

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

*Friday, May 26, 2023*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

**PRAYERS**

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have received communication from the hon. Terrance Deyalsingh, MP, Member for St. Joseph who has requested leave of absence for the period May 26<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and from Dr. Roodal Moonilal, MP, Member for Oropouche East, who has requested leave of absence from today's sitting of the House. The leave which the Members seek is granted.

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Value Added Tax (Bond-Payment Refund) (Amendment) Regulations, 2023. [*The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis)*]
2. Audited Financial Statements of the East Port of Spain Development Company Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2018. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
3. Audited Financial Statements of the Estate Management and Business Development Company Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2013. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
4. Audited Financial Statements of the Estate Management and Business Development Company Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2014. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]

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5. Audited Financial Statements of the Estate Management and Business Development Company Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2015. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
6. Audited Financial Statements of the Development Finance Limited (DFL) for the financial year ended December 31, 2021. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
7. Consolidated Audited Financial Statements of the Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the financial year ended December 31, 2016. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
8. Consolidated Audited Financial Statements of the Trinidad Petroleum Holdings Limited for the financial year ended September 2019. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
9. Audited Financial Statements of CLICO Investment Fund for the financial year ended December 31, 2019. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
10. Audited Financial Statements of CLICO Investment Fund for the financial year ended December 31, 2020. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
11. Audited Financial Statements of the Trinidad and Tobago Solid Waste Management Company Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2019. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
12. Audited Financial Statements of the Vehicle Management Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the year ended September 30, 2015. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]  
*Papers 2 to 12 to be referred to the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee.*
13. Ministerial Response of the Ministry of Education to the Fifth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Social Services and Public Administration on an inquiry into the State's Capacity to provide support of Domestic Violence

- and Family Conflicts (with specific focus on the availability of support mechanisms during COVID-19 pandemic). [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
14. Ministerial Response of the Ministry of Planning and Development to the Fifth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Social Services and Public Administration on an inquiry into the State's Capacity to provide support for victims of Domestic Violence and Family Conflicts (with specific focus on the availability of support mechanisms during the COVID-19 pandemic). [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
  15. Ministerial Response of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services to the Fifth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Social Services and Public Administration on an inquiry into the State's Capacity to provide support for victims of Domestic Violence and Family Conflicts (with specific focus on the availability of support mechanisms during the COVID-19 pandemic). [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
  16. Response of the Office of the Prime Minister - Communications to the Fifth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Finance and Legal Affairs on an inquiry into the implementation of a Regulatory Framework for the Development of Financial Technology (Fintech) and E-Payments, Third Session (2022/2023), Twelfth Parliament. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]

### **ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

#### **Deteriorating landslips along Garth Road, Williamsville (Details regarding rehabilitation of)**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** We call on the Member for Princes Town.

- 163. Mr. Barry Padarath** (*Princes Town*) asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

In light of the deteriorating landslips located at LP 118 to 121, 130 to 137 along Garth Road, Williamsville will the Minister indicate:

- a) the expected commencement date for rehabilitation works;
- b) the process that will be used to award the contracts;
- c) the specific timeframe for the award of these contracts; and
- d) the names of the successful contractors awarded the contract?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of Works and Transport.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Sen. The Hon. Rohan Sinanan):**

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Garth Road starts at the Guaracara Tabaquite Road and extends for a length of 4.65 kilometres to the Naparima Mayaro Road. The section of the road from the 0 kilometre to the 1 kilometre mark is in a fair condition, while the section from 1 kilometre to the 4.65 kilometre can be considered in a poor condition, which has deteriorated due to the age of the roadway and formation of landslips. There are currently five landslips along Garth Road located at the 0.6 kilometre, 3.2 kilometres, 3.3 kilometres, 4.1 kilometres and 4.5 kilometres respectively. Repairs to these landslips will be done on a phase basis, as funds permit. This calendar year the Highways Division has scheduled slope stabilisation work to be done at the 0.6 kilometre, 3.2 kilometres and the 3.3 kilometres mark. These projects are currently at the development phase with an aim to begin construction at the end of the fiscal 2023 or early 2024, as funds permit.

Under the PURE Unit, two projects under the Garth Road to Williamsville, these projects include the lamppost 60 and lamp post 119. These projects are currently at the design phase and, subject to availability, of funds are expected to

commence in fiscal 2024. Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Supplemental Princes Town, Member.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Hon. Minister, on the last occasion that this issue of the Garth Road was raised, you had indicated that some seismic work was being done in terms of the testing of the soil and so on. Can you indicate if that has been completed?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of Works and Transport.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact that all the landslips are at the stage of designs and so, it means that those works if not completed, are ongoing. Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Princes Town.

**Robert Village Hindu School, Tableland  
(Update of)**

**164. Mr. Barry Padarath** (*Princes Town*) asked the Hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

Further to the response provided to an Urgent Question on April 20, 2022 regarding the major landslip located along Robert Village Trace in Tableland, will the Minister provide an update on:

- a) whether the Ministry intends to assist with the rehabilitation works; and
- b) the expected date that rehabilitation works will commence?

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Sen. The Hon. Rohan Sinanan):** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as stated in my response to an urgent question on April 20, 2022, one year ago, Robert Village Trace falls

under the purview of the Princes Town Regional Corporation. It is therefore not a road under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Works and Transport of which the Ministry is responsible. However, notwithstanding the fact, that the Ministry of Works and Transport has collaborated with the regional corporation to do some interim road works to facilitate access to the school affected by the landslips. Further, I am advised by that the regional corporation has continued its work to reinstate a sidewalk in the area. At this time, landslip repairs along Robert Village Trace are not included under the programme of works of the Ministry of Works and Transport. However, as usual, the Ministry is willing to provide technical assistance to the regional corporation if requested. Thank you.

**1.40 p.m.**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Supplemental, Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you, hon. Minister. Minister, as you are aware, the Robert Village Hindu School is adjacent to this landslip and the Princes Town Regional Corporation does not have the capacity in scope or in funding for this. I am kindly asking whether or not you will consider funding from the Ministry of Works and Transport for this particular project?—seeing that it is hindrance, one, but also a safety issue for the children attending the Robert Village Hindu School.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of Works and Transport.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Thank you. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the answer to that is simply, yes, once funding is available. We are working with all the regional corporations to assist them wherever we can. And based on importance of the landslip, I can say, yes, the Ministry will step in once funding is available. Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Landslides along LP 83 Brothers Road  
(Details of)**

**165. Mr. Barry Padarath** (*Princes Town*) asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

In light of the development of landslides and shifting of land along LP 83 Brothers Road, Busy Corner, New Grant, will the Minister indicate:

- a) the expected commencement date for rehabilitation works;
- b) the process that will be used to award the contracts;
- c) the specific timeframe for the award of these contracts; and
- d) the names of the successful contractors awarded the contract?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of Works and Transport.

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Sen. The Hon. Rohan Sinanan).** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the landslip referred near Busy Corner is located along the Torrib Tabaquite Road, is in the vicinity of the 5 kilometre mark. The Tabaquite Road starts from the Tabaquite R.C. School and extends for a length of 8.1 kilometres to the Naparima Mayaro Road.

There is also another landslip in the vicinity of the 6.8 kilometre mark in the vicinity of the teak trees. Two projects for landslip repairs at these locations are currently in the planning and development stage, with an aim to begin, barring unforeseen circumstances, to award a contract by end of fiscal 2023 or early 2024 using competitive tendering subject to the availability of funding. Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Chief Whip.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Brent Thomas Ruling  
(TTDF's Participation in Operation on Foreign Soil)**

**UNREVISED**

**171. Mr. David Lee** (*Pointe-a-Pierre*) on behalf of Dr. Roodal Moonilal (*Oropouche East*) asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

In light of the findings revealed in “Brent Thomas Ruling” (CV2022-04567) in the High Court on April 25, 2023, will the Minister indicate whether he approved officers of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force’s participation in this operation which took place on foreign soil?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of National Security.

**The Minister of National Security (Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds):** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As it pertains to the “Brent Thomas ruling”, so called, as Minister of National Security, I was not involved in any form or manner in the approvals of officers from the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force for participation in the said operation. In this regard, the question is futile and does other further arise.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Supplemental, Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Can the Minister state what are the standard operating procedures for the engagement of foreign military assets in the pursuit of our policy and our operational plans?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of National Security.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** I would be more than happy to provide a fulsome answer if the Member would do the right thing, abide by the Standing Orders, and file the appropriate question, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Naparima, Member.

**Mr. Charles:** Is the Minister aware that for a military aircraft to enter our airspace, approval must come from the Cabinet—from the Minister of National



Security, because a civil authority cannot give approval for military aircraft to enter our airspace?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of National Security.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Why is the Member for Naparima being so pedestrian? I did say in answer to the question on notice that I gave no such authority and therefore the question is futile and does not arise. He is now asking me further questions on the same question that I have already answered.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** One second. Barataria/San Juan, you gave way to Naparima?

**Mr. Hosein:** Yeah.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Let me know. Okay. Barataria/San Juan, Member, supplemental.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, can the hon. Minister indicate whether he was involved in the approval of any officer in relation to this Brent Thomas ruling?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of National Security.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Could the Member repeat the question, please?

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

**Mr. Hosein:** I will repeat the question again, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Can the hon. Minister indicate whether or not he was involved in the approval any of the officers involved in this Brent Thomas ruling?

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Again, again, why is the Member for San Juan/Barataria joining the Member—

**Hon. Member:** Barataria/ San Juan.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** —Barataria/San Juan joining the Member for Naparima in being

that pedestrian? I have just answered. I have given no such approval. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The last supplemental question. Who do I give way?

**Mr. Charles:** Is the Minister—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Is the Minister aware who gives the authorization for the military?

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of National Security.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Now he is gone from being merely pedestrian to hobbling along.

**Hon. Member:** Answer the question.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No. Members.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** I have answered the question, and I maintain the answer that I have given.

**Hon. Member:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I will call on the Chief Whip. Question No. 172.

**Caribbean Airlines Limited  
(Flights to Caracas)**

**172. Mr. David Lee** (*Pointe-a-Pierre*) on behalf of Dr. Roodal Moonilal (*Oropouche East*) asked the hon. Minister of Finance:

Will the Minister indicate the commercial basis of the decision by Caribbean Airlines Limited to resume flights to Caracas, Venezuela?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for San Fernando East.

**The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Brian Manning):** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the decision to recommence service to Caracas was based upon research and analysis of historical performance and

potential at route and network level, also considered with the changing aviation environment, the socio-economic and security posture of Venezuela, and the demand for direct flights to Port of Spain as a final destination and as a transit hub to North America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the rationale used in the decision to resume flights to Caracas, Venezuela, is as follows: one, CAL utilized projections to achieve annualized positive contribution levels at route contribution 1 or RC1 to the sum of US \$456,000, or TT \$3.1million, and route contribution 2 or RC2 which includes RC1 of US \$46,000, or TT \$313,000. Levels of positive contribution for the first year of restart operations to Caracas with growth expected thereafter as frequency and capacity is added.

Two, profit contributions to the route is also expected at the network level as CAL expects to have persons connecting mainly to Toronto Pearson Airport or YYZ; John F. Kennedy, JFK; Barbados Airport, BGI; Guyana Airport, GEO; and Suriname Airport, PBM. The connections are expected to grow further as CAL increases frequency.

Three, there has been a great demand for diplomats, members of the diaspora community and the travelling public for the re-establishment of CAL flights to and from Caracas originating in Port of Spain. In addition, requests have been made from the business community in Caracas and wider Venezuela who are interested in doing business in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as using our country as a transit point for onward travel to North American and European destinations.

Four, a recent publication by Bloomberg indicated that the Venezuelan economy will grow substantially in 2023 and record a current account surplus.

Five, airlines are now permitted to charge for flights to and from Venezuela in US dollars, thus eliminating currency risks.

Finally, six, Venezuela has established a secure environment at its international airport in Caracas for the travelling public, thus creating a safe zone for passengers, airline staff and associated businesses to operate. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Supplemental, Pointe-a-Pierre, Member.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the Minister, based on that comprehensive answer, could you state, based on that business plan, what is the—how many flights per day or week that CAL will be commencing?

**Hon. B. Manning:** I do not currently have that information but I can supply it to you in writing.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Proceed, Clerk.

#### **ANTI-DOPING IN SPORTS (AMDT.) BILL, 2023**

Bill to amend the Anti-Doping in Sports Act, Chap. 40:56 to bring in compliance, the non-conformities of the Act with the standards of the World Anti-Doping Code [*The Minister of Sport and Community Development*]; read the first time.

#### **MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS (EXTENSION OF TERMS OF OFFICE AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2023**

Bill to extend the terms of office of Councillors and Aldermen elected in December 2019, to provide for elections in 2023 and to validate the actions of the said Councillors and Aldermen between 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2022 and 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023 [*The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs*]; read the first time.

*Motion made:* That the next stage be taken at the next sitting of the House.

[*Hon. R. Armour SC*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS**

**Mr. Charles:** Could the—How many minutes do have, Sir.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No. Well, according to the records, you completed your session at the last sitting. You completed your debate. So there is—a new Member can enter the debate at this time. Entering the debate?

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay. So I recognize the Member for San Fernando West.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** One second, Member.

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

[Second Day]

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [April 28, 2023]:*

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

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I recognize the Member for San Fernando West.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of Rural Development and Local Government (Hon. Faris**

**Al-Rawi):** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Just for the benefit of us all, may I confirm that speaking time is 30 minutes?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Thirty minutes and your additional 15. Proceed.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Thank you. It is different from the last debate we did. Thank you, Sir. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to address this Motion before the House. We are here in Private Members' Day. We are here to debate the Motion brought the

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Member for Barataria/San Juan and it is a rather boldface Motion, if I could just say so, because it is premised upon, one, an identification of the roles and responsibilities that a Minister of National Security should do. That is good enough. But there are two bald and bare recitals. The second recital says:

“...the Minister of National Security through his vast and continued incompetence has mismanaged the organs and departments of national security;”

That is the allegation. The third recital, which is another allegation, says:

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

And yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have been here on several days discussing this Motion and absolutely no form of particulars can be attributed to the Minister of National Security, the Member for Laventille West. And let me say why I say that so plainly and so confidently, and why I believe that this Motion is destined to fail. The first recital of this Motion reads:

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

Insofar as the first recital reads as that, we are dealing with a partial statement of the truth, and let me explain why.

The Minister of National Security is a member of the Cabinet with the gazetted responsibilities handed to him under section 79 of the Constitution by the Parliament—by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. He sits in a Cabinet established by section 75 of the Constitution and the responsibilities assigned to the Minister are those that are set out in the *Gazette*

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defined to him.

**2.55 p.m.**

But the recital here says, the Minister of National Security is responsible for ensuring public safety. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the truth that it is the combination of all of our Westminster style system of governance, all entities of our Westminster style of governance that actually has the responsibility for ensuring public safety, and let me say why: Number one, our Constitution says that it is the supreme law in section 2; number three, the Constitution says that at section 53 of the Constitution we must make laws for the peace, order and good governance of our country; number four, the Constitution sets up the fact that we shall have a Parliament comprised of both a House of Representatives and a Senate, and then it entrust us collectively with the responsibility to make law, as I have just described.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is in fact the Parliament that creates the operational framework for the Minister of National Security in large part to be assisted by the laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, having managed the passage of laws on behalf of this Government for seven years, as I have your firm attention, I note that it is critical for Trinidad and Tobago to hold on to the fact that we are being asked to run a 100 metres race by the Member for Barataria/San Juan. We are being told that the Minister of National Security should run as quick as he can, finish the 100 metre race. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the Member for Barataria/San Juan is not saying is that he is responsible for causing the Minister to stop at a full 99, not to run the last one metre. Encumbering the one metre to finish the race. It is no good if you run a brisk 99 in

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a 100 metre race, because you still lose the race.

And let me say why I put that the way I just did: In the race towards public safety, in the race towards the protection of life and the respect of life enshrined in our Constitution in sections 4 and 5, in the preamble of our Constitution, the Opposition has insisted on a pattern of conduct where they will not support legislation—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:**—critically necessary for the Minister of National Security, as to his part, to operationalize. Let me give you some live examples: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have had a very aggressive parliamentary agenda for the last eight years. We insisted upon a suite of legislation. We put it toward. We called it an architecture that we went behind crime, because money in crime is what feeds bad behaviour. If there is money in crime and if you seek to take the profit out of crime you are going to invite people to turn away from a life in crime.

So our Government set about an aggressive pursuit of white-collar crime, blue-collar crime, and other forms of crime. But in running through that agenda, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we then also turn to what we call “addressing hard crimes”; kidnapping, robbery, domestic violence. We dealt with firearms, we dealt with trespass, and what are the issues gripping Trinidad and Tobago today? Let us take contemporary issues in the newspapers. People wanting to feel safe in their homes, people seeing that people have entered their homes. They are asking what more can be done. But as we well know, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, if you take the entire number of serving policemen and women, at about 10,000, and you

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look at a population of about 1.4 million, the fact is that police can engage in partial prevention of crime, like on our roadways, et cetera, and roadblocks and structures. But also the vast majority of their time is spent in responding to crimes.

When we get to responding to crimes the reason why we have been given a 99 metre race out of 100, and we have been stopped, is that the Opposition is saying to us, Mr. Minister of National Security, operationalize your police, put them on the beat, let them go and ensure that persons are arrested and that charges are laid, take them before the courts, and then they say, by the way, we will not support bail legislation.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** And we are dealing right now in a country where automatic firearms are a reality. And in dealing with persons coming into the criminal justice system, appearing before the court, being brought before a judicial officer for consideration for bail, the Opposition has insisted by not supporting our bail amendment laws—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:**—they have insisted our bail amendment laws have fallen back to 1994, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and let me explain how serious that is. By the Opposition's refusal to support bail amendment laws the Minister of National Security is now being called upon to be defended today for ensuring public safety. By not supporting the bail amendment laws we are now seeing a revolving door of persons who are alleged to have committed crime going to the court, getting bail, and coming back out onto the streets to look for money to commit more crime.

