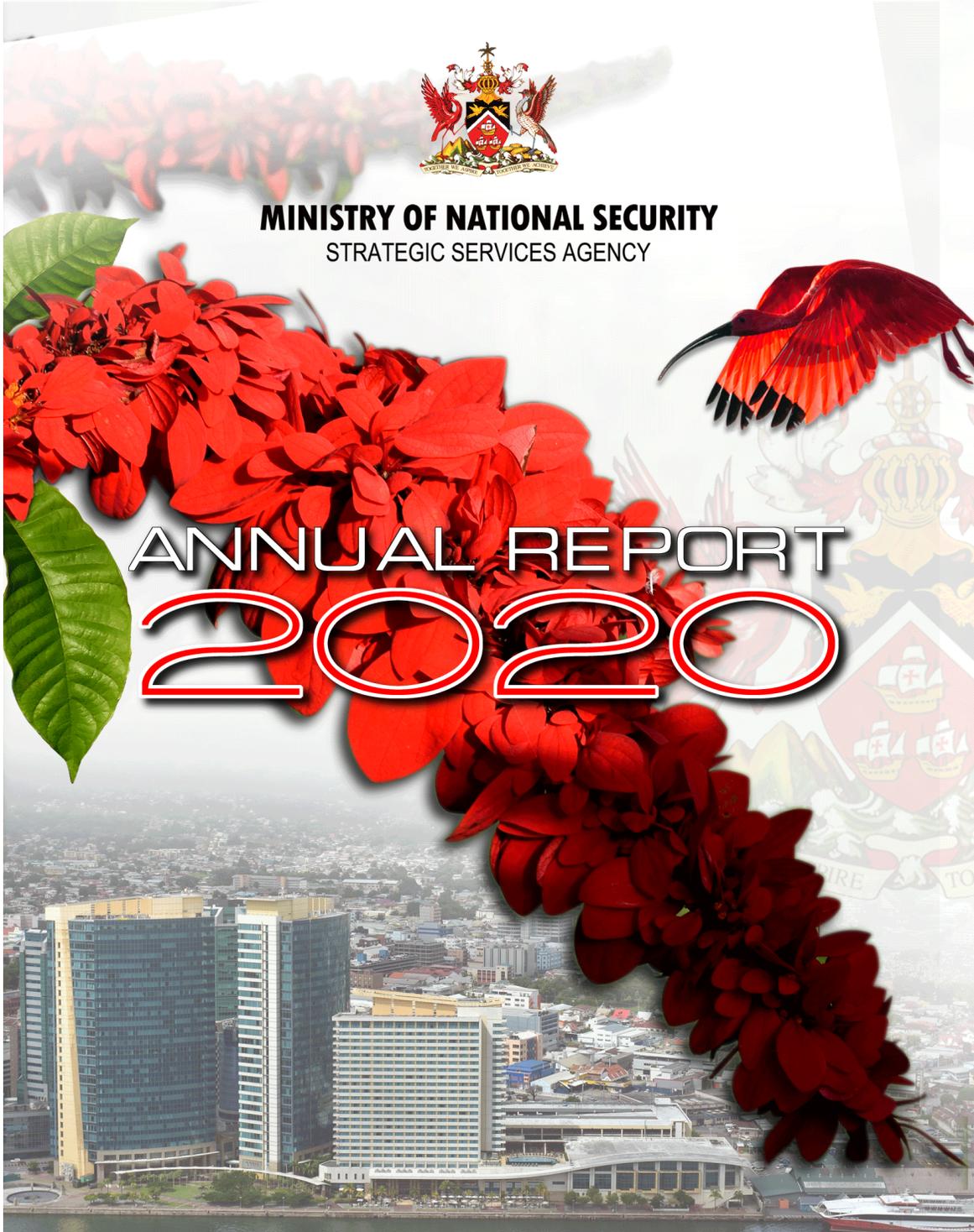




**MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY**  
STRATEGIC SERVICES AGENCY

ANNUAL REPORT  
**2020**



# MANDATE

This report is prepared in compliance with Section 4 (4), Chapter 15:06 as amended by Act 4 of 2016:

*“The Director shall prepare an annual report on the operations of the Agency which shall be submitted to the Minister within one month after the end of the year to which the report relates.”*

Taking into cognisance section 8 (1) and (2) Chapter 15:06 as amended by Act 4 of 2016:

*“(1) Subject to subsection (2), no employee of the Agency shall disclose any information obtained or accessible in the course of the performance of duties and functions under this Act unless so authorised by the Director.*

*(2) Disclosure referred to in subsection (1) is permissible for the following reasons only:*

*(a) for the investigation or prosecution of a serious crime, an offence under the Dangerous Drugs Act or any other contravention of the laws of Trinidad and Tobago; or*

*(b) for the investigation of a serious crime or a dangerous drugs offence committed abroad or contravention of the laws of any other country which is party to the 1988 Vienna Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances or with whom Trinidad and Tobago has a mutual legal assistance treaty.*

*(3) Any person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and is liable on conviction on indictment to a fine of one hundred thousand dollars and to imprisonment for ten years.”*

# CONTENTS

<u>MANDATE</u> .....	2
<u>DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE</u> .....	4
<u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</u> .....	8
<u>2020 OBJECTIVES and STRATEGIC PLAN</u> .....	10
<u>MANDATED SPECIALIST DEVELOPMENT</u> .....	13
<u>2020 OPERATING ENVIRONMENT</u> .....	15
Geopolitics .....	17
Impact of Covid-19 .....	18
Global Crime and Security Perspective .....	17
Implications for Trinidad and Tobago .....	20
Strategic Considerations for Trinidad and Tobago.....	21
The Local Milieu.....	23
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT</u> .....	32
<u>HUMAN RESOURCES</u> .....	33
<u>LEGAL</u> .....	36
<u>FINANCIAL REPORT</u> .....	37
<u>OPERATIONAL REPORT</u> .....	40
<u>INTELLIGENCE DISSEMINATION</u> .....	41
<u>OPERATIONS</u> .....	44
<u>2021 STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES</u> .....	48

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Even as the Strategic Services Agency (SSA) continued along the path of dynamic renewal, the year 2020 started typically but by the end of the first quarter, primarily because of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and COVID-19 pandemic, it became more challenging. The dynamics of 2020, forced nations, international organisations, big and small businesses and people, to re-assess their priorities, revamp their protocols and reconsider their purpose. The meta-narrative spoke to the numbers of infected and dying, but for illness and death, this pandemic actually contributed in many instances to more efficient systems being developed, increased productivity for some sectors and an augmented emphasis on employee wellness.

The pandemic also affected crime and criminality. In Trinidad and Tobago, data suggested that serious crime declined significantly in most instances, for reasons including COVID-19 restrictions on movement, enhanced law enforcement strategy, reduction in criminal opportunity because more people stayed at home and even lifestyle changes due to COVID-19. There however, was an increase in intimate partner violence and fraud offences. The Agency was prepared and this will be discussed further in the report.

### People

*“Headline Stories should highlight the remarkable and enduring resilience of the great majority of the population...<sup>1</sup>; and indeed, during this Covid-19 pandemic period, our staff showed this resilience. As an essential service, in developing our plan for business continuity, we adapted our work model to ensure the overarching mandated protocols were followed - the wearing of masks; taking of temperatures and hygiene factors such as hand-washing. Social distancing, having a direct impact of work space and numbers had to be managed differently.*

In some instances, in the early phases, there were occasions wherein our laws and Public Health Regulations restricted some departments' activities. Under those circumstances, there was reduced productivity temporarily. Our leadership team however, was encouraged to determine methodologies for goal continuity for staff.

---

<sup>1</sup> \* **Stephen Reicher**, School of Psychology and Neuroscience, University of St. Andrews

Research done by our Knowledge Management Department revealed that in many units, productivity, after the initial shock, soon returned to the pre-COVID-19 high levels. In fact, in some departments, the change contributed to *increased* productivity. For the few where productivity decreased, new working procedures were introduced.

Rapid re-skilling, work from home routines, a culture of trust, transparency and openness, promotion of individual and social wellbeing and working in a more responsive fashion, are now taking precedence, as employee resilience becomes just as important to strategic thinking, as cost and efficiency. The events as they have unfolded have shown our agility and have demonstrated that we can adapt quickly.

### **Challenges**

There had to be adjustments to the Agency's financial projections due to the prevailing economic climate, with some contribution from pandemic-related fiscal decisions. Budget tightening resulted in cutbacks or curtailment of some projects. This impacted the delivery and expansion of some intelligence initiatives.

With regard to the continued fight against transnational crime, there is widespread recognition that the struggle against such activities will be influenced by the manner in which we define threats and the nature of the international cooperation we pursue, in support of our security goals and objectives. In this regard, we at the SSA, continue to expand our direct intelligence cooperation with foreign Security Agencies.

Many analysts have noted the increasing interdependence of the criminal element, who though they might have divergent motivations (ideology, profit, etc.), readily leverage one another as "force multipliers". Therefore, the focus of the Agency's efforts with its stakeholders, regional and international partners will include the sustaining of good relationships and the development, implementation and evaluation of relevant new strategies and programmes.

## **Governance**

As Director, I am committed to doing what is right for the people and the sovereign state of Trinidad and Tobago, through our employees and systems, inclusive of ensuring certain legislation are passed. For example in 2020 our SSA Personnel Regulations and SSA General Regulations were approved, as well as amendments to the IOCA Act Chapter 15:08 (yet to be proclaimed). We were given extraordinary powers; we commit to using them responsibly and to being accountable to the Parliament and the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

## **Successes**

Despite the toll the COVID-19 pandemic had on our staff, for 2020, the SSA disseminated over four hundred (400) reports to International and Local Entities. Also identified as actionable intelligence – these reports were of sufficient quality to have been acted upon by our external stakeholders, with no further analysis required. Of course other similar intelligence products need further refinement as the intelligence picture evolves and intelligence gaps are filled over time.

As well, in mounting crime countermeasures, a National Threat Assessment was developed, geopolitical reviews were enhanced to security intelligence forecasts. The number of strategic intelligence geopolitical forecasts also increased to quarterly, bi-annually and annually. Additionally, in order to create a comprehensive overview of the local milieu, at the Agency we developed new products - our country profiles and security perspectives; and scenario based risk and threat assessments. All this, along with our standard strategic assessments, alerts and special reports.

