

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 23, 2023

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Audited Financial Statements of Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited for the year ended December 31, 2020. [*The Minister of Finance (Hon. Colm Imbert)*]
2. Audited Financial Statements of Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited for the year ended December 31, 2021. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]
3. Audited Financial Statements of Rural Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (RDC) for financial year ended September 30, 2021. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]
4. Audited Financial Statements of Taurus Services Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2019. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]
5. Audited Financial Statements of Tourism Trinidad Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2021. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]
6. Consolidated Audited Financial Statements of the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the financial year ended December 31, 2021. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]
7. Audited Financial Statements of National Quarries Company Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2020. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]
8. Audited Financial Statements of the University of Trinidad and Tobago for the financial year ended September 30, 2017. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]

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9. Audited Financial Statements of the University of Trinidad and Tobago for the financial year ended September 30, 2018. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]
Papers 1 to 9 to be referred to the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee.
10. Administrative Report of the National Training Agency (NTA) for the fiscal year 2018/2019. [*The Minister of Education (Hon. Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly)*]

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

Madam Speaker: Leader of the House.

The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh): Madam Speaker, there are no questions for oral answer. There is one question for written answer, question No. 174, and the answer has already been laid. Thank you.

Student Support Services Division (SSSD) Breakdown of the Number of Persons Employed

174. Ms. Anita Haynes (Tabaquite) asked the hon. Minister of Education:

With regard to the Student Support Services Division (SSSD), will the Minister provide a detailed breakdown of the number of persons employed in the following units?

- a) Guidance and Counselling Unit;
- b) Social Work Unit;
- c) Special Education Unit; and
- d) Development Assessment Intervention Unit.

Vide end of sitting for written answer.

MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY (LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN)

[Third Day]

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

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Be it resolved that this House express its lack of confidence in the Minister of National Security. [*Mr. S. Hosein*]

Question again proposed.

Madam Speaker: Ten Members have already contributed to this debate. I now call upon the Member for Chaguanas West, who has 29 minutes of original speaking time remaining. Member for Chaguanas West.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Dinesh Rambally (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to continue contributing to this very important Motion brought by my colleague Member for Barataria/San Juan. Madam Speaker, on the last occasion when it came—when this Motion was in session, I did contribute for a minute or two but, Madam Speaker, I would like to revisit the words or the recitals of this Motion, just to bring our minds back into focus and in context of what we are debating. And Madam Speaker, very quickly:

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

And whereas the Minister of National Security, through his vast and continued incompetence has mismanaged the organs and departments of national security

And whereas the Minister of National Security has unequivocally demonstrated his inability to competently execute his duties

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

Madam Speaker, as I contribute to this continuing debate, the overall theme of my contribution will be that there must be accountability, and it gives me

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absolutely no pleasure to debate this Motion here today. And let me be clear, Madam Speaker, this is not a personal Motion about the Minister of National Security, the Member for Laventille West. It is not a Motion about whether he is qualified or not to occupy his ministerial portfolio, or whether he cares about his job or not. I believe Madam Speaker, the people of Trinidad and Tobago can easily deduce those things and have done so already. This Motion is simply about one word, and that is Madam Speaker, “accountability”.

Madam Speaker, when we look at the presentations or contributions from Members on the other side, I think they have ignored this word or this theme or this concept of accountability. You see, Madam Speaker, in this House, we all sit as elected Members who have taken a sworn oath to serve the best interests of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Madam Speaker, a country’s Minister of National Security, whosoever he or she may be, is tasked with the responsibility of, and let me repeat that—that word responsibility. Whosoever is the Minister of National Security, their responsibility is to manage the security of the nation, and in so doing, keep the people safe.

People in our nation are living in a state of fear and that is putting it mildly, Madam Speaker. Last year, there were over 600 murders recorded in our country. That is a shameful and unholy record in our history. Daylight robberies, home invasions, murders, gang-related activity, are all now synonymous with life in Trinidad and Tobago, just as we would speak off doubles and bake and shark. I see my colleague, Member for Diego Martin, he is smiling at this. But just as we like our doubles and bake and shark, we are now somehow hampered because of the criminal activity. Of course, our citizens, Madam Speaker, do not expect Minister Hinds to personally go out and solve the murders. What they expect,

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however, is a government Minister to reassure them that his Ministry is working on strategies and policies to save lives.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. D. Rambally: And as I say strategies and policies I want to just respond to something I had heard—at first, when I heard it being said once, stated once by the previous speaker, Member for Port of Spain South, I thought it was just an error, but he kept repeating it, Madam Speaker. It was disappointing to hear that the Member of Parliament for Port of Spain South, that he was at the last session, he appears not to understand how our system of government works, in that he kept saying that, and referring to several pieces of legislation. And in so doing, he was saying based on these pieces of legislation, the Government has been forming policy and then seeking to implement it.

Now, I think that that is putting, you know, as they say, Madam Speaker, in common parlance, “yuh dropping de gear into reverse”. We have a system of governance whereby it is the Cabinet, the Government of the day will set policy, Madam Speaker, whatever they see as necessary for good governance, they formulate policy. There is a way that the executive arm and the legislative arm operate so, when the Cabinet and the Government formulates the policy, it is there that they will now use that policy to inform the legislative framework. So it is quite on the reverse. But why do I make reference to that very quickly? It is because it is telling as to why it is the Government does not have any control on the spiraling crime; they are working in reverse. So I want to set that on the record. So I say, as I was saying before, Madam Speaker, that people do not expect the Minister of National Security, Member for Laventille West, to personally go and solve crime. They want to know what the elected representatives, who are being

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paid with their taxpayer dollars, what these representatives are actually doing, and they want them to do their jobs.

It is quite amazing that the Minister of National Security came to this debate in an earlier session, not to answer to the people, Madam Speaker, of Trinidad and Tobago about what it is he is doing to keep them safe but rather to engage in a self-serving diatribe, attempting to pass off his responsibility for his failings to others. And if I may quote a word that he used in his contribution, if anything, that is what I would call “evilousness.” That is “evilousness” Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. D. Rambally: Now when the Minister fails, he is not failing himself or his Prime Minister or the Cabinet, both of whom, and their colleagues, enjoy their own personal security detail—certainly the Prime Minister and the Minister for National Security—paid for by taxpayers, they are failing the people of the country. If the Minister of National Security no longer feels the need to stand in this House, to be accountable to the people who employ them, then we all might as well close down, Madam Speaker, and I say so respectfully, this House and go home. The theme is accountability. If the Members opposite do not take this Motion seriously, then they should stop saying they care about the people and that they care only about themselves.

Madam Speaker, it is telling that none of the Minister’s colleagues could defend him from their Government. The Member of Parliament for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West, stood for 45 minutes and was not able to provide the House with any proof that the Minister of National Security is competent and capable in performing his role as the Minister of National Security. He spent a considerable amount of time speaking about the crime symposium, which has yet to produce a

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single improvement or tangible action by resolution or Bill before this Parliament to bring any kind of relief to the citizens to sleep soundly at night, without the fear of home invasion or of theft of their property or of simply being murdered mercilessly.

Madam Speaker, imagine Members on that side they spoke at length—

Madam Speaker: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. D. Rambally:—yes please, Madam Speaker. Imagine speaking at length about the technical points of a parliamentary debate and policymaking instead of giving any credence to the ability of the Minister in question in this Motion to perform his job. This Motion continuing before us here today, Madam Speaker, is not simply about the competency of the Minister of National Security, it is about accountability of public officers, the confidence citizens of our nation have in those entrusted to serve them and most of all, it is about the safety and security of our citizens.

I want to reference, Madam Speaker, with your permission, an article which appeared in the *Daily Express* of 14th April, 2023 and it was a letter to the editor and it is titled: “An accountant for national security?” That is the title *Daily Express* 14 April, 2023. And I quote:

“It would appear that Minister of National Security Fitzgerald Hinds has the easiest job portfolio since every time he is asked about the escalating crime situation, he simply replies that he is only responsible for providing budgeted resources. Nothing more, nothing less.

Maybe we should get rid of that ministerial position and let someone with an accounting background handle the job as it is such a simplified job to perform.”

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The author—I do not quote anymore—but the author is J. Deering of Maraval.

I want to begin, Madam Speaker, by reminding the Minister of National Security of his statement last year, 20th December, 2022 at a major conference at the Ministry of National Security, Port of Spain, headquarters. And this was during the handing over of the Draft Firearm User's License Policy and the Draft National Border Security Policy by the Office of Law Enforcement. And it goes, I quote:

“I came into this business understanding that 70 per cent of society does not support this effort or want to see us succeed.”

I go no further Madam Speaker, simply because other Members would have referenced this particular public discourse.

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But what I want to say is that that statement perfectly sums up the overarching philosophy of the Minister as well as the Government. And that is, instead of trying, Madam Speaker, instead of trying to tell the population of the role that they intend to undertake, knowing that we have runaway crime situation, knowing that we need to have public safety, what we are getting is a deflection of accountability which they should own up to, a deflection onto the population. So this is something that is very important and that seems to be the philosophy, please, Madam Speaker, that you have a deflection which is always taking place. So instead of trying to win over public trust, instead of outlining plans and proposals to reassure the public that the Government will keep them safe, what you have is a Minister of National Security starting the job, blaming the majority of the population and cynically suggesting that is they want to see him fail. That is the philosophy.

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Despite this country recording over 605 murders last year, Madam Speaker—it was higher than that, but I used that as a conservative and somewhat safe figure in the context of what the statistics from the TTPS, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, put out, and 274 murders thus far for this year, which already, Madam Speaker—if we look at the duration of time this year as compared to 2022, we have surpassed the number of murders already with 274, this Minister believes that he, not the 274 or the 605-plus last year, these statistics—according to the Minister, he believes that he is the biggest victim in our nation.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. D. Rambally: So I want to assure that the Minister of National Security, hon. Member for Laventille West, that the entire nation, who are now living in fear, who have lost loved ones due to criminals, who have lost their businesses due to criminals, are not against him in the way he thinks. They are frustrated, they feel angry and feel helpless, and they simply want a Minister of National Security who can do the job.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. D. Rambally: So, Madam Speaker, this is not about crime politics, this is about the people who have elected us as hon. Members of this House, and what they expect from each and every member of this House is accountability. And this Motion—again, I commend the member for Barataria/San Juan. I think the Motion is one of accountability. I think it is one which is an endorsement of the role of the Opposition in holding those in Government accountable. And so I endorse this Motion, I commend it. I ask all Members in this House to think about those who have lost their loved ones; to think about whether or not we need to have someone in that office of Ministry of National Security who can get a handle on the crime

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situation, instil public trust and confidence, and ensure that people are safe once again in this country.

Madam Speaker, having said that, I move a little bit away from the theme of accountability to treat with some of the issues of crime, but in so far as it relates to women, and there is a reason for it, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to travel to England, to London, in the past week and I know Members on the other side do not like to hear this word or this name, but I was fortunate and honoured to appear before the honourable, the Law Lords of the Privy Council.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. D. Rambally: And whilst I was there, Madam Speaker, I was requested to attend a meeting before the *BBC*, the British Broadcasting Corporation, and it was interesting some of the matters that were raised in that particular conversation. And, of course, I at no time represented myself to be representing the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. It was simply because the *BBC* knew I was in England and they wanted to speak on certain matters.

Madam Speaker, one of the matters which arose was an article entitled:

“The Caribbean island of Trinidad grapples with a ‘national crisis’ of violence”.

This is *The Guardian*, the UK *The Guardian*. It is a Friday, 16th June, 2023 article and the author of the article is Tracy McVeigh. My belief is that Tracy McVeigh is one of the leading editors in global matters and what is the—having entitled it—the subtitle:

“Killings of women and girls in Trinidad and Tobago have reached an all-time high, while police and are politicians are failing to tackle rising crime rates”.

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That is the subtitle. And so, Madam Speaker, I do not wish to—it is a lengthy article. I do not wish to cite ad nauseum from it. They have referenced in this article the numerous:

“Photos of...women appearing on social media with regularity. Headlines of shootings are weekly.

For women, it is a ‘national crisis’...”

And in this regard, they have cited the local writer and lecturer at the Institute for Gender and Development Studies at UWI, that is Dr. Gabrielle Hosein. One of the window captions says:

“Violence is so endemic that its reduction and prevention should be treated as a national emergency”.

And again, in this regard, they quoted Dr. Gabrielle Hosein, local UWI lecturer.

One part of the article which I wish to cite, however, with your permission, and I quote:

“In March, the police commissioner, Erla Harewood-Christopher, said ‘an evil had spread over the land’ and that reducing murder rates was a ‘bit beyond’ the force’s capabilities. An initial government response to the uproar over the murders of Riley and Bharatt was to announce that the use of pepper spray by women would be legalised. Later, the attorney general, Faris Al-Rawi, said permits would be needed.”

I am quoting from the article still:

“There have been no attempts legislate or control the illegal “PH” (private hire) taxi drivers, who are widely regarded as a risk to the safety of women and girls in a country where public transport is limited and expensive imported cars are beyond the means of many.”

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I continue:

“The PH drivers are a major problem, that could be easily resolved with political will...”

And this is a quotation from Bharath-Nahous who is a prominent—I do not want to use the word popular, but a prominent social activist in Trinidad and Tobago. And they continue with the quote of Bharath-Nahous:

“So many girls are being taken away and never coming back. For women to feel they cannot go to their own yard or to the mall without parents dropping them off is heartbreaking. The Government does everything in terms of stacking things against an honest citizen.”

So this article published prominently in the UK’s *The Guardian* is citing local contributions on the crime situation.

“Bharath-Nahous says stories abound of rape victims being turned away by police - she describes one woman who had been abducted and raped who was dismissed by local officers as having had a fling; another who ran naked and bloody into a police station and was sent home to put clothes on.”

And so, I stop there with the article in terms of quoting one social activist.

They continue with—the fact is that:

“When questioned about femicide in April 2022, the prime minister...”

I am quoting now:

“...Keith Rowley, appeared to shrug off the issue with a dismissive:”—and they quote the Prime Minister’s words—“We are a violent society.”

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“That assessment is shared by Claire Guy-Alleyne, the police superintendent

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in charge of”—T&T’s—“special victims unit, although she aims to tackle the problem.”

So what this article shows—16th June—and this is an intervening article between when we last debated this Motion and today, it shows that you have persons who are looking on and they are watching the crime situation and they are not simply prepared as commentators and/or as investigative journalists to simply say, “We are treating with a global crime situation”. They are seeing it in terms of going back to what they think are the causes, the origins of the spiralling crime, and they are speaking about whether or not something can be done about it. They are commenting on what is being done by the authorities who are in charge.

And pivoting on that or using that as a platform, Madam Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the crime statistics insofar as it treats with women in our society. Madam Speaker, I must say that, for myself, I have attempted, premised on persons within my constituency of Chaguanas West, have written several articles on crimes against women with the hope and the expectation that it will be treated with by the Minister of National Security and the other Members, the Cabinet and the Government as a whole.

Now, when we look at the statistics, Madam Speaker, which come out of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, these statistics, Madam Speaker, I want to say very clearly, they are peppered. It is not something that is in black and white and it adorns a flow chart and it is there when we need to write a report or we need to compile something for a thesis or those who, you know, are pursuing a PhD. These statistics are peppered with real cases. And, Madam Speaker, I want to say that it is impossible to talk about violence against women in our society without mentioning certain names. Those names are, Madam Speaker, Asami who was

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strangled in the Savannah. We have Marcia, who was stabbed and burnt in her bed. Pixie, raped and strangled with her school belt. Baby Amy, raped to death at home. Shanice, gunned down in Mount St. George. Candice and Karen, raped and stabbed in front of their children. Keyana, six, raped, battered and stuffed in a barrel. Grandmother Norma, raped and beaten at home after church. Shakuntala, raped and strangled, her nude body stripped green among the stalks of the cane field. These names, Madam Speaker, are unforgettable and as I say, we cannot talk about crime against women without repeating some of these names. Names unforgettable, rolling off our fingertips of easy recall but still only the tip of murders, all-girl roll call. And why do I say that, Madam Speaker? These highlight some of the most heinous crimes which have occurred in the last two years, two to three years.

So, I am not pontificating what may have happened in the last decade. I am not referring for political purposes to talk about 2010 to 2015 as versus 2015 to 2020. I am speaking about years where we have seen that the murder rate has surpassed all other years. The time period in question we have surpassed all murders, all homicide numbers, and why we have to look at it, is why we are here today, one of accountability. Madam Speaker, Asami, Kezia, Roxanne Warren, Andrea Bharatt, as I have mentioned and was mentioned in the UK *Guardian*, these are all names which they have seen a most brutal end to their beautiful lives.

When we look at the murders, Madam Speaker, I have with me the reported Crime and Problem Analysis Unit, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service data source population estimate, Central Statistical Office prepared by the Population, Social and Vital Statistics Division, Central Statistical Office. And this has been cited in newspaper articles. So, I did not just simply take the newspaper article, I went

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back to the source to make sure that when we quote it here in the House, Madam Speaker, it is in fact accurate. And when we look at the statistics, 57 women were murdered in 2022. This was actually the subject of an *Express* newspaper of 1st January, 2023 article:

“57 women killed in 2022
...’figures consistent over last 6 years.”

That is the title. This figure is based on statistics by the *Sunday Express* from the TTPS Crime and Problem Analysis branch.

“Fifteen of these killings were the result of domestic violence; while ten were the result of gang-related activities.

With 57 murders reported, the number of women killed over the last six years from violent confrontations was pushed to 307.”

That is really a startling figure.

“In 2017, there were 496 murders, 52 of which were women; in 2018, there were 518 murders and 47 female victims; in 2019, there were 539 murders and 64 female victims; in 2020, there were 399 murders of which 54 were women; and in 2021 there were 448 murders of which 33 were women. For 2022...”—

—there had been up to the time of—this is the 1st of January.

“...there had been 632 murders; 57 of them were women.

This represented an estimated 9.46 per cent of total deaths.”

And they quoted the criminologist Dr. Randy Seepersad. Coincidentally it is important to reference not necessarily a name of the criminologist but that this particular criminologist had, in fact, put forward, by way of his own reports, and public utterances what would have happened for 2022 and the prediction was that

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you would have had in excess of 600 murders if serious intervention had not been engaged by the Government. And that, in fact, came to pass, Madam Speaker, unfortunately. This criminologist said that unless you have serious interventions, serious embarkation on the serious measures, what would be expected to happen in 2023 is in excess of 710 murders, homicide. So this is something that we have to be very careful about. But going back to the article:

“...Dr. Randy Seepersad told the *Sunday Express* in November that while every death was a tragic and unfortunate incident, the statistic showed that annually the number of women killed has remained consistent during the six-year period—an estimated ten per cent a year”—increase.

So, Madam Speaker, this does not bode well for—

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, you have one more minute of ordinary time. You are entitled to 15 more minutes of extended time, if you so wish.

Mr. D. Rambally: Thank you, Madam Speaker, with your permission, may I have the extended time please?

Madam Speaker: You may proceed.

Mr. D. Rambally: Thank you. So, Madam Speaker, the point that I have made here is that what we are seeing is that it is not a generic statement to say that crime is on the rise. What we are seeing is that we are seeing an associated increase in crimes against children, crimes against females, women in the society, and a 10 per cent increase per annum is not something that we can allow to continue for any period of time or just simply let it sit by indefinitely.