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And the Member for Barataria/San Juan has the temerity—

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I stand on 48(1), Standing Order 48(1). I do not know if the Minister of Local Government is acting for the Attorney General in this particular debate.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Overruled! Overruled!

**Hon. Members:** [*Interruption*]

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

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Desperation looks in many forms often as irrelevance, but anyway. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in looking at the fact that the United National Congress has by its exercise of voting privilege in this House, all 18 of those hon. Members, all 19 of those hon. Members, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have refused to support bail legislation. They are coming to condemn the Minister of National Security today to say that the responsibility for ensuring the operation of that system falls squarely to him. Well no Sir. It falls as a consequence of the refusal of the Opposition to support legislation which can stop people from coming out to commit further crimes.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** And let me remind Trinidad and Tobago, when there was a scourge of kidnapping in this country, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and people were worried about their state and condition, it was the introduction of the amendments to the Bail Act, it was the denial of bail under the amendments to the kidnapping legislation that saw people initially go to prison without bail for 60 days.

And there was a dedicated exercise of arrests, and as a result of that

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kidnapping for ransom which was at runaway, epidemic levels in 2007, 2008, around 2009 kidnapping for ransom began to fall, and in fact statistically went to nearly zero. Mr. Deputy Speaker, so powerful were the restrictions on bail in the anti-kidnapping that in 2010 Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, the Member for Siparia, later to become SC by her own hand, supervised a Cabinet that came to the Parliament, and one of the first amendments that they engaged in 2010/2011 was to amend the Bail Act immediately to deny bail for kidnapping for ransom from 60 days to 120 days, to then come to the Parliament to invite the introduction of an ant-gang law, to then come to the Parliament to a companion amendment to the Bail Act, to deny bail completely if proceedings had begun, so you were initially denied bail for 120 days, but if proceeding began you were no bail conditioned. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that prevailed for 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015.

And in the course of that passage of five years and three months we saw the bail provisions moved from three strikes, no bail to two strikes, no bail to no bail if you have possession of a firearm in the commission of an offence. Understand what we are saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the United National Congress, through its Attorney General, came to this Parliament and said, via Mr. Anand Ramlogan, that “jail eh make to ripe fig”, and that criminals needed to be put into persons who were alleged of commit crimes, all listed in the Bail Act, were to be put into prison without the option for bail beyond 120 days if their matter had started. In 2016, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Bail Act was coming to a sunset clause, and the United National Congress entered into its habit of reversing its position.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** They came to us and they refused to give support to the bail amendments. They refused to give support with the anti-gang amendments. Whereas our Government in 2010 in Joint Select Committee, and in 2011 participated in fulsome support for the bail amendment and anti-gang legislation to allow no bail provisions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the PNM in Opposition supporting no bail. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it gets worse. We came to the Parliament, we struggled, we fought, we had to write, the anti-gang legislation could not be passed. It lapsed. A national uproar happened. We were forced to come back to the Parliament under the UNC being compelled to bend to public will to agree that we could debate an Anti-Gang Act within the prescription of six months. Because after a Bill is defeated you cannot bring it back to the Parliament unless there is consent within six months. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we then did was to amend the Bail Act in a very important way. One number, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we included white-collar crime offences the schedule of offences in the Proceeds of Crime Act and other Acts, white-collar offences, that is, where you get “ketch tiefing” in contracts and other matters. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we very importantly amended section 6, 7A of the Bail Act to say that if you are caught in possession of firearm on a second occasion that you shall be not entitled to bail unless you show cause why you should get bail.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say now very plainly that it is my fundamental belief that that bail amendment, section 6, 7A, where we reversed the burden of

proof, where we upheld that the court still had discretion to grant bail, where we upheld that it will be hard for people who were caught with firearms, or for scheduled offences, anti-gang, anti-terrorism, raping children. Mr. Deputy Speaker, raping children, that they should not be granted bail, and today you have criminologists, you have police, you have persons who are eminent in their understanding of the law saying that there is a revolving door of crime, because even through the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service are capturing people, are arresting people, they go to the court and they are then granted bail in less than stringent circumstances that a reversed burden of proof can.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what are we met with today? We are met with Barataria/San Juan's Motion telling us to condemn the Minister of National Security, the first—the second recital, and the third recital just make bare allegations that he is vastly incapable or incompetent, allegations of that nature. And the first recital is to say, he, the Minister of National Security, alone, it seems, is responsible for ensuring public safety by the maintenance of law. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you will not give the Minister of National Security the same force of law that your four Ministers of National Security had, that your government, the UNC government had, if you will not give him the opportunity of asking the entities under his hand to take people to court and have them fight for bail, Mr. Deputy Speaker, “yuh fass and outta place” to come and condemn the Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**2.10 p.m.**

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Because they are saying, listen, do not judge by our standard,

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do not use the same tools we had, do not have the benefit that we have, you just do it with your two hands tied behind your back, your one leg sling up and then you have to jump kick in with one leg in a football match.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is just nonsensical for the Opposition to come here today—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:**—and I reject this Motion. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it gets worst.

**Mr. Young:** “They evil”.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** In recital No. 1—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, Member—

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Minister—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hold on. Member kindly retract the statement you just made, please. Member retract, please.

**Mr. Young:** I retract.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Thank you.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, in understanding where we stand today it gets worse. I just dealt with bail. They will not give us support to make bail difficult within the law, within constitutionality, by reversing the burden. Mr. Deputy Speaker, they will not do that, Sir. But it does not stop there. They will not support powerful amendments to the Evidence Act. They are on record as rejecting the concept of witness anonymity, and let me explain that.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, we came as a Government, my colleague, the Minister of National Security, part and parcel of settling that law with me and

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my colleagues, to amend the Evidence Act to say, if you are frightened, if you are afraid to give evidence, if your life is at risk, if your family life is at risk, go to the court and let the court give an anonymous protection order where you can, just like the Yankees do it, just like the Americans do it, you can have a modulation of your voice, you can have your screen use technology.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we came to the Parliament and said, let the court allow people the opportunity to give evidence in a safe environment where the law is preserved, where there will be a special panel of council to make sure the rights of the accused are protected. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you think that the hon. Members would support that? And what is it that people in Trinidad and Tobago are experiencing today? They are being told, correctly, if you see something, say something, but people then turn around and say, “Me say something? To suffer the brunt of victimization? For my family to be at risk?” And the Opposition will not give its consent or approval for the use of anonymous witness evidence.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, it gets worse than that. This is the same Opposition that will not give its consent, Sir, for the use of polygraph and other lie detection technology inside of the police service. This Opposition hears the country saying there is a degree of uncertainty and unease in relation to a minority of bad apples, if you put it that way, inside of law enforcement. And this Minister of National Security, himself, I can say, having chaired the law revision aspects that he brought forward, was the champion of saying, let us use truth detection devices to weed out. Integrity must be number one in testing.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** This Minister of National Security, having served in the Office

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of the Attorney General, having real on the ground experience, championed the cause of saying make sure you know who guarding the guard, make sure integrity exist in the ranks and file so that you do not have any allegation of misbehavior in the rank and file of law enforcement—

**Mr. Hinds:** Inland Revenue.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Inland Revenue for white collar crime, Customs and Excise, for white collar crime, for importation, for revenue duties, for guns coming in at the border, for drugs going out, for drugs coming in; Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Opposition said no. So no reversal of burden for bail, no anti-gang legislation of any strength—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:**—no legislation to protect witnesses with anonymous witness evidence, no legislation to have integrity testing in Customs and Excise, in Board of Inland Revenue, in Trinidad and Tobago Special Reserve Police, supplemental police, estate police, not one bit of support.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** And the Member for Barataria/San Juan has the temerity to come and say the Minister of National Security is responsible for ensuring public safety. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reason why I started with the Constitution is to point out that public safety is one of the requirements of the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Mr. Hinds:** Yes, Sir. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Because we make the laws. But Mr. Deputy Speaker, we cannot pass laws in certain ways without meeting certain formulas. The law, the Constitution says, if you want to interfere with your right to private life, with your



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freedom of movement— Private life is giving fingerprints, private right is taking a lie detector test, freedom of movement and if you look to section 5 of the Constitution, bail. If you look to the preamble, you cannot interfere by way of law with those things without what we call special majority, or as the Suraj case put it, super majority, where you have to have a three-fifths of the Parliament in the House agreeing. And, if you go into deeper entrenched provisions that require you have to go two-thirds and three-quarters of the Parliament. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they just simply said no, we are not giving any support.

I stood and took criticism day and night as Attorney General for passing law using simple majority law. They cried and they yelled and they screamed constitutional abuse and they said, “we go take you to court and we go strike out all yuh laws”. You lost!

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** You lost to the Privy Council in the case of Suraj, Dominic Suraj which upheld the case of Surat, which Surat then said you can pass law on simple majority basis. I, without their support—

**Mr. Indarsingh:** What is the last case you won?

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:**—if you have the ability— Piarco is the last case “ah” win. “Yuh want to know? \$1 billion.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk banging*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** \$1billion.

**Mr. Hinds:** Yes, Sir, yes, Sir.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** “Yuh want to go there, Couva North? Yuh want to go there?”

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

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** “Yuh asking who is the last case I win?”

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Address the Chair. Address the Chair.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the last case that I won is the Piarco corruption case.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk banging*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** So “doh” go there, unless you have a cake sale to help pay the money.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay, Chief Whip thank you, thank you.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we deal with the fact that we had to pass law by simple majority using proportionate grounds it is bald-facedness, it is temerity, it is shamelessness to tell the Minister of National Security, “run ah 100 metres race, but stop at 99 and let me blame yuh for the one because ah not giving you bail amendment support.”

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** “Ah not giving yuh anti-kidnapping support, ah not giving you anti-gang support, ah not giving lie detection support, ah not giving yuh whistle blower protection support.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the United National Congress you know, here in the courts of this land decisions can happen, where people stand accused of certain allegations and serious crimes and they celebrated it “yuh know”. They celebrated it as if the persons are accused are national heroes. No. 1 recital:

“...the Minister of National Security is responsible for ensuring public safety...”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Opposition is part and parcel of public safety but they are trying a fast one.

**Mr. Hinds:** Yes. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us get down even deeper. We passed against their wishes something called the Criminal Division. They say, “it is unconstitutional, it cyah” happen, “we go take yuh to court, your law go fall”, because we came as a Government and piloted the Criminal Division. You know what the Criminal Division is, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It was part of the architecture to tackle crime.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** And we said the Criminal Division deserves its own structure. It cannot be that “yuh” have a Magistrates’ Court with a man calling out the list every morning. For example, Faris Al-Rawi, Rodney Charles, Fitzgerald Hinds, by names, and by way of examples. No record, no list, no computerization. The Registrar does not exist, “yuh” had a Justice of the Peace who was a Clerk I, Clerk II, Clerk III coming to legal advice.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member—

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** May I have the extension? Thank you, Sir.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** So obliged. The additional 15.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Thank you, Sir.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** The Magistrates’ Court was running a longhand book where the transcription of evidence did not happen, where the magistrate sits with no judicial support, it was this Government, this Minister of National Security in a different incarnation that stood against the UNC to pass that law. And what happened, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Today we in the Magistrates’ Courts have 18magistrates, 12 senior magistrates, deputy chief magistrate, a chief magistrate—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** We have registrars of the court, we have electronic hearings, prisoners come to court on a camera so justice on time, wheels and big trucks moving prisoners not crushing “yuh” on the way to work every morning. You have matters being disposed of with precision and clarity. We took out 104,000 motor vehicle and road traffic offences and we created demerit points and we saw a 65 year—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:**—low in road traffic deaths. But you know what the Criminal Division gave us? It gave us an addition to the Children’s Division, the Children’s Court, a specialized court to take children out of conflict with the law, which had ground-breaking drug enforcement and drug treatment aspects to it. But you know what else it did?—it allowed the Civil Courts to do better.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, inside of the Criminal Division, I want to put on record today something that this Minister of National Security did. This Minister of National Security agitated, alongside some of us, but for a different reason, for the creation of a specialist court under section 24 of the Criminal Division Act. And you know that specialist court that this Minister agitated for, amongst the other specialist courts? This Minister agitated, and some people might get jumpy now, for an anti-trafficking court. You know what that is, Mr. Deputy Speaker? A specialist fast-track court for people who are trading in flesh—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:**—for people you are kidnapping young girls or putting them into circumstances of conflict with the law by way of prosecution—

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:**—by drug use.

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

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** This particular Minister of National Security urged and saw the creation of the specialist court pursuant to section 24—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:**—of the Criminal Division Act to make sure that people who are the subject of affidavit evidence which will tell of criminal conduct in trading in flesh—

**Mr. Hinds:** Yes.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:**—that they find themselves in a court of law without delay. It is this Opposition that had to scramble and run and backtrack and say, not me and not me in relation to open allegations that certain persons were involved in flesh trade.

**Mr. Hinds:** Yes.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Them so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it is this Opposition that faced the allegation coming from a previous Member of their Government that there was truth to certain allegations. But it is this Minister of National Security that ensured that the Gender-Based Violence Unit continues, that the Domestic Violence Unit continues—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:**—that Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit prospers and it is this man, the Member for Laventille West, the hon. Fitzgerald Ethelbert Hinds, the Minister of National Security, that went and saw the fixation in fact of a specialist court to deal with trafficking in human beings.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**2.25 p.m.**

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder if this Opposition is afraid. Because, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, as recent events have demonstrated, you could run for 15 years, you could run for 19 years, you could run for 25 years. In white-collar crime the wheels of justice may turn slowly, but they definitely turn.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** What time is full time, Sir?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** You have probably about 11 minutes—2.36 p.m.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me further grind that point solidly into the cement. You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with this Minister of National Security having had the experience of coming from private practice, law enforcement in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, being a respectful man, I can testify, Sir, having sat on the defence counsel with this gentleman, that the hon. Minister of National Security is one of the hardest working people I have come across, and I say that in all honesty from my heart as a witness to his work.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the Opposition that wants to see this Minister trip. A few moments ago, there was salivation in the questions being asked: “Minister, did you go and interfere with a plane to go and give approval for somebody to get arrested?” The Minister stood, two, three times and said, “I did not.”

**Mr. Charles:** Who did?

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the same UNC that now comes to say this Minister is responsible for going to do exactly what they tell him he should not do.

The Minister of National Security has the responsibility to create structures that work in tandem with the laws of Trinidad and Tobago. For instance, I have the responsibility—

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**Mr. Charles:** [*Inaudible*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** If Naparima's voice can just chill itself. I have the responsibilities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to ensure the Municipal Corporations Act, sections 48 to 52 apply.

**Mr. Charles:** [*Inaudible*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Naparima, through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

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

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:**—has the disadvantage of having—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay. One second. One second. Again—

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hold on. Hold on, Members. Again, the decorum of the House is that we listen to the Member in silence. Again, you can speak, but again in very hushed tones, right? And at times it is elevated to a high decibel. All right? But again, Member, we have a form as how things are done in this House. So again, proceed.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Let me repeat what I was saying. Naparima has the disadvantage of being the originator of a lot of these questions that do not make sense.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Because it is Naparima who is prosecuting a false allegation by way of question time, answered three times today by way of example, where they are asking the Minister of National Security to take responsibility for certain things and then at the same time telling him, “You cyah engage in certain things, but take responsibility for public structures and doh mind we not supporting you with the

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law to get there.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on principle, the Motion has to fail.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** But I was on the point of grinding this point into the cement. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of National Security is now managing urgent attention in trafficking in human beings, significant amendments to come in relation to that legislation, ensuring the creation of a specialist court to deal with trafficking in persons charges, pursuing white-collar crime, and I want to add, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was the Opposition that was kicking and screaming in the civil asset forfeiture, unexplained wealth legislation. Without going into any case, what I can say is that that law has gone to work, and that there are matters before the court where people have to explain their wealth as we speak, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And when those cases mushroom and become precedent, they will be as powerful as the 19 years it took to deliver a victory in the Piarco International scandal.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the “explain your wealth” legislation, you are going to find the proceeds of crime. Those proceeds of crime are going to have to have people explain, how you are earning \$6,000 a month and have \$70 million in assets? How?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the UNC that went on a tirade in this country about witnesses, about the State ensuring that whistle-blowing protection legislation came here. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is one of most powerful pieces of law that we can have. I will give you an example to a case that has now concluded outside of Trinidad and Tobago, the Piarco International case. It was five confessions of guilt given in 2005 when the case started; '06 and '07; 2006, 2007,



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five people went on affidavit and then in plea agreements to say, “I thief money from Trinidad and Tobago,” and they went to jail. Five Americans went to jail and forfeited assets.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the United States Government took millions of US dollars and gave it to Anand Ramlogan, as Attorney General, and to the Comptroller of Accounts in the period 2010 to 2015 as—

**Mr. Rambally:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, Standing Order 48(1). What is the relevance of this?

**Hon. Member:** What?

**Mr. Rambally:** 48(1), please.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Time. Time.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Overruled.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Thanks. Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And by way of returning moneys to Trinidad and Tobago, stolen moneys, Mr. Deputy Speaker. when I was in the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs, there was this rather unusual painting in the office. I looked at it on the wall and I said, “What on earth is this?” They say, “Boss, you don’t what that is?” I said, “No”. They say, “Well, that is a stolen piece of art which was returned to Attorney General, Anand Ramlogan, as reparations, as return of moneys to Trinidad and Tobago in the Piarco case. It is worth hundreds of thousands by a famous artist.” It was hanging up in the Attorney General’s Office, Anand Ramlogan.