Moreover, with training and development of staff, and greater rigour in our systems and procedures, this led to:

- Increased collaboration with the Agencies in the National Security Apparatus;
- Continued support from our International Partners even though some activities had to be curtailed because of the pandemic.
- Implementation of the Agency's Strategic Plan;

## Outlook

The challenges brought on by the pandemic remain fluid, but we shall continue to accommodate the requisite modifications and mitigation strategies, as necessary, to ensure worker safety and increased productivity. Across the value-chain, the continued implementation of our strategic plan, in conjunction with training and development of our staff, and developing strategic partnerships and strong collaborations with our external partners, augers well for the performance of the Agency.

The environment within which we find ourselves means continued creativity, agility and vision are the requisite skills for beating the criminals at their game. Our Agency is ready and capable. According to youth poet laureate<sup>2</sup> – *“But one thing is certain, if we merge mercy with might and might with right, then love becomes our legacy and change our children’s birthright... So let us leave behind a country better than the one we were left with.”*

The Director

Major Roger Best (Ret’d)

---

<sup>2</sup> Amanda Gorman, The Hill We Climb

# Executive Summary

## Overview:

The emergence of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic triggered a global economic recession in 2020. COVID-19 mitigation measures disrupted Trinidad and Tobago's labour market during the first half of 2020.<sup>3</sup> Although there was initial disruption at the Agency, this was managed expeditiously and work continued posthaste.

It is established that the prime directive of the SSA is to protect the people of the sovereign Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. In order to chart the success of the Agency, one must understand our *raison d'être*. Our fundamental purpose among many others, as defined by the act, is to —

(a) Act as an office for centralising information that could facilitate the detection and prevention serious crime...

(b) Develop strategic intelligence and make recommendations to Government on the formation of policies in relation to counter narcotics matters;

(c) Prepare drug interdiction strategy and stimulate action towards and monitor the implementation of the agreed strategy;

(d) Advise on policy formation in respect of the development of human resources engaged in counter drug trafficking activities and maintain an inventory of all training undertaken and seek to identify opportunities for training;

(e) Disseminate information and intelligence to the appropriate Services;

(f) Provide intelligence and analytical support for the appropriate operational and intelligence arms of the appropriate Services;

Every employee swears an oath of allegiance and secrecy to the country and because of this the SSA must operate lawfully, in proportion to the threats, in line with the expectations of the people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Core to the operations of the Agency are integrity and its requisite behaviours, service, patriotism, innovation, excellence and partnership.

---

<sup>3</sup> Central Bank – Economic Bulletin Visual Summary July2020

Employee regulations, which were approved in January 2020, gave gravitas to our human resource policies and procedures, developed to protect the employee and by extension, the work of the Agency. As work continued, the COVID-19 pandemic, for the most part, brought out the best in our staff who approached this challenge with creativity, clarity and agility – which for us is the hallmark of excellence in an intelligence agency.

Work continued briskly over the period as the various departments strived to improve their products and as creativity and diligence yielded success with persons being charged and arrested; cocaine, marijuana and money seized, threats to life disrupted, a 10-year repository of Serious Crimes developed. Another major accomplishment was the continued enhancement of operational dashboards/trend reports, among other Agency advances. Collaborations with our external stakeholders improved over the period, not only in terms of intelligence sharing – with hundreds of reports going to them - and training, but in the provision of specific services to the various ministries and other facets of the intelligence community.

The rest of this report covers work done by the Agency:

- The Operating Environment examines the existing milieu locally, regionally and internationally and makes the links to the issues facing us at home.
- The Administrative Report – this deals with human resources and capacity building, and other systems implemented to ensure efficiency of services. It also gives a breakdown of the finances of the Agency.
- The Operational Report –provides details on the organisational productivity and priorities.
- 2021 Strategic and Operational Priorities.

The security of our nation is our prime directive. We continue to do this by creating and delivering the highest quality intelligence products and services. In 2021, we shall persevere, contributing to the safety of our nation by increased detection and prevention of serious crime.

# SSA OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIC PLAN 2020

Objectives were developed on the assumption that an integrated approach would be central to the coordination of all of the Agency's information assets. It is further expected that the main goals of the Agency - the provision of services which facilitate a collaborative environment and support information sharing - were critical.

The objectives of the Agency continue:

The **Core Priorities** for the Agency:

1. *Detection and Prevention of Serious Crime*
  - ◇ Continually improve intelligence products and services
  - ◇ Continually improve training products
  - ◇ Advance research on serious crime
  - ◇ Enhance information sharing networks
  
2. *Creation of Social and Economic Value*
  - ◇ Establishing a return on investment in the delivery of national Intelligence products and services

The **Enabling Priorities**:

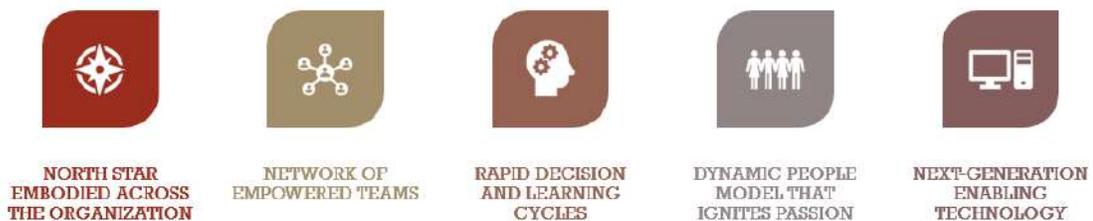
3. *Achieve Operational Excellence*
  - ◇ Build/Upgrade the Agency's technology infrastructure and facilities
  - ◇ Strengthen current and attract new Alliances and Partnerships
  
4. *Build Organisational Capacity*
  - ◇ Develop our Staff
  - ◇ Continue Organisational Transformation
  - ◇ Fortify the Desired Culture of Teamwork and Performance



The Strategic Plan is a manifestation of the Agency’s commitment to the service and defence of the nation. With foundations in the SSA Act, the National Development Goals and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the plan delineates the path to achieve the goals and objectives related to the core business of the Agency.

In 2020, a great deal of work was done in support of implementing the Agency’s strategic plan, despite the initial negative impact of Covid-19 measures. This VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) environment, called for its antithetical VUCA application of Vision, Understanding, Clarity and Agility.

Focus was on capacity-building and developing the skills to create a world class and agile organisation. Therefore, groundwork concentrated on leadership development, team building, change management, and communications.



McKinsey & Co

We continue living our mission, to ensure the security of the nation and the people of Trinidad and Tobago, by creating and delivering the highest quality intelligence, operational support and training products and services to our local and international partners to detect, pre-empt, disrupt and dismantle current and emerging threats. With our vision of a world-class intelligence agency enabling the fight to reduce and prevent serious and organised crime in Trinidad and Tobago, Service, Integrity, Innovation, Excellence, Partnership, Patriotism are the living values to achieve this.

All this, given the Agency's desired impact - that Trinidad and Tobago is a peaceful, thriving society, in which there is public trust in justice; rule of law is upheld and the safety, security and defence of the nation and its people, are assured.

Our steps for 2021 - the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework, as part of strengthening the quality management 'infrastructure'; continued leadership development, teambuilding and sustained training in change management.

## MANDATED<sup>4</sup> SPECIALIST DEVELOPMENT

In seeking to (i) enhance training and development of national security personnel throughout the industry, (ii) refine products and services and (iii) strengthen its operations, this past year, the SSA's Training Division undertook a sector-wide needs assessment. The needs assessment was conducted with three (3) objectives in mind:

- To inform the design and development of training products and services, strengthen partnerships/collaboration with local and international institutions, and deliver accredited, multi-dimensional security and public safety studies;
- To be the lead in standards development and quality assurance for training, learning and educational activities across the sector; and
- To identify resolve persistent learning gaps.

The development of the intelligence community, a lofty objective which, although sideswiped by the Covid-19 pandemic, continued on a smaller scale, as initially, some classes were suspended, in order to reconcile training activities with strict Covid-19 measures. Nonetheless, accomplishments included the following - The design and development of a new Diploma in Leadership and Management, Supervisory Training, Critical Thinking Training; Project Management Training; Learning Systems Design; and Use of Force among others.

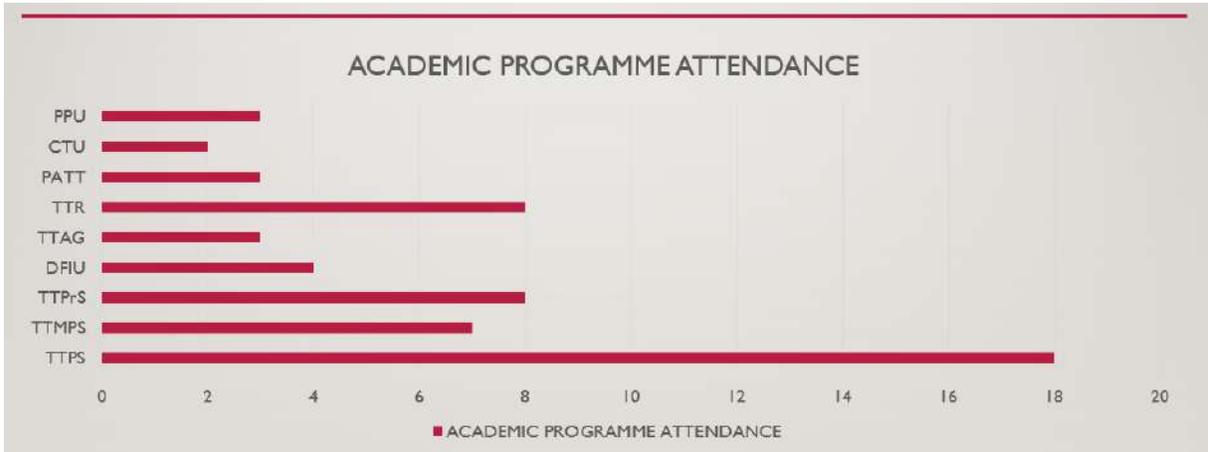
In pursuing our goal to identify new training opportunities, and develop specialist personnel, we were able to champion the use of Microsoft teams for online training and thus keep the training division functioning.

Over the 2020 period, the chart below shows the breakdown of participants for the Training Division's academic programmes:

---

<sup>4</sup> Outlined in Sections 6 (1) (d), 6 (1) (k) and 6 (2) (f) of the Act.