So, Madam Speaker, we have calls that are being made by the population, hence the reason for the Member for Barataria/San Juan and the Opposition bringing this Motion. What are those calls, Madam Speaker? Accountability, as I

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have indicated before. We are receiving urgent and vital calls to arms. They are seeking compassion by those who are in authority that we can engage to treat with this crime situation. What the people want, Madam Speaker, is they want an abandonment of the rhetoric, the political rhetoric, the evasiveness with which the Minister of National Security treats with the increases in crime. They want to see meaningful change, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. D. Rambally: So they want to see changes in terms of how we implement laws because that is something, as I indicated before, it seems as though the Government may be in reverse. But just to set it back straight, policies being formulated, being reflected in legislation and then we must see proper implementation by the arms who the legislation governs.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. D. Rambally: So we need to see that. We need to see changes in policing. And as I said, Madam Speaker, when I say that I have already categorized that nobody is being facetious in even remotely suggesting that we expect the hon. Minister to go out there and be solving the crimes himself. But there must be some comfort by his demeanour, by his language, by his actions that he is, in fact, engaging in a process that will see some semblance of the sweet Trinidad and Tobago that we knew it to be in years gone by.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*].

Mr. D. Rambally: Madam Speaker, what we expect to hear, and we have not heard from Members of Government is, to put it frankly, a devastating analysis of how the criminal justice system is failing these women and girls and why we need to speak about it openly; what needs to change. I want to surmise, and I want to

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say clearly, that what needs to be the starting change is the removal of the Member of Laventille West as the Minister of National Security.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. D. Rambally: When you read that *Guardian* article, Madam Speaker, and several other articles, what is the image being put forward, not by this Opposition. It is very easy for Members on the other side to say, well the Opposition wants to do this and the Opposition wants to bring shame to the country. No. Unless they want to say on record, that the UK *Guardian* is a member of the UNC. That is not so. What the image, this is what we have. We have to get away from the political rhetoric. What these news agencies and what the investigative journalists, and in the case of the criminologists like Dr. Randy Seepersad, what they are seeing, is a picture being painted, it is now spilling over into an image being painted of Trinidad and Tobago which is not a nice one, that men somehow in the society have all gone violent. And we know that is not so. So, we need to arrest some of these matters. Madam Speaker, there is a quote:

“Not all men practice violence against women but all women live with the threat of male violence every single day”.

And that is a quote of Fuad Alakbarov. So, I repeat it, Madam Speaker, and this is applicable to our society. Not all men practice violence against women but the reality of where we are is that all women live with the threat of male violence every single day. This is the reality that is Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Speaker, I have mentioned the cases and the names. It was not to incentivize the debate. And it was certainly not meant to bring any particular flavour. But as I said, the statistics are such that we need to put names to it because then it just comes across as something cast in black and white. And what

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these statistics show, and the names that I have mentioned is that, they put forward a terrifying reminder of the dangers faced by women. All of those names that I cited, these women were basically going about their ordinary lives on a daily basis, when they met their unfortunate end.

So when their deaths, the details of their deaths emerged, what did we see? We saw that we had a runaway crime situation and the criminal elements being totally out of control, totally unchecked and they themselves have no fear for the law and they have no conscience of their own.

So grief of the population is now turning into one of anger. Revelations that one person may have been kidnapped, raped or murdered, these revelations have now become all too familiar. At the risk of some persons and I dare say it may be, it may be that the Member for Laventille West finds himself in this situation as Minister of National Security that he has been hardened to these instances of killings and that is a most unfortunate situation because the numbers are just simply too high. We have seen red flags, Madam Speaker, red flag after red flag being raised, yet being ignored by the Minister of National Security.

So, I want to say today that if anything at all, if any message I can make in this contribution here is that the deaths of all of our citizens, with particularity the young children and the women, their deaths, Madam Speaker, will continue to stain our national conscience. And that is why if the Member of Laventille West, Minister of National Security, has any conscience of his own in terms of being a public officer and being accountable to the people, he would do the honourable thing and allow this debate not to continue but to simply resign his position.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

2.10 p.m.

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Mr. D. Rambally: Madam Speaker, even when appropriate laws are in place, because that is the PNM Government's machinery at work, that we do not support critical legislation, yet we have had—the Member for St. Augustine cited some 20 pieces of legislation in the last session, critical pieces of legislation which we had contributed to, but that is a propaganda or a narrative which the Members on the other side like to bring up again and again. We do not accept that, but even so when you have appropriate pieces of legislation in place, what is critical is the enforcement of those pieces of legislation, and that is not what we are seeing under the auspices of the Minister of National Security. Those laws themselves can be rendered meaningless, and I dare say that is what we are experiencing now in our society.

We, Madam Speaker, have been seeing increases in the numbers of murder rates, we have been seeing increases in the number of crimes, if not homicides, but crimes, and these are still considered serious crimes against our women in our society, and this is where I feel, Madam Speaker, it pains our national conscience the most when we are not dealing with that situation. I am not in any way belittling a drive-by gang shootout which will kill fellow members of another gang. I am not belittling and trying to say that that is of no consequence. What I am however saying is that when we deal with these crimes against women, these are the ones that will continue to stain our national conscience.

Madam Speaker, what do the statistics say? I have already said that it has shown a 10 per cent per annum increase in the crimes against women from

serious to sexual crimes as well, and this is, if we are to get it to the fuller picture, time does not permit it today, but I think that it is something that we need to have addressed. We have not seen the Member for Laventille West being able to do so, and this is why this Motion is so important, because being able to manage, whether by way of micro-managing or otherwise, being able to manage the apparatus that fall under you is the exact reason why we say that someone is the line Minister, That someone is the operational Minister in charge. They are the ones who are responsible, but we are not seeing that this particular Minister is, as we say in local parlance, “grabbing the bull by the horns” and treating with the problems at hand. Statistics tell us the story where violence against women is concerned. These are statistics which are public, but it cannot convey the enormity of the human impact. If we get into the human impact of these crimes against the women, that, Madam Speaker, is as we say, another ballgame which we would have to get in to.

So, Madam Speaker, I would like to say that when we look at the different communities, and I reference Chaguanas West in particular, it would be most inaccurate to say that we as Members of this House on this side, to say that the people in our constituencies, that we are not helping or assisting the police in trying to treat with crime. Whilst I was abroad I saw my sister colleague, Member for Chaguanas East, participating in a crime meeting, a crime town hall meeting. I myself, Madam Speaker, as a Member of Parliament, you know, was responsible—and I “doh” do not want to use the word “responsible” as though it is something I am ascribing to myself. The community partnered with the

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Trinidad and Tobago Police Service to be able to exchange what they felt were ideas that could help the police service, and I want to say that I commend the police members who participated in those meetings, that they themselves were open—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. D. Rambally:—they were receptive to what was being told to them, and they themselves had tips to put across to the members of the community. So what you have is you are seeing at the different levels where members of the public, members as constituents, and Members of Parliament, certainly on this side, we have been engaging in assisting the police service in respect of what we can do at our level, engaging in what we can do at our level, Madam Speaker. So it would be wholly inaccurate to take a position, which I have been hearing on the other side, that we are not prepared to help solve the problem.

So, Madam Speaker, what we need, is if the members of the public are doing their duty in trying to bring down crime, if you have the members or the activists, the social activists doing their duty as members of the public, if you have those persons who are the governing personnel of, like for example, Crime Stoppers and other NGOs getting down into the trenches doing their part and trying to assist the community, if you have the businessmen who are assisting those who cannot afford things like the fog horns, the loud horns to help people equip themselves and their homes with apparatus to somehow deter criminal elements. If you have all of these entities doing their part, what I want to conclude by saying is that what we need, the only recurring decimal we need

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removed, is the Minister of National Security.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. D. Rambally: He, as member who is heading the National Security Ministry, is not doing his part, and his duties are failing, and therefore what the members of the public and what this country needs is a total endorsement of this House that he must be removed, this Motion of no confidence must be upheld against the hon. Member, and he should be removed as Minister of National Security.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for the time that I have had today to contribute. Thank you.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for La Horquetta/Talparo.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Youth Development and National Service (Hon. Foster Cummings): Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to join in this debate. Madam Speaker, the UNC is well-known for their crime politics, and as we see local government elections in the air we understand that they will fall upon their usual style of attempting to instil fear in the population. It is in this hope that they continue to speak about crime every time they have an opportunity to speak, the very people who had five Ministers of National Security when they were in office. I have heard of governments collapsing in office across the world, Madam Speaker, but what we are witnessing in Trinidad and Tobago at this time is an Opposition collapsing upon itself.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: Falling apart at the seams, with a leader fully asleep, and while members at all levels leave the UNC in droves—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings:—to find purpose and to find direction that only this PNM Government can offer.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: We welcome those who will come. We will accept some and we will certainly not accept others. Madam Speaker, would you believe I drove pass Mc Bean recently in Couva, the traditional headquarters of the UNC over the years, would you believe, Madam Speaker, that even that traditional headquarters that they no longer occupy that that whole building is now painted in bright PNM red?

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: The UNC is collapsing and has collapsed—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings:—and no amount of fear tactics will fool Trinidad and Tobago citizens into returning the UNC to the corridors of power in this country. Madam Speaker, this debate has been marked if anything not by any alleged incompetence of the hon. Member of National Security, who is doing an excellent job at what he is doing—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: —but a clear agenda by the Opposition both in and out of

Parliament to utilise crime and criminality as their vehicle to maintain relevance in this country. It is an agenda, Madam Speaker, not based on hopes and the aspirations of our people or designed to share with our population their plans for the development of Trinidad and Tobago. When they speak they offer no alternative. When Bills are brought to this Parliament so that we can take some serious action against the criminals in this country they lend no support. They use the opportunity at every turn to frustrate the efforts of the Government only to be able to come back to the country to speak about crime and crime and crime. But the evidence is clear. At every opportunity to support the Government in its fight against the criminal elements in this country the UNC has fallen down on the job, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: They have failed in this quest before, and as sure as night follows day they will fail again, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: Madam Speaker, many of my colleagues have spoken before and demonstrated in their contribution the Government's approach to crime. It is not an isolated approach, it is a whole-of-government approach, and this feature of a whole-of-government and that collaborative effort is clearly something that is alien to the Members opposite us, and certainly alien to their absentee leader.

It is not surprising. As they continue to demonstrate their inability to enter the corridors of power and to govern in Trinidad and Tobago, they simply

cannot understand how a collective programme can have multiple impacts, so they focus their attention, as often as they can, on the Minister of National Security and on crime-related matters in this country. It is a very short-sighted nature that has caused the country to lose billions of dollars in investments over the years, because when they speak about Trinidad and Tobago, the impression they give to the international community is as though this country is a place to be feared, as though this country is not a place for safe investments, and therefore it gives the Government additional work to be able to go out into the international community and attract investments for the development of this country. They lack patriotism, they lack direction, they lack foresight, they lack ideas—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings:—and as I repeat, they are falling apart at the seams. It is this narrow mindedness that has resulted in them discarding the Vision 2020 document, a policy document of the PNM Government designed to take Trinidad and Tobago to developed status.

Mr. Hosein: Madam Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 48(1), relevance please. This has nothing relevant to this Motion.

Madam Speaker: Okay, so Member if you could tie it quickly into the substance of this Motion.

Hon. F. Cummings: Thank you, Madam Speaker. You see, Madam Speaker, the mover of this Motion somehow refuses to understand that the criminal elements in this country who continue to attract our young people into a life of

crime, it is dealing with crime, is not only about detection and arrest and putting our young people in prison, it is about creating a safe space where they can develop as active and sustainable citizens of this country. And that is what we are about as a Government.

Madam Speaker, like the Ministry of Education, like the Ministry of Trade and Industry, like the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, like the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, all the programmes that exist under the Ministry that have the opportunity to lead at this point in time, all these programmes are designed to combat a number of the social deficiencies in our society. Deficiencies that have accrued over time, and that will not be resolved overnight. It is these deficiencies, many of them, many of the situations created by the very government that they were a part of on more than one occasion in this country.

The sad truth, Madam Speaker, is that the Opposition Members know this. The mover of the Motion is an attorney himself. He is aware of the lengthy delays in the criminal justice system and the negative impact of these delays on the administration of justice, and yet, as I mentioned earlier, they have refused on countless occasions to support legislation that would remove the power from the criminals, legislation that will restrict bail for persons arrested for gun-related crimes. And as I will speak about gun-related crimes I noticed in media recently where one of their so-called nominees was arrested for gun crimes, in a campaign in Tunapuna all dressed in yellow.

You do know, Madam Speaker, the minute the gentleman was arrested, they

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distanced themselves from him? They abandoned him. But, Madam Speaker, yet they come into the Parliament to speak about crime and what the PNM is doing about crime. Well, we know what the police is doing about crime.

2.25 p.m.

Madam Speaker, it is this Government that brought legislation to this Parliament to abolish preliminary enquiries and to bring legislation that will allow a defendant, if he so chooses, to have a judge alone trial. All of these matters intended to improve on the criminal justice system. And yet with all that fortitude that he could muster, the Member for Barataria/San Juan places the blame of the country's current crime situation on the shoulders of the Minister of National Security alone.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: Madam Speaker, the youth population of this country is about one-third the size of the entire population, and the statistics are available and clear that many of our young people are grappling with development issues; that many of our young people have fallen victim to crime; that many of our young people have been recruited by criminal elements in this country; that many of our young people continue to grapple with youth delinquency. We are mindful of some of the root causes of delinquency and therefore, we have introduced programmes.

The question of crime fighting, Madam Speaker, does not, as I mentioned before, only involve on the extreme end the question of arrest and prison time, it involves getting into the development of our young people to steer them away from a life of crime. And it is the reason why this Ministry of Youth Development and National Service was established—one of the main reasons—to make sure that we have available to our youth training programmes geared towards providing them

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with the opportunities to skill themselves, to upgrade their technical learning and so forth, so that they can enter the job market and be productive citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. That kind of foresight and thinking does not exist with our Members on the opposite side. And so it falls to a Government, like the one that we have now in office, to do what has to be done for our young people in this country.

More specifically, Madam Speaker, we have targeted eight strategic priorities for sustainable youth development to make sure that when our young people look at what opportunities are available to them, we have it available to them. In the areas outlined in, for instance, our youth policy speaks to:

“Harnessing youth social and intellectual capital”.

I would certainly make an available copy of the National Youth Policy of Trinidad and Tobago—a copy available to the Member for Barataria/San Juan.

“Creating safe spaces, peaceful communities, and environments

Creating an enabling environment for positive youth development...

Emphasising youth...”—participation in—“...agriculture production, and food security”.

Madam Speaker, every single programme initiated by this Ministry is underpinned by these priorities and is already contributing to a reduction in youth deviant behaviour and delinquency. That is what we are aiming for.

We believe, and we firmly believe, that for every one young person who joins or completes one of these programmes, it is one less person available to the criminal elements for recruitment. For every one graduate out of these programmes, that is one less person likely to be enticed into a life of crime. And this, Madam Speaker, is the Government’s approach, not a piecemeal, make it up

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as we go along, attack the Minister of National Security, talk about crime every opportunity you get but bring no ideas to the table. I listened to the contributions and nowhere inside there can you find workable solutions being put forward by the Members on the other side.

Madam Speaker, this is not a T20 or a T10. This is not even a 50 overs, one day. This is a test cricket match and unless my colleague from Barataria/San Juan is prepared to come out on the field and last the entire duration of the match, then I suggest that we may have a golden pen waiting for the Member for Barataria/San Juan where he can find good governance.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: Madam Speaker, we did not get here overnight and we will not get out of this situation overnight. It requires all of our citizens to take part in making sure that we have a safe space in Trinidad and Tobago for all of our citizens.

If I am to touch on the programmes I mentioned earlier that offers guidance and support to a youth who—many of them might be struggling in less than perfect homes or communities. By connecting our young people with positive adult role models, we offer many mentorship programmes to help foster a sense of belonging and self-worth, and that, of course, will also reduce the likelihood of these persons moving into delinquency and deviant behaviour.

Madam Speaker, we have proven that another way in which we can impact youth deviance is by providing opportunities for skill building and for education. It is a proven fact that programmes which focus on education, job training and life skills development help young people to prepare for successful and fulfilling lives. When young people have access to the opportunities that I have outlined, we

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expect that they will quite likely not engage in delinquency and in deviant behaviour. They develop positive self-esteem, have a greater sense of purpose and could therefore envision greater opportunities for a brighter future. Many of us—all of us on both sides represent different constituencies. We engage with all of our citizens, all of our constituents. Many of them come to Members of Parliament and would speak to you about situations that are occurring in their lives. As a Member of Parliament sometimes you may even be aware of some young person coming to you, trying to form some direction, or being somebody who is actually being targeted by members of the criminal world, and you have to be able to counsel them and speak to them about how they live a better and fruitful life in this country.

I mentioned earlier, Madam Speaker, of the strategic priorities that the Government have outlined in the development of our young people to gear them up as productive citizens, and one of the areas that we have put significant emphasis on is our agricultural sector, as we steer our young people into that direction; a very robust programme of youth in agriculture. And therefore, we launched a programme called the Youth Agricultural Homestead Programme, and it is quite unfortunate that as we attempt to roll out that programme, it is a programme that has come under significant attack from the Opposition in this country. And not only the Opposition, the very criminal elements that the Member seeks—the actions of which the Member seeks to place at the foot of the Minister of National Security, those elements have gone beyond the call of duty to attempt to stifle and to frustrate this particular youth intervention programme.

I wish to quote, Madam Speaker, from a letter I received recently from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, Victim and Witness Protection Unit. This

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letter demonstrates unequivocally that contrary to what the MP for Barataria/San Juan would have us believe, the approach to fighting crime must be multipronged and interdisciplinary. In the letter dated the 23rd of this year, the writer indicates as follows:

This Unit—I quote now—is seeking to partner with your Ministry on the Youth Agricultural Homestead Programme. Given the ranges of vulnerabilities facing our clients, we are requesting your kind consideration towards 15 per cent of the placement of the next cohort of the YAHP, that that be assigned to young persons impacted by crime. A placement on this social intervention project will certainly have far-reaching positive consequences towards changing the trajectory of our young men and women who have become vulnerable to crime and its effects.

This programme would indeed provide invaluable opportunities for themselves and their families to stifle the effects and vulnerabilities observed to be affecting young crime victims in the country.

Madam Speaker, the author goes on to say that:

The VWSU is interested in partnering with the Ministry on other programmes. We believe that these programme can lead to fundamental changes in the lives of many young persons plagued by criminal activities, thus facilitating their journey towards healthy and productive lives.

I am pleased to indicate, Madam Speaker, that we took that request very seriously and we gave serious consideration to it, and we have agreed to allocate to this arm of the TTPS some of the spaces in the next cohort of the Youth Agricultural Homestead Programme. And that is an example, Madam Speaker, of how we on this side of the House are treating with the issue of crime and crime

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fighting.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: It is not, as the Member for Barataria/San Juan would have us believe, that crime fighting is somehow a job that resides only for the Minister—the line Minister to execute. It is all of our responsibility. It is a whole-of-government approach, and it is a whole of Opposition support and approach for policies that the Government will put in place for crime fighting. It is the responsibility of every citizen. And if they do not understand that and if they are not part of the solution, then, Madam Speaker, it is clear to all of Trinidad and Tobago that they are part of the problem.

