are two separate matters, and I do not want to have it intertwined at this time.

The fact is that usually when you look at CompStat, comparative statistics, the homicide rate would go in tandem with all other major crime. Homicide will go up, you would start seeing the patterns for rape, robbery and other serious and violent crimes. There is a pattern, it continues. It will go up or it will go down, and you will see the trend, and this has always been the case on most occasions.

From August 2018 to August 2019, there was actually—and that pattern was there—there was the reduction of every violent crime, every serious crime, between 8 to 15 per cent, inclusive of homicides.

**4.40 p.m.**

So up until the first six months if you look at in 2019 there was actually a 12 or 13 per cent decrease. So when we were looking at the pattern, we were looking at about 450 homicides per annum which was in line with what our standard was. We were looking at 10 per cent decrease every year which meant that in four or five

years we will be down to less than 300 and even getting close to the 200s, so that was—and it was there with all of the other violent crime.

At the end of the year this continued, nothing had changed, pertaining to all of the other violent crimes and serious crimes there was a reduction for all except homicide. Homicide was the only one that changed, so there was a break in the pattern. So immediately our data looking at CAPA, our intelligence agencies started to find something was—it did not mesh.

Now, one thing I do add that could have caused that as well, something to consider was the use of the 5.56 rounds, whereas in 2018 there were actually more woundings/shootings than homicides in 2018 than 2019, even though the homicide rate was higher because there was not the use of the 5.56; a 5.56 you are automatically sure to die compared to the previous in 2018 where many persons would have used a side arm, the side arm. With a nine-millimetre there is a greater chance of woundings and shootings. So even though in 2019 there were about 30 or 40 less woundings and shootings and homicides, that '19, the homicide rate increased.

So going into, as I stated, Chairman and Committee, up until October, September or so, the pattern was continuing. Then there was this spike and we picked up something was amiss and we started looking at intelligence. And as you rightly stated, and the Minister, it was not related to gang activity because usually my Deputy Commissioner of Police Operations who works hand in hand with the SSA, with the intelligence agencies in the police service with many informants that we have, we started realizing that it was not related on most occasions to reprisal.

In 23<sup>rd</sup> of December, 2018 there were 515 homicides. In 23<sup>rd</sup> of December, 2019, there were 516; we were virtually on par with same because of the increase,

even though we were 10 per cent below, 10 to 13 per cent below in the middle of last year, because of the gradual, we levelled off. Usually that week of the year is usually the lowest number of homicides. So in 2018, 23<sup>rd</sup> of December it was 515, it went to 516 after just one week, so it went up by one. In 2019 it went up by 22 and therein lies the difference. So in one week there were 22 homicides in comparison to one the previous year, and because as I stated in 23<sup>rd</sup> of December it was levelled, neck and neck, so we were going to be just about the same as the previous year. And then we got the—and Mr. Forde could actually elaborate on it. So there was intel, there was intelligence that we picked up. The individual who was a—well, that gang, we got intelligence that the gang leader had actually stated through that their mission was to increase the homicide rate, it must go to 550. It just so happened—

**Mr. Chairman:** What? So for the record, what is the significance of 550?

**Mr. Griffith:** We do not know, Sir. We do not know, but the intention was to have as many homicides as possible to get it to 550 or over. It is, I do know that the highest—it would have made it the highest in history in our country's history. So we do not know if that was a relation, we do not know if it was a number, but it seemed that they were given a target and it must go to 550, at that time we were at 536.

**Mr. Chairman:** So the police is now, you are now confirming that you picked up credible evidence, intelligence sorry, that there was a plan, a motive, an instruction actually to take the murder figure beyond anything in the country's record.

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much. Continue.

**Mr. Griffith:** Now, with that what we got, it started meshing with what actually

transpired because the gang leader actually—usually when—we have about a 1,000 shooters in the country, he sent his two lieutenants, he sent in his two most senior persons for this, that is how important this task seemed to him, his right and left hand. There were actually photographs, and that is “Bulls” and “Snake”, another “Snake”. [*Laughter*] So these two individuals were his right and left hand and he sent them out. He sent them, and usually when they have these types of incidents, it is not a situation where they will—their job is to go, hit as quickly as possible and get out. Sometimes there would be a situation where if it is to target a specific gang member from the other side, one or two persons that would be in and around the area would also be hit, and that is known as unfortunately, “collateral damage”, but their aim is to hit.

The intelligence that we have is that at that time and that day there were no persons on the other side, that being the Muslim group. There was nobody, there was no one individual from that group that was anywhere near that area when the shooting took place; that is one.

Two, the exact time when it took place, the location it took place was an area where it is you had the largest amount of persons at that particular time.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. Griffith:** So it all meshed in towards that. This, Chairman, as you mentioned—

**Mr. Richards:** That is the Charlotte Street area, eh.

**Mr. Chairman:** Prince and George.

**Mr. Griffith:** Prince and George Street.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. Griffith:** So they actually found an area with the most amount of persons at the highest mass at that one particular time. This then takes it away from it being



related as a gang-related shooting to terrorism because this is no longer gang related, this now becomes a situation of virtual terrorism.

And that, so in line with what the Minister said, there seems that the intelligence that we had was on par with exactly what transpired. Just to clear some of the questions, we do not have intelligence to verify who are the perpetrators or who were the persons that would have influenced the individual or that gang to commit such an act. There can be a number options, but—so I will just leave it open now.

**Mr. Richards:** Has that gang leader and if you can identify him because you have already identified “Bulls” and “Snake”, can you identify that gang leader?—if it is not a breach of—

**Mr. Griffith:** No.

**Mr. Richards:** And two, Chair, have he and his cohorts now been identified as “terrorists”? If that is a “terrorist”, has been classified as a “terrorist act”?