**FIGURE 1: ACADEMIC PROGRAMME ATTENDANCE**



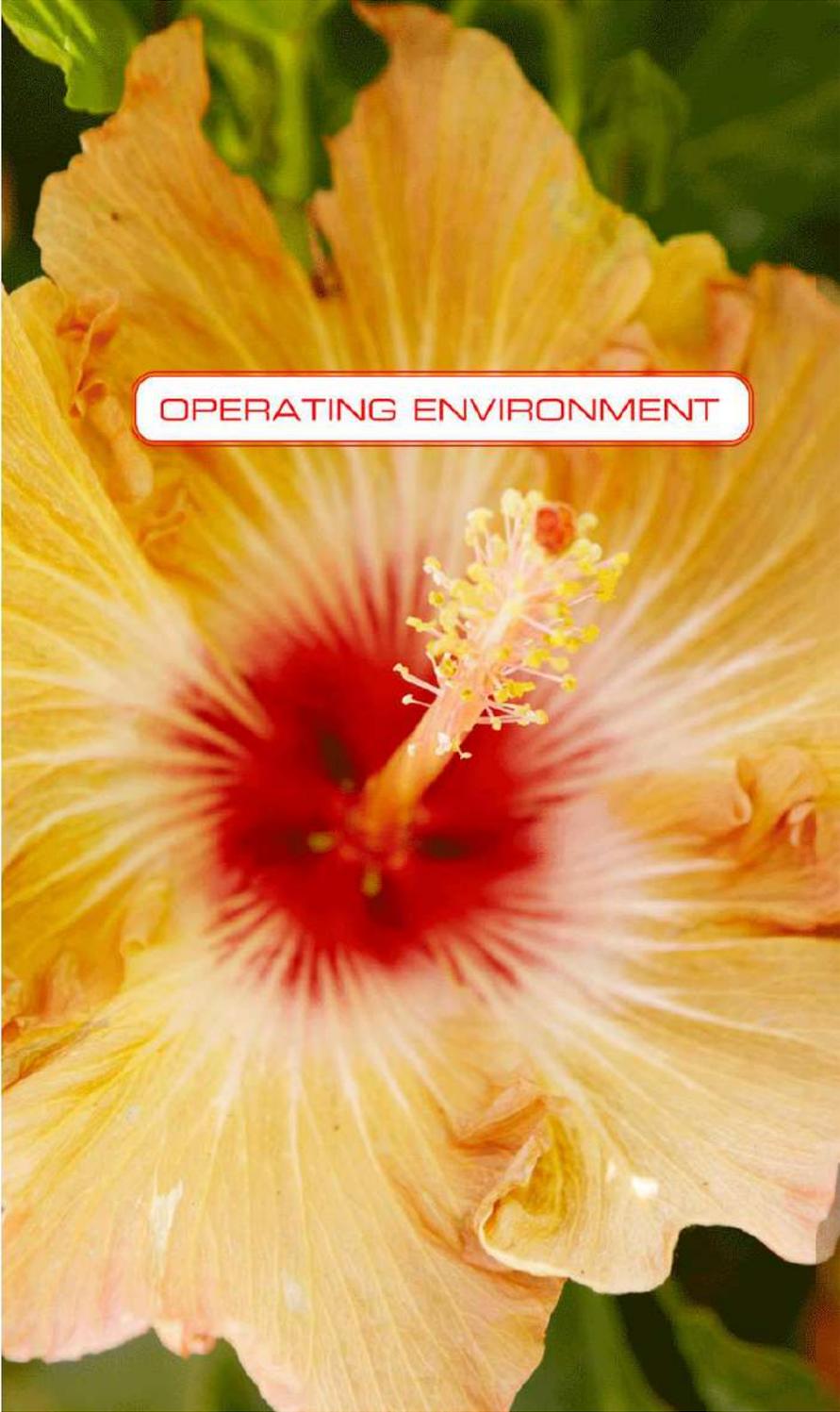
The areas covered by the 2020 academic syllabus were Crime Scene Investigations, Law Enforcement Control Tactics, Intelligence Analysis and Surveillance Operations.

With our offering of Technical Programmes, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) participated with over 400 students for this period. Also attending were the Defence Force Intelligence Unit (DFIU), Trinidad and Tobago Prisons' Service (TTPrS), the and the Trinidad and Tobago Municipal Police Service (TTMPs). These technical programmes aimed to improve the skills of the participants and covered areas such as Learning Systems Development, Oleoresin Capsicum Training and Use of Force.

This training in particular was physically demanding and intensive and was designed to provide the officers with the skills and concepts necessary to apply effective control measures in a multitude of incidents. It also gave participants a practical experience of Police Use of Force.

Do note that officers were certified as Operators of the Pepper Spray and Tasers. Pepper Spray and Tasers are less lethal options used by Law Enforcement Officers in National Security. Though deemed prohibited, the Firearms Act Ch. 16:01 and the amendments of 2004, gives Law Enforcement the authority to use same.

Other agencies who have received our training include Counter trafficking Unit, Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, Trinidad and Tobago Air Guard; Parliament Police Unit; Trinidad and Tobago Municipal Police Service



## 2020 OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

### INTRODUCTION - INTERNATIONAL

The year 2020 was atypical because of the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has created a multiplicity of challenges and opportunities for the international community. These have consequences far beyond the health implications of COVID-19 and most responses require a multi-dimensional approach. While the pandemic has temporarily forced governments around the world to prioritise the containment of the virus and its variants above all pre-existing domestic political, economic and geopolitical issues; agile responses and specific mitigation measures have proven crucial to building resilience, which will ease the impact of future crises.

There was another side to the advent of the pandemic, as global responses yielded several benefits. The pandemic thrust much of the planet into the digital age and all manner of business now occurs in the virtual space. Further, the restriction on movement resulted in work from home arrangements, reduced traffic and air pollution. The flora and fauna were given a recuperation period. Increased creativity also occurred such as the development of kitchen gardens and other similar activities, as citizens sought to break the monotony of restrictive routines. There is however, divergent views about the sustainability of these benefits in the post-COVID era.

The post-COVID-19 recovery period is likely to see an increase in geopolitical tensions, as disputes among countries gradually re-emerge in 2021. Although some optimists infer that the COVID-19 outbreak period might lead to a peaceful phase and a reassessment of the desirability for confrontation, it is unlikely. Rather, the COVID-19 crisis is likely to increase countries' sense of vulnerability to external threats, and compel them to prioritise their own political, economic, health and security interests.

In addition, with the prospect of COVID-19 vaccines becoming available in 2021, hopes for a faster recovery to boost local healthcare systems, secure businesses, maintain jobs and education, and stabilise the financial markets and the economy will depend on the safety and efficacy of vaccines. While Trinidad and Tobago has suffered the impacts and consequences of the pandemic, the recovery will require cooperation among countries until vaccines and treatments are globally available and affordable.

## **GEOPOLITICS**

The pandemic did little to slow the US-Venezuela conflict and this issue remains of utmost importance to Trinidad and Tobago due to our proximity to Venezuela. President Nicolás Maduro scored a victory against the US backed opposition, winning the National Assembly election in 2020, gaining control of the last opposition-led institutions in Venezuela, and eroding US-backed Juan Guaidó's legitimacy as interim president. These tensions are far from settled and with Venezuela's enhanced relationship with Iran, another heavily sanctioned US rival, regional security is threatened. Already, there has been a heightened US and Venezuela naval presence in the Caribbean's maritime space. Further, continued sanctions on Venezuela worsen the exploding migrant crisis that is adversely affecting Trinidad and Tobago. The continued US strategy of maximum pressure, which was sanctioned by President Donald Trump, is not expected to ease suddenly under the Joe Biden Presidency in 2021.

There was also a resurgence of medical diplomacy with the Covid-19 pandemic. Russia, China and Cuba endeavoured to increase their countries' profile in this geopolitical power dimension, while attempting to mitigate the effects of the virus in their own countries. Russia and China gifted medical supplies and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to their allies, Cuba sent medical personnel to 19 countries to assist on the frontlines. For some, this is indicative of strategic partnership between countries and highlights the importance of relationships between developed and developing economies.

Actions by larger economies during COVID-19 therefore resulted in solidarity in some instances and hostile exchanges between countries in other instances. The pandemic exacerbated existing global tensions between both the United States (US) and China, in particular. There were continued US efforts against Iran and Venezuela, which improved relations between the two latter nations. It is anticipated the international system will experience similar geopolitical issues that were prevalent prior to COVID-19, dominated by military competition among US, China and Russia.

## IMPACT OF COVID-19

The COVID-19 virus and the associated countermeasures have had adverse impacts on multiple sectors worldwide. There were economic deficits from plunging stock prices<sup>5</sup> and declining trade, health systems crises and supply chain failures including food<sup>6</sup> and pharmaceuticals.<sup>7</sup> Key industries, including educational institutions were shut down and non-essential businesses were closed. Major events including sporting tournaments were postponed or cancelled<sup>8</sup> amid significant loss of life and liberty. Other noteworthy worldwide effects of the pandemic include:

- A pending worldwide recession<sup>9</sup>
- Increased mental-health problems as a result of dread or uncertainty
- Health-care worker burnout or post-traumatic stress disorder<sup>10</sup>
- Release of low risk prisoners
- A reduction in law enforcement personnel due to quarantining or redeployment to enforce public health regulations
- Increased unemployment

## GLOBAL CRIME & SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

The changes brought about by COVID-19 restrictions caused criminal elements to adapt to the prevailing environment:

- Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) have shown their resilience amid the pandemic by adapting to and surviving the changing environment. Some OCGs in Latin America and Europe took advantage of the high demand for PPE and produced counterfeit PPE. This has

---

<sup>5</sup> Guy Faulconbridge and James Mackenzie, "Coronavirus Deaths in Italy Overtake China as Economic Damage Mounts," World Economic Forum, March 20, 2020,

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/coronavirus-deaths-italy-china-recession-economy/>

<sup>6</sup> Center for Strategic and International Studies, "COVID-19 and Food Security," www.csis.org, March 26, 2020, <https://www.csis.org/programs/global-food-security-program/covid-19-and-food-security>

<sup>7</sup> Jacob Heilbrunn, "The Next Coronavirus Nightmare: There's a Drug Shortage on the Horizon," The National Interest, March 18, 2020, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/next-coronavirus-nightmare-theres-drug-shortage-horizon-134147>.

<sup>8</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation, "Tokyo 2020: Olympics to Be Postponed until 2021, Says IOC Member," *BBC Sport*, March 23, 2020, sec. Olympics, <https://www.bbc.com/sport/athletics/52002474>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Benjamin Williams, "Healthcare Workers Report Elevated Psychiatric Symptoms Amid COVID-19 Pandemic," *Psychiatry Advisor*, March 23, 2020, <https://www.psychiatryadvisor.com/home/topics/general-psychiatry/healthcare-workers-report-elevated-psychiatric-symptoms-amid-covid-19-pandemic/>

also been the case with some essential pharmaceuticals. In the early stages of the pandemic, Interpol also announced as many as 121 arrests worldwide against illicit sales of medicines and medical products<sup>11</sup>. In Latin America OCGs have also replaced the state in some communities, imposing COVID-19 countermeasures including curfews and providing social services to residents.