Programmes like these have been a phenomenal success with our young people. It was only earlier this month that we graduated 168 young men and women who are now successful—now to move on to be successful agro-entrepreneurs. And, Madam Speaker, that gives them some kind of purpose and direction. It is very unlikely that we will see any young persons listed in the statistics as pointed out or that we were reminded about by the Member for Barataria/San Juan. We will expand this programme, as we have already done in some areas, to include a part-time and another full-time cohort, Madam Speaker.

Unlike the Members opposite, when they had their turn at the crease—you know, it is always very interesting to listen to Members on the opposite side. Some of them are new, but some of them have been around for a long time and they know that when they had their turn at the crease, they destroyed all viable options for young people that were put in place by the previous PNM Government.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

2.40 p.m.

Hon. F. Cummings: Our current party leadership and Government leadership led by Dr. Keith Christopher Rowley is certainly moving in the right direction by creating additional opportunities for young people and promoting agriculture as a viable option. The impact can only be positive for our economy and for our people and so, Madam Speaker, this is not the only programme but I need not—I have mentioned to the Parliament before many of the programmes that the Government have in place for our young people, in terms of the agriculture programmes, we also have a Shade House programme doing the similar kind of work, youth cooperatives, training young people in aquaculture and we do this in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, focusing on our young people between the ages of 18 to 35.

I visited the prison some time ago to speak to some of the inmates there and when I looked at the audience, it pained me to see the amount of young persons that constituted that audience I was speaking to at the time. But what it did is encouraged me to put out more effort to make sure and start the reversal of that cycle. There are many things for which the party in Opposition of which the Member for Barataria/San Juan is a Member, there are many things for which they must carry the blame for abandoning our young people and their development in the past. It is sheer hypocrisy for the Member to bring this Motion in an attempt to wash their hands of the responsibility of our current situation in this country which did not start with the PNM returning to office.

Madam Speaker, we remember that it was the former Government under the stewardship of the leader and Member for Siparia who shut down every youth camp in this country under their disastrous tenure. They did that. When traditionally young people coming out of school who may not have gotten their full

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certificates, et cetera, would have gone to these institutions, gotten access to technical/vocational learning, moved on to either become young entrepreneurs. I met one recently on a flight from Tobago, he now resides in New York, he is doing a very successful business in domestic electrical wiring and so forth out in New York and he said to me he got those skills at the youth camp in Chatham. He is now out there doing a successful business. It was the Government of the UNC that shut down all the youth camps in this country. But, the good news for young people, is that the mess that they created, we who are in power now will do all in our power to clean that up and so the Government will reopen all of the youth camps closed down by the UNC.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: All, all. In Chatham, we will certainly reopen that camp.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: You know, Madam Speaker, when we announced to the country that we were going to reopen the Chatham camp for the young people in the south land and the project started, the Opposition asked many questions about that project and unfortunately for the young people of Chatham, there was an attempt to sabotage that project by lighting the camp on fire. That will not disrupt or dissuade us from completing that project and others like it.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: We have also started work at Persto Praesto to refurbish and reopen that camp for our young people. We have also started work at Chaguaramas Convention Centre to convert that into a youth apprenticeship development centre.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, you have one more minute of ordinary speaking

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time available to you, you are entitled to 15 more additional minutes, if you wish.

Hon. F. Cummings: I thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I will certainly be using those minutes.

Madam Speaker: Please continue.

Hon. F. Cummings: I thank you.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: Because the people of Trinidad and Tobago need to know. They need to understand for those who are likely to be followed by the old talk from the UNC, they need to know of what the Government is doing. They need to understand that there are many opportunities available for our young people. I was saying earlier that we will repurpose in Chaguaramas that convention centre that when they were in government, they gave it away. Luckily, we were able to—that property, that historical property— They want to talk about crime, that was a crime.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: We are about to celebrate 50 years of Caricom and that will be celebrated right here in Trinidad and Tobago. We are able, as part of the ceremony, to go down to the Chaguaramas and as we remember what our leaders of the past did, had it been up to the UNC, we would not have access to that facility, it would have been owned by some private citizen, not for the benefit.

But what this Government will do is open that facility for the development of our young people from all over the East-West Corridor, south, central, they will be able to get there. Instead of putting them in “ah van” to take them to Arouca, we will be putting them in “ah maxi” to take them to Chaguaramas youth centre.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: Madam Speaker, because we know that in east Trinidad, there are many communities: La Horquetta, Malabar, Maloney, Arima. We will as well construct a facility in Wallerfield to train our young people. We do not want them in Arouca. We do not want them in “Colour Me Orange” as well, we want them in training facilities to develop themselves.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: We do not want to put them in “ah orange jumper”, we want less of those trucks on the road with barbed wire behind it and the police moving and providing transport to take them to court. We do not want to provide that young people, we do not want court places and prison places for our young people, we want development and education and technical/vocational learning—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings:—to develop them all over Trinidad and Tobago, including in Barataria/San Juan, including in Couva South, including in Chaguanas East and Naparima and Pointe-a-Pierre. All over Trinidad and Tobago, we are going to provide opportunities for our young people in Claxton Bay, in Naparima. We are going to provide for all the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: That is how the PNM operates. We are not here for old talk and “wey de Minister, what the Minister look like, if the Minister short, if the Minister tall”. That is not going to solve crime. When they were in Government, Madam Speaker, they battled with this problem to the extent that they had one, five Members of their side, six, six—

Hon. Members: [*Interruption*]

Hon. F. Cummings:—six National Security Ministers, six—

Hon. Members: [*Interruption*]

Hon. F. Cummings:—National Security Ministers and yet they left office and left us in a hot mess that the PNM has to fix today.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: And then they come to talk about crime. But you know what they are speaking about crime? We understand why they are speaking about crime. It is because election coming and that is all they have to campaign about.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: And we understand now, why their Members are leaving in droves from the rising sun to the balisier.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: Madam Speaker, you know as we do the business of people, the people observe what we are about and they could recognize—well I do not know, is “foolishness” a parliamentary term, Madam Speaker? They could recognize foolishness when they see it and that Motion that we are debating has a high percentage of foolishness in it, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: Madam Speaker, we are moving swiftly ahead in a positive direction without distraction and without delay. We will not be distracted by Motions like this. It is frivolous, it is vexatious and it is a waste of parliamentary time.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: We are going to constitute our efforts in partnering with agencies such like the NESC, the MIC and YTEPP to partner with them and offer more opportunities. You saw, we displayed before and it is going to be available

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to everybody. Training programmes in heavy equipment operation, I am sure the Member of Barataria/San Juan could tell some of his constituents, get on board with what the Government is doing and learn how to operate “ah truck, ah backhoe, ah excavator, ah skid steer”.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: That is what the young people want, not old talk, not old talk about crime, crime, crime, crime, crime, crime. What they want to do is what can you do to improve my circumstances and that is what this Government, under the leadership of Dr. Keith Christopher Rowley, is doing, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: Madam Speaker, I will wait for the budget debate to inform the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago of the hundreds of programmes that we have available but I have made the point that we are proactive about what we are doing, we are focusing on reducing the number of our young citizens available to the criminal elements in this country, we are repurposing where we can and we are making sure that we find opportunities, training opportunities available all across the country for our young people. We are not interested in turning our young people into career criminals but rather into businesspeople and career professionals.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Cummings: In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I want to say to my colleague that we on this side are convinced that if we bend the tree while it is young, that it is in so doing that we reduce the situation where young persons who many of them are full of potential, many of them are bright, energetic and willing to contribute to this country, if we bend the tree while it is young, it is very likely

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that we will work together to have a better society for all of our citizens. But if you find frustration in being able to execute any good idea that you might have and sometimes the Member for Couva South does have an idea or two, not many. If you find that you are unable to execute those ideas, then you can talk to any Member on this side, we are about positive development for all the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh (*Couva South*): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker as I join this debate and I want to immediately tell the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo, I will not fall victim to his mamaguy but he knows fully well that I am indeed a competent Member of Parliament and that is why he was able to make that comment—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—about getting good ideas from a Member of Parliament on the Opposition Bench.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And I want to take the opportunity to respond to some of the false narratives, the propaganda that has been put on the record this afternoon by the Minister of Youth Development and National Service. Because you see in his final commentary before he came to an end, he indicated that the Opposition should not talk about Ministers of National Security and so on because we had a number of Ministers, but they too have had Ministers of National Security.

And probably someone on their side must get up, and, during the course of this debate, and indicate where is the former Member for Point Fortin? And why was he relieved of his portfolio—

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2.55 p.m.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh:—and responsibility as the Minister of National Security. And in fact if you want to know about the whereabouts of that former Minister, you may have to ask one Mr. Piper from Point Fortin, and he probably will assist you. And, Madam Speaker, the Government also had the Member who sits opposite me, the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West—

Hon. Member: He was the worst.

Mr. Indarsingh:—as a Minister of the National Security, and the state of affairs did not improve in Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: And the current Minister of the National Security really, if you do a poll from 1956 to 2023, he will emerge to be the worse Minister of—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh:—National Security in Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Member: By far, by far.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: That is the reality, Madam Speaker. And that is why the argument that was put forward by the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo in terms of attempting to discredit the performance of the Government between 2010 to 2015 about Ministers of National Security holds no water. It is propaganda, Madam Speaker. And again, you see sometimes I think that it is stick, matchstick, that has broken in the ears of some of the Members on the Government side, so it

is important from our point of view to correct the records. Because they do not listen and they attempt to create this false narrative, hoping that they can get the population to be on their side from the point of view of whether they are winning the war on crime. And again, the Member indicated that the UNC is well known for crime politics. The UNC is focusing on crime because we want to utilize crime and criminality, hoping that it will be the pathway or the road towards the government of Trinidad and Tobago. I want to tell the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo that the population will indeed send a message to you on the 14th of August as it relates to your performance—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh:—on crime.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: But more importantly, Madam Speaker, the Member indicated, and this has been their constant narrative, that the Opposition—hey have no support for the Opposition when Bills are brought to the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, and virtually in every debate we have to stand and correct the records.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: And I will not allow it.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: I will not allow that this afternoon to be put on the record without a rebuttal from the Opposition, Madam Speaker, because this is the last time.

Mr. Secharan: Correct.

Mr. Indarsingh: This is the last time any Member of the—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh:—Government should attempt to project this false narrative to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Because they are desperate, they are desperate and that is why they continue to repeat this propaganda and this false narrative, Madam Speaker. Because you see, it is important, as I said to remind, and he holds a very—the Member holds a very important portfolio in the context of the Government and their political party. He is the general secretary of the party.

Dr. Ragbir: An ex-leader.

Mr. Indarsingh: He is someone, the Member has the responsibility to speak to the young people of this country, the future of this country. And it is important that when the Minister speaks, whether it is on the Parliament—in the Parliament or outside of the Parliament, that he puts forward the reality, and not attempt to skew, to skew the reality, Madam Speaker. And that is why I will tell him that from the point of view crime fighting Bills.

The Opposition gave support to the Bail (Access to Bail) (Amdt.) Bill, 2017, and made extensive amendments, Madam Speaker. Miscellaneous Provisions (Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, Proceeds of Crime, Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago, Customs and Exchange Control) Bill, 2017. The Miscellaneous Provisions (Supreme Court of Judicature and Children Bill), 2018. The Payment into Court Bill, 2018. The Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings) (Amdt.) (No. 2) Bill, 2019.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: The Firearms (Amdt.) Bill, 2019. The Opposition supported and still supported it although, the Opposition support was not needed when the—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh:—legislation was piloted. And I see the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo is smiling broadly because he has to accept the facts that are being put here.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: And—

Mr. Cummings: I am smiling how you leave out the Bail Bill.

Mr. Indarsingh: And the Civil Asset Recovery and Management and Unexplained Wealth Bill, 2019.

Hon. Member: Do the Special Majority

Mr. Indarsingh: And I am coming to the special majority Bills, because this should be the last time. You must not have that sense of hypocrisy.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: Of hypocrisy to stand in this Parliament, and attempt to mislead the young people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: Because if indeed you are going down the road of misleading the young people of Trinidad and Tobago, we well know of the direction the People's National Movement is taking down the country.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: And the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo, go back and read the

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Hansard, and you will see the following special majority Bills were passed with Opposition's support. The Tax Information Exchange Agreements (United States of America) Act 2016. The FATCA Bill.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: The Anti-Gang Bill, 2018.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: The Insurance Act, 2016.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West—

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Indarsingh: Your attempts to engage in crosstalk will not drown out the facts that we are putting on the record.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: Because at the end of the day, Madam Speaker, this is the reality, and the most important—the most important, the most important the Bail (Access to Bail) (Amdt.) Bill, 2017, Madam Speaker, and the Anti-Terrorism (Amd.)t Bill, 2018.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: “All ah dat?”

Mr. Indarsingh: And I want to remind the Member, because the PNM is a very hypocritical party you know.

Hon Member: Tell them, tell them.

Mr. Indarsingh: They like to create that they have no support, they get no support from anybody, everybody is against them. Trinidad and Tobago is against them in terms of—

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Hon Member: [*Interruption*]

Hon Member: That is a fact.

Mr. Indarsingh:—even the Privy Council, they will tell is against them.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

3.05 p.m.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: But, you know, May of 2010 to September of 2015, where was your patriotism? Where was your commitment to Trinidad and Tobago as it relates to crime fighting? Why did the PNM vote against the Constitution (Amdt.) (Capital Offences) Bill, 2011—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—the Administration of Justice (Electronic Monitoring) Bill, 2011—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—the Bail (Amdt.) Bill, 2013—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—the Miscellaneous Provisions (Defence and Police Complaints) Bill, 2013; the Miscellaneous Provisions (Administration of Justice) Bill, 2014?

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Where was your commitment? Where was your sense of patriotism in fighting crime? And where was the need to embrace and work from a whole-of-government approach—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—and embrace the Opposition be bipartisan in the approach to crime fighting? That is the hypocrisy of the People's National Movement, Madam

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Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And we will have none of it. We will have none of their propaganda. And that is why the Opposition will be consistent in its position. You cannot trust—you cannot trust anyone of them in terms of what they—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—in terms of what they spew and what they espouse to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

And, Madam Speaker, the contribution of Member for La Horquetta/Talparo really reminds me of what we would call full of sound and fury, signifying nothing, Madam Speaker. And, Madam Speaker, I thought that the Member, in his contribution, would have come or used the opportunity to tell us what is really being done on behalf of the law-abiding citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. Because it is clear that the population, the law-abiding citizens of the country, they are indeed on the run. There is a sense of hopelessness. There is sense of mortal fear in relation to whether an individual is at the supermarket; whether they are at a gas station; whether they are at the banks, when they come out from the banks and so on.

In fact, the goodly Member for La Horquetta/Talparo said he was driving recently in Mc Bean and he is very familiar with the roads of Mc Bean and environs. I wonder, Madam Speaker, if the Member drove past the gas station at St. Mary's Junction in Carapichaima last night and was advised that the gas station was robbed by four gun-toting and gun-wielding bandits.

In addition to that, Madam Speaker, yesterday— I reading or I am recollecting a *Newsday* online article where two persons were robbed in the

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parking lot of the Trincity Mall on Wednesday afternoon, where a 56-year-old man and a 75-year-old woman were standing in the car park of Tru Valu Supermarket around 2.45 p.m. when they were confronted by a bandit with a gun. The bandit hit the man several times on his head before snatching his bag and also snatched the woman's bag, which contained \$600, Madam Speaker.

Because, Madam Speaker, according to the data from the police service's Crime and Problem Analysis unit, robberies and burglaries at residences, they are saying, have not seen an overall increase. These were the statistics or the data that was presented by the Minister of National Security, Fitzgerald Hinds, in the Senate on the 12th of June, in response to a question on the apparent increase in crime of that nature. And there was a conclusion that there were increases in areas such as Cunupia and Barataria, and so on, and in the constituency, because I stand as the Member for Couva South. And I am sure that if you do a poll in all of the constituencies under the control of the Government, in every constituency the constituents will challenge the statistics because of the proliferation of home invasions and robberies in Trinidad and Tobago.

But, Madam Speaker, the Minister during his response in the other place, told the country that to this end a specialized—he assured, sorry, firstly that the police service is taking all measures to tackle home invasion with several crime suppression strategies being deployed. To this end, a specialized team of intelligence officers, CID personnel and analysts have been designated to respond to home invasions across the country. And this team will receive enhanced training equipment and other necessary resources.

Madam Speaker, I liaise with officers of the Central Division from time to time. I liaise with the Freeport Police Station. I liaise with the Couva Police

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Station. And I am sure—because I see all my colleagues are nodding their heads in a very approving manner, they liaise with officers of the police service—there are no specialized units appointed by the Minister of National Security to deal with home invasions in Trinidad and Tobago. That is mere propaganda again.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And the team will receive enhanced training and equipment and other necessary resources, Madam Speaker. Recently, there was a home invasion, or what I would call a brutal robbery that occurred at a mini mart in Calcutta. And when they “finish rob” the mini mart in a very brazen act, the mini mart was firebombed in Calcutta. It is on the public record. It is in the public domain. It was on all the newspapers.

And, Madam Speaker, I continue to liaise with the police. And do you know what they told me? They have two used vehicles at the Freeport Police Station. Their manpower: on every shift they should have at least between 8 to 12 officers. They have less than 50 per cent of that strength on every shift. And a senior officer told me that when two officers or one officer is absent on a shift, the whole issue of policing within the community collapses because they cannot function effectively. And they did not need a crime symposium, from a regional perspective, to tell you how to fill the vacancies as it relates to the manpower needs of the Police Service of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Minister of National Security is very aware. We have been told time and time again that there is a vacant number of what?—1,400 police officers that are needed. And they will attempt to tell you they have no control over the Police Service Commission. But I think that if they are responsible and they have a sense of leadership, the Minister of National Security will tell the Prime Minister, who is

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the head of the National Security Council, whenever you meet the head of state of the country, press upon the head of state to ensure that the Police Service Commission fills the vacancies within the Police Service of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: That is the leadership that is needed in terms of the fight against crime—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—not rhetoric and “ole” talk; not rhetoric and “ole” talk, and every minute across the floor, “who go geh lock up and who on bail”, and all that rhetoric.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: We need leadership. We need action. And the Government, based on successive Ministers of National Security, have failed the people in Trinidad and Tobago over the last eight years.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And, Madam Speaker, I say so, that there is a sense of hopelessness. There is a sense of hopelessness because the statistics continue to be—the data continues to show that law-abiding citizens in this country are under attack because of the inaction and the incompetence and the lack of leadership and the lack of vision from the Minister of National Security. Madam Speaker, 700 motor vehicles are being stolen in the first five months of 2023..

And you know what really caused me to be alarmed? And I know that we are at an end, an all-time low under this Government, Madam Speaker. I want to refer you to an article that was written by one Sascha Wilson, the 21st of June 2023, and the headline was:

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“Cop to traumatised home invasion victims: Protect yourselves, properties as you see fit”.

This was the headline.

“In the wake of a series of home invasions in the Barrackpore district, a senior police has advised residents to deal with criminal ‘as they see fit’ to defend themselves.”

Imagine this, the police service, based on the leadership, based from the point of view—because if you have a National Security Minister instilling confidence, instilling a sense of purpose and focus to tackle crime fighting, a senior police would not be throwing up his hand in the air. And the:

“...senior police...advised residents to deal with the criminals ‘as they see fit’ to defend themselves.”

