



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO POLICE SERVICE CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

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MEDIA RELEASE

2 Men Fined Just \$6,000 for Possession of Shot-gun and Ammo

Two men were each fined just \$6,000 when they appeared before a Rio Claro Magistrate yesterday, charged with possession of firearm and ammunition.

STEFAN ANDREWS, 35, and **RASHEED KAZIM**, 36, both of Tabaquite Road, Rio Claro, appeared before Magistrate Rae Roopchand, in the Rio Claro Magistrates' Court, on Wednesday 18th March 2020 to answer to the charges.

They pleaded guilty and were each fined \$5,000 or four months' hard labour for possession of firearm and \$1,000 or 30 days' hard labour for possession of ammunition.

The men were arrested during an anti-crime exercise conducted in the Rio Claro district between 7:00pm and 10:00pm on Tuesday 17th March 2020. During the exercise, officers proceeded to Campbell Trace, Rio Claro, where they had cause to stop and search a Nissan Almera motor vehicle with two male occupants.

A search of the vehicle resulted in officers finding one home-made shotgun loaded with one 12-gauge cartridge. The men were arrested in connection with the find.

Commissioner of Police, Gary Griffith, says these fines provide no deterrent, nor consequences to offenders. The holders of these illegal firearms get a pat on the back by paying a fine which is far less than someone issuing a \$600 bounced cheque (where the penalty is 10 times as much as the cheque and five years' imprisonment).

The bounced cheque penalty of \$6,000 equates with the same punishment for offenders who can use these weapons to go out and kill. And when they go out and acquire other illegal weapons which are used to kill, the police are blamed. Six thousand dollars is less than the cost of an illegal firearm, which criminals use these days and which police have seized on many occasions.

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We did our intelligence, we arrested and charged. We did our job. The criminal justice system is again failing us. The Judiciary ought to reflect the will and intention of the Legislature and by extension, the prevailing circumstances in our Country. This apparent failure is what leads to recidivism.

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END