



Office of  
the Prime Minister

**Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police: Opening Remarks 36<sup>th</sup> Annual  
General Meeting**

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**The Hon. Philip Davis, QC Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas**

**May 30, 2022**

Along with a changing world, comes the increasing threat and vulnerability of crime to our country's safety and economic security. Crime, in all of its manifestations, is a global and complex issue that profits criminals billions of dollars each year while leaving many reeling to recover.

We all feel deeply the damaging effects of crime. We all hear the cries of persons who have suffered at the hands of criminals.

We all know how it plagues our communities.

And I know we all want desperately to change this narrative.

However, the ongoing effort to eradicate this scourge will require a multi-faceted response that address the economic, social, and legal realities that contribute to this situation, particularly in the Caribbean.

Given our proximity and longstanding relationship with many of our Caribbean counterparts, The Bahamas knows well the unique commonalities and complexities that exist in a small island developing state often

challenged with limited resources. It is with this understanding that we often consolidate our resources to provide a stronger and more united front on issues surrounding national safety and economic security. For this reason, I applaud the efforts of the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police (ACCP) in promoting law enforcement in the Caribbean and I am exceptionally delighted that you decided on The Bahamas to commemorate and host your 36th annual conference. The 36-year history of the ACCP depicts a record of providing participating

nations a platform to share their varied perspectives and recommendations on crime and how to implement best practices.

Despite the fact that crime is omnipresent, it is entirely preventable. Commissioners of Police, you represent an essential leadership role in preventing crime and ensuring that the livelihoods of citizens are secured. Greater harmonization with international partners to promote and invest in educational training programs for officers so that they will be aptly able to respond to challenging situations is an

initiative to this end. Understanding that no country can canvas every square foot of land in isolation, the ACCP is a great asset as you consolidate your efforts. Consolidation will ensure regional partners have a shared duty to provide support that can help to defray the financial expense for one country to meet its challenges.

However, there is no greater asset than incorporating the support from your communities. In The Bahamas, the police are aware that combating crime requires a

communal effort. Most recently, I met with community stakeholders to address the issue of crime in a multi-level approach. To this end, we have built a shared framework of solutions that includes the police, civic organizations, churches, courts and our communities. As a result, our Royal Bahamas Police Officers have undertaken many measures to repair public confidence and renew relationships with various community sectors. It is here that valuable information can be attained to assist the police in detecting and solving crime.

Commissioners, I stand here recognizing that your role is no easy feat. You must compete in a global environment with no geographical boundaries, since criminal activities are not always contained within borders. In this day and age, policing requires comprehensive answers that promote safer communities and better public support. Inevitably, everyone has a stake in resolving our issues; yet it is your responsibility to bring the culprits to justice.



The ACCP continues to raise awareness about the threat posed by organized crime, cybercrime and narcotics, all of which the Government of The Bahamas has made strides to combat. This is an area that we will not compromise on. Any sort of criminality under any circumstances will not be allowed. As it relates to cybercrime, The Bahamas has taken legislative steps to mitigate cyber threats to our national security, by enacting The Computer Misuse Act (CMA) in 2003. This Act provides provisions for the criminalization of any unauthorized access or

modification to any computer and its material. In addition to this, the Parliament of The Bahamas has enacted the Data Protection Act (2003) and the Electronic Communication & Transactions Act (2006) to further protect our citizens against cyber threats. In an effort to combat financial crimes, a Financial Intelligence Unit was implemented to receive, analyze, obtain and disseminate information relating to the proceeds of crime under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2000. We have also partnered with our regional family to incorporate a strategic approach to financial

crimes by becoming a part of The Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for the Caribbean (ARIN-CARIB).

The exploitation of men, women, and children, as well as the impacts of illegal firearm use continues to undermine the safety and security of The Bahamas and can never be accepted. The fight against human and firearm trafficking remains a top priority for this government, as is its resolve to raise awareness and motivate regional countries to collaborate and work with allies to eradicate and prevent these crimes. In

respect to human trafficking we have taken significant steps to prevent, detect and circumvent this human tragedy with the enactment of the Trafficking in Persons Prevention and Suppression Act and Suppression Act and the creation of a Human Trafficking Task Force and the Special Prosecutor's Office for Human Trafficking. We also continue to strengthen collaborations with our international partners to counteract threats.

Illicit guns, eventually end up in the hands of criminals, contributing to a high number of gun-

related injuries and deaths. More than 90% of guns confiscated and used as murder weapons in The Bahamas can be traced back to American manufacturers and gun shops. The production of small guns, ammunition, and their components is illegal in The Bahamas. The stringent nature of The Bahamas' gun possession laws creates a gap between statistics and reality. Despite the enormous burden of policing a country that forbids the manufacturing and possession of guns, the Royal Bahamas Police Force, has done much.

As you conduct this conference, I hope you would examine how we can move this region forward and develop a more cohesive partnership that extends and delivers on our existing collaboration. There is a need for improvements in law enforcement efficacy with more modern technologies to optimize information exchange on trafficking routes, trafficker profiles, and victim identification, which is aimed at destroying criminal networks. Additionally, using our resources in concert can prevent and/or eradicate safe

havens for criminals. Member States should also be creative in making decisions with their international counterparts to combat crimes including cybercrime.

The Caribbean region must cooperate and coordinate efforts to combat human and firearm trafficking in all neighboring territories, as well as any other form of criminality. Caribbean nations have made significant progress in establishing legislation to combat the crime problem and have made immense strides. However, there is still work to be done, and you

are the front-runners. I propose that you concentrate on creating relationships and repairing trust with the community, so that we may begin to lay the groundwork for a society that can compete with crime. In our fight against crime, the people are our collaborators. This collaborative effort involving the church, community leaders, and the police will continue to yield benefits.

I wish you a productive conference and may your exchanges of ideas and deliberations produce



recommendations that identify the things that will make for peace.