Because:

“Addressing a police town meeting at Vickar’s Country Club in Barrackpore...”

A Senior Superintendent said:

“...Your home is your castle, and you are entitled to protect yourself against any external person who comes to make trouble for you. You have to protect yourself and your family. I would not go on to say how. Use your imagination...”

Imagine that is what we come to. Imagine that is where—

“Use your imagination...”

If the police had the resources; they had the motor vehicles; they had, for example, the support of joint police/army patrols, body cams, CCTV in the Barrackpore district, and so on, you think that they have been telling the law-abiding citizens:

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“You have to protect yourself and your family. I would not go on to say how. Use your imagination, deal with it accordingly because they are in your place.”

3.20 p.m.

Madam Speaker, and in addition to that a businessman was one:

“Laltoo Seepersad was moved to tears after he spoke about his ordeal. He told reporters afterward that the incident occurred ‘a couple’ of years ago, but he is still traumatized.”

And—

“Addressing officers at the meeting, he said, ‘Right now, I don’t know what to do if they come again. How to protect myself, my family? I need some help from you all. All I could do is use a machete or some piece of iron or something. I am really scared.’”

That is the reality. That is after eight years in government. That is after the Member for Laventille West has been the Minister of National Security, Madam Speaker. And the time for the old talk, the time for the rhetoric, the time for the propaganda has come to an end, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And you know what is more important, Madam Speaker, that if we take an approach to the Prime Minister, you will believe that there is no crisis as it relates to—

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, you have two more minutes of ordinary time available to you. You are entitled to 15 more minutes extended time to wind up your contribution if you so wish.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will certainly take advantage

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of that additional 15 minutes.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: I have much more to say.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Yes, and if you listen to the Prime Minister who is the head of the National Security Council, and you read the newspaper the *Newsday* newspaper of Thursday 25 May, PM:

“No crisis.”

And another headline on page 10:

“PM defends approach to crime...”

And he indicated that when a government is elected to govern the affairs of the country, it is the responsibility of the Government to ensure that—well, I am saying, Madam Speaker, he said, that there is no crisis. But I am saying that when a Government is elected to deal with the national security responsibility of its citizens, it must fulfil that mandate. And from where I sit, Madam Speaker, we have failed miserably.

During the course of this debate my colleagues on this side, they have been able to establish, and they have provided the supporting data and material to further strengthen our position, to strengthen the case that was the put forward by the Member for Barataria/San Juan when he piloted this particular debate—this Motion. And it is not passing strange that Trinidad and Tobago ranked six on the list of the world most criminal countries. And I take no joy in saying this because this is the reality, Madam Speaker, and crime continues to impact upon the persons who reside in the constituency of Couva South.

Mr. Charles: And Naparima.

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Mr. R. Indarsingh: Persons have started to migrate because they are living in mortal fear. The Minister is yet to show his face in Couva South to address any meeting or to provide any leadership to the police in Freeport and in Couva. To visit, to find out, to see the conditions that exist in the Couva and Freeport police station, Madam Speaker. And as I said, home invasions, robbery of vehicles and so on, continue to be the order of the day.

And Madam Speaker, it is crisis after crisis, whether it is in the police service, and whether it is in the fire service, whether it is in the Immigration Division, whether it is in the prisons, whether this is in the defence force. Only recently, a Galil disappeared. I am not blaming the Minister of National Security to say that it is his personal responsibility you know, but the crises that continue to pop up from time to time definitely lend credibility that something is amiss in terms of the leadership.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And Madam Speaker, fire stations fall under the jurisdiction and the responsibility of the Member for Laventille West, and the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo seemed not to be concerned about the people of Couva, probably he is concerned about the land assets in Couva.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: But he is not concerned about the people in Couva, because if indeed he was concerned about the people in Couva, he would have told the Minister of National Security that in Couva there is the National Aquatic Centre, the cycling velodrome, the National Cricket Centre, the Couva Hospital, the multi-training facility which they renamed, the Point Lisas Industrial Estate, the Port of Point Lisas, the Phoenix Park Industrial Estate, and recently they went to launch a

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solar park in Phoenix Park and to tell you how they are not accustomed with the geography of Trinidad and Tobago, they launched a solar park in Phoenix Park but telling you they launched it in Brechin Castle. That is how they know the geography of the country.

But more importantly, look at the assets, look at the number of employees in addition to the communities of Dow Village, and Esperanza, and California, and Couva, and Windsor Park, and Phoenix Park, and yet you do not have a functioning hazmat tender at the Savonetta Fire Station, Madam Speaker. It is sad.

Mr. Charles: Sad, sad, sad.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And also, Madam Speaker, the Couva Fire Station also, that is in a state of chaos. And I am sure that if the Member were very concerned about his responsibilities, because his responsibilities take into consideration from the point of view of public order, safety, and law enforcement, it takes into consideration the police service, the fire service, the prison service, the lifeguard services of Trinidad and Tobago.

And the assets that I just referred to in terms of what is owned by the people of Trinidad and Tobago, really should get priority attention from the Minister of National Security.

Mr. Charles: Coast guard.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And then, Madam Speaker, it is important to look at not only the state of fire stations in Couva, but it is a responsibility across the board in the context of Trinidad and Tobago. Because, Madam Speaker, it is not politics, it is the reality. And certainly we do not want, and I am sure that I speak for all the 41 Members in this House, that we do not want a repetition of the incident which occurred in Siparia at the beginning of April 2023, when mother Kemba Morris

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and her daughter perished in that unfortunate situation, that fire at their home.

Madam Speaker, it is not a matter of politicizing. It is a matter of meeting and treating with the issues as it relates to the real or the reality confronting the people of this country. And we are saying to the Minister of National Security, we are saying to the Prime Minister and his entire Cabinet, allocate resources to fire stations throughout the length and breadth of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: So that we will not have a repetition of what transpired in Siparia, Madam Speaker. Because at the end of the day, not only that situation, but following the Kemba Morris situation one transpired also in Rochard Road in Penal where the family of—a businessman by the name of Anil Sundar he had to wait for firstly the fire tender in less than 10 minutes that responded to the fire at his home, ran out of the water.

Ms. Ameen: Hmmm.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And I hope the Minister of Public Utilities listening too, because they always you know, the whole-of-government approach, the whole-of-government approach. We have it under control. We liaising and we talking with each other. But everything falling down from a whole-of-government approach because of the incompetence of all of them.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: The whole lot of them. And if they had any decency, Madam Speaker, they will do a sense of reflection indeed, they are the most disconnected Government from the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Charles: They have no shame.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And, Madam Speaker, the issue continues as it relates to the organs or what is under the responsibility of the Minister of National Security. We on this side, we are concerned also about the state of affairs at the Prison Services of Trinidad and Tobago. We are concerned that there is the need to focus also on the provision of adequate lifeguard services in this country. Because we all are, duty bound in our responsibility to look after the well-being of the people of this country when they go to the nation's beaches. And I am saying to the Minister of National Security, that you have that responsibility not only from the point of view of the lifeguard stations, but you must ensure, Member for Laventille West, that these life guard stations whether they are at Maracas, or Los Iros, or Mayaro, or—well the ones in Tobago they fall under the THA and so on, they have the necessary.

Mr. Charles: Apparatus.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Apparatus. The necessary apparatus, whether it is jet skis, it is dinghies; it is ambulances and so on, Madam Speaker. Because again, these are the things that are near and dear to the ordinary people—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—when they go or they traverse the length and breadth of this country. Any mother or father when they take out their children on excursions to the beaches and so on, they want to know that there is a Government, and a Minister of National Security who is putting a sense of focus as it relates to the provision of facilities and equipment in relation to a better lifeguard service.

And from where we sit, we are of the strong opinion, Madam Speaker, that the Minister has failed also in dealing with a lifeguard service that is competent, and where the ordinary people of this country have confidence in. They have

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confidence in the lifeguards you know, but they do not have confidence in the Minister of National Security, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

3.35 p.m.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And Madam Speaker, I will now attempt to bring my contribution or ensure that we put on the record before I end where we are because the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo again, attempted to create a narrative that the Opposition—

Hon. Member: Has no solutions.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: —has no solutions, we just get up and talk and so on. But at the end of the day, we have advocated, and the Opposition led by the Member for Siparia, have said that we will institute some solutions at the community level to dispel the fears of the ordinary citizens as it relates to crime. And the UNC is about securing communities and ensuring that there is a restart to community comfort patrols in communities.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: We are about securing families and in that regard we would support and we would want everyone to support our proposal to increase legal gun ownership for you the law-abiding citizen.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: We, when we were in government we dealt with a public lighting programme throughout the length and breadth of this country that made citizens feel safe. And we will restore a nationwide plan to improve your street lighting in your respective communities—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: —to take back control of your streets. And we will also use the municipal police in the local government corporations to secure our children at the primary and secondary school, Madam Speaker—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: —because they promised in successive budgets to hire 100 municipal police officers in the 14 regional corporations, and in eight years, if you ask them how many they have hired, they have hired less than 20 per cent and that is why we are saying, overall, the Minister of National Security has to go. If he has any decency—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: —he will listen to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and the Prime Minister will ensure that he no longer occupies the position of Minister of National Security. I do not know who he can put because if there is a rotation or a shuffling of the cards, there will be a similar result and the law-abiding citizens will have no hope in the People's National Movement. The only hope to restore Trinidad and Tobago from the point of view of the national security point of view, and where the citizens of this country can have a sense of security and a sense of hope is the Member for Siparia—

Hon. Member: Yeah.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: —and the United National Congress.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for St. Ann's East.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Education (Hon. Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly): Thank you very kindly, Madam Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise and to contribute to this debate

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Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly (cont'd)

today. You know, Madam Speaker, though we are on different sides of the floor, we are human first. And I—as I listen to my colleague from Couva South contributing, I saw the Member for Princes Town yawning widely, Madam Speaker. I understand why—

Hon. Member: He is bored.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: —because this is the fourth Private Member's Day that we have been here discussing this issue and it seems as though, the Members on the other side believe that by saying one thing over and over and over again, it is going to be accepted. But, Madam Speaker, the Member for Couva South said that he feel “match stick break in our ears, but match stick eh break in our ears”. We heard you the first time, we heard you the second time, we heard you the third time, and we are hearing you now, and we are saying to you now that despite whatever strawmen you put up there, the People's National Movement and the people of this country will not be derailed.

Mr. Gonzales: Amen.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: We will not be distracted. And we are going to continue to make the work that we are doing, pressing ahead, and I want to tell you, Madam Speaker, that all the Members on this side stand in full support and solidarity of our colleague, the Minister of National Security.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: An experienced politician.

Hon. Member: Honourable.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: A citizen that has contributed for many years in this country, and someone that is well respected and holds that office, working hard to

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ensure the security and safety of all of us. I have confidence in this Minister of National Security.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Madam Speaker, the UNC changed Minister, after Minister, after Minister, after Minister. There is a standing—“ah doh want to call it ah joke” because it is sad, it is not even funny.

Mr. Gonzales: Revolving door.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: That one day the Prime Minister at that time who is the Opposition Leader now called for the Minister of National Security and about three people jumped up. That is not even funny, it is sad, it is sad.

Mr. Gonzales: Oh yes.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Because here we are, again, how many years later and the same thing is being proposed to the country by the United National Congress, change the Minister, change the Minister, change the Minister. It did not work for you and it is not going to work for us.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Why do I have confidence in this Minister of National Security? Madam Speaker, we went through a very trying time in this country, in the world, during the time of COVID-19. I remember the day the Prime Minister stood up and said we have to close our schools.

Hon. Member: Oh gosh.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: I am a parent, and I considered the effect of that. We all thought it would be a short measure, that stretched to two years for some children and I, at that time, was in a different capacity within the Cabinet. Now, I

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am Minister of Education and I know too well, the trials our children went through and when they came back out to school in April of 2022, we all saw the effect of that on our children. Imagine two years away from socialization, two years away from dealing with your peers, two years away from developing the tolerance that it takes to sit in a classroom and have the kind of discipline required. And our children came out and many of them were behaving in ways that we could not understand, appreciate, and it was causing national concern. I reached out to that Minister of National Security. I reached out because we could not handle it alone, the Ministry of Education could not go it alone, and I can tell you the immediate response of the Minister assured me that this is a man that cares about this country, our children and our society.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Immediately, I asked, “I need to meet with your officials. We need to discuss how we deal with this,”. And, into our conversations came the TTPS at the highest level, ensured by our Minister of National Security, because he understands that the underpinning of crime is not on the street when they are old. It is in our schools when they are misbehaving and they need the support and they cannot get there and so into our discussions came the TTPS. And we went on and on for days in order to come up with something that will help us. And into our schools immediately, 17 of our secondary schools where we had the most problems, went the community police.

So I am listening to the Member for Couva South and you are talking about bringing community police into our schools. We are doing that already.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: So thank you. Thank you for your endorsement of what we are doing under this Minister of National Security because we understand, the PNM understands what is required and we have put a man there to do the work and he is doing the work that we have to do.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: So we have our community police in our schools helping us and I want the country to remember back in May 2022 the average was maybe three times a week—all of these fights going viral on social media. consider it to today, May 2023, where our average is down to, maybe less than one a week with those kinds of fights. It is a lot more sporadic. It is difficult to eradicate. But the fact is that those community police—I want to give kudos to those officers in the schools.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: I want to give kudos, sent there through the intervention of the Minister of National Security to help support our children and the community police are the ones that run the police youth clubs. Let us give them kudos again for that.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Because the children they are helping and supporting, were they not doing that these children would be without family, without support, guiding them in a positive direction. So the police are in the schools, encouraging the children to come into the community, in the police youth clubs, to ensure that continuity of support, providing mentorship, role models for our children.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Under this Minister of National Security, that is what is currently going on. And that is so critical, Madam Speaker. If we do not catch them there, in the schools, then we have a problem because later on those same children who could have been stopped and saved would be the ones that we will be budgeting for under the budget of the Ministry of National Security. Madam Speaker, I have confidence in not just the talk but the walk of the Minister of National Security.

Madam Speaker, another area that is very important for us is mentorship of our children. Mentorship of our children because he wants to deal with the problem before it mushrooms and balloons into something that is more deleterious to our country. We have written to the Ministry of National Security, again under this Minister of National Security, speaking to them about children who are truant, children who are not appearing in our classrooms. And we know that there are children who fell out over the COVID. We know that there are children who need that level of support. And again, who is going into the highways, the byways, up the hills where our school social workers cannot go? Who is going to pull out those children, speak to those parents, encourage them. Who is doing that? The police under the guidance and instruction of the Minister of National Security.

Just yesterday, a constituent messaged me and she said to me, my children's names are in the police station and the police want to speak to us as parents. Why? Because her children had not been to school for a couple of days. And so the school made a report to the student support services; they could not find them when they went. And so they made the report to the police, and it is the police now who are looking for them, doing that work, helping, partnering with the Ministry of Education to find those children, question the parents—what is happening?—not

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punitive intentions but to bring them back. Because if we do not bring back our children, and if the police do not help us to do that, under the guidance of the Minister of National Security, then we will lose them. And we will find them again in the prisons, we will find them again in our homes, we will find them in the home invasions. That is why it is so important what this Minister of National Security is doing. And I said to that parent, I said, “Go and speak to the police and explain your situation”. The parent was ill and they moved from the house in order to take care of her. I said: Explain to the police your situation. They are not looking to lock you up. They want your children back in school because it is important to us and to them and to the country that our children are there. This is under the instruction of the Minister of National Security. So when you asked me if I have confidence. Yes, I have confidence in him, yes.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: I want to ask the UNC. What are you doing to help? I can tell you that I wrote to this Minister of National Security asking for police officers to be involved in our school mentorship programme. Madam Speaker, we have children who are parenting themselves. We have children who do not know what it is to have a father figure speaking to them, and telling them do this, do that, “doh” do this, “doh” do that. We have children in our system who are coming to school, nobody to feed them, nobody to clothe them. Teachers are at their wits end. And we have to provide role models for these children.

I have written to the Minister of National Security asking for the police to be involved in a mentorship programme and I can tell you, within short order, a response was given by the police. They will be involved in our school mentorship programme. That is ongoing.

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Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Madam Speaker, we need them. We need them because our children require that support. They require looking up to someone who can tell them about their own experiences and who can guide them in the right way, in the realest way possible. That is the support being provided to our children in our schools from the Minister of National Security through the TTPS. That is why I have confidence in him. What are you doing to help?

I want to say this, Madam Speaker. We have been approached by NGOs, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, civil society organizations, all wanting to make an impact in the school system because they understand that crime and criminality begin right there. And I am saying that among all the people who have approached us, I have had no approach coming from the United National Congress. None.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

3.50 p.m.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Is coming here every Private Members' Day, for the last four Private Members' Day, speaking about no confidence in the Minister of National Security, is that helping? Who is that helping? Hmm? Who is that helping? And that is what I want to ask, what is your track record as the UNC on crime legislation?

Hon. Member: None.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Did you support the Bail Bill?

Hon. Members: No.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Did you support the child marriage Bill?

Hon. Members: No.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Did you support the Anti-Gang Bill?

Hon. Members: No.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Did you support the Cybercrime Bill?

Hon. Members: No.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Did you support the whistleblower Bill?

Hon. Members: No.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Did you support FATCA?

Hon. Members: No.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Did you support the interception of communications?
Did you support the Gambling (Gaming and Betting) Control Bill?

Hon. Members: [*Interruption*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: If you supported one out of the million, then that is one in a million. I give you kudos for that.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: But you are quick to come here to speak about hypocrisy? We come to speak about hypocrisy? No, no. The UNC is so petulant—

Hon. Members: [*Interruption*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: The UNC is so petulant that not even a national event is attended by the UNC Members.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Tell me I am wrong. What is the example, eh? What is the example you are showing to the children who we want to supply role models for to make sure that they understand what is good patriotism and good citizenship? Hmm? The UNC can do more to help.

Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: And coming here every day to speak about no confidence, that is not helping. Do more to help our young citizens.

Hon. Member: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: I want to talk a little bit more about the track record, because you are speaking about no confidence in the Minister of National Security.

Hon. Member: That is right.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Who destroyed the crime-fighting units that were formed to tackle crimes in the Special Anti-Crime Unit?

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Who cancelled the OPV contracts and left our border porous?

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Who destroyed the facial recognition software and equipment at the airports?

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Who passed section 34 to protect criminals in Trinidad and Tobago?

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Under which administration was the famous LifeSport birthed in Trinidad and Tobago with all the effects that it had?

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: And on top of that, to put salt in the wound, you bring back the vilest person in the other House to serve still.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Which one of our governments—

Madam Speaker: Member, I will just ask you to retract that and rephrase it. Okay? Please.

Hon. Members: [*Interruption*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Certainly, Madam Speaker. The most—

Madam Speaker: I am not in an enquiry about—okay? Please.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Thank you, Madam Speaker. One of the contributors with the most unparliamentary behaviour.

Hon. Member: That is right.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: Well said. Well said.

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Madam Speaker, there was someone who served as a Minister of National Security under UNC that is now wanted in the USA for international crimes.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: A former police commissioner accused a sitting Opposition Member of Parliament in a JSC of leaking information to criminals.