**Mr. Hinds:** Oh my God!

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** This is the same UNC, under the same Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bisessar, Member for Siparia, that came to this Parliament and passed section 34. Mr. Deputy Speaker, and you know what was shocking? In all the

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allegations that it was political persecution, if it was political persecution, the Piarco, case why did you accept the money from the US Government?

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Why did you not tell the population—

**Mr. Charles:** Mr. Deputy Speaker—

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** —that there were moneys being returned to Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

**Mr. Charles:** Wait and respect me.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Yes, Sir. I rise on 48(2). As far as I am aware, the matter has been appealed in the United States court and therefore, you cannot raise substantive aspects of the case in this House.

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** One second. One second. One second. Again, so Member again tie in your point quickly and do not go into the details of the matter.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Yes, Sir. I am guided by—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** You just have about three more minutes.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** I am guided by the Standing Order which prescribe that I should not makes statements so as to influence certain things. I am talking about a piece of art in the Attorney General's Office—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:**—hanging up in the office that I sat down in for seven years, which represented “thief money”, that was returned to Trinidad and Tobago and suppressed by the UNC.

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

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**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence.

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in bringing the Motion against the Minister today, they are telling him that he is responsible and he should be condemned for public safety, when they will not give the assistance or tell the truth.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Al-Rawi:** And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that and that alone means the Motion is destined to fail.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the population is tired. It is sometimes difficult to have to repeat things from the past but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say why I have just mentioned a number of the things that I have mentioned as I wrap up. It is because the Leader of the Opposition, Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, was in the government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in the years 1995 to 2000. It is the same Mrs. Persad-Bissessar, the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Siparia, that was the Prime Minister in 2010 to 2015, and in both periods that Member ought to have been capable of testifying of the facts that I have just spoken to. But instead has refused to say it is political prosecution, and just pretended it did not happen, and “leh we run de country and geh we ah chance”, and “don’t mind” we will not give you the laws—the same laws we had, the UNC had, to fight crime—we are not going to give you the laws, we are not going to give you the resources, and instead they come to make condemnation of the hon. Minister for National Security.

This Government wants to do better all the time. This Government must ensure that we continue to try to serve the people. This Government wanted to make possession of any weapon, any automatic weapon, non-bailable. And if any

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of them have the guts to stand up and support that law, then they will not be leaving a Rasta man alone to bear a cross by himself, in figurative, in literary, or the actual senses, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I reject this Motion and I condemn the mover's rationale behind it. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I recognize the Member for St. Augustine.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. Khadijah Ameen** (*St. Augustine*): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, listening to the last speaker, the country could be misled. This is not a Motion about the former Attorney General, Anand Ramlogan, whose shoes the Member for San Fernando West cannot even step in much less fill. This is not a Motion about the Opposition. The Member for San Fernando West has failed to defend the Member for Laventille West as the Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** The Members has failed to give any just reason, for not just this Parliament, but for the people of Trinidad and Tobago to have any confidence in the Member for Laventille West as the Minister of National Security. He is an abject failure.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** And, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for San Fernando West should be the last person to talk about losing cases. I want to kindly remind the Member that he is no longer Attorney General for a reason.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** He was fired for a reason, and that reason is abject failure.

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**Mr. Hinds:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker—[*Inaudible*]

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Standing Order? Standing Order?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members—

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker—

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

**Mr. Hinds:** 48(1). I stand on 48(1). This Motion is not about—[*Inaudible*]

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Member:** What is 48(1)?

**Mr. Hinds:** And the UNC was—[*Inaudible*]

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Members. Okay, Members.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Mr. Deputy Speaker—

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

**Mr. Indarsingh:**—the Minister of National—

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

**Mr. Indarsingh:**—Security just cannot railroad this House.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No, no, no. No! Fine. I am in control. Again, overruled.  
Proceed.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not be railroaded by the  
Member for Laventille West.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, Member, I have ruled.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Charles:** Woman power.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for San Fernando West has an  
undeniable track record of losing cases on behalf of the—[*Inaudible*]

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**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** And, you know, I hear so many “dumb blonde”/lawyer jokes about this Member on the outside, and it is—

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on Standing Order—

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Which Standing Order?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Which Standing Order? Sit down.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, Member. He has risen on a—

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Which Standing Order?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Well, you have to give—no. Proceed.

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I respectfully rise on Standing Order 48(1), Standing Order 48(4), Standing Order 48(6) because it is not a substantive Motion on me, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again—

**Hon. Members:** [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, overruled. But, Member, again, tie in your point quickly so that we could get on to the business of the Bill with regard to national security.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am surprised that Member for San Fernando West—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I have ruled. Go ahead. Go ahead, I have ruled.

**Ms. K. Ameen:**—is indicating that this is not a Motion about San Fernando West, because from his contribution it was all about him.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** He did not spend a minute defending his colleague, who this

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Motion is about.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** I thought he was reappointed—[*Inaudible*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** But, you know, it would be laughable—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No, again, Chief Whip, you just stood—you are doing the same thing you just spoke about, Chief Whip. Chief Whip, so please, let us hear St. Augustine.

**2.40 p.m.**

**Ms. K. Ameen:** We could laugh about the incompetence of the former Attorney General losing so many cases but it has costs this country millions and billions of dollars. And Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the record, not one of us here in the Opposition has been making deals with state witnesses.

**Mr. Charles:** “Ahhh.” Oh lord, oh lord.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** And I want also for the record because the former Attorney General—

**Mr. Hinds:** Mr. Deputy Speaker. Standing Order—sit down please.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** What Standing Order?

**Mr. Hinds:** I am on my legs.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** What Standing Order?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay, St. Augustine. Standing Order? Let us hear it.

**Mr. Hinds:** Standing Order 48(1), the Member is treating with the Member for San Fernando West, the Motion here is not about him or that.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, Member, as I told you, tie it in quickly with the national security and let us proceed.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Thank you. I am responding to the points raised by the Member

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for San Fernando West.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** I want to correct the record. The former Attorney General spoke about several pieces of crime-fighting legislation that the Opposition did not support and this is not the first time that I am hearing this incorrect information in this Parliament—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:**—and it is being said on platforms and other places as if it is the truth and it is not.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** I want to call, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the record in this House the list of some of the crime-fighting Bills that the Opposition supported.

**Mr. Charles:** Tell them.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** The Bail Bill, 2017.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** The miscellaneous provisions, 2017, that was mutual assistance in criminal matters.

**Hon. Members:** Oh yes. [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** The supreme court of judicature and children, 2018.

**Hon. Members:** Yeah, yeah. [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Payments into court Bill, 2018.

**Mr. Charles:** “All ah that?”

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** And in that Bill, the Opposition made extensive amendments.



**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping and interruption*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** The Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings) Bill, 2019.

**Hon. Members:** “Ohhhh.” [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, Members. No problem with the desk thumping but you see the little comments, let us keep it in hushed tones. Proceed.

**Hon. Member:** “Take yuh time and read it”.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the list goes on.

**Hon. Member:** Read out all of it for the record.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** The Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings) 2018.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** The Firearms (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** And that Bill, the Opposition did not need to support because it required a simple majority but the Opposition supported that Bill.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping and interruption*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** I hope that the Minister of National Security in his response could tell us how many arrests and convictions were made under these.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** The former Attorney General specifically spoke about the Civil Asset Recovery and Management Bill, 2019 and he said that the Opposition did not support, that is not true. That is not true.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** The Opposition’s support was not needed because that Bill needed a simple majority and the Opposition supported that Bill.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** And in fact, it was the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, who brought over 60 amendments to fix that Bill.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** There were also several pieces of legislation that required a special majority that were passed with the support of the Opposition and I will call some of them for the record. The Tax Information Exchange Agreements, FATCA, 2016.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** That was passed in the House of Representatives in February 2017 and in the Senate with the Opposition support. I notice that both the Member for Laventille West and San Fernando West have vacated their seats.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** And they should be ashamed. They should be ashamed.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping and interruption*]

**Hon Member:** Beat them!

**Ms. K. Ameen:** There was also the Insurance Act, 2016 which was passed with the support of the Opposition in 2018.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** In both Houses.

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Will the Member give way?

**Ms. K. Ameen:** No, no. There was—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** San Fernando West.

**Hon. Members:** [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Charles:** Sit down. “Take ah walk.”

**Ms. K. Ameen:** There was the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act, 2018 passed by

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both the Houses of Representatives and the Senate. The Licensing Committee Validation Act, 2018 passed by both the Opposition and the Government.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** That is not all you know, there are more.

**Mr. Charles:** Tell him!

**Hon. Members:** [*Interruption*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** And this former Attorney General continued to put forward untruths. The Bail (Amendment) Bill in 2019.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** That Bill was passed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the House of Representatives, 32 votes for, zero votes against and zero abstentions.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping and interruption*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** So voted against and who abstained? Mr. Deputy Speaker—what Standing Order?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member.

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise on Standing Order 48(6). What the Member has said is just simply untrue. Untrue.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** All right, so again, hold on. So Member for St. Augustine, I think you have exhausted your lists in terms of identifying the amount of support. The previous debater would have mentioned a few, you have even gone on before. So I would like you to tie it in quickly, right. If I have to rise again, I will have to probably tell you to move on accordingly, right. I think you would have exhausted your list.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have not exhausted the list, there are more but I will stop there for now.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No, Member.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** I will stop there for now.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, okay, once second, I understand you clearly in terms of the amount that you have gone on to even more and I am saying kindly proceed accordingly.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was saying that the list, there are more pieces of legislation on the list that the UNC Opposition supported. However, I mentioned these for the record for a purpose. The Member for San Fernando West was Attorney General at the time and either knows or ought to know the truth and I call on him to apologize—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:**—for the incorrect information. I am not accusing him of lying, for the incorrect information.

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on—

**Ms. K. Ameen:** And, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** I rise on Standing Order 48(6). The improper motive of imputing that I am telling an untruth is just not true, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. All right, so again, Member, again, that is also debatable in terms of going forward but I would like you to move on to another point, please. Right, move on.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, my source for this information is the *Hansard*.

**Hon. Members:** Correct. [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** My source for this information was *Hansard* just for the record.

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Standing Order—I rise—

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** St. Augustine, St. Augustine.

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 48(8). If this was substantive motion on me, the Member would have all the latitude possible but it is not one on me and therefore I cannot respond so it is an abuse.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Is the Member raising a Standing Order or responding?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, Member, again, Member, again, I will have to uphold the particular Standing Order. I would like you to move on. The debate and the Motion is not on the particular Member.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Right.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** And I think you have exhausted in terms of the response, so kindly move on, please.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** All right. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really think at any point in any debate or any committee or any proceedings of Parliament, it is customary that if a Member puts incorrect information on record—

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** No, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Ms. K. Ameen:**—they either apologize or face the privileges committee.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay, thank you. Point taken. Member for St. Augustine, Member for St. Augustine, and again Member for Baratavia/San Juan, there is a procedure as you all well know how to go about with regard to that. So kindly move on to your other point.

**Mr. Rambally:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 48(6). The Member for San Fernando West clearly said that we are speaking untruths on this side, he should withdraw that.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping and interruption*]

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**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I overrule. Proceed.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, responding to the last speaker is part of my contribution but this debate was never about the former Attorney General, it was never about the Opposition. It is about the failure of the Member for Laventille West as the Minister of National Security. I want to for the record, out of the *Gazette*, to share with you the assignment of responsibility for the Ministry of National Security and so with a checklist we can tell whether the Member has been successful or he has failed in his responsibility.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping and interruption*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Minister of National Security, departments of Government:

“Immigration”

**Hon. Member:** Fail.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Well fail, completely failed.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Just for the record that *Gazette* is dated—?

**Ms. K. Ameen:** April 27, 2021.

“Intelligence”

Well, oh, that completely escapes him.

**Hon. Members:** [*Laughter*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:**

“Internal Security

Management of Illegal Immigrants and Deportees”

Failed.

“National Emergency/Disaster Management”

Failed and I want to talk a little more about that with flooding in St. Augustine.

“Parole and Prisoner Management”

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Failed.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:**

“Probation Services”

Failed.

“Security of Government Officials and Premises

Supplemental Police

Victims of Crime”

Failed.

**Mr. Charles:** Failed.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** “Witness Protection and Care and Support”, failed.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** There are several other areas of responsibility for the Minister of National Security and I am referring to *Trinidad and Tobago Gazette* but I do not want to spend all my time reading what the Minister of National Security apparently has not read because the responsibilities listed there clearly are not attended to by the Minister of National Security.

What we have seen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Trinidad and Tobago is a complete breakdown in law and order. What we have seen under this Minister of National Security is fear in citizens. We are seeing increased school violence, we are seeing girls growing up in abusive homes and communities and the State failing to protect our girls.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Under this Minister of National Security, Trinidad and Tobago—

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on—

**Hon. Member:** What Standing Order now?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** One second, one second. One person at a time, no but still, hold on, hold on.

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** I rise on Standing Order 48(1). This is not the Office of Prime Minister - Gender Affairs.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Okay, again, Member, tie in your point. Proceed.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I find the Member for San Fernando West abusing the Standing Orders now “eh”.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No, Member for St. Augustine, I have ruled. Proceed.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Thank you for your ruling—

**Mr. Rambally:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to lodge on the record Standing Order 55(1)(b) against the Member for San Fernando West.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay, Member, thank you.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, under this Minister of National Security, Trinidad and Tobago has been ranked the sixth most criminal country in the world and that is not the UNC statistics, that is the *Guardian* Media Report from the World of Statistics.

**Mr. Manning:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I stand on 48(1) please. This information is completely false and I would like to ask the source of the information please.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping and interruption*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, Member. Member—

**Mr. Manning:** False! It is false!



**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay, Member, proceed.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** I will repeat for the record.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping and interruption*]

**Hon. Member:** You are a Manning boy?

**Ms. K. Ameen:** I will repeat for the record for the Member for San Fernando East.

**Hon. Member:** You are a Manning boy? [*Crosstalk*]

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

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Trinidad and Tobago has been ranked the sixth most criminal country in the world under this Minister Fitzgerald Hinds according to the *Trinidad Guardian* report from World of Statistics.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** All right. What date is that?

**Ms. K. Ameen:** I will provide the date. 2023. It was in 2023.

**Hon. Member:** Upstanding data.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** According to the report, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Trinidad and Tobago:

“...has the sixth-highest crime rate in the world.”

Trinidad and Tobago’s:

“...government faces several challenges...”

**Mr. Manning:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I stand on 48(1). This source is completely irrelevant and false and therefore—it is irrelevant and should not be used.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** “Yuh just ask for the source, now yuh find it irrelevant, boy, sit down eh.”

**Hon. Members:** [*Laughter and interruption*]

**Mr. Manning:** It is irrelevant.

**Hon. Member:** The source is of relevance.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay. Fine. Again, there is a certain decorum that goes with this particular House. Okay? The Member rises on a Standing Order, the Member who is speaking would have his or her seat and then when—hold on, Member for St. Augustine. And then when the Speaker rules, there is no need for any other comment, please.

Alright so I have ruled. Proceed, tie it in quickly to what you want to bring forward.

**2.55 p.m.**

**Ms. K. Ameen:** On the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2023, the Trinidad *Guardian* had a report that Trinidad and Tobago was the sixth highest crime rate in the world.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** That the Trinidad and Tobago Government faces several challenges—

**Mr. Rambally:** Embarrassment.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Embarrassment, embarrassment.

**Ms. K. Ameen:**—in its effect to reduce crime such as; bureaucratic resistance to change, the negative influence of gangs, drugs, economic recession, and an overburdened legal system. There is a great demand for illegal weapons as well, which drug trafficking and gang-related activities fuel. All of these point to a failure of the Ministry of National Security.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** And when *Guardian* contacted the Minister of National Security for a comment on these statistics and this report, he was so kind to apologize. Minister Fitzgerald Hinds apologized and said he was unable to speak on the listing. He “cyar” even talk about it.

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**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Because he is—

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want you to guide San Fernando East as it really relates to—

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order.

**Mr. Indarsingh:**—Standing Order 47, he cannot continue to abuse the Standing Orders.

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay, thank you. Members again, the Member will speak in silence, the Member—

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Speaker:** Bartaria San Juan, and Member for San Fernando East, you all—

**Ms. K. Ameen:** May I continue?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, proceed Member.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the truth hurts you know, the truth hurts. And that is the reason for so many irrelevant objections from those on the other side. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we in the Opposition stand and we talk about the state of crime in Trinidad and Tobago, we are not doing this to show the world a bad side of Trinidad and Tobago; the world already sees. Several countries, including the United States, have issued bulletins, warning their citizens about what happens in Trinidad and Tobago where crime is concerned, not because the UNC said so, the bulletins did not come from the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar or

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Rodney Charles. It came from the United States, from the United Kingdom based on their national security intelligence on the state of crime in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** In Trinidad and Tobago, missing persons present another area of failure by the Minister of National Security. In December of 2022, there was an article in the *Newsday* that indicated that there were 552 missing persons in 2020 alone. Thirty were reported—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Once you are an article or so on, I would like to get the date for the record of the *Hansard* just in case please. Other than that you take total ownership for the particulars.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I started the line by saying, the Trinidad and Tobago *Newsday* of the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2022, said, so the source is Trinidad and Tobago *Newsday* December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** There were 552 missing persons in 2020, 30 dead, 446 found and 56 vanished without a trace. Has the Minister of National Security provided any kind of security, any kind of comfort, for those families that their loved ones would be found? He has failed.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Has the Minister of National Security put measures in place to prevent women and girls from going missing? He has failed. And when, not the Opposition alone, when civil society speaks out, you know what he does? He attacks them. Rather than attacking the criminals. Again you try to intimidate people who speak out because they speak against your failure, and your abject failure as Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Murders in Trinidad and Tobago, in that same article, the source is *Newsday* December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. In that same article, they spoke about the murder toll of 2022 exceeding 600. You tell me, a man who is serving and unable to reduce the murder rate does not have the decency to step down?

