



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO POLICE SERVICE CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

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MEDIA RELEASE

Police Did Not Raid Media House, MATT Should Get the Facts First Before Making Misleading Comments

Commissioner of Police, Gary Griffith says, contrary to misleading reports, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service did not conduct any 'raid' of media house, Radio Jaagriti, nor was any "heavy handed approach" used in obtaining a copy of audio/visual material for investigations by the TTPS.

Officers of the Special Investigation Unit went peacefully and respectfully to the radio station with a search warrant on the morning of Thursday April 18th 2019, to obtain a copy of a programme which has been making the rounds on social media and was cause for inquiry.

Officers first showed the warrant to the station manager and respectfully waited in the reception area at the radio station for the arrival of its CEO, Mr. Satnarayan Maharaj. Upon his arrival at the station, Mr. Maharaj was shown the search warrant and peacefully cooperated with officers. Two of his attorneys arrived a short while later and while speaking to him in his office, police allowed his lawyers to read the document as well. Mr. Maharaj gave the officers a copy of the audio/visual recording, following a brief discussion, the police left without incident.

A photograph was even taken between the investigating officer and Mr. Maharaj, which shows at no time, any degree of aggression or hostility by either party. **(See attached photo).**

The Commissioner takes note of the comments made by the Vice President, Mr. Joel Julien, on behalf of the Media Association of Trinidad

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and Tobago (MATT) in relation to the matter. In contrast to what is stated by Mr. Julien on behalf of the Association, the Police Officers did in fact read and serve the search warrant upon their arrival at the radio station.

It is therefore inaccurate and misleading for MATT, through its Vice President, Mr. Joel Julien, to state that the police conducted a raid, without a search warrant at Radio Jaagriti.

Did Mr. Julien seek clarification of the facts from his colleagues before falsely accusing police officers of unprofessional conduct and intimidation?

There were two police officers in uniform, while others were in plain clothes with no firearm visible, yet Mr. Julien and others on social media are accusing officers of being harsh and oppressive. There was no forced entry of the premises, no physical confrontation between officers and staff nor did police search any desk draws or vehicles. Police lawfully served the warrant and copy of the material was given to them by the CEO of the station without incident.

During the Easter weekend, at a time when police officers are out in full force to ensure that law abiding citizens can be safe, Vice President of the Association, Mr. Julien is seeking instead to falsely accuse the police of unprofessional conduct in the execution of their duties, when this is not the case. Mr. Julien should be advised to spend more time in ascertaining why three daily newspapers headlined a story, by falsely stating that the Police 'raided' the premises, to cause uncalled for sensationalism, when what actually took place was in total contrast to those misleading headlines. (**Again, see attached photo**).

The Commissioner states the TTPS must never turn a blind eye to any possible criminal activity, regardless of who the individual in question may be. The TTPS is an independent body, led by an independent

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Commissioner and its role and function includes investigating matters which at times may lead to charges being laid or even clearing persons of criminal wrong-doing.

In a time when many are demanding that this nation no longer be a lawless society, there are some who are trying to tell the Police who they must and must not meet with, what they should investigate and how to do their job, by being offended by the Police simply conducting inquiries to ascertain the fact of a matter.

The CoP states that there are always two sides to a story and if the CEO of the radio station feels the police abused their power, he should feel free to forward correspondence to the Office of the Commissioner or Police Complaints Authority (PCA), and it would be thoroughly investigated.

Commissioner Griffith says the TTPS will not be biased in its actions as no one in the country is above the law or exempted from being questioned or even charged if after an investigation, they are found to have committed a criminal act. He says this course of action must not be seen as the TTPS siding with any individual or group, but adhering to its responsibility to ensure that the law is not broken.

The CoP says if any person has an issue with the TTPS simply conducting an inquiry to ascertain the facts in a matter, and this is seen by some as abuse of power, then they clearly do not understand the role and function of the TTPS. He says the TTPS will continue its inquiries into this matter and stand firmly by its mandate to ensure law and order.

SEE ACCOMPANYING PHOTO

Corporate Communications Unit

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END

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