Mr. Hinds: “Ohhh”.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: In 2021, there is a report of the Opposition Leader calling the police monsters. This is the track record of the persons that, week, after week, after week, after week, after week, are bringing us here and saying they—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly:—have no confidence in the Minister of National Security? No, no, come better than that. We have confidence and we know why we have confidence and we will continue to have confidence in the Minister of

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National Security.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: And we speak over and over about our whole-of-government approach, and we will continue to speak to it because that is what we are doing. You cannot approach crime simply on the level of the Ministry of National Security. You have to attack the root. That is why the Ministry of Education is partnering with the TTPS. That is why the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service will open every single youth camp that the UNC closed down.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: We will do it, because we have to do it. These are the people that we need to support. These are the children growing up in circumstances that some of us would not even imagine exist and as a Government we have a responsibility. So when they see us speaking of a whole-of-government, we mean whole-of-government. When they see the Ministry of Education partnering with the police, we have to partner with them, under this Minister of National Security. When you see the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service doing what they have to do to ensure we have youth camps and access centres and we have programmes for our young people, these are the things that we as a PNM Government that cares about our people are doing—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly:—to attack crime. So it is not about the Minister of National Security. It is not about him. It is about all of us working together as a Cabinet with a plan and a purpose and clear understanding of why we were voted into Government. And if all the UNC sees as a way to help the crime situation, if

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all you see is by regurgitating what the PNM is already doing, putting community police in schools, we are already doing that. You are speaking about street lighting, the Ministry of Public Utilities has installed over 3,000 new street lights just in this term here alone, over 10,000 repaired.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: So do not come to us with the recycled work of the People's National Movement. Respect us for who we are and for what we are doing, and respect the position of the Minister of National Security who is working hard with all of us to ensure that we secure our people in Trinidad and Tobago.

So if all you can do is to stand and say, "Fire de Minister, fire de Minister, fire de Minister", ad nauseam, then that will ensure that the UNC remains in its rightful place on that side of House—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly:—and we in the PNM will stay on this side of the House and we will do the work that is required to secure this country; all of us pulling together, working hard: Ministry of National Security, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth Development and National Service, Ministry of Social Development and Family Services. We will do the work to ensure that we safeguard the citizens of this country from the smallest to the biggest. We will do that under the astute leadership and guidance of the hon. Keith Christopher Rowley—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly:—who understands what is required to secure this country. So no confidence, we on this side declare our confidence in our Minister of National Security.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Madam Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. Member: Well said. Well done. Well done.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for Caroni East.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Rishad Seecheran: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me the opportunity to speak on the timely and necessary Private Members' Motion, brought by the talented and brilliant Member for Barataria/San Juan. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank all the speakers on this side of the House for their passionate and well-intentioned contributions.

Madam Speaker, we face unprecedented times in this country. As we all know, Trinidad and Tobago is now a cruel and brutal place. Madam Speaker, as a nation, we must take stock of what has happened and endeavour that this level of brutality and insecurity must never be allowed to continue. Madam Speaker, the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago will remember the unparalleled feeling of safety and prosperity that we all enjoyed under Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar.

4.00 p.m.

Madam Speaker, truth be told, the local government elections will be a referendum on Prime Minister Keith Rowley and his Ministers. Every single Ministry is failing. Earlier this week, we learnt of another horrific death in the oil and gas industry. And on behalf of the Members on this side, we give our condolences to the family of that person. But as we see, again, there is no accountability in any sphere of governance. When questions are asked, we are all told to look the other way, but the time has come for citizens of this country to

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stand their ground. And we in the United National Congress, under Kamla Persad-Bissessar, will stand by the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago and we will stand our ground.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. R. Seecheran: Madam Speaker, the Member for St. Ann's East, the Minister of Education, I listened to her contribution, but she seemed very out of touch and out of reality. She spoke of confidence in the Minister of National Security and the help that he gave during COVID-19 in our school system. But, Madam Speaker, we must remember what happened on November the 4th of, 2022 when there gunfire outside the Rose Hill School, Madam Speaker. The Minister of National Security is on record of saying that the video was misleading. The children were under their desks scampering for their lives and he said, that the video was misleading. The children had to duck and run for cover as criminals exchanged gunfire outside of the school.

Madam Speaker, we then have the issue on the 2nd of May, 2023 in Chaguanas West, the Monroe Road Hindu School where a person was murdered on the school compound and all the children had to view that dead body. How traumatizing could that be, Madam Speaker?

The Minister also spoke about mentorship and she spoke about the Minister of National Security being a mentor for these children. But how can he be a mentor for these children when he is not even accountable to what has happened, Madam Speaker?

The Member also went on to speak about various Bills and I would like to have put on the record that the Miscellaneous Provisions (Marriage) Bill of 2016, all Members voted in support of that Bill, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. R. Seecheran: All Members voted in support of that Bill, as well as the Bail Bill of 2014.

Mr. Hinds: [*Inaudible*]—after defending it.

Dr. R. Seecheran: Madam Speaker, the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo spoke about a whole-of-government approach and the fact that there are training programmes for young persons in this country. And he spoke of having safe spaces and youth development, as well as educational opportunities and job training. Madam Speaker, I will spend a significant amount of time today on a part of my constituency where we see none of that and that is in Kelly Village, where crime has grown exponentially in the last few years and more so during his tenure, Madam Speaker. Kelly Village was a peaceful community between 2010 and 2015. It is not so again.

Madam Speaker, I would like to commend the Member for Chaguanas West, as well as the Member for Couva South on their presentations today.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. R. Seecheran: The Member for Chaguanas West spoke about accountability. He also spoke about the evasiveness of the Minister of National Security and the fact that he cannot take responsibility for anything that is happening in our country right now. He spoke about changes in policing, as well as the criminal justice system. And, you know, he just returned from the Privy Council in the United Kingdom, something that the Minister of National Security has never done.

Madam Speaker, I will also speak about three divisional—central divisional town hall meetings that we had in Caroni East, as well as MP for Couva South spoke about the fact that crime is everywhere and home invasions. Madam

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Speaker, we have seen an increase in home invasions in Caroni East, and I will delve into more detail in that a little later, as well as stations without officers, stations being undermanned. In Caroni East, we have three police stations and we had a crime symposium, a regional crime symposium costing in excess of \$4 million but we do not have police officers in our stations. So it is an issue of leadership, it is an issue of the strategic direction that this country wants to take, and we will have a referendum on this Government in the local government election, Madam Speaker. So, Madam Speaker, I would like to restate the Motion for those who may not know:

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

And whereas the Minister of National Security through his vast and continued incompetence has mismanaged the organs and departments of national security;

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

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

And, Madam Speaker, each tenet of that Motion Caroni East fully agrees with and I will delve into this a little more, Madam Speaker, beginning with the inability to execute his duties. The Minister of National Security took office in April of 2021 and he was not the first choice to the Minister of National Security. It happened under tragic circumstances and he was thrust upon this role due to a reshuffle in the Cabinet, Madam Speaker. And there is no indication that serious crime would

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abate under his tenure. And, Madam Speaker, my intention is to primarily focus on Caroni East during my contribution but, of course, I would expand into the national context.

And one of most glaring failures of this Minister of National Security was his inability to keep serious crime out of the public's view during Carnival 2023. You see, Madam Speaker, Carnival 2023 was our reopening to the world. It was our first full Carnival after COVID-19 and we invited the world to visit our shores and extensive funding was put aside for this. And this was despite the numerous international travel advisories against our country. Carnival 2023 was branded as “the mother of all Carnivals”. But in fact, Madam Speaker, it turned out to be the mother of all embarrassments—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. R. Seecheran:—when our nationals, as well as visitors witnessed an early morning double murder along Ariapita Avenue in Woodbrook which left a British citizen nursing a gunshot wound on the 18th of February, 2023. Madam Speaker, reports of persons that were there said that they thought it was Carnival skit that they were watching in amusement as two men approached two others and gunned them down in cold blood, Madam Speaker. Right? Instead of laughs, they got screams of terror as these persons drew their last breath. And, Madam Speaker, this is one of the busiest partying strips during Carnival and it was on Carnival Friday, I think it was. Madam Speaker, the mother of all Carnivals showed the murderous underbelly that lies here in Trinidad and Tobago. Hundreds of law enforcement officials were unable to stop a double assassination in front of hundreds of party reveller. It sent hundreds scampering and the homeowners rushed to their homes to lock their doors. That is how scared that they were,

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Madam Speaker, with hundreds of police officers around. How low can we go? How can they defend the situation we are here in Trinidad and Tobago?

On behalf of the Members on this side and hundreds and thousands of right-thinking persons and God-fearing citizens in Trinidad and Tobago, we apology for those who witnessed those murders. We apologize to the street vendors who witnessed the incident and said on record that they were too scared to continue operating that night. One vendor said, “Yeah, we feeling unsafe but what could we do”? My friend, you simply have to vote out the PNM. Do not tote, vote.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. R. Seecheran: Madam Speaker, Minister Hinds was unable to keep Carnival 2023 crime free and he has been unable to marshal the security forces of this nation to prevent crime as best as he could from occurring and from holding perpetrators to account. He could not do it then and he cannot do it now.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. R. Seecheran: It would take a UNC government led by Kamla Persad-Bissessar to rescue this country once again. She did it once, Madam Speaker, and she will do it again.

Madam Speaker, I would like to move the tenet of ensuring public safety and would like to apply many of the tenets of this Motion to what has happened in my constituency in Caroni East over the last couple of years. And to be fair to the Minister of National Security, I would only refer to crimes that happened since he became the Minister of National Security. Right? And I will refer to some *Hansards*, as well as three central division town meetings that we had in Caroni East during his tenure. And it is my intention to show that the promises that he made were not kept. We are more unsafe than ever and that serious crime, murders

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and victimization of citizens, law-abiding citizens continue unabated and, in fact, has increased and proliferated during his tenure.

Madam Speaker, I will also speak about initiatives that the United National Congress will propose to do, such as community comfort patrols, legal gun ownership, street lighting, as well as municipal policing. Madam Speaker, on the 24th May, 2021, question No. 143 on notice, page 19 on the *Hansard* the question was:

“Could”—Minister Hinds—“state what specific measures are being implemented to curb the current high incidents of violent crimes in communities in and around the Caroni East constituency?”

And Minister Hinds, sorry, the Minister of National Security at that time said:

“Many strategies have been implemented to curb the crime in...Caroni East”—including—“very proactive and scientific approaches which include hosting weekly operations meetings with first division officers, inspectors and sergeants of the respective stations...”

“And identifying...the situation”—and analysing—“strategic implementation of the patrols, road blocks...search exercises”—and—“engaging in...ongoing projects...through the Central Division Intelligence Unit where data is being collected, collated and converted into actionable intelligence. This is in keeping with intelligence led policing initiative”—geared towards the reduction of organized crime.

And he went on to say:

“There is a “monthly average of 10 anti-crime exercises...conducted in the three stations...that is...Cunupia, Caroni and Las Lomas”—and—“several public awareness exercises.”

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And in addition, there is help from:

“...the Emergency Response Patrol, the Inter-Agency Task Force, and the Guard and Emergency Branch”—and patrols have been ongoing.

Madam Speaker, he said this on May 24th, 2021, and every year since my first year in Parliament I have asked him basically the same question. And I will continue to ask him the same question every year that I am in the Parliament. And, Madam Speaker, the residents of Caroni have seen nothing, nothing remotely close to what this Minister has promised on this particular answer to this *Hansard* question.

Madam Speaker, on the 10th of June, just a couple of months after this question in 2021, we had a home invasion in St. Helena in Mohepath Trace. Madam Speaker, \$150,000 was stolen and the homeowner was shot. And, you know, just recently Minister Hinds spoke that right now in 2023 home invasions are on an increase in Cunupia. Right? There were 12 in 2023 compared to five in 2022. So whatever he says he is doing, it is not working, Madam Speaker. And that is our point. What is the point of keeping him, if it is not working?

Madam Speaker, on 4th September, 2021, five persons were murdered in Caroni East in one day, Madam Speaker, in one single day. We had three persons gunned down in Kelly Village. Right? And I will spend a lot of time on Kelly Village, Madam Speaker, and we had two persons murdered in Enterprise. Right? What about the proactive and scientific approaches, the weekly operations meetings with inspectors and sergeants, Madam Speaker?

4.59 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Madam Speaker: Member for Caroni East, you have 15 minutes and 17 seconds left.

Dr. R. Seecheran: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, as I was saying, on the 12th of September, 2022, a shop owner along the Caroni South Bank Road, Kelly Village, was shot and killed. Over 30 spent rounds of 9 millimetre ammunition was found at the scene. Madam Speaker, the perpetrators of this crime, upon getting away, crashed into an oncoming vehicle. The persons that had the high-powered rifle pointed his weapon at the oncoming driver and asked the driver to stop, and made a three-point turn and went along his merry way. We have actual dashcam footage of the gun shooter's face, Madam Speaker, and it was shared widely on WhatsApp groups, and to date this person has not been found by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. So this person is still at large. This person is still out there with his weapon and able to kill others, Madam Speaker.

And, Madam Speaker, most disturbingly, on the 10th of October, 2022, a young boy, nine years old, was killed in Enterprise on African Grounds. Madam Speaker, he was at the basketball courts in African Grounds. A white panel van pulled up, persons came out, fired upon another group of persons, and this young boy, nine-years-old, was shot and killed. Madam Speaker, this one hits very, very close to home. Not only was this a very, very young man, I myself have done health clinics at African Grounds and I saw this young man at one of my health clinics, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, this family has lost a son and this is the point at which crime has reached in Caroni East, where a young nine-year-old boy, with the rest of his life to live, is now gone forever from this earth.

Madam Speaker, in another part of my constituency in Mon Plasir Road, Cunupia, on the 18th of October, 2022, the body parts of two men were found in several garbage bags in a river in Mon Plasir Road. Roughly 100 feet away a leg was found floating, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, this gruesome event took

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place in a quiet, peaceful village in Cunupia, and it is not the first time that a body has been found in this area on Mon Plasir Road. How difficult it is to place a CCTV camera or at least some street lights that these persons know that this is not a place to dump murdered victims' bodies, Madam Speaker? And this continues to happen under the Minister of National Security's watch. Residents have made numerous pleas, Madam Speaker, for CCTV cameras as well as street lights in this area. This is a preventable crime, Madam Speaker, and more must be done, more will be done under Kamla Persad-Bissessar, under a United National Congress government.

Madam Speaker, I will now speak about my third question to the Minister of National Security, which was on the 4th of November, 2022, and question 17 on page 33 of the *Hansard*. And I asked the Minister of National Security at the time:

“Will the Minister inform this House what measures will be taken to cease the escalating crime and murders in Kelly Village, Caroni?”

The Minister of National Security replied:

He has received—“...information...from the Commissioner of Police, the Central Division Task Force...the Emergency Response Patrol Unit...”—and they have been—“...recently retooled, retrained and equipped for all...”—types—“...of eventualities...”

Madam Speaker, he went on to say:

“...Kelly Village has come to be...”—known as a—“...hotspot...”—zone by the TTPS.

“In addition, the Emergency Response Police Unit and other assets of the...”—TTPS—“...driven by the intelligence element within the police service and outside of it, have been redeployed to augment the usual patrols

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in...”—this—“...community. In this regard, the...”—TTPS—“...has been focusing a large chunk of its resources on Kelly Village and environs...to alleviate the incidence of violent crime...”

Again, Madam Speaker, promises, promises, promises. He said and these were his words, that:

“...the Central Division Task Force and the Emergency Response Patrol Unit...”—had been—“...retooled, retrained and equipped...”

Madam Speaker on the 12th of December, 2022, a 52-year-old businessman was fatally shot again on the Caroni South Bank Road, Piarco. And, Madam Speaker, this victim was a well-respected businessman in the area from Hydraulic Trace. The persons that robbed him and killed him got \$500 worth of hardware supplies from this man, and this brings me to the point of the extortion of business persons in Kelly Village. Criminals are going business place to business place and demanding protection money, Madam Speaker. They are demanding protection money. Businesses are being taxed. They are being told, pay silver or take lead. And if you do not pay every month, Madam Speaker, your safety as a business owner is in jeopardy.

Police officers have advised business owners not to pay and to report this to the police, but the fear that these business owners face and feel, Madam Speaker, in many cases, they still pay this extortion money. What is the point of not paying this extortion money, calling the TTPS at Caroni, at Cunupia or at Las Lomas in an emergency and being told there are no cars available? Who will protect you then, Madam Speaker, meaning the business persons? So this is happening right now as I speak, Madam Speaker. A total failure by this Minister of National Security. And I would like those on the other side to please rebut many of the things I am saying

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here. Please give the country an explanation for what is happening in Kelly Village. Defend it. Go ahead and defend it.

Madam Speaker, on the 2nd of January, 2023, again, in Kelly Village, a man and a young lady were sitting along Church Street in Kelly Village and they were both killed. Thirty bullets again, Madam Speaker. It is probably the same weapon and maybe the same shooter. The villagers at the time told the newspaper that the Caroni Police Station does not have enough vehicles to cover the Kelly Village area, and that Kelly Village has become a key hiding spot for criminals from other communities. And most interestingly, Madam Speaker, the villagers also told that reporter that criminals are using the Caroni River to transport their drugs and their guns under the cover of night. So they are not going along the roadways. They are using the Caroni River to transport drugs and ammunition under the cover of night, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, on the 22nd of January, 2023, again, another person was killed on Palm Drive in Kelly Village. Thirty spent shells again. Thirty spent shells, another illegal high-powered weapon and no CCTV cameras still, Madam Speaker. After three questions, three consecutive years in Parliament asking for this—and it is on *Hansard*, so he cannot say I did not ask for it.

Madam Speaker, on the 22nd of January, 2023, four persons were shot. Two were killed at a popular bar on the Southern Main Road in Cunupia and this happened at 11.25 p.m. And the sad thing about this, Madam Speaker, is that this was 100 metres from the Cunupia Police Station, and there is a video of the person shooting these persons—two persons died. He just jumped in the car and he “drive straight past the police station and up de road”. One hundred metres—less than 100 metres. I am using 100 metres just to be safe. Less than 100 metres from the

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Cunupia Police Station, two persons murdered, two persons shot and nobody was caught. Totally forgotten. And that murderer still lives today and that gun is still out there today. So this goes to show that the police stations themselves have no type of surveillance, otherwise they would have picked up that car on their tapes, but \$80 million for a palace in Tobago, Madam Speaker; \$80 million dollars for a palace for one in Tobago.

Madam Speaker, it gets worse. On the 9th of July, 2023, Airport Boulevard Road, which is obliquely opposite Kamachie's bar, which I spoke about before—and this one is probably less than 50 metres—four people were shot. In this case, one person died, but the interesting thing about this one is that man, woman, child and dog were shot. Right? A seven-year-old, an eight-year-old, the adult male died as well as two dogs; man, woman, child and dog, Madam Speaker. So it is not even children, not even the dogs are speared by these gunmen.

And I am running out of time here, Madam Speaker, and there is so much more here to speak about. The most disturbing one probably was on the 12th of May, 2023, just a month or two ago. In the busiest intersection in St. Helena Road, Madras Road and Caroni South Bank Road, a man and his young child in the back seat, a three-year-old, and they alighted from a vehicle behind and “bullets up” that car, to put it crudely—30 spent shells. That person was killed at 12.00 noon, Madam Speaker, in the day, right in front of Marios.

5.10 p.m.