- Border closures disrupted supply chains, leading to price gouging of narcotics in Latin America and the US and the increased use of social media sales in Europe. The border closures reduced the amount of illegal narcotics entering the countries. The impact on the trade was reflected by fewer, but larger shipments of narcotics including cocaine and marijuana. There was also an increase in the use of mail and courier services for international drug trafficking, possibly to replace drug mules because of travel restrictions.
- Globally, overall serious crime rates decreased as restrictions on movement inadvertently reduced criminal opportunities - crimes against the person and property crimes decreased. The data suggest that murders were at an all-time low however, intimate partner violence and child abuse increased significantly. Fraud was also on the increase reflecting a correlation with the economic downturn. Pyramid schemes and “criminal call centres<sup>12</sup>” (a type of fraud utilised by OCGs to coerce family members to provide money to falsified hospital officials for sick relatives who were in dire need) are now common features.
- Globally, COVID-19 related cyber-scams increased as OCGs sought alternative means to supplement income from declining drugs and counterfeit industries. Multiple reports indicated that by March 2020, there were over 42,000 website domains of a malicious or suspicious nature encompassing the name “corona” or “COVID”. Recurrent email scams embedded with ransomware included shopping discounts on face masks and hand sanitisers; links to donate towards the fight against COVID-19; phony contact tracers; healthcare websites; offerings of government assistance, special loans and investment scams in vaccine-production companies were commonplace.
- Deportation and re-integration of offenders - Large-scale deportation continued despite the COVID-19 outbreak. The US conducted deportation exercises to stem the flow of migrants from Central America. Regionally, 5400 Caribbean immigrants were deported in

---

<sup>11</sup> IBID

<sup>12</sup> Isabelle Kumar. March 30, 2020. COVID-19: Organised crime group 'adapting' with 'new crime trends', Interpol warns <https://www.euronews.com/2020/03/30/covid-19-organised-crime-group-adapting-with-new-crime-trends-interpol-warns>

2020, 73 to Trinidad and Tobago, 3 of whom tested positive for COVID-19. The repatriation and deportation of nationals from overseas territories may increase strain on the local health systems. Conversely, there was a hindrance in the return of foreign fighters (FTFs) because of closed borders in other countries. This reality may change with the reopening of maritime and aviation borders.

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, terrorists continued to remain steadfast in their cause. Attacks continued in Africa, Europe and Asia demonstrating the propensity to adapt to the new normal. An interesting development in 2020 was the resurgence of Islamic State (ISIS) in Africa - ISIS's new frontier. Utilising the virtual space, the ISIS caliphate has thrived and even expanded its reach via online radicalisation and attack training. This foothold in Africa is reflected by increase attacks and other terrorist-related activities in both east and west Africa. The trends suggest that the pandemic and the restriction on movement did little to stymie the activities of terrorist groups. Further, the growing vulnerable population - due to the economic downturn in 2020 - proved a fertile recruitment ground for ISIS and other analogous groups.
- The social inequalities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic gave rise to violent social movements on a global scale. A popular movement that developed in 2020, and reflects the magnitude of this particular threat is the 'Black Lives Matter' movement. This movement has manifested protest actions and riots in several countries. The issue of violent social movements is expected to be a feature of the post-COVID era. This is particularly dangerous, as threat actors utilise social media to manipulate the masses into adverse behaviours, resulting in significant property damage and mass casualties.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

As world economies face recession, slow economic growth, high unemployment rates and increased government debt, the pandemic raised serious concerns over the success of the global recovery efforts and the long-lasting implications for the international security environment. For Trinidad and Tobago, the virus poses not only significant risks to public health and economy, but it also poses substantial risks to our national security that include:

- Significant financial debts, business closures and high unemployment, which could lead to political instability the longer the COVID-19 crisis goes on.

- Increased socio-economic instability coupled with accusations of police brutality could create ungoverned and ungovernable spaces where organised crime and extremism can take root, including changing crime typologies and the illegal trafficking of humans, narcotics, arms and ammunition. This is already reflected in the development of garrison-like communities and radical Islamic communes.
- Increased online activity exposes our vulnerability to cyber-attacks and the use of social media to politicise and amplify class issues, economic conditions to facilitate social unrest and threaten governance.

## **STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS**

While the coronavirus pandemic is wreaking havoc globally, the Trinidad and Tobago government has managed COVID-19 infection rate effectively by implementing international guidelines and ensuring the borders remain closed. However, the consequences of the crisis and the many uncertainties at the local and international level will continue to affect countries, whether in health, economy, social, political, and security. Besides this country's vulnerability to international shocks in trade and energy prices, Trinidad and Tobago is exposed to other international security implications related to cybersecurity, illegal migrants, and violent social movements (Black Lives Matter), and the potential effects of a second wave of infections and attendant consequences if borders are re-opened. As such, the following should be key areas of consideration in moving forward:

- Assess national security agencies information technology (IT) platforms to identify vulnerabilities and develop mitigation strategies to address identified weaknesses.
- Treat with vulnerabilities at the border and improve coordination and cooperation of maritime security assets and systems to provide complete coverage of Trinidad and Tobago's maritime space.
- Increase the number of cargo/container scanners at legal ports, as this is an essential component required to increase the number of seizures of contraband entering the country illegally to further starve criminal groups of resources.
- Deploy mobile posts along key traffic routes and illegal ports utilised by smugglers and traffickers.

- Develop social intervention programmes, policies and strategies to treat with ungovernable spaces where criminal gangs and other influential groups act in a governing capacity providing social, health and law enforcement services in periods of crisis.

While early forecast assumed that, the pandemic will recede by mid-year in advanced economies and later in developing countries and that, widespread financial crises will be avoided, the speed with which the crisis has overtaken the global economy may provide a clue to the depth of the recession and the resultant effects. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the pandemic and its associated economic costs could destabilise countries, forcing new international alliances that would challenge and provoke geostrategic rivalries in the region. Growth prospects depend on many factors, including how COVID-19 evolves, the duration of any shutdowns, the impact on activity, and the implementation of fiscal and monetary policy support. Beyond the human tragedy of COVID-19 lies the 'New Normal' as world leaders are required to take steps to improve pandemic resilience and develop strategies to prepare, respond, and recover the present crises, as uncertainty will likely prevail for an extended period.

## THE LOCAL MILIEU

### Introduction

In 2020, Trinidad and Tobago recorded one of its lowest serious crime and murders rates within the last five years.

According to data and intelligence:

- There was a decline in serious crimes with the advent of COVID-19 countermeasures. A notable **28%** decrease in serious crime reports from 8,714 reports in 2019 compared to 6,578 reports in 2020 occurred.
- Murders were at an all-time low. There was a **27%** decrease in murders (See figure 1) compared to 2019 in which there were five hundred and thirty-eight (538) murders for the year. This is the lowest number of yearly murders in Trinidad and Tobago in 5 years<sup>13</sup>.

**FIGURE 2: MURDERS COMMITTED AMID COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS IN 2020**



<sup>13</sup> Ryan Hamilton-Davis, "Murders still below 400 in 2020 so far" December 31, 2020, <https://newsday.co.tt/2020/12/31/murders-still-below-400-in-2020-so-far/>

Similar to international trends, while serious crimes decreased, domestic violence increased amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the prolonged socio-political Venezuelan impasse, as well as the low price and demand of oil and natural gas impacted the country's domestic, economic and social reality. Within this context, the country also hosted its General Elections, with one party regaining its mandate, ensuring some level of policy continuity for the next five calendar years. Despite this, the economic realities associated with the global pandemic and the energy crisis forced the state to reduce its expenditure within the public sector, which affected infrastructure development and the issuance of contracts, placing the additional burden on the social safety net. The adverse effects of COVID-19 restrictions on global and domestic movement yielded some unintended consequences, which continue to affect the Strategic Services Agency and by extension the Ministry of National Security.

Some key issues facing the State include:

- The burgeoning illegal migration, with the corresponding human smuggling from Venezuela, and other associated ills, including contraband trafficking;
- The added pressure on the state machinery with the repatriation efforts of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and their local advocates;
- Reduction in state funded contracts and expenditure;
- Domestic criminal gangs and their increasing volatility;
- Increased deportation of criminal offenders to Trinidad and Tobago;
- The importation of more sophisticated illegal weaponry from North America; and
- The increased interest and consumption of amphetamines locally.

In 2020, and in accordance with sections 6.1 (b) (c) and (d), of the SSA Act Chapter 15:06, the Agency provided strategic intelligence reports specific to changing trends in female offending and victimization, updated national firearm estimates, threat assessments for all major public and national events, geopolitical issues, patterns of offending within the cyber domain, illegal quarrying, criminal impersonation of Law Enforcement, Fraud perpetration including card skimming, marijuana cultivation including hybridised strains and precursor chemical control.

Further, keeping in compliance with international regulations, the Agency successfully brought the questionnaire response regime current, specific to the Arms Trade Treaty (UNATT), United

Nations Register on Conventional Arms (UNROCA), United Nations Crime Trends Survey (UNCTS), United Nations of Drugs & Crime- Pre-Export Notification System(PENS), United Nations Military Expenditure (UNMILEX) and the Organisation of American States Convention and Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission(CIFTA).

## **SECURITY OPERATING ENVIRONMENT**

### Migration Issues:

The Security Operating Environment in 2020 was characterised by a large influx of Venezuelan nationals whom were possibly encouraging the migration of relatives to Trinidad and Tobago. Whilst the majority of Venezuelans attempted to work legitimately there were those who arrived with the sole aim of conducting crime and criminal business. As such, the illegal trade of weaponry, livestock, narcotics, contraband and prostitution were and remain a real issue.

*As the situation in Venezuela continues to worsen there will always be a threat associated with mass migration. Further, cultural and language barriers would become more apparent as the Law Enforcement community and National Security apparatus must now cater to these differences.*

### Victimisation of the Vulnerable

The continued victimisation of the vulnerable in society including women, children and senior citizens is noteworthy. Reports of several female minors absconding from home for temporary gratification have also risen and have become a burden on Law Enforcement, as in some cases there were actual abductions. These instances forced police to employ resources to respond whether voluntary or involuntary and sometimes proved to be an inefficient use of National Security's resources.

*Several of the rural communities also have had higher levels of reporting specific to sexual deviance and rape. It is a trend which must be acknowledged as several of the females are targeted and victimized. It is possible that restrictions in 2020 may have positively impacted on the victimisation trends in this regard.*

### Legislative recommendations

Legislative amendments are a vital part of the arsenal for the work of the Ministry of National Security. As such, the following laws are considered specific to the reduction, detection and punishment of serious crimes in the year 2020 and beyond:

1. The Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Bill 2019,
2. The Motor Vehicles & Road Traffic Act 2020,
3. The Children's Act Amendments (2020),
4. The Central Bank Act 2020
5. The Summary Offences Act 2020
6. The Bail Amendment Bill and,
7. The Anti –Gang Bill.

