



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO POLICE SERVICE CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

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MEDIA RELEASE

CoP continues to press for amendments to Bail Act.....Man fined just \$16,000 for firearm, ammo

Commissioner of Police, Gary Griffith, continues to press for amendments to the Bail Act to deal with firearm offenders. The CoP has been calling on the legislators to amend the law so that persons held with any illegal firearm can be denied bail for a period up to 120 days.

He also wants judicial officers to deal with firearm offenders in a more serious way. A Valencia man was fined a total of \$16,000 by a Sangre Grande Magistrate last week, after pleading guilty to charges of possession of a firearm and ammunition.

The man pleaded guilty and was fined \$10,000 for possession of a firearm; \$6,000 for possession of ammunition and allowed 90 days to pay or in default face two years hard labour.

The CoP says the accused pleaded guilty at the very first hearing and was fined a total of \$16,000 for having a gun and ammunition, a weapon which can kill.

“What the accused got was a pat on the back and a free pass, knowing there are no consequences for his actions. A person who issues a bounced cheque can be fined up to ten times the amount of the cheque and can also be sent to prison for five years. But someone who was caught with a gun which can kill, is back out the very same day.”

“We did our job, we conducted our intelligence, we arrested and charged and the accused person was given red carpet treatment and immunity to go back onto the streets.”

Commissioner Griffith pointed out that over the last nine years, there were 1,457 repeat offenders with respect to firearm offences. “They were

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charged, got bail, and went back out there, only for them to be arrested on other occasions for the same offences.

“Let me remind you that 323 persons were arrested for firearm offences over the last three years and were given bail at their first court appearance, with hundreds getting bail subsequently. This means that someone was held by the police every three days for firearm offences. It was just easy for them to get bail, go back and continue their trade of killing persons, and when those released go out and commit more homicides, some would blame the Police.

"The vast majority of homicides are by those who have such illegal firearms. So we arrested most, but instead of remaining where they belong when charged, they were allowed to return to society to continue their trade of killing.

“The TTPS has done its job through proper intelligence and operations over the years, by arresting and charging these persons, simply for the said “shooters” to go back onto the streets within 24 hours to continue their trade of killing.”

The CoP says that in Barbados, persons held with any illegal firearm, are denied bail up to 24 months. He says that Trinidad and Tobago needs a similar law that worked in 2014.

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