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Hmm. Hmm.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** The youngest murder victim in 2022 was a one year old baby Nova Brereton, who was shot dead along with her mother, thirty-year-old of Sachel Elliot. And the oldest murder victim Mr. Deputy Speaker, was an 88-years-old woman Evelyn Piper, who was found dead in her home in Gasparillo. And no sign of a reduction in murder. An abject failure by the Minister of National Security.

I personally have participated in many sessions with victims of abuse who come to share their story with the rest of Trinidad and Tobago; Sharday Emmanuel, Ria Sookdeo, Ashanti Riley, Andrea Bharatt, Keithisha Cudjoe, and dozens of other women who would still be here with us today, had the Government shown any compassion or had any competence at all. Some of these families still to this date have no closure. It has torn families apart, they live in depression, unable to recover from that sense of loss from losing their daughters, and their sisters. And from time to time we see on the media stories of families explaining what the last day was like, what the uncertainty for so many years is. And still the Minister of National Security continues to operate like all is well. And it is not. He is an absolute failure.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** In 2022 Prime Minister Dr. the hon. Keith Rowley in his New

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Year's Day message indicate that the Government was committed to making 2023 a year of public review, consequent overhaul, and redoubling of its effort to fight crime on all fronts. This Mr. Deputy Speaker, is an acknowledgement by the hon. Prime Minister that crime is out of hand. And I have a recommendation for the hon. Prime Minister where you should start fighting crime. And the first thing you should do is to fire the incompetent Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Because he has proven over the time that he was been there, to not only be unable to reduce the murders but we had seen an increase in murder, serious crime, violent and criminal activity under his watch. He has been almost boldfaced with it. I remember we had asked a question in Parliament here concerning the CCTV cameras some time ago. And on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February, the then Minister of National Security had—which was Minister Stuart Young, stated that non-functional CCTV cameras were being removed across Trinidad and Tobago while those that were usable were being repaired to ensure that they were operational as a part of crime fighting measures. Okay, “we waiting” for action, “we waiting” for CCTV cameras that would help in finding and identifying criminals, and two years later we see that nothing has been done. Nothing.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** The Opposition did not stop there. The Minister of National Security present, Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds, confirmed to this Parliament, when we in the Opposition asked, that a total of 1,766 CCTV cameras were installed throughout the country. But guess what? Just under 700 were non-functional; non-functional “yuh know”.

**3.05 p.m.**

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And in the last year we have been asking him: How many of these CCTV cameras have you repaired? And we continue to raise the matter because it is the role of the Opposition to keep the Government in check. And it appears that every time this Minister of National Security has to answer follow-up questions about CCTV cameras, after women go missing, after women are kidnapped, after they are raped and their bodies found, this Minister seems to be upset that the Opposition is asking questions for the safety and security of our citizens. And—

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

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Yes. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** So proceed.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Thank you very much. With regard to the safety of women and girls, the UNC Opposition as well as civil society have been making recommendations to have CCTV cameras functional. It is not enough to just have CCTV cameras, they must be functional. We must have adequate street lighting. I trust that the Member for Lopinot/Bon Air West, who is the Minister of Public Utilities, will take note of this plea, which I am making again, because I have spoken about it before, where street lighting and public safety is concerned. And admission is the first step, but it is not enough to just admit that you do not have what it takes to solve the problem.

Public transport, another area that the Minister of National Security should be collaborating to ensure the safety of our women. I remember this Government told us there would be buses with Wi-Fi, you know. We are in 2023, we “doh” even have buses in some of these areas, much less Wi-Fi.”

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**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** We have been asking and recommending police posts in certain hotspot areas. Again, failure by the Minister of National Security. We need the presence of police officers, which will be a deterrent to offenders. We have not seen that. We need continuous support for rapid response, community engagement with our police officers.

I want to, for the record, read the number of murders that have taken place in this country. And the source is the TTPS, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the TTPS. In 2016, under this PNM Government, 462 murders; 2017, 495 murders, 53 were women; 2018, 517 murders, 47 were women; 2019, 536 murders, 64 were women; 2020, 392 murders, 54 were women; 2021, 448 murders, 33 were women; 2022, a record 598 murders, 57 were women. And this Minister of National Security continues to sit there with his incompetence and be just in our faces as though all is well. All is not well. In the years, we have had—from 2011 to 2022, we have lost and continue to grieve thousands—sorry, in the years 2016 to 2022, we have continued to lose and we continue to grieve for so many murder victims.

The current Minister of National Security promised a miracle crime plan. He said that he had been given a violent crime reduction plan prepared by the TTPS. We have not seen the results yet. He said he had 15 objectives for successful implementation. We have not seen the results yet. He said he would be dismantling criminal gangs, seizing illegal firearms. We have not seen the results yet. He said that the plan aims to achieve 11 targets, a 20 per cent reduction of homicide and a 30 per cent detection rate. Just last week the Commissioner of Police came out and told us, there is a 12 per cent conviction rate for murders. So clearly, the Minister of National Security is not meeting his target. Again, he is an



abject failure.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** The Minister said that there were 2,500 cutting-edge cameras being installed all over Trinidad and Tobago. “We still waiting. We still waiting. This is not joke time”. This is serious business. National Security is serious business. So all this time, Minister Fitzgerald Hinds is telling us that he has the recipe. But he has refused to use it. How could he possibly predict a 20 per cent homicide rate? To date, the rate has not been reduced. It has in fact skyrocketed under this Government.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the responsibilities of the Ministry of National Security is the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management. It is described as:

“...a coordinating and managing body that places equal emphasis on all the phases of the disaster management cycle- prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.”

Under Minister Fitzgerald Hinds, the level of unpreparedness of the disaster—of preparedness is totally astounding. The Minister is an absolute disaster.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I represent the constituency of St Augustine. Shelters were advertised by the ODPM; full-page ads that cost a lot of money, taxpayers’ dollars. And I will tell you, I want to use the two in St. Augustine constituency as first-hand information. St. Augustine South Community Centre is on the list. Bamboo Community Centre is on that list. You know we had some devastating floods in December of 2022, and the areas in St. Augustine such as

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Bamboo 2, Valsayn South, Spring Village and St. Augustine South were terribly affected. The response from the ODPM was poor. We had those shelters advertised and the ODPM never even visited them.

The regional corporation sent 12 cots and blankets two years before, and we were supposed to have a visit by the ODPM to certify these shelters. Never happened. We never had appointment of shelter managers, no supplies, no plan, but you are taking our taxpayers' dollars to advertise shelters that are not functional, that are operational, that are not equipped, and you are just fooling people. You are using our money for PR, rather than disaster preparedness. You yourself are a disaster. Mr. Deputy—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No. Member, Member, I would just like you to retract your last statement.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No, no, no.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** I do retract.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Oh God, give me a chance. I retract.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No, no, no. Member, listen, listen, listen, kindly retract your last statement. That is all I ask you to do.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** I retract the last statement. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Trinidad and Tobago is on Tier 2 Watch List from the United States for human trafficking. To date, not a single conviction has taken place or registered under the present Minister of National Security for human trafficking. “Dey up and down de place talking about human trafficking”. It was the government led by the hon. Kamla

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Persad-Bissessar that brought the human trafficking Act into being.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** “And dey up and down” using human trafficking, as if it is a campaigning point. Put your money where your mouth is and arrest people who are guilty.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** The statistics “doh lie, yuh know”. The statistics do not lie. And I listened to several of the—in particular, the Minister—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, again, the statistics do not—I think you could use a better word.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** The statistics do not lead us wrong. Right?

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Statistics and facts and numbers are the truth. What you hear on a platform may not necessarily be the truth. And last night I heard some things on a platform that I know were not the truth.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I heard is a tone of, almost apology from certain Members. And because it is very clear now that the population is so dissatisfied with this Government and this Minister of National Security dealing with crime and safety in Trinidad and Tobago, the Government has to face the truth now. And you know what I am hearing coming out from the other side? I am hearing: “Well, things hard. It tough. De Opposition doh support we. Wee, wee, wee, weh, weh, weh.”

And, you know, when you speak to the victims of crime, this does not resonate with them. Nobody wants to hear about a painting in somebody’s office.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** They want results. They want the criminals off the streets.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Get the guns off the street. Get justice for people. And when in this country a continued sense of injustice continues, because it seems that there is one rule for one, and another rule for another; one person's children could have guns, another person's children will be arrested, one, that creates a sense of injustice in this country on top of the situation with the social issues, such as people do not have food, people cannot go to school, cannot send their children to school and they are facing the frustration of the risk of stepping out their house and getting gunned down.

School children have been gunned down. A little boy was gunned down in Cunupia on a playground. Children in school have to be ducking and hiding under their desks because "gun man outside", under the Minister of National Security. He is a failure.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Not only did he not address the issue, you know, he blamed the children and blamed the teacher for overreacting. I want to know if a gunman is outside your house, you would not duck and cover too. But then again, some people have security outside their house, some people do not. And that sense of injustice continues to make our citizens feel that—you would not know, unless you sit and speak to some people. The anger they feel. And that it is why our young people are falling through the cracks, because the soft approach and the hard approach to crime fighting to reach our young people, to provide opportunities, to take them out of the hands of the criminals, when the Government refuses to provide jobs and they see an income from the criminals, that is what this Minister

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of National Security is failing—“let me tell yuh, eh, my fadda was a Rasta man”. And Rastafarian and a Rastafarian hairstyle, to try to appear to be down to earth, and appear to be people-centric is so disturbing. And it is—

**Mr. Manning:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 48(1), please. The Minister of National Security’s appearance has nothing to do with this debate.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay.

**Mr. B. Manning:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** San Fernando West said it.

**Mr. Hosein:** San Fernando West said it.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Can I? Can I now? Can I? Can I? Again, Member, please. Let us not bring identity itself into it. Let us talk about the office, as against the thing. I know you made reference to the thing. But again, let us keep the identity directly out of it. So I will hear you and then I will decide if we would go further on that.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe “yuh owe meh some injury time, eh”. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am responding to a point made by the Member for San Fernando West in his contribution, which I personally found disturbing, because it was in reference to the Rastafarian identity of the Minister of National Security, as if that was relevant. And I personally find it offensive because my father is a Rastafarian. I know my father with long dreads to his knees. And—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** [*Inaudible*]—point made. Let us move on, please.

**Mr. S. Hosein:** But he had integrity.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Your point has been made.

**Mr. S. Hosein:** But he had integrity.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I have ruled. I have ruled. I have ruled. So let us move on.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** And my father was man of integrity.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am an elected Member of Parliament. I serve the constituency of St. Augustine.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, you have three minutes.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** But before being a Member of Parliament, I am a patriot of Trinidad and Tobago first. It gives me no pride, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to have to come to this Parliament and talk about the hon. Fitzgerald Hinds, his incompetence as a Minister of National Security.

We have had some bad ones in the past, eh, but I really feel the hon. Member for Laventille West is by far the worst Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:** And it is not only his failure based on the rising number of murders, the increasing violent crime, the guns, and so in the country, there is also a level of arrogance in his approach and we see often what I consider bullying, an attempt at bullying the media, his opponents or anybody who wants to challenge—

**3.20 p.m.**

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Mr. Deputy, Standing Order 48(6) please.

**Mr. Hosein:** This is a substantive Motion.

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, Standing Order 48(6) please.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Yeah, again, you can say that differently, right. You are

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capable enough, say it differently.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** When we speak in Parliament, the children of this nation are watching. And when we get an air of arrogance from our Ministers, when we see an attempt to vilify those who put forward opposing views, when we see people appearing to bully other people, it sends a signal in this country to our children, and it has an impact on how acceptable—

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, Standing Order 48(6) again please.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, Member we are bordering on a couple seconds. Right, Members please, I need no assistance. I need no assistance, right. Right, Member again you are couple seconds away from your thing. So again, I told you to say it over, and I mean, so let us retract that last end and just close off please.

**Ms. K. Ameen:** Yes. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am making a general statement about the behaviour of our leaders in society—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. K. Ameen:**—and the poor example being set by those on the Government Bench, and in particular—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay.

**Ms. K. Ameen:**—by the Member for Laventille West who has continuously—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member your speaking time has elapsed. I recognize the Member for Lopinot/Bon Air West.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Marvin Gonzales):** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased to enter this debate as the Member of Parliament for Lopinot/Bon Air West. Any Motion that is filed against any member of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, a member

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of the Cabinet, expressing lack of confidence, is a Motion and a matter to be treated with a degree of seriousness. This particular Motion is against and filed against the Minister of National Security, filed by the Member of Parliament for Barataria/San Juan. And I sat and I listened to every speaker on the Opposition side prosecuting their case against the Minister of National Security.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is almost three years in this Twelfth Parliament that I am a Member of Parliament, and privileged to serve as a PNM Member of Parliament.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** And during those three years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have participated in numerous contributions on this side of the House treating with the issue of crime and violence. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a very serious issue that beholds all Members of Parliament. It is our collective responsibility and duty to ensure that we participate in discussions and pass laws for the good order and governance of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

It is not only the responsibility of the Minister of National Security, as my good friend from San Fernando West would have eloquently explained during his contribution. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that the laws that we pass in this Parliament, they are all passed for the good order and the peace of every single citizen of Trinidad and Tobago.

The issue of crime and violence, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is one that besiege this country for years. It is not a matter that just came about just yesterday, or last year, or five years ago. As a matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, between the period 2010 and 2015 we would have seen an avalanche of Ministers of National Security, it was like a revolving door in that Ministry. And we also saw where a

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Minister of National Security in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago was named in all kinds of documents in FIFA, being involved in all kinds of crimes—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —transnational crimes. A very, very serious issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, Members, Standing Order 53 is clear, listen in silence and if we want to take it to the total extent that will be determined by the Chair. So again, I recognize the Member for Lopinot/Bon Air West, continue.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we in Trinidad and Tobago, together with all of our neighbours and our brothers and sister in the entire Caribbean, we are faced with an avalanche of crime and violence, with guns entering into our shores, guns being used to murder our young boys and our young girls, and it is our duty and our responsibility as legislators and law makers to do what we must to protect—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:**—our entire Caribbean, and our entire republic. That is our duty, but Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is politics. And perhaps one may argue that it is fair game to use the issue of crime and violence to attack a sitting Government hoping that it brings political reward for the Opposition. It is not only in Trinidad and Tobago, we would have seen it all over the entire Caribbean where opposition parties, as opposed to working collaboratively with their sitting counterparts in the Government, they use the issue of crime and violence hoping it brings political reward for them.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** And I as a Member of Parliament here, almost three years, I

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would have seen it, I would have witnessed it, I would have lived it. I heard the Member for St. Augustine read out a whole list of Bills, but I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are not living in Mars, we living right here.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** And it is our experience that every single Bill that was brought in this House, we have to resist, and we have to resist, and we have to resist, and this current AG as well the previous current AG—

**Mr. Hosein:** Previous current.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Previous AG had to amend Bills so that we can use our majority to pass because what the Opposition was doing—

**Mr. Hosein:** [*Inaudible*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, please protect me from Barataria/San Juan.

**Mr. Hosein:** I will never harm you.

**Hon. Members:** [*Laughter*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, Members, Members. Member, Member again, for the records, in your absence, and you have now returned, Standing Order 53 will be invoked. Proceed.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Thank you very much Mr. Deputy Speaker—[*Laughter*]

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But one may argue it is fair game to attack the Government and hope that we fail on crime because they believe, the Opposition in Trinidad and Tobago believe, that if this Government fails on the issue of crime it will open the doors for them to inherit office, and to continue and plunder and mismanage the people of Trinidad and

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Tobago and their affairs. That is what they hope for.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 48(6).

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Proceed, overruled.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is what they hope for. Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me emphasize to all Members of Parliament, especially Members of the UNC, if you believe that changing a Minister of National Security would bring about the type of country that we desire, and I hope that that is their desire, then what you are selling this country is cat in bag. You are not being forthright and you are not being honest with the people of Trinidad and Tobago, because the issue of crime is a multifaceted one. It is a multifaceted issue and we as legislators have our role to play. The Minister of National Security has his role to play. The Judiciary has their role to play. The police have their role to play. Community development and community groups they all have their role to play. Religious groups all have their role to play, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And therefore to come in this Parliament and file a Motion beating it almost every single week and every single month, that the problem in Trinidad and Tobago with respect to crime and violence is the hon. Member for Laventille West—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —and the Minister of National Security you are not being forthright with the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** You are not being forthright. The Minister has his role to play, and we as a Government we have our role to play to support him and all agencies that fall under his command, and ensure that all of the legislative

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frameworks are in place, so that the other arms of the State with their roles and their responsibilities will do what they must to protect the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

The criminals, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are following exactly what is taking place in this Parliament. And they know full well that the Government stands on its own with respect to the defence of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, because we do not have an Opposition that is willing to cooperate with the Government in its effort—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —to protect the people of Trinidad and Tobago. They understand it. They know it; they understand it very, very well. And it is very unfortunate when we are in a crisis all law abiding citizens both PNM, UNC, and all other political affiliation, we are in this fight together to protect our country. There is a time and there is a place for politics.

So let me come to this Motion. The hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is an attorney, and he knows, and he appreciates, that if you file a Motion against a Member of the Cabinet, you cannot just come here and read newspaper clippings and repeat what people are saying in the media to prosecute your case, it is not enough. It is not enough.

