



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO POLICE SERVICE

Office of the Commissioner of Police

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COP: 1/1/11

June 18, 2020

Ms Keiba Jacob
Secretary to the Committee
Public Administration and Appropriation Committee
Office of the Parliament
Parliamentary Complex
Cabildo Building
St Vincent Street
Port of Spain

Dear Ms. Jacob,

Re: The Twenty-Fifth Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee on an Examination into the Development Programme for fiscal year 2018/2019 and follow-up on the Ministerial Response to the Sixth Report on the Tobago House of Assembly (THA)

Reference is made to email dated June 1, 2020, in response to the caption subject. I hereby submit the following as requested.

Status Update on Investigation into the Missing \$10 million from the Tobago House of Assembly (THA)

The Tobago House of Assembly (THA) has the responsibility of overseeing the developmental and administrative concerns of the island of Tobago, using public funds allocated by the Central Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

It was reported that in November 2017, the Division of Tourism, Culture and Transportation for the THA approved and sent overseas wire payments to, supposedly, a United States tourism consultant and a tour operator company in the United Kingdom (UK). The Division received false email instructions, purportedly from the vendors mentioned, directing payments to accounts held in the United Kingdom. It was later discovered and confirmed that the emails were not sent by the vendors. THA representatives requested that an urgent investigation be launched by the Fraud Squad to identify the perpetrators and to assist in the recovery of the public funds stolen.

The Fraud Squad of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) was given the responsibility of:

- (1) Obtaining an understanding of the control environment and customary procedures and processes related to the management of payments to international and local service providers retained by the THA.
- (2) Determining whether there was any verifiable criminal conduct on the part of any associated person, or others, applicable under the laws of Trinidad and Tobago.



(3) Determining whether any associated person benefitted from such criminal conduct, and, in such a case, to clearly quantify that benefit.

(4) In the case where objectives (2) and (3) are proven, the Fraud Squad was also charged with:

- (a) identifying all proceeds of crime;
- (b) proffering appropriate criminal charges; and
- (c) seeking civil restraint on criminal property.

With the assistance of other agencies, the Fraud Squad is also responsible for:

(5) making efforts to locate the public funds stolen, and attempt full recovery of same.

(6) identifying and commenting on any shortcomings or absence of controls that provided opportunity for such criminal conduct to occur.

The following methods were used by the Fraud Squad during the investigation:

- i. Analysis of information gleaned from interviewing persons (statements recorded);
- ii. Analysis of documents obtained from THA (via court warrant);
- iii. Analysis of documents obtained from the local bank sending the funds (via court warrant); and
- iv. Analysis of information gleaned from other sources (open source, confidential sources, etc.).

While the investigation into this case is incomplete, it has significantly progressed. The investigation has revealed that two local employees of THA and one foreign national have been identified as major persons of interest. In the case of the former, the Fraud Squad is continuing its investigations to unearth additional evidence to criminally link the two THA employees to this fraudulent act. In the case of the latter, the TTPS will continuously engage law enforcement officials from the United Kingdom, who are also conducting investigations into the matter.

Yours sincerely,

Gary Griffith
Commissioner of Police