Right. And he had his three-year-old daughter in the back seat, Madam Speaker, and this was in front of residents, this was in front of commuters, this was in front of business owners and no CCTV cameras again. A senior police officer at the time said it was only by the grace of God that the three-year-old was unharmed.

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People also expressed shock in the area. One person said I do not want the Government to call a state of emergency but what else can we do right now? It is children's lives that are in danger.

And I skipped many crimes, I would probably get to it in the budget but I do not have the time to do them right now. And I would like to move to the three central division town meetings that we had in Caroni East. We had one at the St David's R.C. Primary School on the 19th of January, 2023. We had another at the St Helena Hindu school on the 27th of April, 2023 and we had another at the Warrenville Regional Complex on the 25th of May 2023.

And, Madam Speaker, it broke my heart to be at these meetings, reason being, I heard what the residents of each of these areas had to say and the issues raised were: juvenile delinquency, robberies, drug dealing, home invasions, gang proliferation, drive-by assassination, extortion of business owners, lack of high-powered guns for officers, the use of army ammunition at crime sites, lack of body armour for responding officers, the use of the Caroni River to transport drugs and guns, limited police vehicles at the three police stations in the area and the fact that they have been begging for a police post in Kelly Village just to stop this onslaught.

Madam Speaker, with the few minutes I have remaining, I would like to thank and commend Senior Superintendent Michael Pierre, Superintendent Miguel Montrichard, Acting Superintendent Ramdhanie Dipchand, Senior Superintendent Andrew Eli, Sergeant Richardson, Superintendent Subero, Retired Assistant Commissioner of Police Joanne Archie and Inspector Sylvan for the time and effort that they have made in reaching out to the constituents and the residents of Caroni East and I thank them for that. But what we learnt in all of these meetings

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is that no matter what we may plead to them, they come back and they tell you that they are not in charge of the resources, they are not in charge of the purse book of the nation. They cannot put resources as they wish, all they can is respond and they are available for contact in an emergency but it is only so much they can do. The stations have no police officers, when I say no, I mean not enough. There is not enough weaponry for the police officers. They do not have police vehicles to even respond. And how is a police officer going to face these criminals with these high-powered rifles? How are they going to face those persons?

So Madam Speaker, part of my Kamla Persad-Bissessar and the UNC's plans are for community comfort patrols and this will secure many of the communities in our areas and throw off these criminals as they may not know when a vehicle might pass. We are also asking for legal gun ownership for persons that may qualify, persons that have business interests and may be targets, they need to be able to protect themselves and not be victims all the time. We are asking for, and we will do, improved street-lighting in poorly light areas and try to help those persons that may have to travel home in the dark and walk up a lonely dark road. We are asking to secure our children with the use of municipal police in the primary and secondary schools and it is also a means by which we may—[*Madam Speaker stands*]

Madam Speaker, I would like to commend this Motion and I greatly approve this Motion of no confidence in the Minister of National Security.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, Gender and Child Affairs (Hon. Ayanna Webster-Roy): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to join in this debate. I know it has been done before but please permit

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me just to read out the Motion again. The Motions says:

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

And whereas the Minister of National Security through his vast and continued incompetence has mismanaged the organs and departments of national security;

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

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

Madam Speaker, this Motion is dangerous, misleading and counterproductive and I reject it outright.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. A. Webster-Roy: Madam Speaker, the Motion starts by ascertaining that the Minister is responsible for ensuring public safety by the maintenance of law and order and effective oversight of the National Security apparatus. While the Minister of National Security has a role to play, Madam Speaker, he is not solely responsible. Madam Speaker, it is only this week where I fully understood the concept of having a system in place to integrate safety, security and to reduce crime and violence and at the heart of that, Madam Speaker, was an understanding that it calls for an all-of-society approach.

Madam Speaker, the Members who spoke opposite constantly call for a change in Minister but that is a strategy that they tried and it did not work, so we must go back to the drawing board. Madam Speaker, law and order, peace and

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security are not handouts that we must sit back and wait on. Regardless of our station in life, regardless of where we may stand on the political divide, we the people of Trinidad and Tobago must all work together towards the attainment and maintenance of law and order, peace and security.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. A. Webster-Roy: And, Madam Speaker, that is why I say the Motion is dangerous, the Motion is misleading, the Motion is counterproductive and I reject it outright.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. A. Webster-Roy: And, Madam Speaker, I want to again indicate my full confidence in the Minister of National Security.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. A. Webster-Roy: I want to express my full confidence in the efforts of the Minister of National Security, his team, as well as my other colleagues, as we all work towards ensuring peace and security and safety in Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Speaker, regardless of how much money “we pump” into policing, border control, regardless of how many Ministers of National Security may be appointed, unless there is an acceptance of the fact that we can only see a reduction of crime and violence and an increase of peace and security is if there is an all-of-society approach and I am going to keep reiterating that because that is what is required. So we can sit across the aisle and point fingers, we may highlight a particular Minister, but at the end of the day, unless Trinidad and Tobago embrace the strategy, unless we all buy into the efforts and unless we all work collectively towards attaining, peace and safety and security, then we will be doomed.

Madam Speaker, there has been a number of strategies that would have been

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employed. I have seen where we would have increased the number of CCTV cameras. I have seen where we would have increased number of officers who are being recruited and trained. I have seen where we have purchased offshore patrol vessels to provide surveillance for our coastlines. I have seen where we have pumped money into the police youth clubs. I have seen where we would have tried to develop strategies to address crime and violence in school. I have seen where we set up a National Standing Committee on Child Protection to reduce child abuse and to improve the way we care for children who fall into the hands of the State. But, Madam Speaker, I go back to my original point, unless Trinidad and Tobago is working together, then we will not see any success.

Madam Speaker, as I said it was just this week where I really understood the concept that for there to be success in any effort, any measure to address crime and violence, we must have an all-of-society approach and full buy-in and that calls for buy-in and support from those on the other side of the aisle. So coming here and calling out the statistics is all well and fine to remind us, it grounds us, it centres us. Coming here and calling out the names, that is important. It causes us to reflect and think about how we can do better but we need your help. The Minister of National Security cannot and should not be expected to do it alone.

Madam Speaker, as we walk through airports, in international airports, even our own, you would see the signs up “see something, say something” and that is important because it is a call to action. In any airport at any time, something can happen but for that not to happen, it is dependent on somebody seeing something and saying something for action to occur.

And Madam Speaker, I want to share an example of something that happened recently. I heard when the Member for Chaguanas West read—he read

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out all the names and read all the statistics and while he was reading, I felt the pain and hurt of persons who would have lost loved ones. Because this week, I am still amongst many trying to locate a friend who went missing with his vehicle but in my post and my call to Trinidad and Tobago in trying to locate my friend, I said somebody saw something, somebody might have heard something, somebody might have seen something, please come forward.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of National Security cannot be in everybody's home, he cannot be at the side of every street, police officers cannot be in every PH car, the soldiers cannot be on every street corner everyday, but people know what is happening. Madam Speaker, the gangsters, "when they talking and they lie down with dey girlfriend, sometimes they tell dem where dey going and put down dey next wuk, is for the girlfriend to come forward and talk". Madam Speaker, sometimes when a man is abusing his son or his daughter, sometimes he will "go on the block and big up he chest and tell he friends and dem ah eating before 12, is for the friend to come forward and talk".

Madam Speaker, sometimes when young girls enter PH cars, somebody would have seen them going in and would have known that that person is a predator, is for that person to come forward and talk. The Minister of National Security is not God, he cannot see everything, he cannot do everything, he cannot be everything but collectively Trinidad and Tobago, we can solve this problem. And Madam Speaker, I want to use this opportunity to ask the public, to ask the citizenry, to join us in our efforts to establish a safe, secure and peaceful society.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*].

Hon. A. Webster-Roy: Madam Speaker, one of the earlier presenters on Opposition side spoke about gender-based violence and violence against women

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and they would have indicated that there is a report coming out from the UK, some reporter put out a story about, you know, violence against women in Trinidad and Tobago. And Madam Speaker, you know while the person was saying it, I said, you know what, the hypocrisy. Other countries with more resources, better technology, more people to see and report, they have the same situation but they constantly pick on Trinidad and Tobago. Trinidad and Tobago, who even though things are not perfect, the Trinidad and Tobago that is leading in many aspects in bringing about a change in terms of how we respond to crime and violence in not only our society but the Caribbean.

So Madam Speaker, I want to speak with what we have been doing as it pertains specifically to women and girls. Just recently, Cabinet has started reconsidering—the Government has started reconsidering the revised and updated national action plan on gender-based violence 2023 to 2027. The revised action plan which was developed through participatory inclusive and collaborative means through the support of the Spotlight Initiative plans to foster a zero tolerance for gender-based violence and sexual violence and provide a coordinating strategy to end GBV and sexual violence in Trinidad and Tobago across five outcomes.

5:25 p.m.

And permit me, Madam Speaker, to outline the five outcomes that we are looking at. Outcome number one: citizens of Trinidad and Tobago will demonstrate increased awareness and intolerance towards all forms of gender based violence and sexual violence. Madam Speaker, this is important because for too long in our society we have developed a high tolerance towards gender based violence and sexual violence, where, to an extent, it has become normalized. So even in our art form you see people glorifying violence and the objectification of women. You

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hear people talking about “kick in she backdoor”, and you hear people singing about “gunman in she hole”. Now if you want to bring about change we have to even start with the art form and start with the messaging, because these things go into the minds of our young people, and they start accepting it as though it is normal, as though it is acceptable. We have to start changing the discourse. This is beyond the Minister of National Security. This is for all of us to carry the same message.

Madam Speaker, outcome number two: effective, inclusive and gender responsive services delivered to victims and survivors. On many occasions, Madam Speaker, persons who are victims and survivors of gender-based violence, they need the—Madam Speaker, I am being disturbed.

Madam Speaker: Members, let us all listen to the contribution. Thank you.

Hon. A. Webster-Roy: Madam Speaker, as I was saying outcome number two, we are working towards effective, inclusive and gender-responsive services, delivered to victims and survivors of gender-based violence, and, sexual violence.

Outcome number three: robust legislation implemented by knowledgeable and effective duty bearers delivering the consistent administration of justice that is underpinned by gender-based violence and sexual violence victims and survivors-centred principles and accessible to all. And, Madam Speaker, you see this concept of duty bearers, that is very, very important because we are all duty-bearers. We all have a responsibility to stand guard as we try to protect Trinidad and Tobago.

And I want to bring a point. Madam Speaker, almost every sitting where I have a question to answer, I am knocked about what we doing about protecting children. And I have said on more than one occasion, we need to educate each

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other as well as the public so that we become the vanguards. Provide a training workshop, Madam Speaker, tell me how many of my Opposition colleagues turn up, Madam Speaker, on child abuse prevention. But we are not giving up, we decided that yes we are going to try again, and I am making this an opportunity to call on my Opposition colleague's to make yourselves available, and make your offices available so that they will gain the knowledge to help us to prevent child abuse.

This is important because as my colleague, the Minister of Education, said, children who are hurt, children who are neglected, sometimes become the centre of attention for the Minister and the Ministry of National Security later on if they do not get the right intervention at the right time. So Madam Speaker, I go back to my original point. The Motion is dangerous and misleading. If the Motion had said we call on all of Trinidad and Tobago then I would have accepted it, Madam Speaker, because we all have a role to play, a crucial role.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. A. Webster-Roy: Madam Speaker, outcome number four; improved mechanisms for opportunities for redress, and reparations for victims and survivors of gender-based violence and sexual violence, as well as appropriate penalties, and rehabilitative resources for perpetrators. It does not make sense for us to only focus on those persons who have fall victim, but we also have to do the research. We also have to understand the minds of the perpetrators, and put systems in place so that we could prevent them from further perpetrating, or even save someone from becoming a first-time perpetrator. Madam Speaker, that is not just the work of the Minister of National Security. That calls for an all of government approach, and all of society approach, and we are all responsible for that. So again, Madam

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Speaker, I want to thank my Minister of National Security for being an active participant and contributor on our national standing committee on child protection. He has been dedicated, he has been contributing, and Madam Speaker, I am all confident that once he continues on his good work and his good vein, that we will see a change once Trinidad and Tobago decides to come on board and play this game. Because work with us, help us to achieve that outcome that we desire.

Outcome number five, Madam Speaker, strengthen and effective gender responsive interventions through enhanced multi-stakeholders coordination, and synergistic applications that address GBV and sexual violence in Trinidad and Tobago, including rehabilitation of perpetrators. Madam Speaker, the structure of the proposed national strategic action plan to end gender-based violence and sexual violence, 2023 to 2027, aligns with established commitments and focuses on areas of prevention, protection, prosecution, punishment or penalties, and the effective provision of redress for victims and survivors of GBV and sexual violence including children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

Key to the successful implementation of the NSAP is the collaboration between government, civil society, and international partners. And, Madam Speaker, we see where through the Spotlight Initiative to end gender-based violence, and to end violence against women and girls specifically, where we have that collaboration and coordination amongst government, civil society and international partners we are seeing inroads. And I would go back to my colleague from Mayaro who spoke in the Spotlight Initiative event about how Spotlight is impacting his community and helping to address domestic violence et cetera.

So, Madam Speaker, we see where we have that all-of-society approach where civil society and Government, and the media, and the Judiciary, and

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everyone who is working together, we can bring about peace and security and reduce crime and violence in Trinidad and Tobago. Madam Speaker, in seeking innovative and novel ways to address gun and gang violence, this Government has decided to embrace a new approach, and to embrace a novel approach. And through engaging with international partners, we have decided that Trinidad and Tobago would start looking at WPS that is, Women Peace and Security—as one of our strategies. In April 2023, Trinidad and Tobago joined the Women, Peace and Security Focal Point Network.

And, Madam Speaker, I want to commend the Minister of National Security. When I invited him to be a part of the delegation to Washington for us to meet the with other members of the network and other countries looking at embracing the WPS agenda, he willingly agreed, he came along, and he told me the experience made it even easier for him to understand and implement strategies around gender within not only the Ministry of National Security, but the National Security apparatus and framework. Madam Speaker, WPS is underpinned by the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and while a number of countries in the network are not in a state of conflict—because WPS really speaks about women and girls in times of conflict. While many of the countries are not in a state of conflict, they have been adapting the agenda and the framework to suit their domestic context.

So I remember, Madam Speaker, when the Canadian High Commissioner met with me, and when I started having discussions with the UN, I said, “Well we are not in any conflict in Trinidad and Tobago, we are not at war”, but I said, “we have an internal situation that this strategy might help us to address.” And I would have indicated after discussions with my colleague, the Minister of National Security, adapting and adopting this strategy to address gang violence, and gun

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violence. Madam Speaker, I am happy to note that in April we became a member of the network. But, Madam Speaker, beyond becoming a member of the network, we have started the work towards developing our own national action plan using the WPS strategy and agenda and framework to help to address gun and gang violence in Trinidad and Tobago.

5.35 p.m.

Among other issues, Madam Speaker, we held our first workshop this week. And, Madam Speaker, one of the things I asked my Permanent Secretary, when I was entering the venue I said, I gave instructions for us to invite parliamentarians, including the Opposition, because I believe that you all are a valuable and valued contributor towards the development of this particular action plan. You have constituencies. You have communities. You are leaders in your own right within your constituencies, so your voice matters. And he said, yes, we invited them. But, Madam Speaker, I did not see any of my colleagues there.

Member for Barataria/San Juan, you really disappointed me. I was expecting to see you there. Member for Couva South, I was expecting to see you there. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, “you self” I was expecting to see there. Because, you see, Madam Speaker, for this thing to really work—

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

Hon. A. Webster-Roy: Madam Speaker, for this thing to really work, for us to really develop the strategy and get the full buy-in that is required, we need to have that collaboration across the aisle. We need to demonstrate to Trinidad and Tobago that we are bigger than petty politics and when it comes to issues, such as crime and violence, that we could put aside our differences and work collectively.

So, Madam Speaker, I am taking the opportunity, when we have further

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workshops, that all my colleagues on the divide would come across and help us to develop the strategy. Because it would not only be for this time and this Government, you do not know what the future may hold, it would be for future generations to benefit from. Because, Madam Speaker, at the end of the day, what we are working towards is a safe and secure Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. A. Webster-Roy: Madam Speaker, we could buy more police vehicles, Madam Speaker. We could get more offshore patrol vessels. Madam Speaker, we could get more police officers. But, Madam Speaker, if the persons who are responsible for executing the work and committed to the work and passionate, no matter how a good leader, a good Minister, my colleague and friend, Minister Hinds, maybe, if the people on the ground are not doing to do the work and put in the work, Madam Speaker, we are going to still have problems.

So I want to use this opportunity to call on those officers within the police service who may be involved, Madam Speaker, in illegal activities to reconsider. We need you. Your country needs you to be the best version of you, so that we can safeguard our sons and daughters who are dying.

Madam Speaker, I want to call on those persons within the various arms of the defence force who may be thinking about getting involved in illegal activities to reconsider. We need you to safeguard us. We need you as part of the process. I want call on families and parents, Madam Speaker. You cannot leave the parenting up to the schools and to politicians. You have to put the interest of your children first. We need you. Madam Speaker, I want to call on the religious leaders. You have to use your voice and your influence for good. We need you to help us to solve this problem with crime and violence in Trinidad and Tobago.

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And, Madam Speaker, I want to call on the media. You have the power of influence. You have the ability to educate and disseminate information. Do it responsibly. Do it wisely. We need you in this fight.

Madam Speaker, I started my contribution by saying, what is required is an all-of-society approach. And, Madam Speaker, we must get that in our heads in Trinidad and Tobago. We must accept that it is an all-of-society approach that is required. Madam Speaker, I started my contribution by saying that the Motion is dangerous, misleading and counterproductive, and I stand by that. Because the focus should not be on the Minister of National Security or bringing another Minister of National Security. The focus should be on calling on all of us as citizens, as right-thinking, decent citizens, as hon. Members, to bring about the collaboration and partnership required for us to really seize and take control of the crime in Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Speaker, I want to commend, I want to honour, I want to salute my colleague and friend, Minister Hinds. And I want to thank him for being able to withstand the pressure and remain committed to service; to remain committed to trying to bring up the best possible framework and solution that we can all work together to bring an end to crime and violence. But, Madam Speaker, Trinidad and Tobago, colleagues on the Opposition side, we have to do better. We have to use our leadership positions to encourage persons to be the best version of themselves, so that Trinidad and Tobago could be a safe place.

And, Madam Speaker, just as the many persons who would have put out posters for missing loved ones, as I again share the poster for my friend, if you see something, say something. If you heard something, report it. Persons are hurting, but your voice, the information that you might have when you are in the quiet of

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the night, your friend, your lover, your neighbour whispering to you, bring the information forward so that we can once again restore the peace and security of our nation. I thank you for this opportunity, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for Princes Town.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Barry Padarath (*Princes Town*): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to the Motion currently before the House. Madam Speaker, I listened attentively to the Minister of gender, youth and child Affairs, the Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister. And, Madam Speaker, I want to say off the bat that stranger things have happened. However, it is a parody of comedies when one Minister, who citizens have no confidence in, comes to defend another Minister on a no confidence Motion.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. B. Padarath: The Minister of gender and child affairs herself have faced many calls to either resign or be removed, that lending her support to the Minister of National Security today does more harm than good.