I would have gone through the entire contribution of the hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan, looking and searching for the evidence that he would have presented in this House to prosecute the Minister of National Security. And if he was in a criminal court that matter and this Motion would have failed at the minute he sat down on a no case submission.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

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**Hon. M. Gonzales:** On a no case submission. No evidence. No prima facie evidence, nothing whatsoever. No substance whatsoever. All designed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all designed and when you listen to his contribution, I mean, at certain points in time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cringed.

**Hon. Member:** What?

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** I cringed at some of the statements that the hon. Member and other Members would have stood here pointing to issues of guns and bullets flying through classrooms, and all these things. Painting the worst circumstances about the people of Trinidad and Tobago, not recognizing that what you are saying not only the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago are listening, but the world is listening and we have to be very careful that we have to be responsible as legislators. I am not telling you to be unfactual; I am not telling you to misrepresent anything. But we ought to be very careful in the way we describe our country, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And everything that the Member would have said in the piloting of this Motion, I have read through the entire contribution, and the hon. Member would have fallen woefully short in prosecuting his matter against the hon. Minister of National Security. Very, very unfortunate. It has failed; it lacks substance, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** It is bound to fail and not on one occasion, he has offered any solution to the Government.

**Mr. Hosein:** Yes, I did.

**3.35 p.m.**

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Not on one occasion he offered any solution, because their objective is not to work with the Government and to cooperate with the Government in the fight against crime in Trinidad and Tobago. That is not the objective.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Member:** [*Inaudible*] the Prime Minister.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** That is not the objective. So, he spent his entire 45 minutes reading from newspaper clippings, repeating what people would have said and town would have said in the streets and what people would have told them. But one thing I recognize that the hon. Member as well as his other colleagues, the last Member who spoke, the Member for St. Augustine, just skirted the issue of human trafficking. None of them else—none, no other speaker on the Opposition side spoke of the issue of human trafficking.

**Mr. Young:** None.

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Because I wonder why.

**Hon. Member:** It coming next.

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

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —I wonder why? They talk about guns—

**Hon. Member:** It coming next.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —they talk about drugs—

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Al Rawi:** You have no moral authority.

**Ms. Ameen:** San Fernando West [*Inaudible*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Guys please, again, Member for Chaguanas West, San Fernando East, St. Augustine, no, I mean—Couva North, please, let us keep it—we are going fine. Proceed.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And very soon, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to raise and I am going to expound a bit on the issue of human trafficking, because we are talking about the Ministry of National Security and all of the matters that they are responsible for. And in prosecuting the case of human trafficking, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they hardly made any mention of prosecuting the case against the Minister of National Security—I am sorry. They made no mention whatsoever on the issue of human trafficking and I will speak about that.

**Hon. Member:** Tell us.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** But Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have spoken for hours in this debate and on the previous occasion, searching the UNC to find ways and to find evidence to prosecute their matter against the Minister of National Security. But Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of National Security did not engage in any action to dismantle the national security apparatus of Trinidad and Tobago. But we have to sit in this Parliament and listen to colleagues on the other side telling us why the Minister is unfit to hold office.

**Hon. Member:** Oh yes, oh yes.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** These are the same people, some of them are the same people who participated in a government that gutted the national security apparatus of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** They have no moral authority whatsoever, to come here and lecture to us about who should be appointed Minister of National Security or not, when they were exchanging like a revolving door, changing Minister of National Security almost every year—

**Mr. Indarsingh:** [*Inaudible*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —they have no moral authority. This is the same group of people—

**Mr. Indarsingh:** [*Inaudible*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —part of a party that appointed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a telephone operator—

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

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —a telephone operator to head an intelligence agency in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Was the Minister of National Security, this current Minister of National Security, Fitzgerald Ethelbert Hinds, my good friend—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —he never engaged in that kind of behaviour.

**Hon. Member:** What?

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** He never engaged in that kind of behaviour. He never brought his office into this kind of this discredit. The Minister of National Security supported law enforcement and he continues to support law enforcement Mr. Deputy Speaker, but we have to sit in this Parliament and listen to colleagues on the other side who cancelled an OPV contract exposing the State and when the



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former Prime Minister was asked about it, she made a very famous statement that the war on crime is on the land and not the seas.

**Ms. Cudjoe:** Not the seas. Yes, yes.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Member:** Short memory.

**Ms. Cudjoe:** It is the fact.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —and we have to sit here for three years enduring their non-cooperation and filibustering.

**Hon. Member:** Wicked.

**Ms. Cudjoe:** Um-hmm.

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No, no again, withdraw right. Right have a seat, okay, have you seat, have your seat.

**Ms. Ameen:** He said again.

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Let him withdraw the last word that he used.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No again, Member I already ruled, I already did. Proceed Lopinot/Bon Air West.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Thank you very much.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** We have to sit here and listen to people and Members opposite lecture to us—

**Ms. Cudjoe:** Um-hmm.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —when their history, still haunts them and haunts the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Ms. Cudjoe:** True.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** They have no moral authority whatsoever to come and speak to us on crime—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —none whatsoever. It hurts me to sit in this Chamber and to hear honourable colleagues on the other side—

**Ms. Cudjoe:** Honourable?

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —honourable colleagues. I will call them honourable colleagues because some of them like Member for Mayaro, Chaguanas West is good, Cumuto/Manzanilla good people, yeah good people on that side.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, address the Chair, please—address the Chair.

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Through you Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Address the Chair.

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Even including the Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Ms. Cudjoe:** They try.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —well they try their best.

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —they try their best. But we have to sit here—we have to sit here and endure that. What is the case against the Minister of National Security? What is the evidence? Where did he misconduct himself? Where? Where did he bring his office into disrepute? Where?

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Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will recall the hon. Member for St. Augustine read out a whole litany of Bills where they allegedly supported the Government.

**Ms. Cudjoe:** True.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** I recall, and she talked about young—the hon. Member talked about murders of young girls and women, “eh-heh”? I recall when the child marriage Bill was brought in this Parliament—

**Ms. Cudjoe:** Crime.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —when the child marriage Bill was brought in the Parliament, a temporary Senator was appointed to oppose the Bill, to oppose the Bill. And when they got the political backlash on the population, they had to put their political tail between their legs and follow the PNM and support that Bill but interestingly, the Member for Siparia was absent.

**Mr. Al Rawi:** Oh yes.

**Ms. Cudjoe:** Um-hmm, conveniently.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** But the hon. Member for St. Augustine wants to come and tell us that the Minister of National Security should resign because he is not protecting young women?

**Ms. Cudjoe:** Hmm.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Political hypocrites, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —political hypocrites. They have no moral authority whatsoever.

**Mr. Cummings:** None.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** They need to reinvent themselves and come again.

**Mr. Young:** If possible.

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**Mr. Cummings:** Wheel and come again.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** If that is possible, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** It is not possible. Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me tell you this. We support the Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** We support him, we will continue to work with him, because it is not only his responsibility, it is our responsibility—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —our responsibility. Because we sit in a government, so serious, our leader, the Member of Parliament, for Diego Martin West, trying to treat with the social issues, the things that attract our young male, especially, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to a life of crime, created a Ministry of Youth Development and National Service to give our young men a fighting chance. Because we recognize that to fight the scourge of crime and violence in this country, it is not about arming the police and arming the military, that we must have a soft and targeted approach to give our young men a fighting chance. All kinds of programmes under the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service started off incidentally, by the current Minister of National Security. All kinds of programmes to give them a fighting chance.

My colleague here from Tobago West, the hon. Shamfa Cudjoe, under her Ministry, a number of programmes I myself would have participated meeting some young men talking to them. One of these programmes is the MPower TT programme, where some of these young men had no hope whatsoever, no hope. And these young men were pulled together, put into an incubator, where they were

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placed with mentors and ambassadors to work with them, to give them an opportunity to express themselves as young men.

Some of these people—and these young men could not even apply for a job because of where they live, nobody would want to employ them. And under this programme, we would have seen over 300 young men transition their lives, young boys who would have been attracted to that gun culture, and that culture of violence in Trinidad and Tobago. These are some of the things that we are doing and these are some of the things that we must do as a country, and as a government—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —to save our young boys and those young boys who are attracted to a life of crime.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can tell you, as a young boy growing up in a rural community, some of the opportunities that are available to some of our young men today, I did not have it. I did not have it. There are now a litany of programmes and opportunities for our young boys and we have to ask ourselves, ask ourselves, why are some—so many of them—not participating in these programmes to give themselves a fighting chance, and yet are attracted to a life of crime and violence? Why? Why? And they know that. The UNC is aware of it. They made absolutely no reference to these programmes that we have put in place. None whatsoever, because they do not want the country to know that. Because they believe that if you attack the hon. Member for Laventille West and the Minister of National Security, it will create a political opening for them.

The people are fed up with this kind of political posturing you know, they are fed up and all of us will face their collective wrath if we continue to conduct

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ourselves in this way. The Government has a role to play. All of us have our role to play and you Members of the Opposition, hon. Members opposite, if you believe that crime and violence will create a political opening for you to come on this side to sit—

**Ms. Cudjoe:** Hmm.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** —we may not have a country for you to govern.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** We may not have the country for you to govern. So stop that behaviour. I asked you, and I plead with all Members on the Opposition, you have a role to play, buckle down. There is a time for politics. We will go on the political hustings, and we will fight it out. But the issue of crime and the issue of violence in Trinidad and Tobago, we must all put our collective hands on deck. And therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I turn to the issue of human trafficking. Because human trafficking falls under the purview of the Ministry of National Security. And I want to know, what the Ministry of National Security is also doing with the issue of human trafficking?

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** And I also want to know why the Opposition, for some reason or the other, is skirting the issue?

**Mr. Hinds:** No support from Couva North.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Why? I want to know. Mr. Deputy Speaker, a couple months ago, there was a firestorm in this country with respect to human trafficking.

**Mr. Young:** Ah-ha.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** And Members of Parliaments quoted a United States department report that Members of the Government might be involved, and it turns out that some Members of the Opposition believe that, by the definition Members of the Government it refers to us on this side. It did not turn out to be like that. It did not turn out to be like that.

**Ms. Cudjoe:** Tell them.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** And the hon. Member for Naparima questioned the Parliament—the Prime Minister, during a Prime Minister question time as to what he was doing to treat the issue of human trafficking in the Government and the Prime Minister responded appropriately.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**3.50 p.m.**

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Following the Prime Minister's response, we had former Ministers that served in the UNC government come out and admit that under the leadership of Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, as she was then, that senior officials of the UNC were involved in human trafficking.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, Members of the Cabinet, of the UNC Cabinet admitted—one of them claimed that he was responsible—he was responsible for an investigation, and there is a report. And the Member for Siparia, the former Prime Minister, did absolutely nothing; absolutely nothing. The report was buried—

**Ms. Cudjoe:** And want to come here and cry.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:**—and today we have to listen to Members opposite—

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 48(6) as it relates to what the Member just said, as it relates to the Member for Siparia. He is imputing improper motives. And additionally, 48(1), this matter is under a police investigation.

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

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

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me read, and I am quoting, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Before you proceed, your initial speaking time has elapsed, you have an additional 15, you care to avail?

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Oh, certainly, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Proceed.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** [*Inaudible*—20 minutes. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am quoting a *Guardian* report of February 26, 2023:

“Former...”—UNC—“...minister and senator Devant Maharaj has claimed that between the years 2010 and 2015, internal investigations by the UNC confirmed allegations that some...party members were involved in human trafficking.”

**Hon. Members:** “Ahhh”.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** And I wonder if that is the reason why that in their attack and their political prosecution of the Member for Laventille West, the Minister of National Security, that the issue of human trafficking was almost never mentioned



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in this debate—

**Hon. Members:** “Ohhh”.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:**—never mentioned in this debate. And this is what he said:

“In a statement to the media, Maharaj said he wished to confirm the statement of Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley that particular members of the UNC were involved in human trafficking.”

And I quote:

“I can confirm that I assisted in these investigations. I can also confirm that the allegations were confirmed to be true and correct. I confirm this as particular individuals who now hold high office in the party on a regular basis provided a regular supply of Venezuelan and Colombian prostitutes to persons within and without the party. I, myself, was approached on several occasions to utilise this service all of which I refused.”

And today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to listen to some of these same Members come to talk about crime—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. Cudjoe:** Criminals themselves.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:**—and come to prosecute the case against the Member for Laventille? Hypocrites.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member, again, your last term, retract, and I am sure you can use a better word.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Thank you—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Retract first.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** I retract.

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**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Right.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Deceitful, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** And to make matters worse, Mr. Deputy Speaker—to make matters worse, let me quote another *Guardian* editorial on Monday, March 06, 2023, by one, Ramona Ramdial, another Member of the UNC.

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** And this is what she said, and I quote the last paragraph—I quote the last paragraph of her article:

What exactly has been done in Couva North to end human trafficking and prostitution since I—

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members. Standing Order—Members, Standing Order 53 again, in silence, I recognize Lopinot/Bon Air West, Member.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Thank you very much.

What exactly has been done in Couva North to end human trafficking and prostitution since I was removed after making my last parliamentary contribution on the very subject? Why did Opposition Leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar select a certain candidate even though she would have been privy to a report from Maharaj and possibly another from Dr. Moonilal?

Mind-blowing.

**Ms. Cudjoe:** That is criminal.

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

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**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the person who made that report offered themselves to the police. The matter is now under investigation. A statement was provided and I—

**Mr. Rambally:** How you know that?

**Hon. Member:** How you know that?

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Mr. Deputy Speaker—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, Members, please, please. Address the Chair. Address the Chair. Address the Chair.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Devant Maharaj, I am reliably informed, gave a statement to the police—

**Hon. Member:** What is your source? What is your source?

**Hon. M. Gonzales:**—gave his statement to the police on the circumstances under which this matter of human trafficking in the UNC was handled. But after that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it makes matters worse, because we are not easy as a country, you know. They wanted to attack Fitzgerald Hinds, the Member for Laventille West, and they want to give the impression that getting rid of him in the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago is going to solve the crime situation, from people who cannot even look left and look right on their side. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can tell you here today, and the country, and when that statement was given to the police, the police and the investigators asked Mr. Maharaj for that statement to be certified by a Justice of the Peace. Guess who they brought as the Justice of the Peace?

**Ms. Cudjoe:** “Oh boy”.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Archbishop Barbara Burke.

**Ms. Cudjoe:** Former UNC Senator.

**Hon. Members:** “Oh goooood”.

**Ms. Cudjoe:** Former UNC Senator.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Former UNC Senator. What is happening in Trinidad and Tobago? Are we serious? What is happening to us? A former Minister, a UNC Minister, giving evidence to the police about human trafficking in the UNC, about matters in the UNC—

**Mr. Hosein:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on 48(6), the Member is speaking of an active police investigation, is he willing to adopt and take ownership of what he is saying in this particular Parliament?

**Mr. Hinds:** Yes.

**Mr. Young:** Yes.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence. Silence. Again, the sub judice Standing Order is clear. Member, you accept responsibility for your comments?

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Full responsibility, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Proceed.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Full responsibility. You bring a very, very serious matter, a witness, a whistle-blower, giving evidence of human trafficking in the UNC and you brought Sen. Barbara Burke as Justice of the Peace, of all the Justices of the Peace you can find in Trinidad and Tobago?

I am advising my colleague from Laventille West, without breaching any protocol, and bringing your office into disrepute, exercise your constitutional role and responsibilities to ensure that the interest of justice is protected in this matter.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** That the interest of justice is protected. But as I wind down on

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this debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to tell this country that the UNC is not the answer to the crime problem that we all face.

**Mr. Hinds:** They are a crime. The UNC is a crime.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No. No. Member, again, retract and—please retract. Stand and retract, please.

**Mr. Hinds:** That—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Just retract. Just retract “I retract”.

**Mr. Hinds:** I painfully retract.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member—

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Hinds:** I retract.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Unreservedly.

**Mr. Hinds:** [*Inaudible*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** All right. Proceed, Lopinot/Bon Air West.

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it pains me, as it is paining the hon. Member for Laventille West, to inform the people of Trinidad and Tobago that as we work and we continue to provide policies and programmes, we will utilize our 22 votes on this side of the House—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:**—to ensure that we do all that we can to protect the people of Trinidad and Tobago. We will continue to work with our colleagues in the entire Caribbean to ensure that our borders are protected. We will ensure that young boys and young girls, and the issue and the plague of human trafficking is eradicated. The scourge of human trafficking, be it inside of this Parliament or outside, be it within the UNC—

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**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:**—or outside of the UNC, wherever they are, we must all go after them and protect the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. M. Gonzales:** And therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Motion—this Motion that was brought to this House against the Member for Laventille West, my colleague, the hon. Minister of National Security, it is hopeless, it is void, it is hypocritical and it should be destined to fail, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I beg to move. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Speaker:** I recognize the Member for Tabaquite.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. Anita Haynes (Tabaquite):** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I thank you for recognizing me and giving me the opportunity to bring some semblance of respect back to this very important debate on a Motion against the Minister of National Security.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we just heard from the Minister of Public Utilities. The Minister of Public Utilities was the fourth Member of the Government to speak on this Motion—the fourth Member of the Government to speak on this Motion and give us every reason to talk about the UNC and what is happening in the UNC, and presented no defence for his colleague, the Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** And there is a reason for that. There is a reason for the deliberate misunderstanding of the Motion, which I will read into the record, so that the next person entering the debate on the Government's end has some idea of what we are

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doing here today because clearly, they are lost. And, you know, I listened, especially towards the end, to the Minister of Public Utilities—and very timely, eh, because within my debate, I do intend to address the issue of human trafficking and how the Minister of National Security is using his good office to rid the scourge—rid Trinidad and Tobago of this scourge. Now, mind you, in your entire contribution, asking about what is being done about human trafficking in this country, you forgot that the Minister responsible is under question here today for his inaction.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** So thank you very much—thank you very much for proving our point that the Minister of National Security has been unable, incompetent, incapable—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:**—of using the office of the Ministry of National Security to resource those who are in a place to treat with the scourge of human trafficking. You have not been able to do that.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** So for all of this—and, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not like to participate in revisionist history. The Minister of Public Utilities stood here and rightfully pointed out that a question was asked by the Member of Parliament for Naparima in this House; that the question was asked based on a report that is in the public domain. And instead of standing up as a responsible Government, instead of standing in defence of your colleague to say that from the office of the Ministry of National Security, as a competent Minister of National Security, since the time that question was asked, since the time the report was placed in the public

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domain, since the time it has been a topic of national conversation, “We have done X, Y, and Z, the Minister has been personally responsible for equipping the CTU, personally responsible for meeting with stakeholders,” and making sense of this thing so that you can treat the people of Trinidad and Tobago with the respect that they deserve.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** And do not come here and tell me that you do not desire to politicize an issue and one day we will be on the platform and we will be in the political hospice, and then be totally political in your response here today.

