

# The Launch of the Private Security Network Commission

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ADDRESS

BY

SENATOR THE HONOURABLE BRIGADIER JOHN SANDY

MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE LAUNCH OF THE PRIVATE SECURITY NETWORK COMMISSION

PLACE: Solomon McLeod Lecture Hall

DATE: Saturday 30th October 2010

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

## **Introduction:**

I am indeed honoured to address you on this formal launch of the Private Security Network Commission (PSNC). This august occasion represents our administration's commitment and innovation in comprehensively addressing the issue of crime. By forging a meaningful partnership with the private security industry, the Ministry of National Security is keeping its promise of ensuring safer communities throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Upon assuming office in May 2010, this Government committed itself to developing an all-inclusive strategy to address crime and related ills that plague our society. In keeping with this promise, a National Crime Reduction Plan was formulated. In this regard, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago initiated a course which is intended to bring about political and social change based on our promise of greater people's participation in governance. In fact, in our official policy framework for National and Personal Security, and Human Security for Peace and Prosperity, the Honourable Prime Minister clearly stated:

".... We recognize that lawlessness and disorder contribute to the atmosphere in which criminal activity thrives and we will address this challenge head on ... the key part of our programme will be mobilization and engagement of communities throughout Trinidad and Tobago so that everyone can make a contribution to our nation's success."

## **Community Mobilization Strategies:**

Several mobilization strategies are currently engaging the attention of the Ministry of National Security, including:

The Community Patriotism Initiative which is intended ♣ to bring about a significant reduction in gang related violence by promoting sport and culture with the view of bringing back the traditional community spirit.

The National Mentorship Programme which will assist young people ♣ in developing and communicating their feelings, so that they may be better equipped to relate to their peers, and to develop positive relationships with other adults. The intended purpose is to nurture and guide

the youth of Trinidad & Tobago in becoming socially, psychological, emotionally and economically equipped to contribute positively to the development of our society.

And♣ finally, a partnership between the private security industry and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

It is this third strategy that engages our attention here today.

You may recall that I had made several pronouncements previously with respect to the establishment of a Network consisting of personnel of the Private Security Industry, to be additional 'eyes and ears' in support of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service in reducing crime and disorder in Trinidad and Tobago.

#### **Participatory Process in Fighting Crime:**

In keeping with this intention, the Ministry invited several key stakeholders; including the Security Owners and Managers Associates of Trinidad and Tobago (SOMATT), the Association of Security Companies of Trinidad and Tobago (ASCOTT), the Estate Police Association (EPA) and security companies registered and accredited with the Ministry of National Security to begin the process of designing an appropriate framework for the establishment of the Private Security Network Commission.

These meetings were chaired by the Deputy Commissioner of Police with responsibility for Crime, Mr. Stephen Williams who was supported by the Office of Law Enforcement Policy representing the Ministry of National Security.

#### **The PSNC: A New Dawn**

It is in this regard, we are here today to formally launch the Private Security Network Commission (PSNC). This Commission comprises twelve (12) members representing the:

- Ministry of National Security
- Trinidad and Tobago Police Service
- Private Security Industry (both contract and proprietary providers)
- Local Telecommunications Industry, and
- an academic institution providing criminal justice/security courses.

Added to that, a number of accredited private security companies have been invited to participate in the Network, and this process of engagement will continue as the Network expands.

It is envisioned that this Commission will be the catalyst for reforming the administration and operations of the Private Security Industry by introducing appropriate legislation, rules and a regulatory framework. It is also intended that security officers will be exposed to extensive structured training programmes, to enhance their capacity to better serve the needs of their respective companies as well as the wider society. I consider these issues to be indispensable factors in moving towards the purposeful improvement of the Private Security Industry.

Ultimately, we will elevate the administrative and operational standards of the private security providers to internationally recognized levels while simultaneously ensuring that the welfare of security practitioners is not compromised. Furthermore, the Ministry of National Security is mindful of the need to maintain fair and equitable practices in the workplace, and this should be our fundamental guiding principle in shaping the future growth and development of the industry.

#### **Purpose of the Commission:**

The purpose of this Commission is to enhance public safety and security in Trinidad and Tobago through the establishment and maintenance of a forum for inter-agency collaboration and the creation of functional partnerships between the Police Service and members of the Private Security Industry. This will specifically involve:

Identifying♣ and nominating private security companies for participation in the Network.  
Assisting private security companies in meeting established♣ standards for accreditation by the Ministry of National Security.