**Mr. Griffith:** It is still being, we are deep into the investigation. I can have Mr. Forde speak a lot more on it, but as I said, because of that now we are looking not just at the individual or the gang that will be involved, but who it is that gave them the directive to commit such an act.

**Mr. Chairman:** So it is safe to say that in respect of that matter, two of the perpetrators of that shooting on that day, they lost their lives in a gun fight with the police I understand, we understand. But it is safe to say, Commissioner, that an investigation into that matter continues.

**Mr. Griffith:** Correct.

**Mr. Forde:** Thank you. Yes. Chairman, it is safe to say that an investigation has been initiated and it continues up to this time.

**Mr. Chairman:** In an attempt to determine who would have incited and instructed that kind of behaviour.

**Mr. Forde:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you.

**Mr. De Freitas:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So just to put on the record, so in your opinion this is not a random act? And when I say “random” I mean, you know what I mean by “random”, obviously, because it leads to the next question I want to ask which is: What is the benefit to these individuals of doing such a thing?

You stated before that the trend that you see is that, you know, a rival gang would shoot at each other, and obviously there is an inherent benefit. If my rival is dead then, you know, I take over their turf or whatever, so there is an inherent benefit there. What you have described thus far that is still under investigation is, would seem to be to the average person a random act, but you know, when you look behind it, it is not really random, because it is an anomaly, it is not part of the normal trend that you see when you look at your numbers from previous years. So I just want to lay down that fact and have it confirmed that it is not a random act, it is a purposeful act, and if you all would agree with that statement, and you may not be able to at this point in time give some insight into why or what was the benefit.

**Mr. Griffith:** In gang-related shootings likewise, it is not a random act. The gang-related shootings is a specific target for assassination, so even that cannot be considered “random acts”. So a gang-related shooting is not random.

I think in this situation this was definitely, from what we have, it was designed to try to cause as much damage and fatalities as possible at that specific time, and it went in line with what we had, that the information was to try to get the homicide rate to over 550. This was the last day of the year, the location they went, the time

they went, there were no targets of opposing members of another gang, and you could have actually seen it, because usually when you have this situation, immediately when it happened we blocked off Sea Lots expecting random, there was no retaliation, and even that and so—because it meant that the other gang was aware that nobody targeted us, nobody went after us, so we are not going to go after you all, so this was a deliberate. The individuals there it was, again, which would—a situation like this would be considered under virtual terrorism, because basically what it would mean is that, there is a group that is deliberately designed to commit an act than can destabilize the country and to cause mass fatalities for a certain cause.

**Mr. Chairman:** And insofar as we now know, those guys who came out on that expedition, terrorist expedition, they would have been under the instruction of their leader. Am I correct?

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** All right. And that is as far as we know so far. Thank you very much. Now, Commissioner, I want to, of course everyone can, but I want to get to a point Minister Young particularly raised. Minister Young told us that in February 2019, he at a press conference put down one marker where he observed, where the police informed him—because everything he said was on the basis of information from the TTPS, so assuming that to be so all the way through even if I did not say it. Minister Young told us that the TTPS informed him that a certain person who was seen on a UNC platform was a criminal well known to the police, spoke on a UNC platform with a long list of contact, adverse contact with the police over time. He spoke to that matter and he quoted from that in a report in writing to him. Are you familiar with what I might be alluding to, Mr. Forde?

**Mr. Forde:** At this time I am not familiar with that, hon. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Could you check your records because I am sure—

**Mr. Griffith:** Yeah. Well, I have it, Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Please. So, Commissioner, what I want to do is to determine from you whether, in fact, the police had so informed Minister Young that a man who was well known, with a serious criminal record appeared on a UNC platform.

**Mr. Griffith:** That is correct, Chairman. Is there anything that you would want me to—

**Mr. Chairman:** No. That would suffice, unless if anybody has anything on that particular matter to raise?

**Sen. Hosein:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. Hosein:** Minister Young, sorry, through you, Chair.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. Hosein:** Minister Young would have grouped all of these issues where he outlined the intelligence report to the sporadic shootings in Port of Spain. Now, can you say whether or not there is any link between those instances which the Chairman just outlined to the sporadic shooting in Port of Spain?

**Mr. Griffith:** Sorry, Sir. So to link—what is it that you want me to—

**Mr. Hosein:** Is there any link between the person who—

**Mr. Griffith:** On the platform?

**Mr. Hosein:** Yeah.

**Mr. Griffith:** No.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you.

**Mr. Richards:** Chairman, Commissioner, Minister Young also outlined some allegations of interactions between (Name given), deputy political leader (Name

given) and (Name given) with what has been described as in some cases gang leaders and/or gangs members. Would you be able to give us any information about the nature of those interactions?

**Mr. Griffith:** Now, again Sir, I would prefer not to call names, but I can verify that we have intelligence, I actually have documents here from some of my intelligence agencies, and these are items that would be forwarded as well, not just to—because how our system is structured, information is forwarded to the Chairman of the National Security Council and the Minister of National Security directly to them, and sometimes not even with the Commissioner of Police knowing. So this is information that would be forwarded to the relevant persons in the National Security Council.

And we do have, just quickly, that yes, there is information pertaining to a situation whereby a senior member allegedly approached an individual to go up as a councillor for a certain seat in the local government election. That individual, there was also some degree of affiliation with a very notorious gang leader who is presently incarcerated and who is involved in a major case that is being dealt with at this time pertaining to the assassination of a senior attorney and the intelligence we have is that it was on the condition that the individual, that they would provide protection for the supporters during the campaign. The person in question has a long string of criminal activity. It was also brought—the hierarchy of the party apparently what we have received is that, being made aware of it, that person was removed from the selection process.

There is another individual who was a previous Minister, we also have him being affiliated with having meetings with major criminals, notorious gang leaders with promises of a \$40 million state contract on ascension into office, as well as

another \$2 million contract to build Sherwood Park.