**4.05 p.m.**

Now, and you know, we as a sensible group of people, I assume, I want to take this opportunity to remind Members here, all of us gathered here today, all 41 persons who hold a seat here, that we have the distinct privilege and honour to sit in the House of Representatives. The representatives part, let me reminded you who you represent. You represent the good people of Arouca/Maloney. You represent the good people of Tabaquite, the people of Naparima, of Diego Martin Central. You do not stand here and tell me your only space to express confidence in the Minister of National Security is because “he’s wear a Balisier tie and you’s wear a Balisier tie”, because that is all we are getting from you today. That you are in support of the Minister of National Security because he is of the same political party that you are of. [*Interruption*] No, no, no, no, no.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members, Members, Members. Tabaquite, no problem, go ahead. Member for Tabaquite, proceed.

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Thank you. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will only acknowledge your



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statements here across the floor. I will not take on any interruptions by persons who are indeed, and with good reason, under fire.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** And so, you know, I had to just—there are more rebuttals to the Minister of Public Utilities, but I just wanted to start there, because I found that particularly offensive.

The scourge of human trafficking—I sat on a joint select committee this morning. The Ministry of National Security was represented, the Counter Trafficking Unit they were present there. What stood out was that they were unable to articulate a clear policy on some matters, and I will go into that later on in debate. So therefore that says to me the role of the Minister of National Security is greatly misunderstood by those across the floor.

While our arguments are indeed housed in the ever-present murders and criminality that face people of Trinidad and Tobago, let us not forget that in this House we also have a responsibility to hold Members opposite accountable. That is a parliamentary responsibility. So when Members opposite focus on the legislative responsibility of Parliament, they do so because they are afraid of the accountability measure of Parliament.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** They are afraid of coming here and saying exactly what they have done with the eight years in office. Exactly how they have improved the lives of citizens, and exactly what they intend to do going forward, because they had a space to do that here in this debate, in a very important space in national security.

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So the Motion brought by my colleague from Barataria/San Juan, speaks to the Minister and his responsibility for ensuring public safety, the maintenance of law and order, and the effective oversight of national security infrastructure. That is specific.

Any one of the four Members who have spoken here already from the Government, could have said—the Minister of Public Utilities asked for evidence. What evidence we have that we should have no confidence in this Minister of National Security—because that is essentially what you are asking us—what evidence we as the Opposition Members of Parliament are presenting to the population of Trinidad and Tobago, and indeed this Parliament, that we have no confidence in the Minister of National Security. Then the Minister of Public Utilities said that he is living here. We are all living here. We are not living on Mars. But then I had to question that, because if you have to ask me what evidence do we have to say the Minister of National Security is ineffective, but then every Member could acknowledge the increase in crime, the increase in violent crime, then what are you saying to us?

Then my favourite part of their argument. Well, it is not his fault you know. It is all of our fault. Everybody is at fault, because it is all of our responsibility to deal with crime. Well, there is only one person in this room who has a responsibility to advise the Cabinet of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on matters of national security.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** There is only one person in this room who has a responsibility to

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take an overarching view, take a look at every arm of our national security apparatus, and say to the Cabinet, this is what ought to be done. This is what we can be doing better. Take the data that they say they are receiving, and utilize that for the benefit of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Not one of them got up here today and said he did that—not one.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Even in addressing the scourge of human trafficking, something that should trouble the minds of all of us. Even in addressing that and saying you intended to do that in a serious manner, and in a very unserious way never told us what the Minister of National Security is has intended to do.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** And I know—and I know, somebody is going to get up here and say the Minister of National Security is not responsible for executing, et cetera, and I agree, but he is responsible for guiding the Cabinet on issues of national security—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** —and until somebody on that side could get up and say very clearly, this has been done and it worked, this has been done and it worked, this has been done and it worked, then you have to agree with the Motion.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Because on the first recital you have to agree that the Minister of National Security, through his vast and continued incompetence, has mismanaged the organ and departments of national security. You have to agree with that,

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because unless you can demonstrate where in the years since holding the office of Minister of National Security, this Minister has been able to make an impact on the national security space, then you have to, must, agree with the Motion. If you do not agree with the Motion, tell us it is justified. You all wear the same colours to go to your party meetings. That is all. Just tell us. Just tell us that.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** But do not come here and tell us we have to be very serious when we are doing things.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my preparation for this debate, I pulled the *Hansard* document, because it is always instructive to listen to the first responder. For those of us who have been debating for a while, you understand that the first responder to any Motion outlines exactly where the opposite side is going. That they give you the extent of the arguments that would be drilled down by further speakers, and so they give you the full view of what is to be argued against the Motion. They are arguing against the Motion brought by the Opposition.

Luckily, fortunately, the first responder was the person in the hot seat himself, the Minister of National Security, sent to defend himself. Now I do not know why. Perhaps the Member for Arouca/Maloney had difficulty, great difficulty in finding somebody to lead the defence of the Minister.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Now, I empathize—I empathize, because it is very difficult for somebody to be in the House of Representatives, and representing real people, and have to go to your office day—imagine—I cannot imagine what is going on with

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them—but to have to go to your office day, and say you stood up in Parliament and you said you have confidence in the Minister of National Security, and your constituents are hiding from criminals.

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** [*Inaudible*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Imagine that. I cannot imagine—so I understood the difficulty. I understood the difficulty.

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

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, you do not have to worry, you know, I am not easily disturbed at all. I am not easily put off.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Probably I need to get on my legs to make the point. There is a certain decorum that has to take place. So again, Members, in silence. Proceed.

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Thank you as always, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for your protection.

So the entire space, the entire argument of the Government as presented by the Minister of National Security himself, had nothing, curiously nothing to do with the work that he has done thus far as Minister of National Security. That is already telling you what we are dealing with. That if you could stand up to defend yourself, about your job as Minister of National Security, and you cannot say what you are doing, it means there is nothing. It means there is nothing.

So the Minister started with an attack on the mover of the Motion, and that says something to me. That says already you are without substance. That you attack the mover of the Motion, instead of attacking the Motion itself, which

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seeks—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** —which seeks to say that you are incompetent, you start to tell us about Barataria/San Juan. “So yuh start bad.” But then interestingly, the Minister goes on to talk about his time in secondary school, in the Cadet Force and in the TTPS. Now if this was leading somewhere, as a debater would know, I would have no issue. If this was leading to say, “In my time as a member of the TTPS, I learnt X, Y and Z, and therefore now as the Minister charged with the responsibility of national security, I can unequivocally state that in the Cabinet of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I have brought before the issues of the TTPS, that members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service require X, Y and Z to function in their capacity as the frontline crime fighters.”

If the Minister of National Security had used the opportunity to say, “Listen, I was a member of the TTPS, so I understood that it was my role to advocate for some sort of recognition of the members of the TTPS for their valiant service during the COVID-19 pandemic, or a recognition that they deserve more than 4 per cent for the work that they did—”

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** “—or a recognition that they deserve a proper process to get a police commissioner, or a recognition that members of the TTPS are currently working under standard, under conditions that are not conducive to the job that they have”, then I would have accepted that. But you did not say that.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

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**Ms. A. Haynes:** But you did not say that. You stood up and you told us, “yuh was a member of the TTPS”, and that means something? It means you are supposed to be doing a better job. It means you are supposed to be doing a better job.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** He left, as he told us, because the Minister of National Security again, in a defence of himself as Minister of National Security, tells us that he left the TTPS to become an insurance agent. This is serious, you know. Yes, excellent. And you know, and I realized why, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

**Hon. Members:** [*Inaudible*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No, no, please.

**Ms. A. Haynes:** —through you, I know why—I can only guess as to why the Minister of National Security did that. Because, having recognized that he has failed as Minister of National Security, he is perhaps looking at the insurance sector for a new job, because that could be the only reason “yuh” bringing it into the debate.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** The only reason you are bringing it into—

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

**Mr. Hinds:** [*Inaudible*]

**Mr. Hosein:** “Throw him out de Chamber.”

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No, no, no, Members. So again, Member, Laventille West, just retract please.

**Mr. Hinds:** Again, I painfully retract.

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**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. While we engage in a Motion that seeks to have the House, that “this House express its lack of confidence in the Minister of National Security”, I would like to put forward that the behaviour of the Minister of National Security in this House today should alone be argument enough for why we must express a lack of confidence. That you cannot—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*]

[*Mr. Hinds rises*]

**Hon. Member:** What Standing Order—[*Inaudible*] sit down.

**Ms. Ameen:** But what Standing Order—?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again Members, two wrongs do not make a right. He stood up, I will have to hear his Standing Order before we can proceed, but other Members cannot make comments at the same time. Overruled. Let us proceed, Member for Tabaquite.

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Minister of National Security continues to make my point over and over and over again.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** So every time—I do not know, and I think perhaps I should put it on the record today that these proceedings are televised. These proceedings are on YouTube, and so that when you behave a certain way, people see you. Okay? So as we discuss—as we discuss the contribution of the Minister of National Security, who again has a lot to say across the floor today, but very little to say in his own defence on April 28. Very little.



**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** And so the Minister of National Security used his 45 minutes in laying out what the response of the entire Government Bench against this Motion would be, and he came with his résumé. He came here to bring to the Parliament all the places he worked, and this is the argument that he should be the Minister of National Security, and I heard it today from the Minister of Public Utilities, and I believe the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries raised it on the last day, that what have we brought to the table, how has the Minister put his office into disrepute.

**4.20 p.m.**

Is that the low bar that we are setting for ourselves, Mr. Deputy Speaker? In any job, in any space, in any part of this world there is a performance assessment. You must assess the performance of a person who holds an office. If we cannot come here as a Parliament, which has a duty to hold the Executive to account and be very honest about whether or not a person is performing in the office that they hold, then what are we doing? What are we doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker? If the Member for Laventille West or any of the PNM members or the Government Members cannot say with the evidence that they seem to have, to keep him in office, that he has been performing admirably, average at least, that he has been doing well, then we could say okay. But they have not been able to do that. As a matter of fact, they will not even address the fact that since taking office, we have seen the highest recorded number of murders in this country's history—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:**—in this country's history. And they take it as some sort of badge of honour—because I heard the Minister of Public Utilities raise it, a discussion of

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a revolving door and changing Minister of National Security. If you cannot be honest with yourselves and be honest with the population to say that the Prime Minister as the head of the Cabinet, is taking a good look at the performance of his Ministers and ensuring that they are serving the people of Trinidad and Tobago, then you are telling us that you are not willing to do that? That is not PNM policy? That you are not willing to assess the performance of anyone there and in particular the Minister of National Security, and so we have a major problem.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we look at what the role of the Minister of National Security is, because that is what we are here to assess, we are here to assess whether or not the person in the Member for Laventille West, whether or not in the years he has served as the Minister of National Security has been able to effectively utilize the apparatus of the State, under his responsibility to bring about relief to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. So that took me to the mission statement of the Ministry of National Security, what their mandate is, and I will read that out for the benefit of the House and certainly for the benefit of the Minister, that they:

“... operate under three general areas of responsibility:

- Maintenance of Law and Order, Public Safety and Defence against Aggression
- Management of Disaster Preparedness and Relief”

—which the Member for St. Augustine ably dealt with already. And:

- “Monitoring and Control of flow of persons into and out of the country”

—immigration, correct?

So as I said before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I sat in a joint select committee

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meeting today, it was the public hearing—I really genuinely hope that the Minister of National Security took a look at it, if not again go back on YouTube, you will get it. Because today I had the cause to ask—in 2019 under a different Minister of National Security there was a registration process for migrants from Venezuela, 2019. Having due consideration for the pandemic et cetera, but in the time since this Minister of National Security has taken office, the Ministry of National Security in that Joint Select Committee today, in a public hearing, had the cause to tell us as committee members, that there was no policy, no policy directive since that 2019 registration.

**Hon. Member:** What?

**Ms. A. Haynes:** So we have to ask ourselves, 2019 into 2020/. 2020 was an election year, 2021 this Minister took office. In all that time, as the person—and I will also read into the record because I have realised that a lot of persons in this House, even though they hold high office have a real problem with social studies, civics and basic understanding of governance, basic understanding. The Minister—under a Westminster system, the Minister has responsibility to decide on policy and they are accountable to the Parliament for their decisions and that the Minister is responsible to report to the Parliament also to advocate in the Cabinet for the advancement of their policy under their remit.

So the Minister of National Security is telling—well, I mean he lost his opportunity—but I searched in his response I read through the *Hansard* of his response more than one time because I said, maybe I missed it sometimes things get lost in the crosstalk. But I said maybe the Minister came to us in defence of himself in this Motion and said, since taking office I would have advanced X, Y and Z policy on immigration, having due regard for what happened in 2019 and the

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registration process. Having due regard that so many persons are left in limbo, persons who have been registered, who may want to be registered, that they are in limbo. That the Minister of National Security understands that persons have been entering our country legally and illegally and they reside here now and that is a real problem facing Trinidad and Tobago. That is directly, listen to me Mr. Deputy Speaker, directly under the remit of the Minister of National Security. And in 45 minutes, in 45 minutes of what could only be described as “ole talk”, the Minister never, not once addressed the serious issue of immigration in Trinidad and Tobago—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:**—directly according to his website, directly under it. That the Minister, Mr. Deputy Speaker, can listen to the claims—this is an article in to the *Newsday* from March 31, 2023—

**Hon. Member:** I wonder if that is true.

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Well, it is reporting an event, so yes it must be true. It is not an editorial.

**Hon. Members:** [*Crosstalk*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** That, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

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

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Yes it is, do not worry, like I said, I am not easily disturbed. That the permits, et cetera, the Minister said in January on a radio talk show that permits will be extended again, but to date this has not been done. So that as the advisor to the Government on immigration policy in Trinidad and Tobago, I sat in a joint select committee and I felt so bad for the technocrats, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I felt for the technocrats, I felt so terrible for them, that they have to answer a policy

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question, when I know the issue of policy must come from the Minister National Security.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Luckily, I knew I was coming here to debate this today, so that they will their space, their due justice.

Because they are there to execute a policy handed down by a Cabinet, handed down by hopefully a competent Minister of National Security, but they do not have that. That does not exist. And so the technocrats, members from immigration, members from the CTU, all sat there and unfortunately all they had in place was a policy from 2019, which was put in place under a previous Minister of National Security.

And, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at another time we did in fact bring a Motion of no confidence under that Minister of, and the Prime Minister clearly agreed because that Minister was moved.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**4.30 p.m.**

**Ms. A. Haynes:** But had we known, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that worse was to be found amongst their Benches, we would not have done that.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Had we known that this is where we would end up in 2023, I mean—and you have to be—

**Hon. Member:** [*Interruption*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** —you have to be—

**Hon. Member:** [*Interruption*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, again, again, you know, in the

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contributions—

**Mr. Hinds:** Mr. Deputy Speaker—

**Ms. A. Haynes:** In the contribution—

**Ms. Ameen:** What Standing Order?

**Mr. Hinds:**—I rise to say that the Member is—[*Inaudible*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Oh my God!

**Mr. Indarsingh:** What Standing Order. What Standing Order?

**Ms. Ameen:** What Standing Order?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members. Members. Hon. Members, I think it would be a good time in order to suspend the sitting. Member, you are entitled to an additional 15 minutes. Right? When we resume, you will start your 15 minutes accordingly.

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** So at this time, hon. Members, this House is suspended for 30 minutes.

**4.30 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

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

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, as we resume the sitting, the Member for Tabaquite has her additional 15 minutes. Kindly continue.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As we come back from our short break, allow me to just give us a sense of why we are here today. This House has been asked by the Member Barataria/San Juan to agree:

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

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And we have laid out in the recitals, as well as in the duration of the debate, some of the reasons, thus far, why we feel confident that this House can comfortably express its lack of confidence in the Minister of National Security. And in response, the Government has given their reasons why they believe that we as a Parliament still have a space to be confident in the ability of the Minister of National Security to competently and effectively execute his duties.

And so, I turn to another contribution we heard at the very beginning of today's proceedings, and that is the contribution by the Member for San Fernando, and excellent debater in all rights, a person who I know can very well stick clearly to the Motion that we have in front of us. But today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for San Fernando West had great difficulty. Great difficulty. And it was exposed in the fact that the Member's argument as to why this House must express confidence in the Minister of National Security was essentially that the reason the Minister is unable to do a good job, the reason the Minister is failing, is because the Opposition has not given him the legislative purpose, the support from the Legislature, and that is why he is failing. So at the top, the Member for San Fernando West agrees with the Motion. At the top, the Member for San Fernando West.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:**—has said, has admitted that there is a problem. Yes? The Member for San Fernando West came here and said, yes, there is a problem, crime and violence is plaguing our society. And, yes, Minister of National Security is responsible for harnessing the organs of our state to ensure that we have a safe and secure society. And, yes, the Minister of National Security has been unable to do that, but here is why, and then gives the legislation that the Minister of National

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Security needs to properly operationalize the organs of the State. That is what we were told here today.