Maintaining an electronic database of all providers of private security services in Trinidad and Tobago.

Developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and protocols for the operation of private security companies participating in the Network.

Conducting pertinent research on best practices in law enforcement and private security partnerships locally, regionally and internationally.

Identifying and arranging appropriate training for security officers of participating security companies.

Providing an annual written report of its activities for the Honourable Minister of National Security, summarizing events and decisions of the past year, indicating objectives for the year ahead and an action plan for their achievement.

### **20,000 Private Security Officers on Board**

I wish to reiterate that companies in the Private Security Industry, whose expertise can contribute to law enforcement and national security, represent a workforce of over twenty thousand (20,000) security officers. This figure represents more than three times the existing number of police officers. These security officers and their respective companies have previously been an underutilized resource, with the potential for greatly assisting the Police Service.

By engaging the more than 20,000 additional pairs of 'eyes and ears', the Police Service would have at its disposal, security practitioners who, through a dedicated communications network, will be in a position to transmit relevant information for appropriate law enforcement action. This is the first time such a formalized arrangement, and I may add partnership, has been developed in Trinidad and Tobago.

It is indisputable that security practitioners continue to be assigned to various 'private domains' where police officers are not routinely deployed. These 'private domains' include shopping malls, schools, apartment complexes, hospitals, and various commercial and industrial properties. Again, this vital resource of security practitioners is well placed to provide structured support to the national police as obtains in developed societies.

### **Operational structure**

In terms of the operations of the Network, participating security companies will:

Transmit information to the 555 hotline who in turn will forward this information to the Police Command Centre and other law enforcement agencies for action as deemed necessary.

Information will be recorded and collated by both 555 and participating security companies which will then be forwarded to the Private Security Network Commission for analysis.

In analyzing this information, the Private Security Network Commission will seek to evaluate the performance of the Network in keeping with established best practices for similar initiatives.

The Communications Network is vital to the success of this Initiative and will necessitate varying degrees of technological expertise, particularly in the area of telecommunications. While two-way radios and telephones (fixed and mobile) will be the primary vessels of communication in the initial stages of operation, other electronic avenues communication will be explored as the Network expands its reach to a greater pool of participants. These will include:

Email

push-to-talk technology

Short Messaging Service (SMS or text messages), and

Instant Messaging (IM).

It is to be noted that in the short term, the Network will be implemented on a phased basis. This approach will see a pilot implementation being deployed in the Western Police Division, Port of Spain Police Division and the Morvant Police Station District, west of the Lady Young Road in the North Eastern Division. These areas have been identified for the pilot owing to the less than comfortable level of crime and violence experienced there.

As many of you are aware, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is undergoing major organizational reengineering. Improvements to infrastructure, equipment and processes, the most notable of which may be found at the Police Academy, are well underway. These transformational initiatives will soon place the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service in a very advantageous position to effectively address criminal activities, utilizing modern technology and modern law enforcement methodologies.

The transformation is also intended to increase public confidence in the Police Service. One notable strategy to improve confidence involves the creation of partnerships with communities across our country. The Private Security Network Commission is one example of the police partnering with a community, in this case, the Private Security Industry. In keeping with the Government's people-centered approach to the delivery of services to the citizenry, the Ministry of National Security and its Divisions pledge to continue to engage and partner with relevant stakeholders in the ensuing battle against crime and criminality in our country. And in this regard, please permit me Commissioner to extend sincerest condolences to you and members of the TTPS on the violent loss of our brother, Supt. Joel Nedd. Please convey my sincerest condolences to his family. I would now like to invite all to stand and observe one minute of silence to our fallen brother.

**Conclusion:**

In closing, I wish to embrace the opportunity to again thank the members of the Private Security Industry who have answered this call to serve, in the interest of the safety and welfare of the country. On my own behalf and on behalf of the Ministry of National Security and the Government and the people of Trinidad and Tobago, I wish to indicate that your commitment and support are very much appreciated and welcomed. In this regard I extend special thanks to the Chair of the Commission, DCP Williams and members of the Commission for their hard work, and in keeping with our Government's multi-pronged assault on crime, I take enormous pleasure in formally launching the Private Security Network Commission (PSNC).

Thank you all for coming and May God Bless us all.