And then there is also another individual where we have reports that that person has been walking the ground and being involved in affiliating with certain gang members on par with what would have taken place nine years ago prior to the 2010 election in the Carapo area. And that individual we also have reports that—

**Mr. Chairman:** That individual is a politician?

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** A female politician.

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Minister Young told us exactly what you said, but he called the name (Name given) to this Committee. This Committee is not unwashed, you know, we have heard from the Minister. So are you speaking of one and the same person that Minister Young spoke of when he called that name?

**Mr. Griffith:** I have to be very careful here, Sir. I can go as far to the line without crossing the finish line because remember these are matters that are presently being investigated. I can go to the point of stating a very senior politician and it is a female in a political party, and the individual we have, that individual being in very close links with senior gang members to the point that even in my capacity in another place I was very offended when she had given a state contract for him to build a police station and actually set up CCTVs in the police station, and then she had the audacity to try to justify and tell me that, she did not know when everyone knew because the person was actually walking with us when we built the police station, he was behind us. So, Señor.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Griffith:** I was just speaking Spanish there.

**Mr. De Freitas:** Mr. Chair, just one question. So as much as I have heard what the police Commissioner has said, and he has, to a great extent, corroborated what Minister Young has said without, like you said, crossing the finish line. I just want to establish something here because based on what Minister Young has said and now what you are saying, is there a quid pro quo arrangement happening here?—in the sense that I am hearing that certain contracts were given and certain things were supposed to happen and, you know, certain people were supposed to go up for councillors, and then if that had happened, you know, the entity or the person would have received protection and whatnot. I am just establishing and putting a marker here between the previous witness and/or stakeholder and yourself that there is a quid pro quo happening here; you do this to me, I will do this for you.

**Mr. Griffith:** The intelligence that we had prior to 2010 went along the same lines so as what you spoke about with happened with LifeSport, and that became a scar in our country because of that same situation. There is a saying that, if you play with filthy animals you would get flees.

I have always spoken about the concern whereby we have seen governments come and go inclusive of this one where we have seen that, and when we affiliate ourselves with criminal elements, there is going to be a price to pay. At times you would be in a situation where you feel that by affiliating yourselves these individuals, they have thousands of young persons in the society that you could influence them. This is what happened in Carapo prior to the 2010 election, but then there was a price to pay, and that price was over 70 persons we have in our records that were killed because of LifeSport and it continues now because of the strength that was given to that gang because of the affiliation and given hundreds of millions in state contracts. This situation we have seen it continuing now with the same

individual, she has a capacity to be affiliated with these individuals, and we have seen it with the contracts—

**Mr. Richards:** Commissioner, what does mean?

**Mr. Griffith:** What is that, Sir?

**Mr. Richards:** “A capacity to be associated with individuals.”

**Mr. Griffith:** Well, continues to work in an environment where that person feels that by working with criminal elements it may assist her. I could not understand where it is you hold a senior position that you can give a state contract to a gang leader to build a police station.

**Mr. Richards:** Why I am asking the question, sorry to interrupt—

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Chairman—

**Mr. Richards:** I am trying to be as neutral as possible.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yeah. Right. Okay.

**Mr. Richards:** And we are having some significant imputations about individuals, and in the history of Trinidad and Tobago there have been Prime Ministers associated with meetings with gang members, and now we are having allegations of politicians associated with gang members. Do you have concerns about these linkages and implications for national security or law enforcement? Because we have to be, to me, careful about the nature of the linkages, and I am not absolving anybody of responsibility of what they do in Trinidad and Tobago by any means, but we have had it in the past and we have not had these kinds of concerns raised.

**Mr. Chairman:** Any comment on the implications of that kind of thing?

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Sir. It has proven to be the catalyst towards homicides in this country. The fact is, when it is we continue to give the criminal elements that capability, they use the profits not to help their community, and this is not just



intelligence, this is fact. The profit that they acquire from the State in these contracts that they get, whether it has been LifeSport, CEPEP, HDC, Colour Me Orange or whatever, they have used the profit towards purchasing more firearms, hiring more gang members and putting hits on other gang members to get their state contracts. This has gone on for the last 12 years, it is ongoing, it is littered presently in the regional corporations, and we get a change in administrations, but the pattern has remained the same throughout, Sir.

For the last 13 years we have a capability where persons unfortunately, it affects the police service, it demoralizes us to say that the Government, the Opposition, the State, politicians, they want the police to deal with reducing crime, but you give them more funds than us for them to purchase more sophisticated weapons, hire more persons, get more profit, pay more persons in the community to tip them off so that if we make a raid, we cannot get anything done, and then we now have to confront these same individuals who are actually profiting and benefiting and being, and at times, even protected by the State.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much. Mr. Mitchell.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for casting your eye down this end. Mr. Griffith, Mr. Police Commissioner, I appreciate your reticence for calling names being called in these intelligence reports, but one particular name really concerns me as a member of this Committee. You spoke about a sitting member associating with the criminal element and making promises or giving undertakings that if that sitting member were to get back into government, that contracts would be awarded. Mr. Commissioner, is that member Mr. Roodal Moonilal?

**Mr. Griffith:** No. It is a previous Minister—the information we have on this individual, he spoke, he liaised with a notorious gang leader pertaining to the

Sherwood Park Congo area, he liaised with another person who is a former member of the defence force. At the meeting he addressed the gathering, he promised them award of \$14 million of contracts in the D'Abadie area, he revealed that some 14 streets in the D'Abadie area including Red Lane and Sherwood Park would be included and it would be over \$2 million. So the individual is—there is a number of other things, but this person—

**Mr. Mitchell:** Is it a sitting MP?

**Mr. Griffith:** No. He was a previous junior, he was not in Cabinet, he was a Member of Parliament and a junior Minister.

**Mr. Chairman:** Responsible for state lands, I think it was.

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Am I correct?