That was echoed by the Minister of Public Utilities. It was echoed because it is a very convenient narrative. It is a very easy narrative. It is a very digestible narrative from their end. It is that, despite the fact that we hold office, despite the fact that we ran on a mandate and we said to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, give us your vote, give us your support and we would be able to effectively manage the affairs of the State, in particular national security—and a lot of speakers noted that violence and criminality is not new to our society. But can we accept that it is getting worse? Can we as a Parliament, as the House of Representatives, accept and agree that things have gotten worse?

Now, you get into this space and they say, “Yes, things are not going well but it is not his fault. It is not”—and the Minister of Public Utilities said that Member for Barataria/San Juan came here and did not present a solution to the problem. But I have to wholeheartedly disagree. The very Motion is the solution that we are saying—well, one of.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** That you say that changing a Minister of National Security will not change what is happening in our society. Are you telling the nation—is every Member of the Government Bench willing to stand up here today and tell the nation, “Minister Hinds is the best we have got”? You have looked far and wide in the People’s National Movement, you have looked at every activist, every spokesperson, everybody with a PNM card—because I will give that, you are Government, you are in charge, you can put whomever you wish to hold that position—that you have looked through—I mean, it is regrettable that the Member



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for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West has spoken in this debate already, because in his position in the People's National Movement he may best be equipped to answer that question, that you have looked far and wide in every arm of the People's National Movement, Mr. Deputy Speaker—that you have looked far and wide, and all you have come up with to say to Trinidad and Tobago is, “Minister Hinds. This is the best that we have got.”

**Mr. Tancoo:** Sad.

**Ms. A. Haynes:** And that you can say to us, a Minister's responsibility—and if I accept your argument, if I accept your argument, that you are coming here as a Government that is responsible and that you have solicited the support of the Opposition in a respectful manner, that you have said to the Opposition, “Let us work together,” and that the Opposition has said, “No, we ain't want nothing to do with you,” and that is why we are in the state that we are in, then if that is your argument, you have to look no further than the Facebook page of Minister Hinds to understand why there is no collaboration; no collaboration.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** If you are telling me, as Ministers—and I consider everyone here honourable, as does the Minister of Public Utilities, and that if you are saying to us in good faith that we could work together and collaborate on issues facing the national security of Trinidad and Tobago, then you cannot have Minister Hinds there. In his very conduct—and that is why we brought the Motion of no confidence. And I want to be very clear. Some persons here may be new to Parliament. I am not. I am certainly not new to parliamentary debate and I can tell you, there is a reason you bring a Motion of no confidence in a Minister, and not a Motion on crime which some persons sought to debate. We have that. We could

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debate that. We will debate that on another day. But this is a Motion of no confidence in the person, that is the Minister of National Security, and we brought that specifically. Because the conduct of the Minister of National Security has been called into question.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** And to set the bar of conduct on criminality is a sad state of affairs for Trinidad and Tobago. If you are the Minister and the face of national security for the Government, and if what you are seeking in a collaborative approach, then you need somebody better than that. You need somebody who can in fact engage in discourse that is sensible and that is mutually respectful, and that Minister has shown that he is incapable and unable to do that.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** As a matter of fact, and this is from memory, one of the first actions as Minister of National Security with a former Police Commissioner and a Chief of Defence Staff, this Minister of National Security, newly minted, brand new, sat down in a press conference and very uncomfortably for the people next to him said, “We in de PNM”—and open up his arms like this. [*Member gestures*] You cannot do that. I mean, if you have been here, if you have been here in the Parliament since 1995—1995, I was in primary school. If you been here since 1995, you ought to know better. You ought to know that you cannot do that to persons who work in the national security scope.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I sought to use my time here today to very clearly articulate the Opposition’s position brought forth by the Member for Barataria/San Juan, supported by every Member of the Opposition Bench—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

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**Ms. A. Haynes:**—that we in the United National Congress, as representatives of the people Trinidad and Tobago, express a total lack of confidence in the Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** That we, Mr. Deputy Speaker, persons who have a responsibility to speak for citizens of Trinidad and Tobago—something that I heard the Minister of Public Utilities berate my colleague from Barataria/San Juan, “Why yuh come here and you read out things from newspapers and whatnot.” Because the newspapers, if I recall correctly, did an informal poll as to whether or not people were confident in the Minister

**Hon. Member:** [*Interruption*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** —confident—you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said, I am not—I cannot be distracted but I am hearing a constant question about sources and sources and sources. And if that is pedestrian level of argument, I really understand why that Member—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:**—cannot engage in the substantive debate, because you will speak across the floor but you will not stand up behind the mike and talk. So the people of San Fernando East could never hear your voice when they are asking you—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:**—when they are asking you, why is it—why is that in the City of San Fernando, we are facing high crime rates? Why is it that we are feeling unsafe? I am from south as well, you know. Why it is that we have to experience this state of insecurity? Credit to San Fernando West, he got up and he spoke in the debate, not across the floor; did not give a reason to support the Minister of

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National Security, but he spoke in the debate.

And so as we stand here today as a responsible Parliament, taking a look at all the arms of our national security system, I raised, in particular, questions of immigration, questions—and I want to reiterate that today in a joint select committee meeting that is available for public consumption, the personnel from the Ministry of National Security said that to date, they have not received any update on the immigration policy; a duty, a core function of the Minister of National Security who is responsible for advising the Cabinet on these matters. That you have had—that you can have person after person—when the Member for Naparima spoke, the Member for Naparima in a very impassioned debate on Friday the 28<sup>th</sup> of April went through why is it that we must exist in 2023 in the absence of targeted interventions of data-driven policies, and not one of them could get up and answer—not one—one person from the Government. And I hope the next speaker is coming to say to us that the Minister of National Security, in the interest of people of Trinidad and Tobago, has taken to the Cabinet and is in the process of executing X, Y and Z. There is a space, Mr. Deputy Speaker—and I wish to remind Members who are unfamiliar with the role of Parliament is. You have a duty to be accountable to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Ms. A. Haynes:** And I want to say to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago that is there no shame in admitting that you have made a mistake. That there is no shame in assessing the work of a Minister and saying that, “This ain’t go work for the people of Trinidad and Tobago.”

As a matter of fact, it is the truest act of bravery to say, “I have made a mistake and I will change course”, but do not allow the people of Trinidad and

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Tobago to suffer two more years under this incompetent Minister of National Security. I thank you.

**5.15 p.m.**

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I recognize the Member for Port of Spain South.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Keith Scotland** (*Port of Spain South*): Mr. Deputy Speaker, forgive my demeanour this afternoon if it shows a serious visage because this Motion, and any debate on crime, and any debate that has tangential repercussions relative to crime in Trinidad and Tobago, has no business being frivolous and vexatious. So forgive me this afternoon, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I address each issue on a serious basis and the serious manner that it deserves to be addressed.

Firstly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the hon. Member for Tabaquite went on record to indicate that at a JSC this morning it was stated that there was no migrant policy, or no continuation of the migrant policy. I myself attended that JSC. I did not glean that that was—that is what was being expressed by the Ministry, but be that as it may, let me correct the record of the *Hansard* this afternoon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am informed by the hon. Minister of National Security, Mr. Fitzgerald Ethelbert Hinds, and I verily believe—and I verily believe that within the last month, the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago has approved the continuation of the Migrant Registration Framework.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me repeat for the avoidance of any doubt whatsoever, I am informed and I verily believe that within the last month, the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago has approved the continuation of the Migrant

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Registration Framework. This gives access to all those persons who were registered originally to continue—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:**—the registration process. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the response of the hon. Minister of National Security, and this is the response of a responsible Government, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Secondly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the hon. Member for Tabaquite stated that there was no reply, there was no rejoinder as it relates the scourge of human trafficking. I say that because the irony of seating arrangements has not escaped me. Let me put on record, however, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that as a matter of priority, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has undertaken the following steps, during the period April 2022 to March 2023, to move towards an upgrade from the Tier 2 Watch List, and to upgrade Trinidad and Tobago as it relates to human trafficking. As a result of extensive bilateral discussions between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Embassy of the United States of America, Port of Spain, led by this Minister, a US-sponsored strategic trafficking in persons' adviser was appointed to the Ministry of National Security—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:**—to assist in increasing prosecutions towards the further strengthening in the country's position towards an upgrade in its tier ranking. That is one. The Minister of National Security has met with the Director of Public Prosecutions in order to strengthen the working relationship between the DPP's office and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service in order to ensure that the TTPS

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and cases as it relates to human trafficking are adequately dealt with and lead to more or to greater prosecution in the courts of Trinidad and Tobago. But more poignantly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, an expert in combating human trafficking has been retained by the United States and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to assist in meeting our obligations in order to reduce human trafficking, and that is none other than in the personage of Mrs. Antoinette Lucas-Andrews.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we put on *Hansard* the résumé, the achievements, the gravitas that comes with Mrs. Antoinette Lucas-Andrews, an attorney-at-law who is skilled in international relations and experienced in strategic inter-governmental engagement, and advises on advocacy in the highest levels of government, with extensive training in intelligence, human rights, policy and programme coordination.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what this means is that this Government and this Minister of National Security have seen it important and crucial to hire, not just a person who has no skill in their area which they purport to be competent in—if I say one word, I say “Reshmi”—but persons who are skilled, and this person who is skilled in the area of competence that is required of her, and this is in the person none other than Mrs. Antoinette Lucas-Andrews.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** For the record, in order to be complete, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through you, the hon. Member for Tabaquite and all her cohorts would note that this appointment in the first instance is six months, with an option to renew, as they continue to try to quell and to reduce that scourge of human trafficking. That is the first—that is the second point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I would like to make.

I would now wish in my contribution to totally debunk and respectfully

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address the thesis expounded by the hon. Member for Tabaquite and all the other speakers that went before. Because in the thesis, which is linked, which is sibling to the Motion, it is my respectful submission, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is a fundamental flaw. And when one reads as a whole the Motion presented by the hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan, the gravamen of this Motion is premised on a notion that the Minister of National Security is solely responsible for fighting crime, is solely responsible public safety, is solely responsible for the maintenance of law and order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, nothing can be further from the truth and it shows—it shows a peculiar lack of understanding of how government works, and it shows a definite sign, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they are not ready to govern Trinidad and Tobago.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Because that sort of fundamental misapprehension cannot be founded, cannot be seen to exist within the bosoms of persons who aspire to lead this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my thesis that public safety and the maintenance of law and order is a collective responsibility, and that is the basic premise upon which I stand today to support the hon. Minister of National Security, because I say public safety and maintenance of law and order is a collective responsibility. Consequently, fighting crime and the maintenance of law and order is a community responsibility. It is a national responsibility, it is a family responsibility and most importantly, it is a parliamentary responsibility.

I will now come to deal with the concept of parliamentary responsibility as it relates to the various terms expressed in the Motion, and just to ensure that there is

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no doubt or ambiguity that I understand the premise of the Motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I go back to its main tenets:

“...the maintenance of law and order...effective oversight of national security...

...departments of national security...”

The execution of duties. These are the hallmark, or these are the various planks upon which this Motion is founded. And I would like to address them and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, tell you my view and my respectful understanding of these planks vis-à-vis the hon. Minister of National Security.

Firstly, the hon. Minister of National Security recognizes his responsibilities. And from his actions in the past, he has demonstrated that he will not shirk this responsibility. By and large, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Trinidad and Tobago is a society that adheres to the rule of law—by and large. And by extension, when any Minister, but particularly the Minister of National Security acts, he cannot act arbitrarily, he cannot act in a vacuum. He must act within the four walls of the laws of Trinidad and Tobago.

It is fully understandable and appreciated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when our citizens experience crime and an attack on their safety, they would look for the person’s responsibility—or the person who is responsible for crime, for safety, and by extension they may very well rightfully look to the hon. Minister of National Security. But the Minister of National Security, he can formulate policy. But in order to have the effective implementation of this policy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need legislation. They cannot get away from that. Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me repeat the synergy and the connection to what I am saying. There is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a legitimate concern—

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**Hon. Member:** [*Interruption*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Proceed. Proceed.

**Mr. K. Scotland:** There is a legitimate concern, as anyone would be, as it relates to national security, as it relates to the organs, as it relates to public safety, and rightly the population may very well look to the hon. Minister of National Security. The hon. Minister of National Security in answer will say, “I will devise policy”, but in order to device that policy, his framework must be the laws of Trinidad and Tobago. He cannot act out with the laws of Trinidad and Tobago. But more importantly, each policy—each policy to be implemented, Mr. Deputy Speaker, must be done within the framework of the legislation and the laws of Trinidad and Tobago. This is because the Minister must implement these policies with the parameters of the law.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to remind Trinidad and Tobago, as I join this debate, that the body that has the responsibility and authority to pass laws in Trinidad and Tobago is this Parliament, the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, and a member of which is the hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan, the mover of this Motion, and every Member who stood up to support this Motion by their contributions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, I am taking it in baby steps, the Parliament comprises the Government, and the Parliament comprises the Opposition. Let us see what has happened in this Parliament when the hon. Minister of National Security and various satellite Ministers have brought legislation to assist in the fight against crime and for public safety. Let us examine the records of the *Hansard*. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the *Hansard* of this country will

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show in—it has to be a hall of infamy, that whenever legislation to combat crime and ensure public safety was tabled in this Parliament and debated for passage, they were not supported by the hon. Members on the other side.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**5.30 p.m.**

**Mr. K. Scotland:** No support from the Opposition was forthcoming. No support from the hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan who raised this Motion. No support from the hon. Member for Tabaquite who got up for 45 minutes and called upon us to show why we support the hon. Minister. I say to you, look within before you seek to cast stones.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again Member—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

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

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Look within.

**Mr. Hosein:** [*Inaudible*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, Barataria/San Juan. Barataria/San Juan, please.

**Mr. Hosein:** Sir, I am sorry.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, the crosstalk. Address the Chair also, Member for Port of Spain South.

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, firstly the Strategic Services Agency (Amdt.) Bill of 2016, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March, 2016 a vote was called, 21 Members of Government for, 11 Members of the Opposition against. Shame! Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Interception of Communication Bill, 2020, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 19 Government Members for, 12 Opposition Members against. Strike two, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Bail (Amdt.) Bill of 2022, this was

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a critical component in the arsenal in the fight against crime brought by this Government to continue something that was in place under the previous regime. It required in the form that it was brought, a three-fifths majority of both Houses. It did not receive and the Government did not received the requisite support from the hon. Members on the other side.

The mover of this Motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was one of those who refused and failed to support the continuation of this Bill, and now he has the temerity to bring a Motion of no confidence when he himself has not shown the morale and the parliamentary fortitude to support initiatives that will reduce criminality and create a greater sense of safety in the public. And to show how serious this Government is about crime, when the same Opposition tabled this Bill in Parliament, this Government, whilst we were in Opposition at the time, understood the significance of that piece of legislation and supported it. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not revisionist history. That is history.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** What this Government and, by extension, the Minister of National Security has shown, is that whether we are in Opposition or whether we are in Government, the PNM is serious about fighting crime in Trinidad and Tobago and that is because we know that we have to exist in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I therefore submit on this Motion that the Opposition has breached its duty of care to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** You have breached your duty of care. You have failed in your constitutional undertaking to assist in bringing laws for the better government and governance of Trinidad and Tobago, and the *Hansard* records will reflect this and

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it will reflect that on every occasion that this Government has made attempts to address the crime situation through legislation we have found no support in the Opposition.

The second recital—so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am steering my ship very close to the port of the tenets and recitals of this Motion. The second recital, bold, Mr. Deputy Speaker, here what it says:

“*Whereas* the Minister of National Security through his vast and continued incompetence has mismanaged the organs and departments of national security;”

**Hon. Members:** Oh, yes. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is something. You know when human trafficked organs are something that arise, you know it brings a lot of excitement.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** A lot of excitement so people say, oh yes. You know it is fraudulent at best, but let me not digress. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no mirth in me this afternoon.

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

**Mr. K. Scotland:** There is no mirth. Yes. The second recital of this ill-fated Motion accuses the Government and accuses the Minister of National Security of mismanagement of the organs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, respectfully and rhetorically, I ask this Parliament: Who “dismanned” SAUTT? Who “dismanned”, disbanded, the organ of national security called SAUTT? This is what the records will reflect as it relates to that. Mr. Deputy Speaker, all the resources for training that was put into SAUTT, the

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millions of dollars, \$10 million—SAUTT—that was invested in bringing people from aboard to assist the technology that was implemented in order to assist, to gather data—there is a call for data. Where is Naparima? He has called for data. How can we gather data if all the equipment to that was used and purchased with the moneys of the taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago to assist in the gathering of data? If that was disbanded and thrown away, how can we get data at this point in time, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Within months of coming into Government in 2020, SAUTT was disbanded. What is the reason advanced? Up to now we have not had a reason advanced for the disbanding of SAUTT. But what happened to that organ of State? Under what we say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are not crying about spilled milk. We looking forward in order to assist and to alleviate the situation that exists in Trinidad and Tobago. So let me start. There has been—let me speak in the positive because they will say, “Yuh only looking back. Yuh are only looking.” Well let me look forward.