*Our maritime borders which allow for the movement of Venezuelans and contraband into Trinidad and Tobago, remain a key vulnerability. The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) has procured some vessels, which should assist our coastal interdiction capabilities in 2021.*

### Natural Environment

The natural environment in Trinidad and Tobago was relatively stable in 2020. There was no repeat of devastating floods or earthquakes. This trend is expected to continue into 2021. The GORTT has since installed several pumps to negate the effects of torrential showers and waste water accumulation in some low-lying areas. Intelligence reports reveal however, that there are actors who may be politically motivated to disrupt and damage infrastructure.

*COVID19 has been the single most important factor which affected the National Security apparatus. It is expected that this will continue for the entire 2021 as infection rates fluctuate. Aviation borders remain closed; however, the movement of persons inland is proving to be an issue. It is anticipated that the Health Ordinances will cease to be relevant and their effect minimised as time elapses.*

## Terror & Radical Threat Environment

In 2020, the local terror threat decreased because several radical individuals became preoccupied with facilitating repatriation of relatives who were detained in Syria and Iraq. Their strategy was multifaceted as several protagonists sought to influence the state through the use of social media, international observers and politicians. While the state did not surrender to pressures to repatriate nationals, this was partly facilitated by the closure of borders because of the COVID19 pandemic. There may be increased pressure in 2021 pending COVID19 mitigation efforts.

There are approximately 100 persons - allegedly Trinidad and Tobagonian citizens - detained in the Syrian and Iraqi camps for foreign Terrorist Fighters. There are approximately 15 males, 24 females and 63 children who are of Trinidad and Tobagonian parentage.

*It is anticipated that as desperation increases, sympathisers will seek to influence the governance structures by applying pressure legislatively and through alliances with pressure groups and other civil society associations. There is the expectation that some politicians seeking support, influential persons in the legal fraternity as well as certain sympathetic business owners are likely to join the plea to the Government with the hope of providing the impetus for repatriation.*

*Terror actors remain a serious threat in Trinidad and Tobago due to their radical leanings. Their association with the criminal underworld and the use of the drug and ammunition trade to secure money to facilitate anti-state actions and behaviours will continue to attract the attention of Law Enforcement and Intelligence. Recruitment also may become an issue for those in National Security, as more disenfranchised youth are left behind with the closure of schools re: COVID19, reduction of legitimate employment and education opportunities. Radical extremism is therefore one of the other threats within the terror related environment. Patterns of radical recruitment should therefore be observed.*

## Trafficking - Smuggling (Narcotics, Arms & Ammunition)

With the reduction in the issuance of contracts by the state, slow economic activity and by extension, the shrinkage of the economy, several gangs opted to engage in trafficking. Known unaligned traffickers were killed within the last two years, as criminal gangs attempted to monopolise the import and retail of narcotics in some areas. In 2020, drug related murders trended upwards and is expected to continue for 2021.

The use of amphetamines remained an issue as some of the younger demographic continued to consume these alternative narcotics. These drugs arrived in skyboxes, and from Venezuela. Consumption, which initially rose, was not seen again since the closure of our borders.

*It is expected that consumption patterns will reemerge with the opening of the borders and the resumption of economic activity and local movement increases.*

The local demand for marijuana remained high. Marijuana continued to be imported from Venezuela, but due to the unsteady supply, there was a re-emergence of imports from St. Vincent and Grenada. The north coast of Trinidad and Tobago became more popular for these imports. As such, other Caribbean islands may begin seeing the effect of the marijuana trade in their own domestic environment through the intensification of their own gang activities.

Venezuela remains the primary source for narcotics, wildlife and livestock and humans.

The proliferation of illegal weapons and ammunition remained a cause for concern as the majority of murders continued to be perpetrated via the use of illegal firearms. The agency continued to monitor the occurrence of multiple murder events, which trended upward in 2020. While guns and ammunition still entered from Venezuela, there was an increasing number of newer and more sophisticated weapons arriving from North America via container shipments.

The trade in black market United States currency continues to facilitate leakages in the financial system. US Dollars are therefore scarce in the country and some are diverted from the legitimate sectors to drug trafficking.

Cocaine trafficking continued to occur because of the unremitting international demand. The Caribbean basin remained a source for this drug, however COVID-19 restrictions have reduced the demand locally. Marijuana remains the primary import and most traded drug locally for 2020.

### Criminal Gangs

In 2020, murders were projected to surpass initial statistical forecasts of 563 for the year, with the majority of murders motivated by gang rivalry. Instead, in total, there were 393 murders and while the majority were motivated by gang rivalry, there was an increase in drug-motivated crimes.

Gang related violence has been trending outward, from the traditional hotspot divisions of Port of Spain and Western throughout the East West Corridor. The Northern Division which is the only landlocked division actually replaced the Port of Spain as the high crime division.

There was a uniform pattern of murders in Tobago with the statistic of one per month holding steady for the last two years. The majority of murders in Tobago were also gang motivated however, an increasing number of domestic motivated murders in Tobago and rural Trinidad, was observed.

Gangs continued to seek alternative income streams partly informed by the decline in state contracts. As such, many gangs reverted to the mainstay of narcotics, contract killings, kidnapping for ransom, extortion and property crimes. As the year progressed there was a noticeable increase in property related crimes including House Breaking and Burglaries, Motor Vehicle Larceny and Robberies.

Further, there was a general increase in fourth border crimes as much of the population were now using the worldwide web to transact business. As such, several instances of online fraud and phishing were reported.

Card skimming and ATM/ABM fraud has been trending upwards; several point-of-sale transactions were compromised due to the use of card-cloning devices, which have been sourced and imported to the country through shipping companies from North America and Europe. The expertise for this type of crime however primarily exists with non-nationals who reside in the country.

It was observed that the mean age of gang members was becoming lower. This was related to the cultural pull factors, associated with the new dancehall culture or “Zesser” ethos. During the COVID-19 pandemic, several gangs hosted private “Zess” parties, which were characterised by the use of amphetamine pills, synthetic marijuana, edibles and cocaine. The younger demographic is also reflected in these parties.

Despite a number of illegal weapon and ammunition seizures, there remains the unabated import of several updated and even more sophisticated weapons. As such, several gangs now have in their possession weapons, which are automatic. These need to be destroyed, as intelligence reports reveal some seized firearms do make it back onto the streets, in the hands of criminals.

Historically, there were two main gangs in Trinidad and Tobago, however in 2020, there was a fragmentation and establishment of two additional gangs which contradict the original ideologies. These gangs have expanded rapidly and their membership comprise several minors. This younger group has an increased penchant for violence and has successfully targeted senior gang members in several other communities.

*It is expected that these gangs will evolve and criminality would not be limited to accessing state contracts. In context of these new gangs, there will be a higher involvement of females in these gangs and much younger males than traditionally observed. The evolving threat posed by gangs is expected to morph overtime possibly creating and allowing a subculture to thrive within the larger national context.*

*These trends will continue into 2021.*

## **STRATEGIC OUTLOOK**

In 2020, there were several issues facing us in Trinidad and Tobago - a resurgence of kidnapping for ransom, the continued proliferation of illegal firearms and ammunition; the increased migration of Venezuelan nationals; the thriving smuggling trade in the Gulf of Paria; gangs and their activities such as drug retailing and import; property based crimes; extortion and kidnapping for ransom.

### Some Themes and Trends for 2021

It is expected that three main gangs may not coexist throughout the entire 2021 without hostility erupting. The normalisation of gang culture and the increasing prominence of gang-affiliated artistes continues to threaten the criminal landscape by influencing the “at risk” population

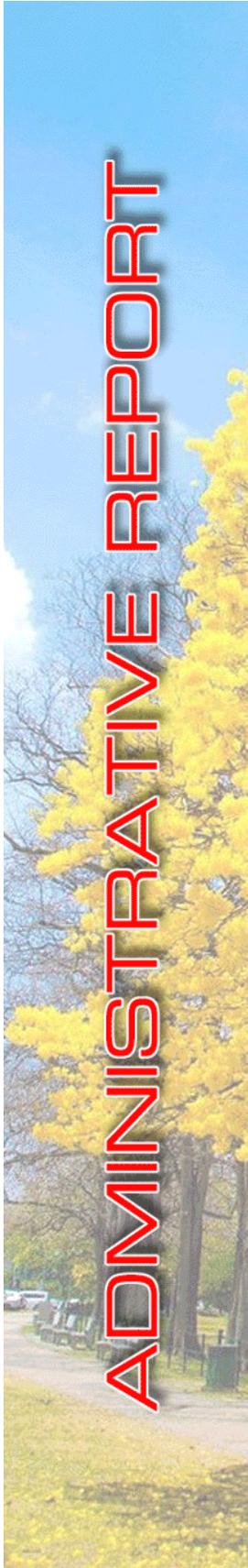
Intelligence suggests that there may be a local proliferation of new psychotropic drugs including MDMA, prescription drugs, ecstasy and fentanyl.

Females in the age group 20-29 as an at risk group, represent a significant number of victims of murder, due to their role as State witnesses, domestic violence victims, victims of robbery, break-ins and burglaries. Their involvement in narcotics trafficking and retail sales and revenge killings also predisposes them to victimisation.

