



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Homeland Security

November 26, 2025

For Immediate Release

MEDIA RELEASE

HOMELAND SECURITY MINISTER INTERVENES AFTER A VISITOR REPORTS DISTURBING IMMIGRATION ENCOUNTER AT PIARCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago — The Ministry of Homeland Security advises that earlier today, the Honourable Roger Alexander, Minister of Homeland Security MP; the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Videsh Maharaj; and the Deputy Chief Immigration Officer, Ms. Alicia Acre-Youksee met virtually with Ms. Shontice McKenzie, a visitor from the United States of America.

Ms. McKenzie recently reported an unpleasant encounter with an Immigration Officer upon her arrival at the Piarco International Airport.

The virtual meeting with Ms. McKenzie took place at the Ministry of Homeland Security's offices, Levels 19–21, Tower C, International Waterfront Centre, #1 Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.

During the discussion, Ms. McKenzie was given the opportunity to recount the details of the incident, including concerns about the treatment she received while seeking assistance due to her hearing impairment. The Minister and Permanent Secretary listened attentively, expressed their deep regret, and extended a formal apology to her on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the Ministry, and the Immigration Division.

Minister Alexander emphasised the critical role of the Immigration Division in shaping the visitor experience, stating: *“Immigration Officers are the first point of contact for anyone entering Trinidad and Tobago. Their conduct must reflect our national values of dignity, respect, and hospitality. Every visitor should feel welcomed and supported, especially those with disabilities or special communication needs.”*

The Ministry treats this matter with the utmost seriousness. As such, a full and impartial investigation has been initiated. Should the findings confirm that any Immigration Officer acted unprofessionally or in breach of established protocols, the appropriate disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the Public Service Regulations and the policies of the Immigration Division.



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In addition, the Minister instructed that enhanced training and sensitisation programmes be implemented for all Immigration Officers, with a specific focus on customer service, disability awareness, and effective communication with travellers requiring special assistance.

The Minister further expressed his appreciation to Ms. McKenzie for bringing this matter to his attention and assured her that steps will be taken to prevent any recurrence of such incidents.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago reaffirms its unwavering commitment to providing every visitor with an experience that reflects the warmth, respect, and hospitality for which our nation is known. This incident serves as a reminder of the responsibility we carry at our borders, and the Ministry of Homeland Security is determined to ensure that the lessons learned lead to meaningful and lasting improvement.

Photo:





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Caption: Minister of Homeland Security, the Honourable Roger Alexander MP, Permanent Secretary, Mr. Videsh Maharaj and Deputy Chief Immigration Officer, Ms. Alicia Acre-Youksee met with Ms. Shontice McKenzie, at a meeting held at the Ministry's offices, at Tower C, International Waterfront Centre, Port of Spain, on Wednesday November 26, 2025.

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