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Mitchell:** He is a sitting MP featured—

**Mr. Chairman:** Are you speaking about MP Mungal or Mungalsingh or something like that?

**Mr. Griffith:** Sir, any matter, again, I can go to the edge, I will prefer not to call the names, but I can say so much, but it was previous junior Minister, he was a Member of Parliament.

**Mr. Chairman:** And that was a Minister from the last government?

**Mr. Griffith:** Administration, 2010 to 2015. Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** All right. We will live with that. Talking about—

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Chairman, I am not finished.

**Mr. Chairman:** Sorry about that.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Why are you treating me like that?

**Dr. Moonilal:** The man is now clearing my name and you are stopping him.

**Mr. Chairman:** Go ahead, Mr. Mitchell.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Commissioner of Police, Dr. Moonilal, is he featured or any sitting member featured in any of those reports to the—

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes.

**Mr. Mitchell:**—intelligence reports?

**Mr. Griffith:** Well—

**Mr. Mitchell:** Dr. Moonilal in particular.

**Mr. Griffith:** Well, we do have information, we do get reports pertaining to Dr. Moonilal that involves with him—not involved in making any—whereas we see individuals promising persons state contracts, well, support on condition on the return.

**Mr. Mitchell:** So associating with the criminal element.

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Okay. You spoke about an incident prior to 2015 where one of the individuals featured in those intelligence reports provided the criminal element with a contract to construct a police station?

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Mitchell:** That person was the CEO the managing director of the HDC.

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Mitchell:** During the time when that was awarded, that contract was awarded, do you recall whether or not any sitting member around this table in particular Dr. Moonilal, was the Minister responsible for the HDC?

**Mr. Griffith:** Correct. Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Thank you. Last question. Going back to the incident on George

Street, the victims or persons in the area where the shootings occurred, did you all determine whether or not those persons had any criminal records? The victims of the shooting or the potential victims?—because we spoke about it being random, and we spoke about them not being affiliated with any rival gangs, but did we determine whether or not these persons were just law abiding citizens without any criminal records?

**Mr. Forde:** Right. On the face of it, it appeared so, but at this time I do not have that final information.

**Mr. Griffith:** And if I could also, again, I just want to clarify. That situation, they were going to be very successful in the performance of their mission. Because of the number of individuals that were there at that time, the type of weapons that they had, the number of magazines that they had, they came with an intention, this was not just to target one person.

The only thing that saved our country that day was an off-duty police officer who drew his firearm and caused them to get back into their vehicle. We would have had a replica of what took place in the Pulse night club in Orlando and several other situations, dozens and dozens of persons could have been killed. Ten persons were actually injured, and thankfully—not thankfully, one is too much—but one person was killed, but had it not been for that one individual.

And may I just shift to another, going to the bigger picture, Chairman, pertaining to the matter of crime in this country, as I speak about administrations giving state contracts to criminal elements, it goes right back to this same situation; I just wish to take note quickly.

In the last three years, 323 persons have been arrested for firearms and released on the first hearing. There have been, we have reports—our intelligence

would reveal that there are just about 800 shooters in this country. The 800 shooters have been the persons who have been involved in the majority of the homicides in this country. The point being, and this is just on the first hearing. What I am trying to state is that we have done our job, the police cannot reduce crime if we have a situation where our parliamentarians cannot understand the importance, that if someone is held with a firearm, he is no different to a terrorist. If a terrorist—if you find an individual with a detonator, the chemicals, the timer, he is known as a “terrorist”. If you find an individual with a firearm, he has an intention to kill persons.

What I find alarming, Chairman, is that in 2014, this same law was for anyone with something even a little stronger than a slingshot, and we saw it being important and confirmed that that person should not be given bail.

Barbados now, 24 months without bail. The New York NYPD commissioner who I signed an MOU with, he has now been open to state that the criminal justice system is causing problems with allowing persons to be released. We cannot be in a situation where eventually we are going to have a—we were just very lucky on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, but we are trying to play a game where we have 300—if it is we have 323 persons remain where they belong which is over, just about half of the number of shooters, it could very well be based on that data, half of the homicides could have been reduced.

**Mr. Chairman:** Commissioner, just before I give way to Mr. Le Hunte—just now. Just before I give way, since you raised that point. The information that Minister Young gave us today suggests that there are current and practising UNC politicians—you do not have to call a name, I am just telling you what he told this Committee.

5.10 p.m.

**Mr. Chairman:** Current UNC practising politicians, including some in the House, who have had, based on information you, the police, gave to him, unsavoury relationships with known criminal elements, people well-known to you. For example, Mr. Young told us today that the same lady, (Name given), he told us, she has been linked to Muslim gangs. He told us so today. And she has been observed—the police briefed him—that she has been observed at a number of political meetings with known gang leader or leaders in UNC T-shirt—yellow T-shirt. Let me say yellow. He did not say UNC, he say yellow—and he had photographs provided to him supporting that by the TTPS, and this has been going on for about two years, he said, in the La Horquetta/Talparo area, she is there with criminal walking about in there, and in Maloney, and in Beetham with gang leader too. All of this he told us, right, that he received from you. Are you in a position to confirm or deny that?

**Mr. Griffith:** Confirm, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** To confirm. So, in that case, and on those bases what Minister Young told us, in addition to telling us that it came from the Police Service, is correct?

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Good. Now, Commissioner, before I give way to Mr. Le Hunte. When you spoke a moment ago about your exasperation, when you look at Barbados and Jamaica and what they are doing with bail and so on to fight crime, it is at the end of the day, the politicians, the parliamentarians who decide what would become law and what would not. Would you agree with that?