Madam Speaker, the hon. Member, in her wrapping up—and I thought that the hon. Member would have taken the 45 minutes because she has a very important component that deals with the protection of nation's children, working in tandem with the Minister, who is the subject of the no confidence Motion. But instead, Madam Speaker, in typical PNM style, instead of defending the Minister of National Security on matters of substance, instead the Minister, who we just heard from, called on the army, called on the police, called on religious leaders, called on the media.

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But, Madam Speaker, I want to tell the hon. Member that there is a publication by *CNC3* television Trinidad and Tobago on January 07, 2014. And while the hon. Member called on the army and the police and the religious leaders and the media and the society to assist with crime, it was the People's National Movement, on January 07, 2014, that said this to the country:

The People's National Movement says it has an overnight plan to fix the police service and crime on a whole.

Eight years later, the Minister with responsibility for gender and child affairs, in contributing to this no confidence Motion in the Minister of National Security, wants us to forget that this was the assurance that was given to the electorate by the People's National Movement, by their Members, that they had an overnight plan to fix the police service and crime on a whole.

Madam Speaker, the hon. Member told us, if you see something, say something. And throughout the Member's contribution, it was something that the hon. Member repeated; if you see something, say something. But I want to remind the hon. Member that it is this very Minister of National Security who is on the public record as telling constituents that if you see the police passing and you have a gun in your possession, "throw it out in de road and you doh know where dat come from". But the Member seems to think, yesterday is yesterday and today is today and wants to tell Trinidad and Tobago if you see something, say something, but refuses to be held to a higher standard as an office-holder by doing what is right and not just saying what is right, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. B. Padarath: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member, in a very, feeble, weak, lame attempt at defending the Minister of National Security, the Member for

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Laventille West, told us about some of the programmes the hon. Member had embarked on and got her colleague, the Minister of National Security, to buy into and support. One was the Women, Peace and Security programme. And the hon. Member told us about the work that she had been doing with the Minister of National Security through this Women, Peace and Security programme. I want to ask the hon. Member, Madam Speaker, through you, where was this programme when Ashanti Riley was murdered in Santa Cruz? Where was this programme when Andrea Bharath was murdered in the Heights of Aripo? For days, weeks and months this Government appeared as though that they had “pip”. Because these are just two instances, Madam Speaker, where the Minister of National Security, the person charged with the responsibility, at least when we look at the Schedule and we interpret the Minister’s role in the Constitution, that this Minister had this overarching remit, in terms of security, in terms policy and in terms of direction.

But not a word came out from the hon. Member for Tobago East when these things occurred; when we could not see the Minister of National Security, who was either running from water or running from his constituents. The hon. Member also ran from all of Trinidad and Tobago, when Trinidad and Tobago was looking and searching for answers from the hon. Minister of National Security as it relates to the protection of women and children in our country. And therefore, I find it hypocritical for the Member for Tobago East, the Minister of gender and child affairs, to come to the population and pontificate once more. Madam Speaker, it is eight years, eight long years, where thousands of our citizens have been murdered, bludgeoned, raped, robbed and brutalized.

And the Minister who spoke before me appears now to the national community as though she has a stump speech; that the Minister will just throw out

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these words about protecting our nation's children and our nation's women, but will not give us any specifics, in terms of the data, in terms of the programmes and the policies that she is working on, in tandem with her colleague who is the subject of today's Motion and tell us this is what you have achieved.

5.50 p.m.

Instead, Madam Speaker, I want to remind this honourable House that it was just a few weeks ago the Member for Laventille West, the Minister of National Security, came to the Parliament as part of the mid-year review exercise that we went through, and additional moneys were appropriated to the TTPS, to the Children's Authority, and to various agencies and Ministries of the State. But I recalled when I looked at the line Items under the Ministry with responsibility for the Children's Authority and I asked, I asked about the security arrangements through the Child Protection Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service about this programme that is now going to be implemented for all the children's homes to be monitored by the Children's Authority.

And the Government, every time we ask questions, hard, tough questions, it is as it relates to the failure of the Government to protect our nation's women and children there is a standard answer just as the Member for Tobago East gives us this stomp speech, full of hypocrisy and crocodile tears. The Member told us these are national security matters, and we cannot put that in the public domain. But what is now in the public domain, Madam Speaker, is that almost every month and we were told this by the Director of the Children's Authority, that there are over 400 cases of child abuse reported to the TTPS on a monthly basis in this country.

But when we asked our colleagues the Minister of National Security, the Member for Tobago East who spoke glowingly about the working relationship

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between the two for the protection of women and children, we are given a blanket answer of: that is national security matters that we cannot go into it.

Madam Speaker, that is unacceptable, but I understand why Members opposite do it, because it is a bandage, it is a bandage to mask and hide the incompetence. Because while they tell us it is an all-of-government approach, it is also an all-of-government approach in terms of the incompetence that they all the exhibit, Madam Speaker.

And therefore today, one with would have thought that when the Member for Tobago East, a critical area in the protection of women and children had the opportunity to defend the Member for Laventille West, the Minister of National Security, would have shared the critical component of the Child Protection Unit that falls under the purview. When we look at the schedule of the Minister of National Security, Madam Speaker, and you see that the Child Protection Unit falls as part of the TTPS, under the Minister of National Security, but yet we are being told that there are 400 cases on an average of child abuse in this country. We are told there is a Sabga Report and there is a Justice Judith Jones Report, but we cannot be told up to now.

Neither the Member for Laventille West, the Minister of National Security, nor his colleague who sought in a very feeble, and weak, and lame attempt to defend his track record could not tell us how many persons have been removed from these children homes, how many of these persons have been charged, how many cases are before the court. Those were the statistics we also wanted to hear.

Under the direction of the Member for Laventille West, the Minister of National Security, how has the Child Protection Unit been strengthened? We did not hear about that. Those were the things that the hon. Member for Tobago East

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should have spent regaling us about in terms of the work being done by the Member for Laventille West, but the Member for Tobago East could not tell us that because it is not being done.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. B. Padarath: Madam Speaker, I tell you, and I have been saying this since 2016, 2017, 2018. It is on the *Hansard* of this Parliament, where I have been asking about the Child Protection Unit in this country, and the Member for Laventille West up to a few months ago when I asked that question, who the no confidence Motion has been brought against by the Member for Barataria/San Juan. And the Member for Barataria/San Juan, I want congratulate him, Madam Speaker—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. B. Padarath: —because his Motion reflects the pulse, the pulse of the people of Trinidad and Tobago who are living in despair.

And today the Opposition wants more. We could have chosen any of the Motions that we have on the Order Paper, Madam Speaker; there are several critical areas in the country that we have brought Motions, that are on the Order Paper. But in determining which one we did today, we saw, we heard, the cries of the people of Trinidad and Tobago as their blood continues to flow throughout the streets, and you have an absent Minister of National Security refusing to address the critical areas of stemming the murders and the gang-related activity, because if that in Minister pontificates to the country to say anticrime measures is not my domain.

Madam Speaker, I have always said, that if you do not have compassion, you cannot be touched by the innocence of children and their plight. Now what do

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you leave for the rest of Trinidad and Tobago? And that is why I raise today the issue of the Child Protection Unit. And I have been raising the fact that the Child Protection Unit continues, like the Children's Authority, to be under-resourced and understaffed. And what did we get today from the Member for Tobago East in her feeble and weak attempt to support and defend the Minister of National Security? We got that we must work with the media because they are not doing enough. We must work with the religious leaders because they are not doing enough.

But Madam Speaker, the people of Trinidad and Tobago whether we like it or not elected a government. They elected a government to ensure that the resources of the State to protect our most vulnerable are met. And therefore, when I have been asking about this Child Protection Unit in terms of the complement of officers, and Madam Speaker, I can give you anecdotal information here today, because on many occasions some of those officers they visit Members of Parliament.

I know for a fact that officers of the Child Protection Unit have visited my office and they complain that they are under-resourced, they are understaffed, and therefore how do we expect those persons who are charged with the responsibility to protect our nation's children, our most vulnerable, how do we expect them to do their work if the Member for Laventille West, the Minister of National Security, is unable or refuses, Madam Speaker, to see the innocence and the compassion, to have the compassion of our nation's children? Especially those who, Madam Speaker, have found themselves in tremendous amounts of difficulty in terms of needing that support from the Children's Authority and other agencies.

Madam Speaker, in the Motion brought by my colleague from Barataria/San Juan there is a word in the first recital, and that word struck me, Madam Speaker,

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because it says:

“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.”

Madam Speaker, colleagues opposite were at pains to say that they believe in the work of the Member for Laventille West, the Minister of National Security. Because I understand, their trepidation had to do with the word “effective” oversight, because none of them on that side far less for the rest of the country can say that the Member for Laventille West, the Minister of National Security is an effective Member—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. B. Padarath: —is an effective Minister and is giving effective oversight of the national security infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, effectiveness means that the Minister is doing the job satisfactorily. That the Minister’s effectiveness in the first recital would ensure that the welfare, innocence, and protection of our nation’s children is paramount, Madam Speaker. And therefore, on the very first limb of this Motion, the Member for Baratavia/San Juan, Madam Speaker, is correct. He is accurate; he has hit the nail on the head—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. B. Padarath:—in terms of seeing the pulse of our nation.

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence. Deyalsingh): Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 50(3), I beg to move that the debate on the Motion before us be adjourned.

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Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Member for Couva South.

**ANNULMENT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (AMENDMENT TO
THE SECOND SCHEDULE) ORDER, 2023**

Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh (*Couva South*): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

Be it resolved that the Industrial Relations (Amendment to the Second Schedule) Order, 2023 be annulled.

Madam Speaker, only Monday of this week, the 19th of June the country celebrate and commemorated the 86th anniversary of the Labour Riots of 1937. And what did we celebrate? What did we commemorate on Monday 19th June? And what did the Labour Riots achieve? The Labour Riots achieved the legal formation of trade unions, the legal recognition of what we would call recognized majority union status in the work environment, and as a result of that the right to strike, the right to engage in the collective bargaining process, and as a result of engaging in the collective bargaining process, today in 2023, the workers of Trinidad and Tobago enjoy unionized terms and conditions of employment.

And when I say so I mean group health plans, pension plan, allowances. and I could go on and on in terms of the importance. And it also saw the emergence of two very significant trade unions in the country, that was the All Trinidad Sugar Estates and Factory Workers Trade Union and also the Oil Field Workers Trade Union.

And, Madam Speaker, this Motion to annul Legal Notice No. 163 has to be placed in a historical context because, Madam Speaker, nowhere in the Labour Day message of the Prime Minister, the Member for Diego Martin West, or the Member for La Brea, the Minister of Labour, did any of those two individuals who

belong to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago indicate to the workers of this country that the Government, the Government indeed was seeking an amendment or would be coming to the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago having gazetted this—gazetted and so on, that there would be an amendment to the Second Schedule of the Industrial Relations Act. In fact, the Prime Minister stated, and I quote:

The significance of the day has to be recognized widely because every citizen, every citizen owes a tremendous historical debt to the sweat of those brave committed workers who in 1937 defied the colonial authorities and began the march for the rights of labour, which continues on the long road to where we are today.

And today as I said, we have to understand our history and what is being attempted through this Legal Notice No. 163.

6.05 p.m.

And sometimes all it is of critical importance that I should read into the record also, Madam Speaker.

“Legal Notice No. 163

Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Industrial Relations Act, Chap. 88:01

Order

Made by the President under section 67 (6) of the Industrial Relations Act and subject to negative resolution of the Parliament

The Industrial Relations (Amendment to the Second Schedule) Order 2023”

And it goes on to say:

- “1. This Order may be cited as the Industrial Relations (Amendment to the Second Schedule) Order, 2023.
2. The Second Schedule to the Industrial Relations Act is amended by inserting after item 10, the following item:
 - “11. The Liquid Fuel Pipeline Facilities and Network Services.”

Madam Speaker, the Industrial Relations Act had its precursor or its forerunner in the Industrial Stabilisation Act of Trinidad and Tobago, and of course, between the period 1960 to 1964 Trinidad and Tobago suffered tremendously in terms of industrial relations, instability strikes, and we could go on and on in terms of— It is documented that approximately 230 strikes occurred between that period and 75,574 workers, an average of 15,000 per year, participated in these strikes and so on. And these strikes were instituted mainly over the issues, like the recognition of trade unions and grievances, the negotiation or revision of collective agreements and sympathy strikes and so on.

And, Madam Speaker, after the Industrial Stabilisation Act, and the industrial relations environment and so on, and the instability, then came the passage of the Industrial Relations Act in 1972 Madam Speaker. And the first amendment, the Industrial Relations Act in 1972—and it is important sometimes to reflect on the history and make those who understand and who are looking on, who are following this debate, to understand the importance of this piece of legislation. There may be those who may not know too that this particular Act was passed in, I think, 48 hours, in one sitting of the Lower House and one sitting of the Upper House and it has what you would call a colourful history. It is part of our industrial relations environment and the history of Trinidad and Tobago. And,

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Madam Speaker, today we are attempting to nullify the Government's attempt to amend the Second Schedule and from a historical—

Mr. Imbert: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: —and that is the—yes, but you see, Madam Speaker—

Mr. Imbert: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: —that reflects the high-handed approach of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: The Minister of Finance declared that it is amended, but what was the real agenda? That is the important—because the hypocrisy of the Government is that they lauded the labour movement, they lauded the right to strike, they lauded the whole process of collective bargaining and so on Monday gone. So it is hypocrisy, Madam Speaker, because what they did, and I will reveal that later on in my presentation, is to deny workers the right to engage in collective bargaining at this particular state entity.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: So you laud them Monday and you, in a very ingenious, and like a thief in the night—

Mr. Al-Rawi: Madam Speaker, I rise—

Ms. Ameen: Oh no, you rise on what? Ohgosh.

[*Member steups*]

Madam Speaker: So remember, every Member has a right to stand on a Standing Order. Okay. And, you know, I would really appreciate if we all speak of tolerance. Member for San Fernando West.

Mr. Al-Rawi: Madam Speaker, I respectfully rise on 48 (1) and 48 (4) and (6). This is not an Order that concerns any one particular entity, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Okay, so Member for Couva South, in terms of—I think you could withdraw that and make the correction in terms of what you are saying and continue with your presentation.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Madam Speaker, I withdraw and I continue with my presentation. But what is important, as I said, is for us to understand the history and what has been done through this Order. And that is why the United National Congress, the Opposition, filed this Motion to annul the Order and apparently the Minister of Finance will have none of this Motion because of his disdain for the labour movement, his contempt for the labour movement.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Al-Rawi: Madam Speaker, 48 (6).

Madam Speaker: So, Member, Member for Couva South, in terms of, you know, I think you should ignore some of the crosstalk and make your presentation this way. I do not think the Member for Diego Martin North East has yet joined the debate so that, you know, the basis for that has not arisen. So, just withdraw and continue.

Hon. Member: Withdraw, withdraw.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Madam Speaker, I certainly withdraw but in the context of the—

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Madam Speaker: I guess you are going to say, you are going on to say “but my new point”?

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Yeah.

Madam Speaker: Oh, sure.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And in making my delivery the Minister of Finance will have no impact upon my delivery here this afternoon.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And also, very quickly, because the Minister of Rural Development and Local Government rose on a point of order, when he indicated that this was not about a particular entity, but I think if the Minister read Legal Notice No. 163 he will see it has to do with a state entity.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: So let us move on, we—I ruled on that, you withdrew, let us continue. Okay, please.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, as I said, the Order and Legal Notice 163 amended the Second Schedule of the Industrial Relations Act. And very quickly, to understand amendments from a historical point of view, the first amendment to the IRA was in 1978 through Act No. 44 of 1978 and this amendment provided for two divisions of the court, namely; the creation of the Essential Services Division, and also the General Services Division. And in 1979, the IRA was further amended through Act No. 2 of 1979 to provide for the establishment of—through the Office of the President, to indicate to which division of the court judges were appointed to. And in 1987, Act No. 3 of 1987 enabled the Minister of Labour to refer an unresolved dispute to the Industrial Court after a period of three months or more of continuing industrial action.

Madam Speaker, and when I look and examine the contents of the Industrial Relations Act, in 1972, the 31st of July, the broad parameters indicated too that it was an Act to repeal and replace the Industrial Stabilisation Act, 1965 and to make

better for better provision for the stabilisation, improvement and promotion of industrial relations. And, Madam Speaker, I want to simply ask the Government through this Order that or this Legal Notice No. 163 whether this Order will really promote and improve the state of industrial relations in Trinidad and Tobago? What will it achieve? And will it benefit the ordinary citizen of the country, those workers at the liquid pipeline facility and so on? And will it lead to an improvement in his or her standard of living and the decent agenda that a worker seeks to achieve?

And Madam Speaker, these questions are very important in the context of what this Government has been espousing as it relates to the rights of workers, the right to join a trade union, the right to pursue collective bargaining and so on. No one can deny that the Government signed prior when they were in Opposition, prior to becoming the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in September of 2015, signed a memorandum of understanding with the labour movement and in their manifesto, Madam Speaker, they indicated that the constitution of the People's National Movement recognizes not only the rights of trade unions, but also those of workers. I want to reiterate that—that the Constitution of the People's National Movement recognizes not only the rights of trade union—

Mr. Al-Rawi: Madam Speaker, with the greatest of respect, 48(1), Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: So, Member for Couva South, I must say that I am giving you a very wide berth but I myself am struggling. So, I will ask you very quickly to tie up what you are giving us with the subject matter of this Order that we are seeking to annul.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Thank you Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I will simply, and probably Members of the Government, they understood or they fully understand what they have done through the Legal Notice 163 and their greatest trouble is that it will be exposed as a result of what is being put forward in this Motion. That is what is troubling them.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And that is why you will see that during the course of my presentation, they will be jumping up and down in order, or in their attempt, for them not to be exposed. Because, Madam Speaker, it is important for us to understand, and you see in the Industrial Relations Act there are a number of what we would call, if you go to section 2 of the Act, under the broad heading “Preliminary” you would see a number of definitions.

“bargaining agent” means a trade union certified as such by the Board with respect to a bargaining unit for the purpose of collective bargaining.”

Also goes on to say, what is the bargaining unit what is the “collective bargaining” process what the “Court” means and also it says or it reflects in relation to what is still termed to be an “essential industry” and—

“essential services”—which—“means the services set out in the Second Schedule”—of the Industrial Relations Act, Madam Speaker.

6.20 p.m.

And immediately I want to go in the direction or go to what is stated in the Second Schedule of the Industrial Relations Act. That will be found on page 79 of the Act and it states:

“Second Schedule
Essential Services

1. Electricity Service (Generation, Transmission and Distribution).
2. Water and Sewerage Services.
3. Internal Telephone Service.
4. External Communications (Telephone, Telegraph, Wireless).
5. Fire Service.
6. Health Services.
7. Hospital Services.
8. Sanitation Services (including scavenging).
9. Public School Bus Service.
10. Civil Aviation Services (including all services provided by a commercial airline the majority of the aircraft of which are registered in Trinidad and Tobago or are owned by citizens of Trinidad and Tobago or by a company incorporated in Trinidad and Tobago, aircraft maintenance, refuelling and ramp services, air traffic control and meteorological services and airline catering services)."

And this Schedule is amended:

"By inserting after..."— number—"...10 the following item:

'11. Liquid Fuel Pipeline Facilities and Network Services.'"—
limited.

Mr. Al-Rawi: No, no, no. It does not say "limited".

