



Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity

Public Hearing Summary

Friday January 18, 2019 at 11:05 a.m.

Topic:

Inquiry into the sexual exploitation of children in Trinidad and Tobago with specific focus on child prostitution and child pornography.

Committee Members:

The following Committee Members were present for the public hearing:

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| • Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, MP | Chairman |
| • Mr. Saddam Hosein | Member |
| • Mr. Dennis Moses | Member |
| • Mr. Rushton Paray, MP | Member |
| • Mrs. Hazel Thompson-Ahye | Member |
| • Mr. Esmond Forde, MP | Member |

Witnesses who appeared:

Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS)

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| • Mr. Harold Phillip | Deputy Commissioner of Police (Ag.), Crime & Support |
| • Mr. John Frederick | Senior Superintendent, Court and Process |
| • Mr. Amos Sylvester | Inspector, Cybercrime |
| • Mrs. Claire Guy- Alleyne | Assistant Superintendent, Child Protection Unit |
| • Mrs. Aisha Corbie- Price | Manager, Victim and Witness Support Unit |

Office of the Prime Minister

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| • Ms. Jacqueline Johnson | Permanent Secretary |
| • Mr. Bertrand Moses | Child Development Coordinator |
| • Ms. Safiya Noel | Director, Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (CATT) |
| • Ms. Rhonda Gregorie-Roopchan | Investigation Manager |

Ministry of Education

- Mr. Kurt Meyer
 - Mr. John Roopchan
 - Dr. Dennis Conrad
 - Ms. Natalie Robinson-Arnold
 - Ms. Theresa Neblett-Skinner
 - Mr. Corey Belfon
- Permanent Secretary
Chief Education Officer (Ag.)
Manager, Student Support Services Division
Senior Schools Social Work Specialist
Curriculum Officer, Health & Family Life Education
Director, Information and Communications Technology

Key Issues Discussed were:

1. Cases of child pornography and child prostitution are under reported in Trinidad and Tobago;
2. Current statistics do not accurately reflect the prevalence of child pornography and child prostitution in Trinidad and Tobago as evinced by the inconsistency in the number of reports between the TTPS and the Ministry of Education concerning child pornography;
3. The circulation of child pornographic material on social media platforms by victims are commonly self-inflicted cases;
4. The Revised National Code of Conduct of the Ministry of Education provides guidelines to principals on cell phone usage at primary and secondary schools and state that the possession or circulation of pornographic material is in contravention of the Children's Act, Chap. 46:01;
5. The Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) programme of the Ministry of Education educates children about sex, sexuality and avoiding high risk behaviours;
6. According to the CATT, child pornography is usually as a result of unresolved abuse or trauma linked to an adverse childhood experience;
7. There are targeted programmes available that offer counselling and support within the Student Support Services Division, Ministry of Education, the CATT and the Victim and Witness Support Unit, TTPS;
8. CATT data suggests that there is no single profile of a victim or perpetrator of child exploitation as this issue that can occur at any strata of the society;
9. The challenges to effectively address the child pornography and child prostitution are:
 - the lack of effective communication between entities;
 - the unwillingness of victims to report incidents;
 - the difficulty to intercept electronic transmissions;
 - the difficulty to access data from foreign telecommunications authorities;
 - the lack of human resources;

10. The recommendations to effectively address child pornography and child prostitution are:

- the need for research is needed to inform policy;
- the need for public education on child abuse and that includes child pornography and prostitution; and
- the need for additional sensitisation and awareness campaigns to deter acts of child pornography and prostitution and remove the stigma related to child pornography and prostitution.

View the Hearing:

The hearing can be viewed on our YouTube page via the following link:
<https://youtu.be/JLzaPSwBoQc>

Contact Information:

You may contact the Committee's Secretary at jschumanrights@tparliament.org or 624-7275 Ext. 2288/2402.

*Committees Unit
January 18, 2019*