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** And therefore I am asking you, if the intelligence that you provided to the Minister of National Security is correct, and you have confirmed that it is correct, then there is a possibility— I am asking you, that if politicians are in unsavoury relationship with criminals, fraternizing with them, making deals with them, when legislation comes to the Parliament to control criminals and crime and does not find the support of the Opposition politicians then it is not unreasonable for the Minister and for a reasonable sober citizen to conclude that the failure to support legislation, the likes of which you just painfully spoke about, might have something to do with those unsavoury relationships. Do you consider that to be farfetched or unreasonable? [*Interruption*] I am asking that to the Commissioner.

**Mr. Griffith:** Well, I could only work on intelligence. It is a possibility but I would not be able to—I have no intelligence to verify that Opposition Members are deliberately doing that, but it is—there is a—

**Mr. Chairman:** I just asked if it is a reasonable position, which is what led the Minister to saying what he had to say, because he is responsible for the crime situation in Trinidad and Tobago. More than that, before I give way to Mr. Le Hunte, Minister Young told us here today that— and let me try and find the exact date— [*Interruption*] just a moment please—that on the 8<sup>th</sup> of the eleventh, 2019, the police reported to him on the 14<sup>th</sup>. He spoke about it on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November, 20—Yes, he said the police reported to him on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November, 2019, a well-known gangster from Beetham, another one from Picton Road, another one from heritage or Hermitage Road in the Belmont or Gonzales area, gathered at the Hyatt, and having had drinks and maybe food, a disruption occurred because they were refusing to pay the Hyatt their bill. And, in the course of that, Minister Young told this Committee today that they reported to the Hyatt management that they were

expected to meet with (Name given) at that location in some meeting there and that he would pay the bill. The management summoned the police and (Name given), Mr. Stuart Young told us, who both went to the Hyatt. It was a day of the sitting of the Parliament. Are you familiar, as the TTPS, with the matters that I have just raised and sharing that information with Minister Young?

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Chairman, I am. A report from Special Branch revealed that. I do not have the involvement with Minister Young, and we do have that report, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes. And that the bill, five hundred and something dollars, was paid by Dr. Moonilal. Are you aware of that?

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** And you confirm that that information was shared with the Minister of National Security?

**Mr. Griffith:** I am not sure if it was, but through Special Branch reports it most probably would have been submitted, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Good. And that Minister Young told us that in the course of his work he would report such matters to the National Security Council and to the chairman of the National Security Council. Well, you are a member of the National Security Council, you would be aware of that.

**Mr. Griffith:** Well, no I am not, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Well, no you are not a member, but you are a regular—

**Mr. Griffith:** Invited guest.

**Mr. Chairman:**—invited guest. I am sorry about that. Yes. Minister Young told us that that matter was reported to the National Security Council, are you aware of that?

**Mr. Griffith:** I think— yes, Sir. Yes, Chairman.



**Mr. Chairman:** This is a matter to which I shall shortly return. Mr. Le Hunte.

**Mr. Le Hunte:** Two simple questions: One, when you got that, the intelligence, I think was about the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, about the potential activities to increase the murder rate up to a certain level, I think it was around early December or not?

**Mr. Griffith:** No, Sir. We started getting intelligence after the incident, because we started picking up the pattern. As I said on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December the homicide rate was almost exact to that of 2019.

**Hon. Member:** 2018.

**Mr. Griffith:** Sorry, 2018. 2018 and 2019 was on par on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December.

**Mr. Le Hunte:** And you started to get information, was there any intelligence that you got before that there was instructions given by anyone to increase the—to try to get the rates up to the levels above the 2008 figure? When notes to that happened?

**Mr. Forde:** The bulk of that information actually came after the Old Year's Day shooting.

**Mr. Le Hunte:** It came after the shooting?

**Mr. Forde:** Correct.

**Mr. Le Hunte:** Okay. And therefore, coming out of that intelligence and based on what it is that you was seeing, and based on what you have subsequently obtained, then you would say that the statement made that it was a deliberate attempt—the statement that was made basically, certain people involved in pushing the crime wave because they want to create a sense of fear and panic about runaway crime, then that statement and light of all of the intelligence that you would have gotten, then you believe that statement to be a fair statement?

**Mr. Griffith:** Now, I want to clarify. The Minister of National Security, it is not just the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service that he gets information from. There is

also the SSA, there is the Transnational Organized Crime Unit, and there will be international agencies from the United States, the United Kingdom. So, we are just one arm, so it would be difficult for me to make a comment and then to label the Minister as being inaccurate, because he would get it from other arms. Most of the things here, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service would have the information in line with others.

**Mr. Le Hunte:** Okay, but based on information it is also again, based on information that was provided by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service on the particular incident that happened, was there any view—what is the view? Was it the view of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service that that incident could have been or was in anyway politically motivated?

**Mr. Griffith:** No, we have no intelligence to verify it was based on it. There are different options, and that is what we are still trying to verify, it can be based on politics, it can be based on businessmen who may deem it appropriate to try to destabilize the country for their own benefits politically if a government changes, it can be based on terrorists, it can be based on persons who may be mentally unstable. So there are a number of different variables that we can look at, Sir. At this time we have nothing to state that this was done deliberately by politicians. What we do know is that—so that is why I said there is a link here where we are aware that there are politicians who have—they familiarize and they associate themselves with gang members and they have given them contracts. We have this other situation where we have seen that gang members have been directed to try to get the homicide rate to 550 for the year.

**Mr. Chairman:** On that point and while you are right there Commissioner, before I give way to someone else, Minister Young told us today that on a particular

occasion the police recently reported to him, the TTPS, and you speak for the whole of the TTPS inclusive of the Special Branch. The TTPS reported to him that a meeting was planned to be held at the office of the Member of Parliament for Oropouche East between well-known gang leaders, and thereafter—I am just giving you an outline—the Member of Parliament for Oropouche East contacted you, Commissioner. He gave us details. What this Committee would like to know is what he said that that information came to him via the TTPS. Do you know that of the incident of which I speak?

