



**Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**  
**Ministry of National Security**  
**CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT**

May 10, 2024

For Immediate Release

## **REGIONAL AND UNITED STATES OFFICIALS MEET ON ISSUES SURROUNDING CRIME AND ILLEGAL FIREARMS**

**Port-of-Spain** [May 10, 2024]: At a regional meeting, held on Thursday May 9, 2024, on combatting and countering firearms trafficking into Trinidad and Tobago and other Caribbean states, Minister of National Security, the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds M.P; emphasized that, **“high incidents of gun related crimes, documented across the region, showed that smaller CARICOM Member States, whose homicide rates were traditionally lower, have, in some cases now come to surpass, those of the geographically larger states.”**

The Minister was delivering the keynote address at a Meeting with U.S. Partners and CARICOM Commissioners of Police to discuss collaboration with the CARICOM Crime Gun Intelligence Unit (CGIU), held at the office of the Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS) in Port-of-Spain.

The establishment of the CGIU was endorsed by the 24th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE) on October 6, 2022. It is a partnership between CARICOM IMPACS and the United States Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and includes agencies such as the United States’ Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS), and INTERPOL.

The aim of the CGIU is to assist regional law enforcement authorities in criminal investigations involving firearms, by utilizing modern intelligence tools and technology, as well as to facilitate greater collaboration and cooperation among regional and international law enforcement agencies.



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As small island developing states, and given the transnational complexity of the issues surrounding illegal firearms, it would be imprudent for respective CARICOM states to attempt to manage the issue in silos.

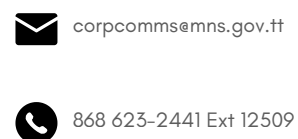
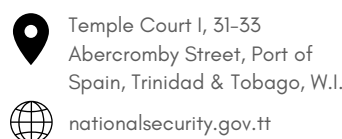
Minister Hinds stated that, **“whether it is within the communities and respective policing Divisions, or at the policy level, by way of a strategy or national action plan, the action taken by the CARICOM States, comprising of international cooperation and mobilisation efforts, was and is an important decision. This is particularly true since the development of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, as the United States of America has been, and remains, an important ally.”**

Minister Hinds said that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has taken due notice of President Biden’s response, to the persistent call of CARICOM Leaders, to help us with the problem of the inflow of automatic/military grade weapons and accompanying ammunition into the region.

**“I am elated to know that the U.S. Department of Commerce, issued a “pause” on all licenses granted to export weapons to non-state, civilian dealers. From July 1, 2024, imports to thirty-six (36) high risk countries in the world, require proof of end user. This new regime is expected to reduce exports to the region by 35%, particularly in those identified thirty-six (36) high-risk countries; including the Bahamas, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.”**

Minister Hinds concluded his remarks by thanking the U.S. Administration, through Her Excellency Ambassador Candace Bond, **“permit me to relay, on behalf of my CARICOM colleagues, sincere appreciation through you, Ambassador Bond, to the U.S. Administration, for your unwavering dedication to mitigating the transnational organized crime, which endeavours to mar our shores.”**

Also attending the meeting were Her Excellency Candace A. Bond, United States Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago, Ambassador Todd Robinson, Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement; Mr. Michael Ben’Ary, Associate Deputy Attorney General, and U.S. Coordinator for Caribbean Firearms



Prosecutions; Lt. Col. Michael Jones, Executive Director, CARICOM IMPACS and representatives from the U.S. Department of State, and Commissioners of Police of CARICOM Member States.

Joining the meeting remotely were representatives from the U.S. Bureau of Industry and Security' (BIS) and ATF, together with CARICOM Commissioners of Police representatives from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The meeting is the first in a series of such very necessary engagements, with the intent of tackling crime and gun violence in Trinidad and Tobago; and the wider Caribbean Region.

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**Caption:** The Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds MP, Minister of National Security, Trinidad and Tobago (front row, third from left); Her Excellency Candace A. Bond, U.S. Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago (front row, fourth from left); Lt. Col. Michael Jones, Executive Director, CARICOM IMPACS (middle); Ambassador Todd D. Robinson, Assistant Secretary, US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (front row, third from right) and Mr. Michael P. Ben'Ary, Associate Deputy Attorney General of the US Department of Justice (DoJ) and U.S. Coordinator for Caribbean Firearms Prosecutions (front row, second from right) with other participants of the meeting and the Belgian Malinois donated by the U.S.