



**REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM:
VIOLENCE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE
- THE CRIME CHALLENGE**
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, 17-18 APRIL 2023



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 12th April, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Trinidad and Tobago to host Regional Symposium addressing Crime and Violence as a Public Health Issue

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago will hold a Regional Symposium addressing Crime and Violence as a Public Health Issue, on 17 and 18 April, 2023, at the Hyatt Regency, Trinidad.

Under the theme, *'Violence as a Public Health Issue – The Crime Challenge'*, the symposium seeks to promote dialogue and regional action aimed at violence reduction and crime prevention. At least seven CARICOM Heads of Government will participate in the symposium which Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the **Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**, and Lead Head with responsibility for Crime and Security, will chair.

At the Forty-Fourth (44th) Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM held in Nassau, The Bahamas, from 15-17 February 2023, Heads of Government agreed that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago would host a special symposium to consider crime as a public health concern. This follows the decisions taken by the Heads of Government in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 to convene such a meeting, the plans for which were delayed by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Region's method of addressing crime and violence from a social prevention perspective as well as a criminal justice perspective has been the traditional approach for a number of years. The conventional approach of the criminal justice system focuses on retribution, imprisonment, rehabilitation and restoration, with the goal of restoring harmony and reintegrating people into society. However, this has resulted in consistently escalating levels of crime and violence which have been an ongoing concern of CARICOM Heads of Government for several years.

Given CARICOM's deep concern about the unprecedented levels of crime, Heads of Government resolved to increase focus on the determinants of crime by taking a public health approach which would first identify the causal factors and preventions where possible, followed by interventions.



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The Regional Symposium will emphasise a holistic system approach, particularly a whole of Government and whole-of-society approach, involving and collaborating with all relevant agencies, organisations and sectors at different levels, including civil society, business, community, families and individuals.

The topics to be discussed over the two days include: Violence and Health in the Region; Crime and Violence: A Public Health Approach; Mental Health; Transnational Organised Crime; Using Litigation to Protect Gun Violence - Global Action on Gun Violence; Trans-Border Crime; Education and Youth, Domestic Violence; Economic Inequalities as the Driver of Crime and Violence; Community approaches- Restorative Justice; Sports and Mediation; and the Judicial Perspective- Legislation and Juvenile Justice Reform.

Interested persons are able to participate by logging on to ttt online, the Symposium website: safecaribbean.caricom.org or via the CARICOM social media platforms.

Communications and Education Unit
Ministry of Social Development and Family Services
CL Financial Building
39-43 St. Vincent Street, Port of Spain

(T) 623.2608 EXT 5400/02/03, (F) 623.8496