**Mr. Griffith:** Chairman, well, it was not the Special Branch. It was the Special Investigative Unit. It was the SIU as I said.

**Mr. Chairman:** No, I said inclusive of the Special Branch.

**Mr. Griffith:** I am sorry.

**Mr. Chairman:** Are you familiar with the incident of which I speak?

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** And in the course of Minister Young's presence, member Moonilal in talking to Minister Young and questioning him, raised the spectre of him, Dr. Moonilal, contacting you and discussing that issue where he was supposed to have met with these persons at his office and revealed to the Committee, Dr. Moonilal that is, that he met with you on another occasion at Town Restaurant. So this Committee has information about Dr. Moonilal—and I am just giving you an outline—having a plan to have a meeting with known criminals at his office, criminals who do not— were not known to be living in the constituency of Oropouche East, from Bagatelle and other places. And following that, Dr. Moonilal contacted you, and this Committee also learnt from Dr. Moonilal, today, in these hearings, that he, Dr. Moonilal met with you on another occasion. I had to tell him

do not discuss his private business, but he raised it. Commissioner, what do you say to this Committee on that general matter? What transpired?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Are you asking the Commissioner to indicate to this Committee what he would meet a Member of Parliament or a Minister of Government and discussed?

**Mr. Chairman:** I am asking the Commissioner a question, and I expect the Commissioner to answer the question. Please, Commissioner.

**Mr. Griffith:** Well member, if I have conversations with any citizen or any Member of Parliament these might be confidential, unless of course, it affects national security.

**Mr. Chairman:** No, no, no. Minister Young told us that the police reported about that activity.

**Mr. Griffith:** No, no, I know. I am truthful about our conversation.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am asking you about that report.

**Mr. Griffith:** Sure, okay.

**Mr. Chairman:** And I am also saying that in the course of dealing with that with Minister Young, I am telling you truthfully that Minister Moonilal mentioned this other event of a meeting. It is that—[*Dr. Moonilal raises hand*] just a moment.

**Dr. Moonilal:** No, no, no, the Minister mentioned that.

**Mr. Chairman:** So we wound up this Committee hearing about a meeting that Dr. Moonilal requested immediately with the Commissioner, and another meeting.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I never—there is no record that I requested any meeting with the Commissioner.

**Mr. Chairman:** Commissioner of Police, you are familiar with the general fact matter pattern I have just raised with you? Commissioner, are you familiar with what I have just raised with you as a report to the Minister of National Security?

**Dr. Moonilal:** But how many times does the Commissioner—

**Mr. Chairman:** I am asking the Commissioner a question. Commissioner, based on what I have shared, are you familiar with the facts that I am—the matters that I have raised with you?

**Mr. Griffith:** If I can answer?

**Mr. Chairman:** Please.

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Sir. The SIU submitted a report to us that there was a Member of Parliament—

**Mr. Chairman:** What is the SIU?

**Mr. Griffith:** Special Investigative Unit. That replaced the OCIU.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very kindly.

**Mr. Griffith:** Sorry.

**Mr. Chairman:** Please proceed.

**Mr. Griffith:** That there were two—because what happened, we do not monitor Members of Parliament, we monitor criminal elements. [*Laughter and Crosstalk*] Anyway, so we discovered that two major gang leaders, there was arrangement for them to meet with a Member of Parliament. It was brought to my attention, and they were going to do surveillance, because that is what they usually do, to verify what the individuals would be doing. The said Member of Parliament, it seemed that he was made aware of it, so he brought it to my attention that he said he was made aware that these two individuals would have met with him. Well, that was it, but there was a confirmation that there was a planned meeting from the SIU, that two of the major gang leaders would have been meeting with a Member of Parliament. The meeting did not take place.

**Mr. Chairman:** So, you would have received, Commissioner, on that basis, or

following that, you received a call from the Member of Parliament?

**Mr. Griffith:** I cannot remember if it was a call or a text, but we did meet. We did meet and in conversation it was mentioned to me that he was made aware—

**Mr. Chairman:** And the Member raised with you that he had become aware that there was this report or this issue in the atmosphere?

**Mr. Griffith:** He did but he said that the meeting did not transpire.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am—just a second. Just a second. So, this Committee is now to understand, Commissioner, that the Special Investigation Unit were picking up intelligence of a planned meeting between the Member of Parliament and certain gang leaders at his constituency office?

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** In the event the meeting did not come off, it turned out that the meeting did not come off. Are you in position to confirm that the meeting did not come off?

**Mr. Griffith:** No, I would not. The SIU did not see the individuals at the office on that day, and the Member of Parliament told me that the meeting did not take place. But we do know that there was a plan to meet at the constituency office.

**Mr. Chairman:** So this discussion about this planned meeting, it is the Member of Parliament who raised that with you and not you with him?

**Mr. Griffith:** I think was in conversation, Sir, that when we met he brought it to my attention that he was made aware that the SIU was—and that was a concern to me because matters like that are supposed to be very confidential and it meant that there was supposed to be some leak somewhere of such a nature that would get back to anyone regardless of even whether it is a Minister or anyone.

**Mr. Chairman:** And this matter was reported to the chairman of the National Security Council?

**Mr. Griffith:** I cannot recall, Sir. I do know it was my responsibility, and because of the— not of who the persons were supposed to meet but the major breach of the SIU, that was my concern. So, I would have spoken to the Minister of National Security of the breach in the SIU.

**Mr. Chairman:** And were you present at a National Security Council meeting when that matter came up?

**Mr. Griffith:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Can I?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you so much.

**Mr. Chairman:** Before you do, before you do, let me at this juncture suspend this meeting, we have a matter to sort out. Madam Clerk, could you arrange, we just suspend this meeting for a moment, and we will take it from there. Thank you very kindly. There is something to sort out. Just stand by. We will call you shortly again. Thank you very much.