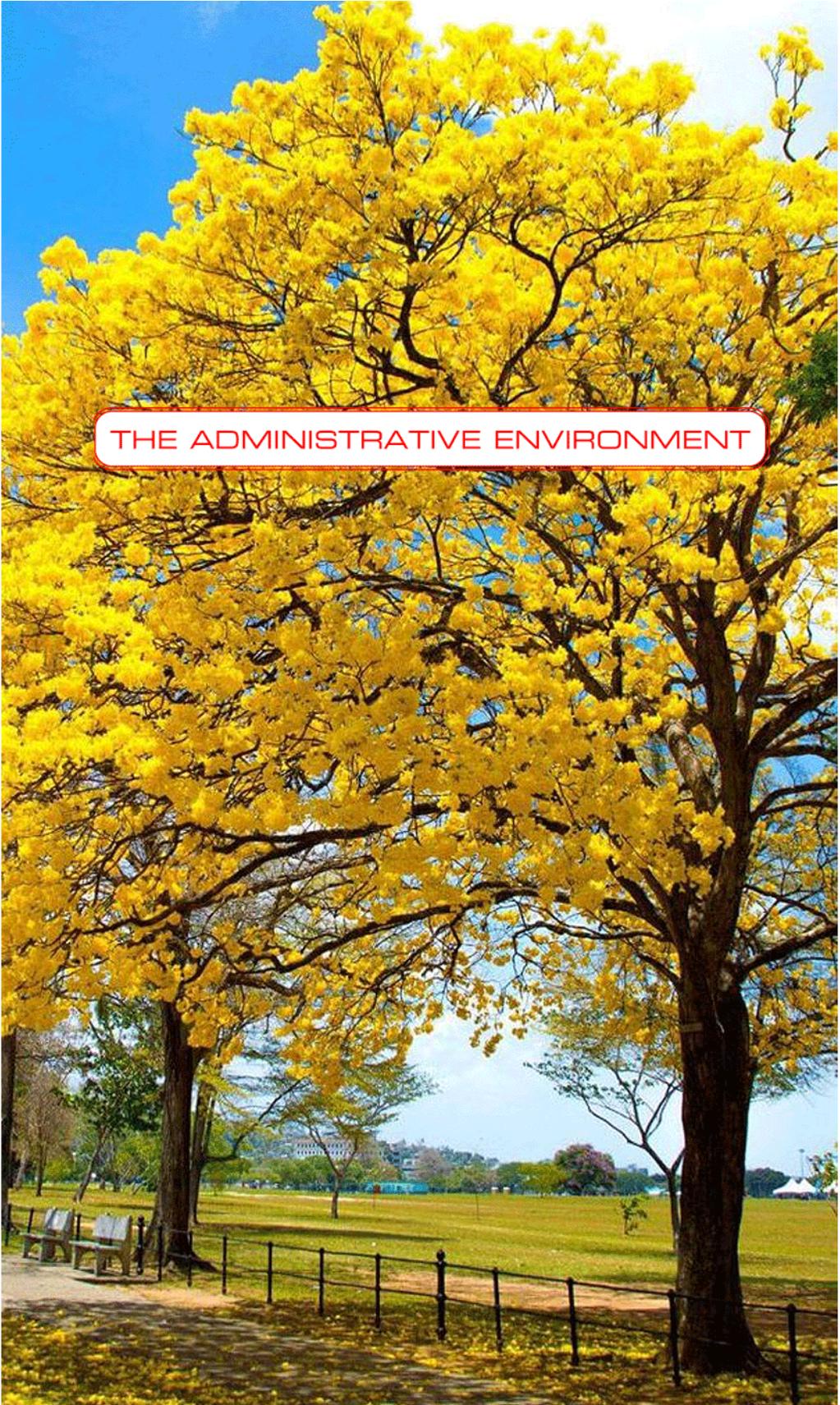
It is anticipated that there will be an increased involvement in serious crimes and victimisation of non-nationals, specifically Venezuelans. The reality means that vulnerable Venezuelans will add to our victimization figures and Venezuelan criminals resident in this country may further inflate the national serious crime rates.

Criminal recidivism of deportees may be a feature of 2021 as the economic decline cause by COVID-19 and declining oil and gas prices limit employment opportunities.

*Clashes with Law Enforcement is expected to intensify over time, as police killings also increased and has been the highest in 2020. The use of non-lethal methods may do little to reduce the number of police killings especially when criminal gangs and their membership view death by police as a glorious. The serious crime climate locally, is therefore one which may persist for some time until the state speeds up its multifaceted approach to the detection and prevention of serious crimes. This complex approach must involve prison reform, amendments to the alternate school curriculum, parenting workshops and increased employment opportunities and training for non-academically inclined youth.*



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT



THE ADMINISTRATIVE ENVIRONMENT

## **THE ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

Corporate Services provide the unseen but essential structures to support the Agency's myriad security activities – from overarching human resources management and administration, to the delivery of training, robust financial procedures and facilities' management. This all is supported by a solid Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure. In leveraging the capacity of technology in intelligence, work has been done by the library and information centre, as it continues open source (OSINT) platform development and the provision of instruments of learning, seeking to build staff capacity, in fulfilling the agency's strategic objectives.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES**

Key to the transformation of the enterprise, our Human Resources Department effectively deploys all the requisite skills to help the Agency gain competitive advantage - from recruitment to resignation or retirement.

In keeping the Agency's strategic priorities, the department focused on the following overarching objectives in 2020:

- (I) Continued improvement of intelligence products and services
- (II) Improvement of training products and services
- (III) Assisted in developing the Agency's research capability
- (IV) Upgrading work processes and practices
- (V) Assisted in developing Staff KSAs
- (VI) Assisted in fortifying a culture of teamwork and performance

A key objective was the continued perception of the agency as an employer of choice. This was done with strategic human resource planning and development. Although the Covid-19 pandemic did have an impact on the performance of the department, several achievements were attained, such as recruitment of two hundred and seventy-two persons and the orientation of forty.

**FIGURE 3: STAFF RECRUITMENT NUMBERS 2020**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>NUMBERS</b>
<i>Staff recruited over the period</i>	272
<i>New employees</i>	54
<i>Renewals</i>	218
<i>Staff Separated</i>	26
<i>Terminated</i>	2
<i>Voluntary Non-Renewal</i>	22
<i>Resignations</i>	2
<b><u>Grievance Matters</u></b>	
<i>As with other organisations, there are a few legal matters ongoing, deliberated and mediated upon at the various seats of judgements, The Supreme Court of Trinidad and Tobago, the Industrial Court and the Ministry of Labour. Our Internal Investigations continue.</i>	

Work continued administratively as the department managed the organization of all Agency Covid-19-related matters, inclusive of modifications of various forms and improved employee testing processes.

During this period, the HR policy manual was also revised and the foundations of a human resource information system (HRIS) was developed. Even with some technical limitations, the HR department continued to revise policies and procedures, provide HR advice to staff focusing on developing our leaders and keep employee relations first and foremost.

#### Human Resources and the Agency's COVID-19 Pandemic Response

In the organisational structure, the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Unit falls within the Human Resources Department. In 2020, with the evolution and development of the COVID-19 pandemic, the unit's agility was recognised, as the OSH, with the health of staff uppermost, immediately shifted focus to not only developing and providing COVID-19 protocols and

countermeasures, but to modifying agency policies and standard operating procedures, where necessary.

The following are but some of the achievements of OSH and the committee:

- The creation of a risk matrix and business continuity plan (with the input from other departments)
- Agency COVID-19 Signage
  - Display posters promoting hand-washing, proper use of PPE; elevator and directional posters
  - Dissemination of general information on mental health, COVID-19 signs and symptoms, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene
- Delivery of covid packages to staff with face masks and sanitisers
- Ensured that housekeeping staff were provided with the proper PPE
- Provided adequate fixed or portable hand washing facilities at workplaces
- Provided supplemental alcohol based hand sanitisers when soap and water was not easily available
- Circulated information on the intranet to promote good personal hygiene practices
- Identify sanitising protocols for frequently touched surfaces
- Ensured staff mental health was at the forefront and shared information and advice with employees about mental health and wellbeing with the elevation of the Agency's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

## **LEGAL**

The Department is committed to advancing the strategic objectives of the Agency by providing the Director with advice on various issues and concerns facing the Agency, both operationally and administratively, as well as providing guidance to the Agency in relation to its international obligations.

Its importance in advocating for and assisting in the drafting and passage of legislation to advance the Agency's Strategic objectives cannot be understated. In 2020 passage of the Strategic Services Agency Personnel Regulations, the Strategic Services Agency General Regulations; and amendments to the Interception of Communications Act Chap 15:08 (yet to be proclaimed) were some of the legislation worked on by the department and approved by Parliament.

The Department also represents the Agency's interest in all litigation brought before various tribunals and courts; and provides training for staff in various departments on relevant legislation and legal obligations

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

In properly managing the financial resources of the Agency, ensuring accountability and fidelity in all financial transactions, is foremost. Efficiently effecting budget planning and management, payment for goods and services procured for or on behalf of the Agency, it is critical that the policies and systems that govern its activities, support timely work flows, approvals and administrative processes taking into consideration the needs of all cost centres.

The responsibility is not taken lightly, as we understand the extraordinary powers granted to us must not only be wisely used, our practices must be seen to be rigorous.

### COVID-19 Impact

Initially the COVID -19 pandemic presented some challenges since some of the protocols meant that changes in the physical space within the Department and work routine had to be made. Notwithstanding, staff, knowing they were essential, made the adjustments and even worked extra hours to ensure that the work rotation did not unduly affect the output of the Department. The greatest impact would have been the reallocation of finances to address the many health and safety initiatives that had to be undertaken to ensure all divisions functioned safely and effectively

in alignment with the Ministry of Health protocols. Additionally, most suppliers and stakeholders experienced delays and shortages which would have affected the Agency's delivery of its priorities and its planned programme of work. Moreover, the adjustment to the Agency's financial projections due to the prevailing economic climate and budget tightening resulted in cutbacks and curtailment of projects. This has impacted the delivery and expansion of certain intelligence initiatives.

#### 2020 Financials

The SSA received a total of \$176,926,504.82 TTD during 2020, representing 9% decrease in income from 2019. Total expenditure in 2020 decreased by approximately 10% from 2019, primarily due to the reduction in subventions and the curtailment of Air Operations. This is reflected in the expenditure for **goods and services**, which decreased from \$126,988,746 TTD in 2019 to \$82,475,165 TTD in 2020.

