



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO POLICE SERVICE CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

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MEDIA RELEASE

Multi-Million Dollar Processing Operation Shut Down, Eight Persons Charged

A multi-million-dollar processing operation was shut down following a joint intelligence-led exercise conducted by the Multi-Agency Task Force (MATF) assisted by the Financial Investigations Branch, the North Central Division Task Force, and Crime Scene Investigators, last Thursday. Eight persons were also charged for Processing Minerals without a Licence contrary to Section 45(1)(a) of the Minerals Act Chapter 61.03.

The exercise follows a directive from Commissioner of Police, Erla Harewood-Christopher, and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service executive instructing the MATF to conduct an all-government multi-level investigation into illegal mining and illegal processing of minerals. The investigative thrust was initiated and spearheaded by ACP Curt Simon and coordinated by Snr Supt Singh of the Financial Investigation Bureau, and ASP Haynes of the MATF.

On Thursday, May 2, 2024, based on information, officers unearthed a large-scale and highly modernised minerals processing plant. They observed persons at the plant's location on Moonan Road, Wallerfield operating a wash plant machine and heavy equipment. They were also engaged in other general site work.

A search warrant was executed at the site where several documents were seized. Enquiries revealed they did not have a licence to operate. Eight men, including a manager and acting supervisor, were arrested.

ROBERT WILSON, of Todds Road, **REUBEN MAPRANGALA**, of Champ Fleur, **RICKY JOSEPH**, of New Grant, **COREY CHARLES**, of Diego Martin, **DEON GEORGE**, of Laventille, **SHASTRI MAHADEO**, of Chaguanas, **KIMAL WILLIAMS**, of Sea Lots, and **ALUKO ATO WARNER** of Woodbrook were jointly charged by Cpl Nowbutt on Friday, May 3, 2024, for the offence of Processing Minerals without a Licence contrary to Section 45(1)(a) of the

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Minerals Act Chapter 61.03. They were granted bail of \$75,000 each with a surety by Justice of the Peace Abraham Ali and will appear before the Arima Magistrates' Court on June 5, 2024.

The exercise follows a similar operation conducted by the MATF on December 2, 2023, in the Five Acres area of Vega de Oropouche, Sangre Grande. Four persons were arrested after being found illegally digging and removing material from State Lands. They were subsequently charged with the offence and two CAT excavators valued at over six million dollars were seized.

Investigations showed that the site was never licenced by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries (MEEI) to process minerals. The illegal quarrying activity was also linked to a processing plant at Moonan Road, Wallerfield. Intelligence also revealed that the plant received illegally mined aggregate, processed same, and sold it to multiple contracted parties.

Following Thursday's operation, personnel from the Minerals Division of the MEEI visited the site. State Lands Inspectors also went to the facility to determine whether the operation was being conducted on State Lands.

Investigations are ongoing.

The exercise, which was conducted between 5 am and 3 pm on Thursday, May 2, 2024, was supervised by ASP Haynes, Sgt Neckles and Cpls Nowbutt and Solozano.

The Multi-Agency Task Force of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service remains committed to fulfilling its mandate of investigating offences such as illegal quarrying and illicit trade.

Corporate Communications Unit

May 4th, 2024

END