**5.32 p.m.:** *Committee suspended.*

**6.25 p.m.:** *Meeting resumed.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Welcome back as I resume this Meeting of the Joint Select Committee on National Security. Commissioner and Mr. Forde, you began sharing with us matters pertaining to an enquiry, the terms of which I had read out to you,

the objectives I had shared earlier with you, you will recall about half an hour ago I asked you to demit this room so that we, as a Committee, can have addressed an internal issue and we have. As a consequence of that resolution, we are unable to continue the business as we had set upon today. We therefore would like to suggest or to tell you that we will be bringing today's proceedings, insofar as you all talking with us, to an end—of course, it is all recorded—and, of course, you would subject to our recall to continue. But for the time being we are unable to proceed.

So we would like and let me on behalf of the Committee to thank you very, very warmly for your presence, and for your very truthful delivery as we had invited you so to do, both you and Deputy Commissioner Forde. We know that you all are very hardworking and very severely taxed—not financially—public officers, and when you spend hours here we know your phones going, things happening, pace hot out there. So we respect the fact that you took time to be us with us and we have a good idea at the expense of other things. So we thank you for coming and we will notify you as to when we should resume accordingly. We thank you very kindly. Thank you very much, gentlemen. Thank you very much.

**6.26 p.m.:** *Meeting adjourned.*



## APPENDIX III

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# Minority Report of Dr. Roodal Moonilal and Mr. Saddam Hosein

**MINORITY REPORT on the Interim Report Of The Joint Select Committee On National Security Fourth Session (2018/2019) Of The Eleventh Parliament On An Inquiry Into Crime: The Security, Safety And Protection Of Citizens**

The Members undersigned submit the following Minority Report for the consideration of the Committee, which we have requested that same be appended to the Interim Report.

After the 54<sup>th</sup> meeting of the JSCNS held on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020, the following concerns and issues were identified:

1. Bias of the Chairman of the Committee- Member Hinds;
2. Denial of Opposition Members to examine the Commissioner of Police;
3. Paucity of Evidence and irrelevant matters by the Minister of National Security;
4. Factual inconsistencies contained in the Interim Report;

**Bias of the Chairman of the Committee - Member Hinds**

That there has been gross procedural impropriety during the conduct of the meeting.

By letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020, we raised objections to Member Hinds sitting as the Chairman of the proceedings as he has been infected by bias based on public statements he uttered in support of the statement by the Minister of National Security made during the post-cabinet news conference on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020 that was the subject of the inquiry.

The Members referred to an article in the Trinidad Guardian dated 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020 authored by Shaliza Hassanali – “**Hinds stands with Young on crime claims**” where it was reported:

*“Hinds said if the police reported to Young that some of the recent shootings and murders were not categorised as gang feuds, fight for drug turf or domestic violence but noticed a “strange phenomenon of random shootings at innocent people and police, then, that to my mind is proof that there are persons. It is not aliens doing that or Martians. Is persons*

*in T&T carrying out those acts. So what Mr Young said is absolutely correct on that basis alone.””*

The essence of the inquiry was to determine the “outlandish and reckless” statements of the Minister of National Security that Members of the Opposition are somehow connected to the Port of Spain shooting in December. Therefore, the JSCNS will be asked to determine the matters relating to the statements of Minister Young. The Members of the JSCNS inclusive of the Chairman will have to find facts based on the evidence presented to come to a conclusion.

Prior to the JSCNS being convened the Chairman has already formed a view and pronounced on the matter as he found that Minister Young’s statement is “absolutely correct”.

The Chairman’s biased has been blatantly displayed and has caused the Committee’s work to an abrupt suspension while he continues to indecently sit as the Chairman of the Committee.

The Member Moonilal and Member Hosein maintain that Member Hinds should be recuse himself as the Chairman of the JSCNS.

### **Denial of Opposition Members to examine the Commissioner of Police**

During the examination of the Commissioner of Police, the Chairman allowed himself 3 rounds of questioning to the Commissioner, 2 rounds of questioning to Member Richards, 1 round of questioning from Member Mitchell, 1 round of questioning from Member de Frietas and 1 round of questioning from Member Le Hunte.

At the time when Opposition Members had to examine the Commissioner the Chairman abruptly suspended the meeting to use the bathroom and when he returned to the room, he made submissions that Member Moonilal recuse himself as a Member of the Committee as his name was mentioned by Minister Young.

Strong submissions were made against Member Moonilal leaving the meeting by Member Moonilal and Member Hosein. The Chairman and other Government members responded which led to a collapse of the meeting.

The meeting was then adjourned and the Commissioner was not fully examined and he still remains a witness before the inquiry.

### **Paucity of Evidence and irrelevant matters by the Minister of National Security**

The main objectives of the inquiry were:

1. To gain an understanding of the statement made by the Minister of National Security which was referred to in the Members' letter; and
2. To obtain an update on the policy and plans in place to combat crime effectively.

Minister Young was called to explain his "reckless and outlandish statements" which were made on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at a post-Cabinet media briefing. However, he decided to confuse two issues into one and made a weak case that the shooting in December 2020 were motivated by Opposition politicians.

Minister Young provided no evidence that there was any link between the shootings in December 2019 to the Opposition. He indicated that there was a unusual trend in the spike of murders during the last week of December 2019, but when examined on the statistical trend of overall murders in December from 2013, there was no anomaly in the December 2019 figure of 49 murders. The Commissioner of Police indicated that there were no links to the shooting in December 2019 to Members of the Opposition.

Minister Young then called names of three members of a political party and purported to read from intelligence reports provided to him but did not provide copies of the report to the Committee or were Members of the Committee able to view the reports to determine the strength of the intelligence in those reports, the incriminatory and exculpatory information contained therein. In fact the Minister provided no documentary evidence in support his allegations which leads the Members herein to determine that his allegations are wild, scandalous, vexatious and frivolous.

