



MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

November 27, 2024

For Immediate Release

MEDIA STATEMENT

RESPONSE TO THE OPPOSITION LEADER ON

CRIME AND THE MIGRANT ISSUE

Port of Spain: I have noted the recent unfortunate and inflammatory statement by the Opposition Leader, Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, that has been carried in the media, in response to the tragic murder of one Winston Thomas.

I extend my deepest condolences to the family and friends of Mr. Thomas, even as the matter is under police investigation.

The Opposition Leader, unwittingly raised several serious issues, in her reckless outburst, which were intended to play politics and mimic Donald Trump. Issues of government policy, crime, social cohesion and xenophobia, arise from her statements.

It must be noted, that in the Government's clearly defined and published Migrant Registration Framework Policy (MRF), the State already deports migrants, who have run afoul of our Immigration and other laws. We have, for a very long-time, deported migrants, who infringe the laws of Trinidad and Tobago.

While it is important to continue to address violent crime, to ensure the safety of all citizens and visitors, the Opposition Leader's aggressive and 'politicking' rant, against Venezuelan migrants in particular, risk creating further misunderstanding and xenophobia, leading to deeper social divisions and possible violent attacks, on this community of persons, here in Trinidad and Tobago.

Her call for deportations of Venezuelan migrants, legal or illegal, following this unfortunate incident, generalizes and "scapegoats" an entire group. Focusing solely on nationality, also risks oversimplifying the very complex issues, in dealing with our migrant population.

It is worth noting, that DCP Junior Benjamin's response, emphasized the police's commitment to justice, regardless of the nationality of those involved. This wise position, offers some sober guidance to the Opposition Leader. This approach advocates accountability, without discriminating against any group. Building a more inclusive society, necessitates that we view individuals, as part of a wider community, rather than defining them by their nationality, especially in circumstances where we have permitted thousands to be here quite legally.

Not all Venezuelan Migrants are here illegally, but whether legal or illegal, immigrants have always been deported, once they breach the laws of Trinidad and Tobago. As for those authorized to be here, this position was also clearly stated in the Migrant Registration Framework Policy (MRF).

The Ministry is confident that the agencies of the Ministry of National Security are equipped, to handle any local or foreign threats, to our citizens and visitors alike.

The Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds MP

Minister