



For further information, please contact:

**Tricia N Henry**

Manager - Marketing and Communications

Trinidad & Tobago Chamber of Industry & Commerce

Columbus Circle, Westmoorings

T: 637-6966 x 310 F: 637-7425 M: 740-1376

Email: [thentry@chamber.org.tt](mailto:thentry@chamber.org.tt)

[www.chamber.org.tt](http://www.chamber.org.tt)

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### **CHAMBER VIEWS ON RECENT SPATE OF CRIME**

Our murder toll for the year now stands at an unacceptable 240 persons killed. The four murders that occurred within a 24-hour period on Wednesday, follows on the heels of another “bloody” 30-hour period just two weekends ago, where we saw seven murders occurring during that time. There have been several crime fighting measures announced in each National Budget, with the National Security Ministry receiving a significant allocation each year, and while we do not expect the government to publicly reveal its crime plan in its entirety, we are deeply troubled by the fact that we have not seen the fruits of any National Crime Plan, nor has the public been apprised of the status and implementation, in any form, of those measures announced. The Chamber has, each year, continued to make recommendations to the government as to the measures that it can consider for effective crime management, based on the practice of zero tolerance.

Even as the nation focuses its attention on the upcoming National Budget Presentation and Local Government Elections (both of which we assume will occur as legally due), the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce feels compelled to speak out against the significant rise in the murder toll in Trinidad and Tobago over the last few weeks.

We strongly believe that the war on crime **must** be fought on ALL fronts, utilising legislation, enforcement, the prompt administration of justice, good example and the social net. Just as the effects of crime are widespread, so too are its causes, which range from problems within the family, to the increased use of drugs, to the rise of gangs and gang warfare, and to the loss of shareholder, depositor and investor value. Therefore the only way to effectively battle serious crime is to tackle it at all levels and from all fronts.

The Chamber believes that **crime reduction** is certainly a matter that deserves all of our political leaders' attention. We wish to echo the sentiments of President Carmona in his speech at the opening of the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament, that crime is, and continues to be the scourge of our society. We agree wholeheartedly with the President that there is an urgent need for our national leaders to put aside the partisan politics and work together to develop holistic and sustainable solutions to combat crime.

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