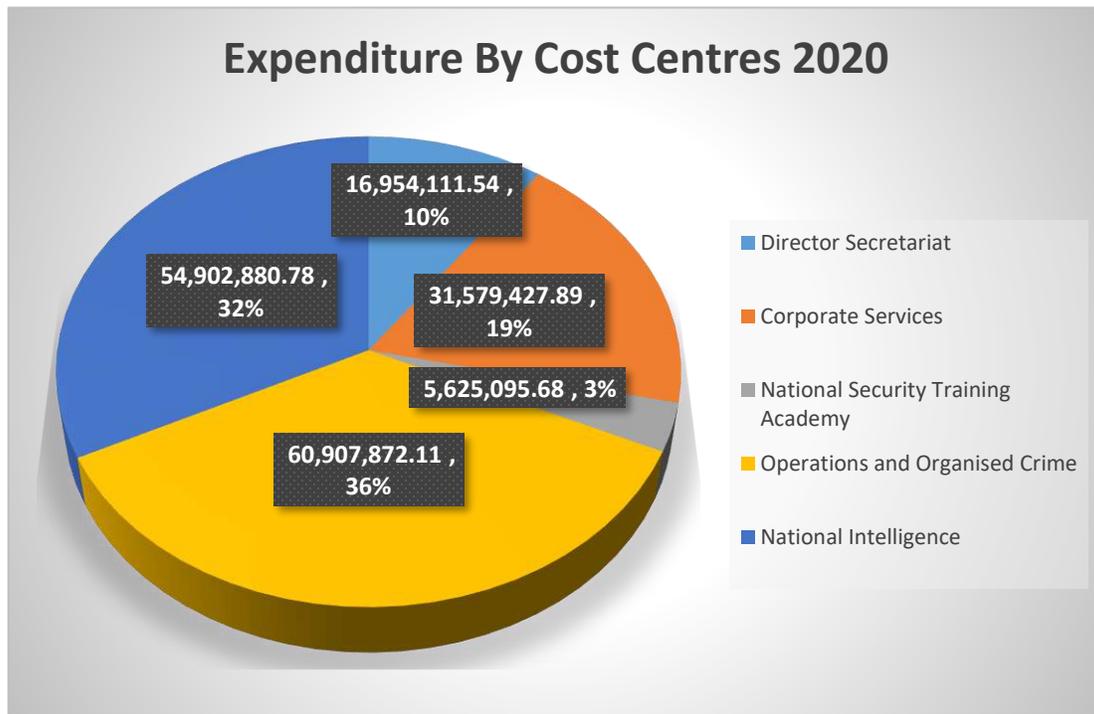
Personnel expenditure (salary and allowances) saw a slight increase from \$56,826,387 TTD in 2019 to \$67,789,067 TTD in 2020. When considering the payment of gratuity there was an increase of 94% from 2019 to 2020. Many contracts were up for renewal in 2020 resulting in a massive increase in gratuity payments.

The economic challenges have resulted in the delay of filling existing vacancies in alignment with the revised structure. Expenditure on Operations and Organised Crime represented the highest amongst cost centres, accounting for 36% (\$60.9 Million) of total SSA expenditure for 2020.

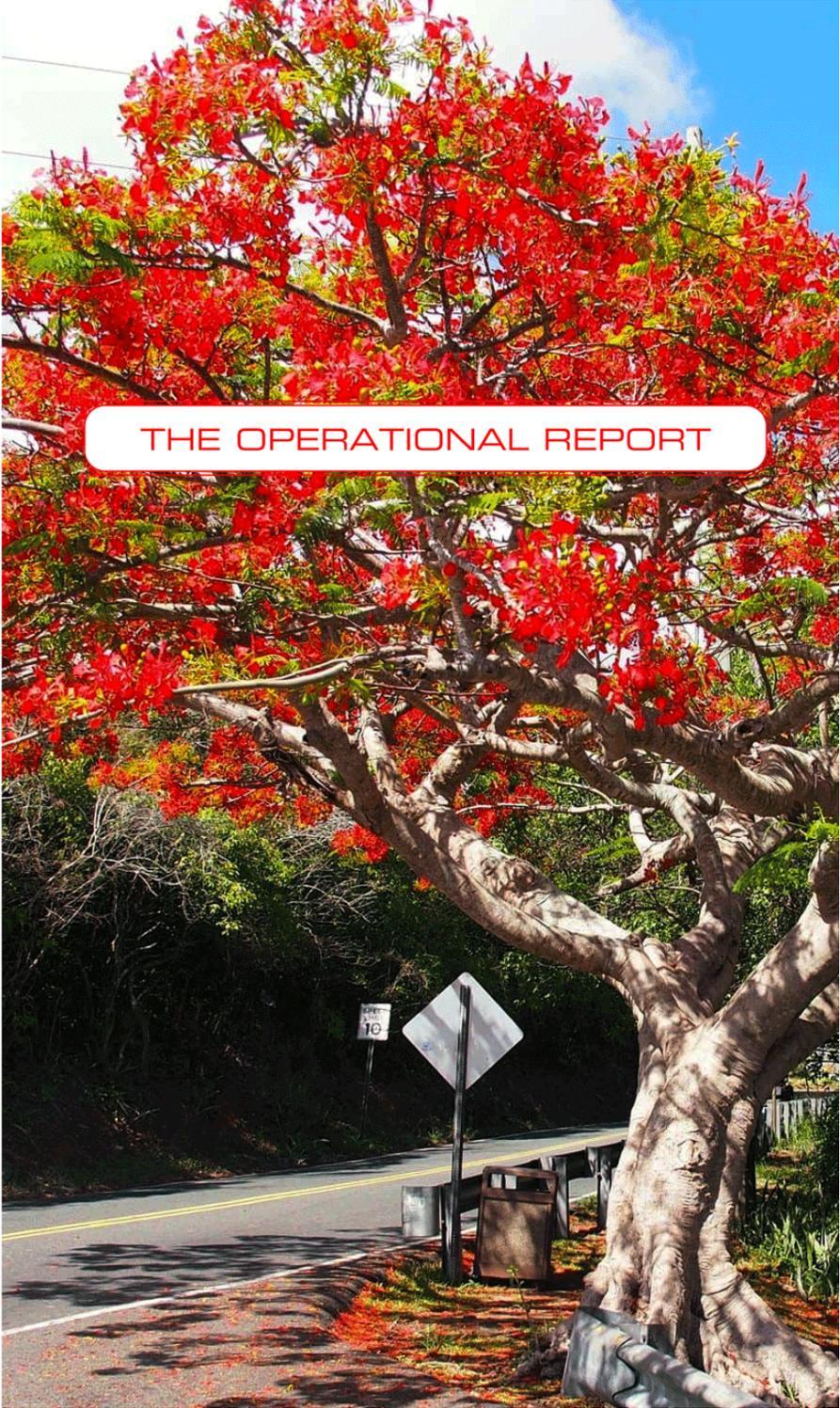
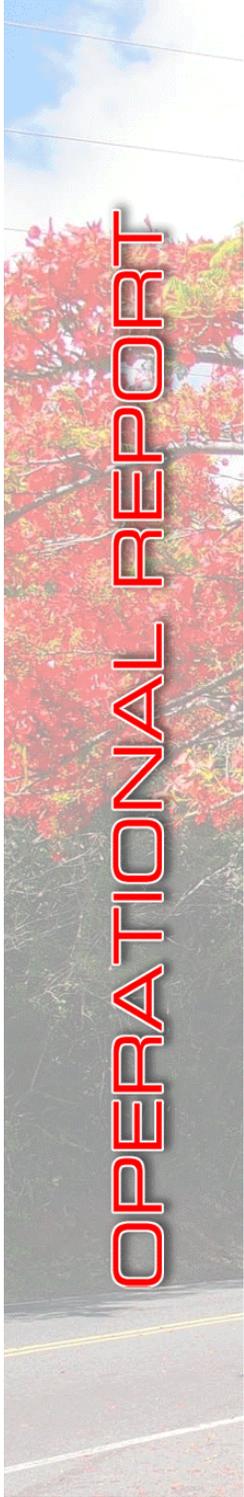
**TABLE 1: INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR 2020**

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>TT\$</b>
Subvention from the Ministry of National Security	164,766,250.70
Wire transfer payments	12,157,253.38
Recovery of Over-payments	3,000.74
<b>TOTAL INCOME FOR THE PERIOD</b>	<b>176,926,504.82</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE PERIOD</b>	<b>169,969,388.00</b>
<b><i>Including:</i></b>	
Contract Staff –Salaries and Allowances	67,789,067.00
Goods & Services	82,475,165.00
Minor Equipment	1,728,619.00
Gratuities	17,976,536.00

**FIGURE 4: BREAKDOWN OF EXPENDITURE BY ACTIVITY BY COST CENTRE**



The Agency will continue to be rigorous in managing its finances to proper international auditing standards, with sound internal controls and ethical decision-making.



THE OPERATIONAL REPORT

## INTELLIGENCE DISSEMINATION

This division is central to achieving the mandate of the SSA act - the reduction of the incidence of crime in Trinidad and Tobago, through the use state-of-art technology, robust all source information collection and processing, as well as, committed and well-trained staff and strategic partnerships.

The main responsibilities and functions are to deal with matters relating to serious crime, including its detection and prevention, the development of strategic intelligence, policy formulation advice, information sharing, deepening of domestic and international cooperation, capacity building through specialised training, facilitating international cooperation.

For the reporting period, the focus of the division therefore was to continually improve our intelligence products and services. This was done through the constant collaboration with our stakeholders internally and externally, regionally and internationally both in terms of meeting their needs, as well as sharing our learnings. The division’s strategic department continued its research on crime and criminality thereby providing relevant and timely products to our stakeholders.

In addition to the provision of intelligence to our external colleagues, the division accomplished other objectives like the regularisation of certain positions; the building of team/departmental charters; continued submission of strategic intelligence despite the challenges of the COVID--19 pandemic and the requisite countermeasures which had to be thoughtfully, but rapidly put in place. The department has increased partner/liaison initiatives with external entities in the realm of Counter Trafficking.

The Strategic Services Agency (SSA) provided intelligence to Law Enforcement and other stakeholders to aid in the successful arrests and prosecution in keeping with the Agency’s mandate.