Minister Young gave hearsay information to the Committee. It is to be noted that the Commissioner of Police did not call any person's name, but the Minister did.

Although, the Minister of National Security called names of the members of a political party, he did not call a single name or designation of any of the "gang members" or "gang leaders" whom he accused were somehow affiliated to Members of the political party.

The Committee is unaware of who these persons are? The alleged gangs they belong to? Whether they have been declared/ convicted of being a gang member/ leader by the Court under the Anti-Gang Legislation? Whether they have been charged as a gang member/ gang leader? Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest that these persons are gang members/ leaders.

He further, indicated that he receives intelligence reports outside of the Commissioner of Police and sometimes receives intelligence reports in an unofficial manner on his phone.

The names in which Minister Young called but were not repeated by the Commissioner was not linked to any illegal activities or commission of any criminal offence. In fact, one of the names he called where he alleged that there was communication between the person named and a prisoner, he was unable to inform the Committee by what means the communication was made.

Member Moonilal questioned Minister Young if he has any links to criminals which he responded in the negative. Member Moonilal then showed to him copies of large coloured photographs of a young woman arrested by police and posing in a picture with Minister Young. The Chairman interjected and did not allow the questioning.

Minister Young indicated that he is aware that there are police reports against other Members of Parliament. When asked about whether there are persons known to the police attending PNM meetings he said he has no information but it would not surprise him.

Minister Young during his examination made several admissions, namely that he was aware of private meetings with the Commissioner of Police and an individual named in the intelligence report. He admitted receiving information of what happens in his political

opponent's executive meetings and screening committees. This leads to the conclusion that Minister Young has behaved irresponsibly and in violation of the rights to privacy as he uses national security agencies to spy on the Commissioner of Police and his political rivals.

At the conclusion of the evidence, the Minister did not confirm that the conduct he complained of amounted to criminal conduct and that the matters presented is based on hearsay "information".

### **Factual inconsistencies contained in the Interim Report**

The Interim Report is not reliable as the information contained therein in some instances is incomplete, does not disclose all of the facts or is not a true depiction of the deliberations of the Committee.

#### **A. Page 11, para. (q)**

*"The last 20 days, of 2019, specifically up to **December 23rd, 2019**, the homicides rate was less than 2018. Statistically and traditionally the last seven days of December is fairly quiet. The idea was to maintain this statistic while putting certain plans and operations in place to bolster the peace in Trinidad and Tobago;"*

Member Hosein examined the Minister of National Security on the statistical trend of overall murders in December from 2013 to present and indicated that there was no anomaly in the December 2019 figure of 49 murders. As compared to the other years. This was not included in the Interim Report.

#### **B. Page 11 para. (u) and (v)**

Regarding the 31<sup>st</sup> December shooting, the Minister of National Security indicated that instructions were given by a gang leader to ensure that homicide toll crossed the 2018 figure. He further stated that the actions were designed to cause panic and chaos and that the actions were politically motivated.

When Member Richards asked the Minister whether the gang leader is known, the Minister indicated that he was. He said through intelligence he was told about the gang leader and the instructions that he gave for the shooting.

However, when questioned by Member Hosein, as to the identity of the gang leader the Minister refused to answer and indicated that the question be posed to the police. When asked if the gang leader has any political affiliations he refused to answer.

When Member Richards questioned the Commissioner, the Commissioner indicated that he cannot identify the gang leader. Further, the Chairman then asked Mr. Forde, if the matter is still being investigated to determine who would have incited or given instructions to which Mr. Forde indicated in the affirmative.

Therefore, the Minister untruthfully told the Committee that the gang leader has been identified and that the actions were politically motivated when this was in fact proven to be false by the TTPS. Further, the Commissioner did not indicate that the actions were motivated by the Opposition as scandalously alleged by the Minister of National Security.

When the Minister was asked about what has been put in place to stop a similar shooting, the Minister indicated that is matter for the police he said that he "cannot go out there and do the work for myself."

**C. Page 12, para. (f)**

*"There was communication between DPL1 and the incarcerated prisoner;"*

This contention by the Minister of National Security was subject to cross-examination by Member Moonilal, where the Minister of National Security was unable to give particulars namely the nature, the dates, the times and the mode of communication. However, those questions asked by Member Moonilal were not included in the Interim Report and the responses given by the Minister of National Security. The Members were denied the opportunity to examine the Commissioner of this point.

**D. Page 13, para (e)- (f)**

*e) It has also been reported to the Minister and depicted in photographic evidence that DPL2, in the lead up to the local government elections engaged in walkabouts in the Maloney area accompanied by a person of interest to the police in particular for gang activities and as a gang leader, out of Beetham Gardens. He is described as a known gang leader in his community and certain allegations were made by the Police with respect to the relationship between himself and DPL2;*

*f) While the DPL2 was the Managing Director at the HDC, this person was awarded the contract to construct the Duncan Street police post.*

No pictures were provided to the Committee. No names of the persons described as a gang leader was given. The dates of the walkabout were not given. No evidence whether he is charged, before the court or convicted of being a gang leader.

Further, no evidence of the details of the contract for the Duncan Street police post was given. The dates of the contract. The value of the contract. The duration of the contract. Whether the contract was awarded to Caribbean Facilities Corporation. Whether this company was given contracts under a Manning PNM Government, a PP Government and now a Rowley PNM Government.

**E. Page 14, para (c)- (d)**

*As a result, the security of the Hyatt, contacted the Police at Central Police Station and the MP, both of whom arrived at the Hyatt at the same time;*

No evidence was given to verify if the MP was in Hyatt on that day. No copies of the alleged bills paid by him were provided. The names of the person who he was alleged to meet were not given.



**And we so submit,**

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**Dr. Roodal Moonilal, M.P.**

Member

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**Saddam Hosein**

Member