There has been increased training for police officers, and under the Ministry of National Security, police officers are working more closely with the community stakeholders. Just a week ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as Member of Parliament for Port of Spain South, I met with the police, I met with the residents of Woodbrook in order to improve their living conditions and to hear the concerns that they had about crime. Secondly, the issue of Gang Reduction and Community Empowerment is contained in exactly a body that is named that, the Gang Reduction and Community Empowerment programme. It was launched in May 2023 and it is receiving support throughout the East-West Corridor and particularly in the Northern Division.

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The aim of this initiative, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to assist with the reduction of gang-related crime and the strengthening of relationships between the police and at-risk community. Let me now go to the very wording of the Motion to tie in that phenomenon with answering the Motion.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when under your watch have you had an initiative which has police in communities working to reduce gangs? Is that not a competent execution of your duty?

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** So we complain about their lack of support for the gang legislation. Yes? We said you do not support us, but we worked around it. That is what Government does. And I say to you in the coming days, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this country will understand what a real government does. We do not sit and put our heads in the sand when any crisis comes up. We address it head on.

So yes, you did not support the anti-gang legislation. We worked around it and we have since May of this year instituted and implemented the Gang Reduction and Community Empowerment programme. I am again informed and verily believed that it is reaping rewards in areas such as Maloney—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:**—in areas such as La Horquetta, and I dare say in areas such as East Dry River. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the aim and the goal of strengthening those community ties is something that this country must sit up and take notice of.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on May the 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Minister of National Security and the

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European Union. This is to enhance cooperation against human and maritime human trafficking. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in light—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:**—why? The hon. Member for Tabaquite speaks about data. You got up to talk, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why have you not brought facts to this Parliament?

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Why did you tell us—Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is one thing to say well nothing has been done if nothing has been done, but in bringing to this Parliament a serious debate, why did you not first acknowledge?

On May the 18<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am calling a date. May the 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022, over a year ago, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Ministry of National Security and the European Union. This is to enhance the cooperation against maritime human trafficking.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** What I say is this. If your thesis—sorry.

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

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Yes please—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Proceed.

**Mr. K. Scotland:**—Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you very kindly. Why not tell the country well that was not sufficient, but why try to mislead the public? Why try to mislead the public—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:**—and say nothing was done? Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the



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European Union we are speaking about you know. I want to continue.

The establishment of the coastal and riverine patrol unit—maybe then hon. Minister of National Security was being coy. Maybe he was just being modest. But I cannot be modest now in light of the contribution that went before. I am told, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that pride cometh before the fall, but I must let the country know—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:**—not in a proud way, but in a factual way, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Hinds:** Upgraded vessels and—

**Mr. K. Scotland:** The upgraded vessels for the riverine and it now—listen, we do not get the OPVs, but we have the vessels to patrol the coast.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** But each member of that unit trained. So what we say now to those that you know, caveat emptor, buyer beware—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:**—people train, we looking for “yuh”. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I continue. Sometimes out of evil and I am not calling—it is only a nomenclature. I am not calling this Motion evil. I am just using a metaphor, but out of evil cometh good.

And because this ill-fated Motion was raised, it gives me—

**5.45 p.m.**

**Hon. Members:** [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Proceed, Member.

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Because this ill-fated Motion was brought, it gives me an opportunity to whisper loudly—

**Mr. Hinds:** “Ohhhh”.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:**—to youths of Trinidad and Tobago without politicizing crime. What we say is this, in this whisper—because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I wish to do is to try to penetrate the hearts, the souls and the minds of the young people of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Hinds:** The Hearts and Minds unit of the police service.

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Yes, and that mirrors the Hearts and Minds unit of the police which is a creation under this Minister.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** I wish to say that crime and security is a problem that have no immediate panacea to eradicate it. It is a herculean task to fix social conditions that lead to the commission of crime, but the Government is up to the task. The herculean task will be undertaken by this Government. And together, it very well may be, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we need to examine the stability of familial relationships, community safety, and educational underachievement and poverty. And together, instead of raising a Motion that is frivolous and vexatious, reason with each other.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Reason with each other and drill down to root causes of where we are at now—for where we are at now: poverty, socio-economic or lack of socio-economic opportunity that leads to vulnerable individuals being attracted to a life of crime. What we say is that in order to answer that, the hon. Minister of National Security, you must not be modest.

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There are certain things that I wish to whisper loudly to the youth of Trinidad and Tobago. The first is this: I say to you, Trinidad and Tobago—and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through you, I speak to them, through you, that there are alternatives to a life of crime.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** I speak to Trinidad and Tobago, and I say that. The first is a programme under the Ministry of Youth, the Specialised Youth Services Programmes, it is called SYSP, in recognition of the fact that a great amount of adolescents between the ages of 14 and 30 are youths at risk. This social intervention allows persons to access a programme overseen by the Ministry of National Security to gain life skills, which will enable them either to enter the world of work, or more akin to what I am warmed to, to work for themselves. It will create a sense of self-esteem and self-worth that is an anathema, that is antithetical to power behind the barrel of a gun, and that is what this Government brings to the table, that is what the Ministry of National Security brings to the table.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** An alternative. How come no Member on the other side, any of the hon. Members, cited an alternative for Trinidad and Tobago? How come?

**Hon. Member:** None. None.

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Is it, what? They will say that that is not your responsibility? Mr. Deputy Speaker, do they not live on this rock called Trinidad and Tobago?

The second one, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I am looking at my time, is the Military-Led Academic Training Programme, MiLAT. This instils, this programme, one of the programmes that we are using—

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**Mr. Hosein:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 48(1). The Member is speaking about the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service, not the Ministry of National Security. This is a Motion on National Security.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Overruled. Proceed.

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Thank you. Mr. Deputy Speaker—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** —I am famous for memes. I want the country to take note of that total lack, that total ignorance of whole government approach, that sort of mouthing—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** [*Inaudible*]

**Mr. Hosein:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on 48(1), this is a Motion of no confidence in the Minister of National Security, not in Minister Cummings.

**Hon. Member:** What?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Again, for the second time, Members, overruled.

**Hon. Members:** [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Silence. Okay. Overruled, proceed.

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Lest it be lost in the conundrum of noise, let me repeat myself.

**Hon. Member:** Cacophony.

**Mr. K. Scotland:** The objection raised by none other than the mover of this Motion, the hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan, shows an acute lack of appreciation of a whole government approach.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

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**Mr. K. Scotland:** Yet they will be approaching Trinidad and Tobago and say “Give us a chance, choose me, choose me.” Reject it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because this programme, even though under the auspices of the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service, is a programme that is available to all, it is not Ministry-specific. So I am aghast—

**Mr. Hosein:** The Motion is—[*Inaudible*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:**—obviously, I am aghast by the puerile nature of that objection. I will move on.

**Mr. Young:** Tabaquite—[*Inaudible*]

**Hon. Members:** [*Interruption*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Thirdly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Civilian Conservation Corp. That again creates in Trinidad and Tobago an opportunity for young persons at risk to have an outlet where they can gainfully employ—

**Hon. Members:** [*Continuous interruption*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, proceed, Member.

**Mr. K. Scotland:**—where they can learn about the environment, where they can organize their time, where they can optimize what they do and—

**Hon. Members:** [*Continuous interruption*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members at the lower end of the Chamber on both sides, you all are free to have your discourse on the outside. Please, Members on both sides on at the lower end. Proceed, Member for Port of Spain South.

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This brings a sense of discipline. It brings a sense of belonging. It brings a sense of that negating of the feeling that the State is against you, and I must rise and I must show myself. Mr. Deputy Speaker, every single time I turn on my television, ESPN, I see a

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basketball star and I am saying, “Why is he going down this road?” But if it is such a person with such a history can be lured to that type of life, this Government has to be complimented for the fact that it is trying, with the limited resources that we have, to lure people away from that life. And instead of bringing a Motion of this nature, which is doomed to fail on its merits, why has not the hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan brought a Motion that engenders, that says, “Look, these are the programmes that we have, access it”? “These are the programmes that we have in Barataria/San Juan.” Barataria/San Juan is a neighbour to Port of Spain South. Why have you not done that? Do you know why, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It is my respectful submission that they do not care.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** As we drill down and we try to analyze what is before this honourable House, we say on this side that the Minister of National Security is not solely responsible for the ensuring of public safety, and that is a responsibility of us all, and it is a responsibility just not of the Government but it is a responsibility of the Opposition. I say that if left up to the hon. Members on the other side, there will be no organs of national security to manage because they will disband all, and the population must wonder why. This side says that we have the confidence in hon. Minister of National Security—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** —because he has displayed the “stick-to-itiveness”. That is one of the hallmarks of the job that he has undertaken in Trinidad and Tobago. With all that has been said—and one of the speakers, the speaker who went before me has admitted it, this is a personal attack. How could this be a personal attack? You tried to chastise us to say, “Well, behave better,” but it was admitted that this is a

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personal attack.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** How do we reach to a personal attack? What about the issue? What about the issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker? What about the hon. Minister of National Security warrants out of the mouth of the hon. Member for Tabaquite a personal attack?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we say that this Government will try to provide opportunities to veer youths at risk away from a life of crime. We ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this platform, this sacred platform that is provided for us to be able to address the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, be used in a productive way. And if one person—if I am able to reach one youth, one young man, one young lady in Trinidad and Tobago, who will hearken to the message and turn away from crime, then my debating shall not be in vain.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** It will not be in vain. We are up to the task. The hon. Minister of National Security is up to the task. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is up to the task.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Do not be fooled. Let us try, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to all be up to the task so that this beloved country—

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

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Let me repeat. If I am able to penetrate one mind, one young mind, one in Trinidad and Tobago to turn away and hearken and hearken—

**Hon. Member:** [*Interruption*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** It will be tedious to you because you do not care.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** And I hope Trinidad and Tobago is listening. It is tedious to you and then they cry, “Oh, this one die and this one is ill and this parent,” Mr. Deputy Speaker. One—if one person hearkens to this debate, then my debating will not be in vain.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. K. Scotland:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity given to me today that I consider very sacred, to address Trinidad and Tobago on a serious issue. To God be the glory, great things he has done.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I recognize the Member for Chaguanas West.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Dinesh Rambally** (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know time is very short, extremely short, and I want to make it clear that having listened to all of the speakers here today, we have seen there is a clear recognition by my colleagues on the other side that they do not have any defence for the Minister of National Security. None whatsoever.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. D. Rambally:** But what it also shows is that they are bereft of ideas as well. If the Minister of National Security, Laventille West, is removed, one of them may have to take that spot.

**Hon. Member:** “Dey eh wah that”.

**Mr. D. Rambally:** And they do not want it.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]



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**Mr. D. Rambally:** They are not up to the task. Contrary to what Port of Spain South said, they are not up to the task.

So it is one thing to say that we are here today, and we are debating and I heard a lot of—

**6:00 p.m.**

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Leader of the House.

### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, sadly, sadly, I must move the adjournment of the House. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Monday the 29<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. Mr. Deputy Speaker, at that time we will do the Municipal Corporations (Extension of Terms of Office and Validation) Bill that was on today's supplemental Order Paper, and we will be taking it through all its stages. Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Again, hon. Members we must follow the procedure of the House. Right so, hon. Member there are four matters that qualify to be raised on the Motion on the Adjournment of the House. I will now call on the Member for Tabaquite, who will be doing two this evening. Member for Tabaquite.

### **Failure to Commence Rehabilitation Work (The Ministry of Works and Transport)**

**Ms. Anita Haynes (Tabaquite):** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thank you to the Members of the House for allowing me this time after our sitting to raise these matters on the adjournment. Matters that are very critical to the constituents of Tabaquite. And so in the first instance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we

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are seeking an answer on the failure of the Ministry of Works and Transport to commence the rehabilitation work at the Bonne Aventure Main Road land steps in the vicinity of Ragoobar lands in a timely manner. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I mean really and truly this is not a part of the job that I relish. I believe that things like road infrastructure are par for the course, something that citizens should readily be able to rely upon, a safe road network infrastructure that is up to the task. Unfortunately—in 2022, so we are approaching one year ago—on the main road in Gasparillo, along the Bonne Aventure Main Road, we had a significant land movement. The Minister is aware of it and I know that, the Minister I believe visited on one occasion. So the issue that we are facing here today is that in my correspondence to the Ministry of Works and Transport, we were told that they required the dry season to complete the work that is left to be completed. And that in the dry season certain works would be done.

In the earlier part of this year, about March of 2023, a notice was issued by the Minister of Works and Transport that stated that work would commence. We were then informed that that was rescinded and that T&TEC needed to remove some light poles from the area, and then the work would commence. But as I said, this is not a part of the job that I relish. I am just seeking answers on behalf of my constituents as we approach a rainy season, in a space that we were told that the work could not be done in the rainy season. We would like to know, to hear from the Minister of Works and Transport, what redress the commuters along that Bonne Aventure Main Road—and for those who are unfamiliar, this is a highly traversed road. It is a main road, I have no desire to bring the Chair into the debate but I know you, you yourself have seen the landslip on the visit to the children's home and so you know it is a very, very precarious situation.

We are currently operating with a single lane that creates significant

amounts of traffic in the Gasparillo area that is already—for those who pass in that area, you already know the traffic situation that we face. And so I thank the Minister for taking the time to give us an answer and I hope to hear a very positive response as to when the road works will begin. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I call on the Minister of Works and Transport. You have 10 minutes to respond.

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Sen. The Hon. Rohan Sinanan):** Thank you Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, seeing that the tone from the Member was very calm, I will also respond in a very calm tone.

**Hon. Member:** Awww.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is just the tone of the Motion, the failure of the Ministry of Works and Transport to commence rehabilitation works, I just want to let population know that there is no truth to that. The Ministry immediately went, out inspected the landslip. I will not get into the cause of the landslip, because we recognized the landslip is causing some distress. However, you do not just go in and repair a landslip, you have to do studies, you have to know what is the cause of it, and how deep is the failure. The Ministry aggressively did that, however, because there are high tension wires running in the area, T&TEC had to mobilize to remove the poles. I think if the Member visits—I think it is close to your constituency office.

**Ms. Haynes:** I pass there every day.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Right, so if you pass there tomorrow, you would recognize that T&TEC have removed the poles and the contract which was awarded since January this year, in time with the dry season will be mobilized, I understand from next week, to have it completed. So like the Ministry of Works

and Transport very efficient as always, the job is getting done. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Thank you Member, I will call again on the Member for Tabaquite. Second matter.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Guaracara Tabaquite Main Road  
(Worsening Road Hazard)**

**Ms. Anita Haynes (Tabaquite):** Thank you Mr. Deputy Speaker, and in the scope of positive responses, I hope we continue as I raise a second matter on the adjournment. This time we are looking at an expedited solution to the worsening road hazard in the form of recurrent mudslide at the Guaracara Tabaquite Main Road the 17 kilometre mark. Again, I know the Minister is aware of this situation, again the Minister would have visited, I, myself, would have visited on several times. So the reason for bringing this matter on the adjournment, again the recurrent and persistent mudslides, it is an increasing safety concern to the persons who use this Guaracara Tabaquite Main Road. And it is a significant number of commuters.

All persons who have to get into San Fernando rely on passing on this road to get from Tabaquite, from Brasso, et cetera. The rainy season, again, poses a very serious problem. I will acknowledge that the Ministry of Works and Transport has engaged in clearing of the roadways to maintain a single passable lane. I am also very aware of the challenges that are faced with this particular situation. But it is my role as a Member of Parliament to seek answers on the official record for all my constituents who I represent. And so that is the reason for bringing this matter on the adjournment for this mudslide.

Additionally, what we are hoping to hear, is that there has been some

movement towards a long term solution. I am a very patriotic citizen, I do not like and condone the use of money to fix a problem in the short term consistently. So we are spending tens of thousands of dollars to clear a road when what we require is a long term solution to prevent the mud from getting into the road. Again this is for the safety of commuters, it is a very serious road hazard and the Minister is also aware, they are in the letters, the letters have been detailed to the Ministry of Works and Transport, the Ministry of Planning and Development, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries as well, because it is a number of issue facing this particular mudslide. But my key concern here today is that we are pursuing a long term solution to this mudslide so that persons can safely get to and from in their commute from home to work. And so I thank you, and again I hope for a very positive response and expedited solution.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Minister of Works and Transport.

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Sen. The Hon. Rohan Sinanan):** Thank you again Mr. Deputy Speaker, and Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would start again by referring to the Motion because the Motion starts with the failure of this time the Minister to expedite solutions for the worsening roads, road hazards, due to the mudslide. Now again, I want to ask the Member, it cannot be as a failure of the Minister because you would admit the Minister immediately went down and visited the site and tried to analyse what was happening down there.

And what is taking place down there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is where I need help from the Member of Parliament, the regional corporations in the area. This is an area where one of the residents went and started to illegally quarry the land. Illegally quarry the land, and damaged a WASA well. And that WASA well has a continuous flow of water bringing down the mud from the hill. Right? The

Ministry visited, the Ministry right now has engaged WASA. When you go down to the site, the neighbours are saying well one person “try to thief” land from the next person, and burst the well and all kind of craziness. Now had this matter been addressed by the regional corporation in the area immediately as the illegal quarrying started, the burgesses may not have had to go through this for over a year.

**6.10 p.m.**

It is not an easy fix. It is a WASA well that was damaged, due to illegal quarrying. The Ministry is looking at the legal options. We have engaged the legal team and in the interim, the Ministry continues to ensure that the road remains passable. We are working with WASA to try to cap the well and then legal action is being pursued and cost to recover the work that has to be done, if the owner of the land does not address it immediately. So it is being addressed. It is being monitored and it is costing us some money to keep the road clear. But it is a legal matter where we just cannot enter into someone’s land and start to build retaining walls, and so, especially when there is a well that was damaged by the burgesses of the constituency. Thank you.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 6.11 p.m.*