Ms. Ameen: Ignore him, nah.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Again, Madam Speaker—

Mr. Al-Rawi: Madam Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 48(1), (4) and (6). That is not what the Order says.

Madam Speaker: So, Member, I think in the debate, whoever is going to rebut

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will deal with that. Member.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Madam Speaker, again, just for the record, I read from the Order that was presented to me in the context of a Note from the Secretary to the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And again, I will quote from it because apparently the Member for San Fernando West, the Minister of Rural Development and Local Government, is a Member of the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago, and, apparently, he has not read or did not get this particular document in his notes. And again, I will read for the benefit of all Members of the Government that:

“Legal Notice No. 163...”

And that is what is being debated this afternoon, that:

“Legal Notice No. 163

Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Industrial Relations Act, Chap. 88:01

Made by the President under section 67(6) of the Industrial Relations Act
and subject to negative resolution of Parliament

The Industrial Relations (Amendment to the Second Schedule) Order,
2023

1. This Order may be cited as the Industrial Relations (Amendment to the Second Schedule) Order, 2023.
2. The Second Schedule to the Industrial Relations Act is amended by inserting after item 10, the following item:

‘11. Liquid Fuel Pipeline Facilities and Network Services.’”

Mr. Al-Rawi: Where is the word “limited”? Where is the word “limited”?

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And it is dated the 26th of May, 2023, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: That is the issue. Right? Madam Speaker—

Mr. Al-Rawi: Madam Speaker, I therefore rise on the Standing Order as to relevance, because that is not what the Member put on *Hansard* a little while ago.

Madam Speaker: And overruled on the point of 48(1). I think it can be treated with otherwise. Continue.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Unless I read from two documents, I stand by—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—what is before me and the document dated the 26th of May, 2023, one C. Hemlee, Secretary to the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And, Madam Speaker, as I said, you have a number of definitions in relation to what is doing found in the Industrial Relations Act. And this amendment to the Schedule or in terms of the insertion, after 10, in relation to adding an additional one to become number 11, one has to ask, how or what was the yardstick that was used? What was the yardstick that was used to insert the “Liquid Fuel Pipeline Facilities”, and just for the benefit of the Minister of Rural Development and Local Government, “and Network Services”?

So what was the yardstick? How did the Government arrive or come to this conclusion that the “Liquid Fuel Pipeline Facilities and Network Services” needed to be added to the Second Schedule of the Industrial Relations Act? That is the fundamental question which must be answered by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Because, Madam Speaker, they do not like to hear these things, you know, because they will be jumping up and down. This is a Government that, when they were in Opposition, as I said, they signed a memorandum of understanding with the labour movement. If you peruse their manifesto, they promised milk and honey. They promised milk and honey to the labour movement. They promised to amend everything under the sun as it relates to labour legislation in Trinidad and Tobago. And in eight years—eight years, what have they done? They brought an amendment to the Second Schedule via a ministerial order—via a ministerial order like a thief in the night. Madam Speaker, that is the reality and that is what they do not want Trinidad and Tobago to hear and to be exposed to.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Al-Rawi: Madam Speaker, I rise on the Standing Order 55(1)(b), this is about the fifth time we heard that.

Madam Speaker: So, thank you for invitation Member for San Fernando West, but I have not reached there as yet. Please continue, Member for Couva South.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Speaker. And what is important, as I said, is that there are a number of issues, and I am sure the Minister of Labour who may join this debate—or I see the Member for San Fernando West is taking copious notes. But you see, Madam Speaker, there are a number of issues that are important to workers over the last eight years.

6.30 p.m.

Madam Speaker, 150,000, approximately, have lost their jobs. Companies

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have gone belly-up in this country and not one amendment in the last eight years that will improve the terms and conditions of workers in the country. And in that regard, one has to ask, or one must ask the question to probably the Minister of Labour because under the Industrial Relations Act there is the Industrial Relations Advisory Committee section, I think, section 80 the Act. It has been established, the Industrial Relation Advisory Committee, and whether the amendment to the Second Schedule was even placed before the Industrial Relations Advisory Committee because the Industrial Relations Advisory Committee is tripartite in nature. It has a chairperson, government representative, labour representatives and so on and they continue to boast of dialogue, they continue to boast of consultation and so on and whether this really found favour, it found favour with the stakeholders in the context of the Industrial Relations Advisory Committee in Trinidad and Tobago, Madam Speaker. Because as I said, we have been promised a suite of legislation and whether too this particular order, I know it was done by ministerial order—

Hon. Member: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—and it is important, it is important to ask—

Hon. Member: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—it is important to ask, Madam Speaker, whether there were any discussions with the Joint Trade Union Movement, NATUC, the National Trade Union Centre of FITUN and so on, as it relates to the decision. Because Madam Speaker, you have to understand if you look at the chronology of events in relation to Legal Notice 163, I will now indicate what is the true intention or what has been the real motive or the real agenda behind the emergence of this legal notice. And for us in the United National Congress we are of the firm conviction

that it is to prevent the workers at the liquid fuel pipeline facilities and network services, prevent them from joining a trade union of their choice and engaging in collective bargaining, Madam Speaker. Because the answer is simple and the records will reflect that on the 28th, based on information that arrived in my mail box, Madam Speaker, and I challenge any one of them to dispute and to contradict what I am saying on behalf of the Opposition is that, on the 28th April, 2023, the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union made an application for recognition, recognized majority union status on behalf of the workers at this facility.

Hon. Member: Eh heh? So why—[*Inaudible*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And on the 24th of April, 2023, the union wrote to the company or the employer informing them of the application in accordance with the Industrial Relations Act. And the Minister of Labour must get up in this debate and deny whether this application was copied to him in his capacity as the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And on the 28th of April, 2023, the notice of the application was issued by the Registration, Recognition and Certification Board which is also found in the Industrial Relations Act, Madam Speaker. And on 28th April, 2023, notice of the application for recognized majority unions' status by the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union was issued by the Registration, Recognition and Certification Board. And further on the 28th of April, 2023, the Registration, Recognition and Certification Board wrote to the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union acknowledging receipt of its application for recognized majority union status.

And then on the 24th of May, 2023, the Registration, Recognition and Certification Board, through correspondence, indicated to the employer, indicated

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to the employer, I want Trinidad and Tobago to listen carefully, indicated to the employer that it had not responded to the application contrary to section 19 of the Industrial Relations Act. This is the series of events. And then on the 26th of May, 2023, like a thief in the night, Legal Notice 163 was drawn up in the context of this Order and to specifically amend the Industrial Relations Act. That is the issue, Madam Speaker, and the United National Congress will have none of this—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—in terms of this Government's continued attack on the labour movement and the right of ordinary citizens to join a trade union of his or her choice. This is why I indicate that it is the most hypocritical and diabolical act on the part of Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: On Monday the 19th, you are lauding workers, you are lauding the trade union movement, you are saying how great thou art as it relates to the right to engage in collective bargaining recognized majority union status, unionized terms and conditions of employment and then not telling them on the 26th of May you, through the Cabinet and at the whims and fancies of the Prime Minister and every one of them in the Cabinet, they “lick up” the right of over 100 workers to join a trade union of their choice.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Arima, history will all judge us in terms of our commitment to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And this is why we are saying on this side, the UNC had its foundation in a struggle for peace, bread and justice.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: We were committed for upholding the dignity and the rights of the ordinary worker in the society. And, Madam Speaker, at end of the day we will not be part of any plot to continue to decimate the existence of the trade union movement of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: They did it at Caroni (1975) Limited. They did it at Petrotrin. They did it at TSTT and they intend to do it at WASA and T&TEC and Lake Asphalt and I could go on and on tonight, Madam Speaker. And that is why we will say to the workers of Trinidad and Tobago that what they signed in the memorandum of understanding and their manifesto of 2015, they must take all the copies of this memorandum of understanding and the manifesto that they could find and create one big bonfire—

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—on the 14th of August, 2023. And just as they would have retrenched, be it through their policies, retrenched and destabilized over 150,000 families, I am saying to the country that come the 14th of August the people of Trinidad and Tobago must retrench the Government—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—in the upcoming local government elections. And, Madam Speaker, with these few words, I beg to move.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for Pointe-à-Pierre.

Mr. David Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to second the Motion and I reserve my right to speak.

Question proposed.

Madam Speaker: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Labour (Hon. Stephen Mc Clashie): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to this debate. My learned friend from Couva South.

Hon. Member: [*Interruption*] He is not learned.

Hon. S. Mc Clashie:—no—indicated earlier today that he is quite competent and he went on to indicate how well he—how much experience he had in the Parliament in making laws and so on. And I have no doubt but I am somewhat disappointed that he had to take all that time to ask one simple question which is, give us the reasons for the inclusion? We could have saved a lot of time.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Mc Clashie: You know, contrary to popular belief, the PNM has been consistent in its approach to unions and good governance and we will continue in that particular vein. You know, there was an advertisement Burger King had in the 80s where in making a burger there was an old woman who used to say, “Where is the meat”? And therefore, I have to ask today, where is the meat? I am seeing bread, no meat.

Hon. Members: [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Mc Clashie: So I would not try to—I would not try to, I would not like to try and compete with my Couva South comrade with regard to the history and so on. That—I would lose that battle. But what battle I will win, is the battle of facts.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Mc Clashie: The industrial relations amendment to the Second Schedule

order 2023 amended the Second Schedule to the Industrial Relations Act by inserting after item 10 the following item 11, liquid fuel pipeline facilities and network services. Madam Speaker, section 67(9) of the Industrial Relations Act states that:

“The President of Trinidad and Tobago made by order, subject to negative resolution of both Houses of Parliament, vary the Second Schedule by adding thereto or removing therefrom any service.”

The Motion raised by the Member of Couva South seeks to annul this order. There are a couple questions that we must first define and answer. And the first one is, what is an essential service? I noted that during the entire conversation with the House, that was never mentioned and/or tried to be defined. So, Member for Couva South, you could take out your pen and take some notes.

6.45 p.m.

The concept of an essential service has been enshrined in our laws for a very long time. An essential service is one which is so vital to the day-to-day existence of any population that it is necessary to preserving life, health, public safety and basic societal functioning as well as to ensure an uninterrupted flow of such services, for example, water, electricity, hospital, aviation, transportation and services. Whether they are delivered by public or private providers are not the issue. Services may be considered to be essential because they are public goods that sustain the well-being of each citizen and help the development of society as a whole. Most International Labour Organization member States have adopted a variety of measures to ensure the continuous delivery of basic services by declaring them essential services and/or by requiring minimum service levels that the population must receive without interruption.

I ask the question: is the liquid fuel pipeline facilities and network services an essential service? As set out by the ILO supervisory bodies, these measures should be balanced by the needs of the fundamental rights of the citizens of the country. Why have these been included? Hon. Members will observe in a previous amendment a new category of essential services, public school bus service was added—no, let me say that. In a previous amendment, a new category was actually added and that was the public school bus services. Historically, some of you might recall that this particular service came out of some issues in April 1969 that impacted the citizenry of this country in such a way that the Government had to intervene.

The liquid fuel pipeline facilities network services are clearly critical infrastructure and essential services. These facilities and services are a critical part of the energy infrastructure of this country responsible for the storage and transportation of motor fuels, gasoline and aviation fuel. So, we need to understand clearly what we are talking about, and what we are talking about here is motor fuels, gasoline, and aviation fuels. In fact, that particular facility that we are talking about has a capacity to distribute 75 per cent of the country's liquid petroleum fuels. A disruption in these services can therefore result in a disruption to the supply of gasoline and aviation fuel to this country. What would be the impact of such a curtailment in the delivery of fuels and aviation—gasoline and aviation fuels.

You see, Madam Speaker, we could talk about a lot of things, we could sound—make it very dramatic, but the truth is that if the supply of motor gasoline and aviation is stopped what happens? Fire services cannot run, taxis cannot run, buses cannot run, ambulances cannot run. We have an issue with aviation fuel,

planes cannot take off the ground. Trinidad and Tobago will have issues with gas, our reputational risk in terms of how we are viewed as a country and how we impact a number of international issues. So when we say we are trying or give the impression to say that the Government of the day is trying to move somehow in a surreptitious manner to deny workers their rights, and we do not understand what that fundamental issue of creating an essential service or a new category is, then we would have essentially lost the playbook at that point in time. There was a process for inclusion of this particular service which started in August 6th, 2018. This just did not happen in January of 2023 or in May of 2023. This started in 2018 when the Ministry of Labour was asked by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries to comment on the inclusion of the following provisions as an inclusion to the Second Schedule as an essential service, liquid fuel pipeline facilities and network services.

At the Law Revision Committee meeting to discuss the inclusion in the second schedule which was held on May 15, 2023 the Ministry of Labour indicated that it did not have any objections to the inclusion of these services because we understood the impact. Where essential services are concerned, strikes, lockouts and any form of industrial action cannot take place in accordance with the Industrial Relations Act. That does not mean that the workers cannot be represented by a union. All it says is that you do not have the right to strikes, lockouts or any form of industrial action that will impact the country in such a negative way that it would be very disruptive to our daily lives. However, there is provision in the Industrial Relations Act to deal with disputes which emanate from essential services, and that particular way of handling it is through conciliation with the Minister of Labour, and if there is no agreement then the Minister could

send it on to the Industrial Court for settlement. It is also noted, and the question was asked very specifically, that within the Ministry “the commence of the chair” of the Industrial Relations Advisory Committee which is established under section 81 of the IRA were sought and this inclusion and no objection was given to the Ministry of Labour’s position.

The sole ramification of these services being deemed essential are that these class of workers are barred from undertaking industrial action further to section 67 of the Industrial Relations Act. As I said before, except in essential services, the Act permits strikes in every other area of economic activity. In some of these areas, however, strikes, especially one of a long duration could have serious and devastating effects on the entire economy and irreparable damage may be done. For example, just consider for one moment a prolonged strike in the oil and gas industry for such a long time that gas delivery is curtailed and the electricity commission is cut off and there is no electrical power and as a result hospital services will be disrupted, the lives of every citizen will be affected. It is to avoid the development of such a situation that clause 65 was inserted; what is being sought is nothing new. It is an accepted industrial relation practice in many democratic countries and jurisdictions.

The provisions of this clause enables the Minister when industrial action is threatened or taken whether or not in conformity with the Act to apply to the court for an injunction restraining the parties from commencing continued continuation of such action. This does not mean that the court will automatically grant the injunction just because the Minister asked for it. In fact, I am confident that a large majority of the people of our country would agree that the burden of duty of any government is to protect the vital interest which members of the public are being

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spared—

Hon. Member: [*Interruption*]

Hon. S, Mc Clashie: What is that?

Hon. Member: Nothing.

Hon. S, Mc Clashie: Okay. Yeah. As I was saying, Madam Speaker, I am confident that a very large majority of the people of our country would agree that the burden of duty of any government is to protect the vital interest which members of the public have in being spared the hardships caused by work stoppages which could cause severe damage to not only the economy but to the daily lives of citizens. It has always been a tenet of good industrial relations practice that industrial conflict in areas which stifle the flow of essential goods and services should be avoided. While I maintain a firm stand against industrial action in essential services, I pledge, and I am sure my colleagues on the other side should they ever return to power, sometime in the distant future, will also pledge with equal vigour, to pursue the settlement of disputes which may arise in such situations. Where there is failure to settle such issues—disputes at the workplace or in conciliation, they will be immediately sent to the court where I am sure they will be expeditiously handled.

It is therefore not reasonable to annul the amendment. As the Minister of Labour I reiterate the commitment of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to good, fair and collaborative industrial relations practice. This addition simply recognizes that liquid fuel pipeline facility and network services are essential to the day-to-day running of this country. I do not understand how such a simple concept cannot be understood in terms of impact. So this is not about union busting, this is not about creating hardships for a handful of workers. This is about the national

good, this is about protecting the country from shutdown, this is about making good use of our natural resources and ensuring that every citizen has the ability to enjoy the same. So, Madam Speaker, unlike my colleague from Couva South, I think I would have taken fewer words to say some of the same things he may have wanted to say but just because he is on the other side he would not say it.

So, Madam Speaker, I rest my case. I do not think I have to over-talk this. I do not think I have to try to build a ledger or put appendices to it. It is quite simple. These services are essential, and because they are essential we cannot allow the disruption of those services. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Rambally: It is okay, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Madam Speaker: Oh, Member for Couva South.

Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh (*Couva South*): Thank you, Madam Speaker. And the Minister of Labour and the Member for La Brea stated in his contribution that this is going to be about the battle of facts, and really and truly the Minister was pedestrian in his response in attempting to justify what the Cabinet has done in relation to this amendment to the Second Schedule of the Industrial Relations Act. It was done in very—we will reiterate that it was done in a very clandestine manner, it was done surreptitiously, it was done to deny—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—because I could remember in this very said, if it was not here, in the other place, on the Waterfront, the Minister of Finance indicated that those who labour must hold the reins of power, and in the award of Patriotic

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Energies being identified as the preferred bidder.

In his glee, he nearly fell over the table when he made that contribution about, let those who labour hold the reins of power. Because we on this side believe in the principles of ensuring that workers' rights in the workplace must be protected and that could be—

7.00 p.m.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—only realized through the recognized majority unions, that process, the Registration, Recognition and Certification Board. And I want to urge the Minister of Labour to ensure—because it has been reported to you that the Registration, Recognition and Certification Board, through correspondence, indicated that the employer had not responded to the application contrary—that is the application for recognized majority union status by the Oilfield Workers' Trade Union on behalf of the employees at this particular entity and facility.

If you are true to your word and you do not feel threatened by the Oilfield Workers' Trade Union in pursuing and defending the interest of over 100 workers in the work environment at this facility, then, Madam Speaker, through you, we will all uphold the good principles of meeting and treating in good faith and in promoting the stability of workers throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to say to you, I beg to move.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Question put.

Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Hon. Member: Division.

The House divided: Ayes 11 Noes 17

AYES

Lee, Mr. D.

Ameen, Ms. K.

Indarsingh, R.

Padarath, B.

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

Madam Speaker: Okay. So, Members, let us have a little order so that the Clerk can get this down correctly.

Division continued.

Hosein, S.

Rambally, D.

Ram, A.

Ragbir, Dr. R.

Haynes, Ms. A.

Ratiram, R.

Seecheran, Dr. R.

NOES

Deyalsingh, Hon. T.

Imbert, Hon. C.

Young, Hon. S.

Al-Rawi, Hon. F.

Beckles, Hon. P.

Webster-Roy, Hon. A.

Cudjoe, Hon. S.

Gadsby-Dolly, Hon. Dr. N.

Gonzales, Hon. M.

Mc Clashie, Hon. S.

Cummings, Hon. F.

de Nobriga, Hon. S.

Manning, Hon. B.

Morris-Julian, Hon. L.

Scotland, K.

Richards, K.

Monroe, R.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, on a division, with 11 Members voting in favour, with 17 Members voting against, and with no abstentions, the Motion on the Order that the Order be annulled has failed.

Motion negatived.

Madam Speaker: Leader of the House.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Wednesday, 28 June, 2023, at 1.30 p.m. Madam Speaker, at that time, we will continue the debate which was started by the hon. Attorney General, a Bill entitled an Act to amend the Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings) Act, 2011. We hope to complete that and to also debate the Arbitration Bill. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I have been informed that there is agreement that there were two matters on the adjournment and these matters are to be deferred. Whip, that is so? Yes. Okay.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 7.07 p.m.