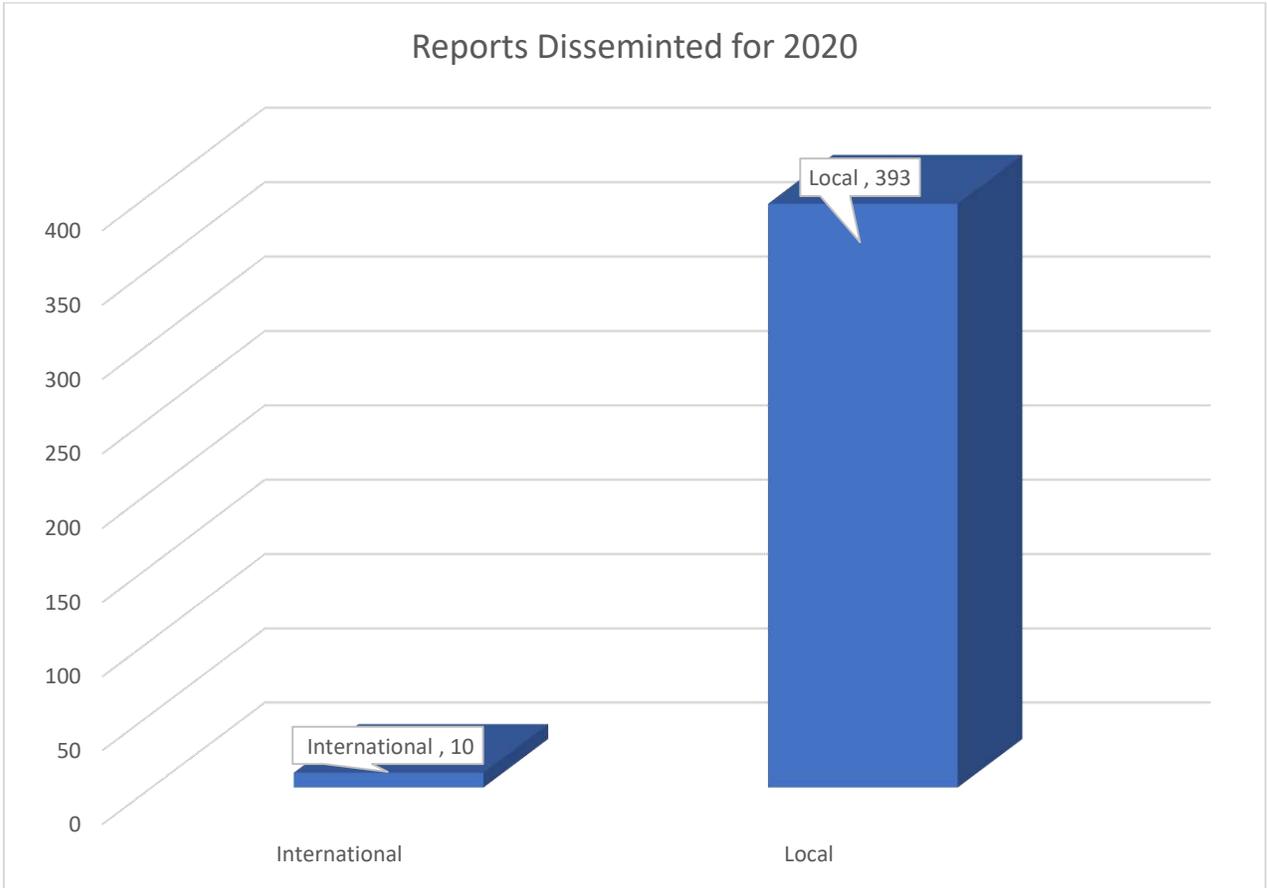
**FIGURE 5: DETAILS OF INTELLIGENCE ACHIEVEMENTS**

PERSONS ARRESTED AND CHARGED (NARCOTICS)	MARIJUANA SEIZED (lb)	PERSONS ARRESTED & CHARGED (VEHICLE LARCENY)	ESCAPED PRISONERS RECOVERED
14	365,509	5	1
MONEY SEIZED (TTD)	COCAINE SEIZED (lb)	THREAT TO LIFE AVERTED	
264,000	26.9	23	

Intelligence Products – actionable and evolving

The SSA disseminated four hundred and three (403) reports to International and Local Entities for 2020. Out of these reports, ten (10) were disseminated to International Agencies and three hundred and ninety-three (393) to local Agencies.

**FIGURE 6: REPORTS DISSEMINATED FOR 2020**



**TABLE 2: BREAKDOWN OF THE REPORTS DISSEMINATED TO EXTERNAL AGENCIES FOR 2020 BY MONTH:**

Reports Sent - International	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	
<b>US Embassy</b>	3	2							1	1			7
<b>British</b>	2												2
<b>CLACIP</b>							1						1
<b>TOTAL</b>	5	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	<b>10</b>

**TABLE 3: BREAKDOWN OF REPORTS SENT TO LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS MONTH BY MONTH 2020**

Reports Sent - Local	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
<b>NSCS</b>	12	9	18	14	9	14	21	21	18	18	17	10	181
<b>TTPS</b>	7	4	12	6	9	12	13	14	15	15	12	6	125
<b>TTDF</b>	3	2	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	4	2	22
<b>MNS</b>	1		3	2	1	11	5	3	9	4	5	5	49
<b>AG</b>								1	1				2
<b>FIU</b>								2		2	1		5
<b>CIO/Immigration</b>						1	1	2		2			6
<b>Prisons</b>									1		1		2
<b>CTU</b>											1		1
<b>TOTAL</b>	23	15	34	23	20	39	43	45	45	42	41	23	<b>393</b>

Actionable Intelligence can be defined as intelligence which can be immediately actioned. It does not necessarily require any further analysis. Some of our other products are part of a constantly evolving intelligence picture, that is, analysis to fill intelligence gaps is protracted.

## OPERATIONS

The Division’s focus is oriented towards achieving the key objectives of the strategic plan through the operationalising of the intelligence generated by the Agency through increased collaboration with stakeholders and the synchronising of methodologies and information sharing. The division is the Agency’s public engagement unit and serves as a repository of knowledge and conduit for information from external sources back to the Agency, thus increasing the Agency’s database and resource pool. Through this engagement with the wider society, the Agency is poised to garner public goodwill thus improving the citizens’ confidence in the nation’s executives.

2020 has seen the division grow and evolve, with the implementation of a new model of interagency operations. The addition of the NOFC contributed positively, as we brought together multiple agencies, thus providing more timely intelligence and information to assist in increased situational awareness and successful operations. There was an increase in the technical capacity with the introduction of licence plate and facial recognition platforms.

### **The SSA Fusion Centre (SSAFC)**

The SSAFC, the country's all threats/all hazards Fusion Centre with responsibility for the coordination of operations and the monitoring of incidents and events of significance to National Security and Safety was involved in operations to recover kidnapped persons, drug seizures, and marijuana eradication exercises. It also provided expertise to different agencies in operational planning, strategies and interventions to suppress criminal activities. In fact, stakeholders requested over 130 requests for information (RFIs) from this platform regarding persons of interest and other related information involved in organised crime and counter terrorism.

The SSAFC facilitated communication between the Agency and the public, which resulted in several successful operations, despite COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a major impediment, but simultaneously, it presented the division with an opportunity to explore various new initiatives, which have positively positioned it should similar circumstances arise – in terms of the coverage of intelligence, information and situational awareness. The Agency being an essential service, the division had to ensure that productivity remained high, while safeguarding employees' health. A strict hygiene regimen was maintained. Adjustments to layout had to be made. Work routines had to be reformed, and accommodation of stakeholders (both internal and external) was limited. No one from the division was/has been infected. Covid-19 may have in essence served as a catalyst for a culture shift. The division has embraced its role as a service provider. A quote from Winston Churchill, hit the mark. As he worked to form the United Nations after WWII, he famously said, "Never let a good crisis go to waste." The division took heed.

The division is not at maximum personnel levels. Recruitment was impacted by the COVID -19 pandemic, but it is still being pursued. There is still a need for legislation/agreements between the Agency and external stakeholders. constrained financial resources affect the ability of the division to execute fully its mandate. there is a requirement to acquire new and maintain/repair existing assets, which will improve the division's output. more training and subject matter expert exchanges need to be sourced/provided for personnel

## INVESSA

Our primary purpose was to assist stakeholders, specifically the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS), in combatting and suppressing serious crime in a more efficient manner. Despite Covid-19, the department has improved on the speed of dissemination of operational intelligence and evidence connected to investigations. This was evidenced in the gathering of intel and data for intelligence processes, leading to charges for anti-gang and conspiracy offences. Joint investigations have led to detection and disruption of a kidnapping, trafficking, armed robberies and conspiracies to murder.

Though the department's focus has been on the development of more long term complex investigations an improvement was seen in the short term and medium term investigations as well resulting in improved intel and investigative reports submitted to the relevant stakeholders for action. Specialist support in assisting TTPS has also improved, with INVESSA - on multiple occasions assisting with sensitive investigations - also assisting in their obtaining of IOCA warrants.

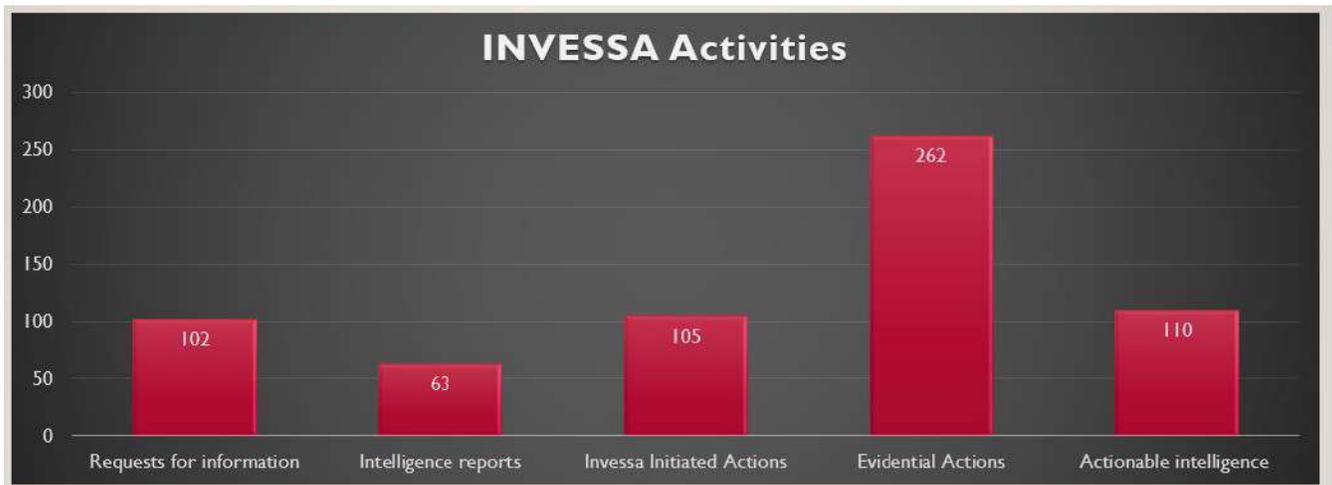
### Operational Achievements

**FIGURE X: SEIZURES AND ARRESTS OVER THE YEAR 2020**

MONEY SEIZED	PERSONS ARRESTED	PERSONS CHARGED	MARIJUANA SEIZED	COCAINE SEIZED	FIREARMS SEIZED	THREAT TO LIFE/ROBBERIES DISRUPTED	STOLEN VEHICLES RECOVERED	KIDNAP RECOVERY
\$164,000TT	42	21	53.3kg	11.2g	1	15	3	1

The department continued to produce intelligence and investigative reports, direct and initiate Investigations of criminality and building of a standardised docket for medium to long term complex investigations, working closely with stakeholders such as Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs). The department continues combatting serious crime through a combination of methodologies – disruption, suppression or prosecution, functioning both covertly and overtly when required, to collect data, information or intelligence.

**FIGURE 7: INVESSA ACTIVITIES 2020**



INVESSA also cleared over 85,000 calls for the reporting period.

With our vision of becoming a world-class intelligence agency, enabling the fight to reduce and prevent serious and organised crime in Trinidad and Tobago, INVESSA continues to diligently support law enforcement agencies. Collaborations have been vigorously sought. Strong relations have been developed with the TTPS and their units such as Special Operations Response Team (SORT), Gang Enforcement Team (GET), Special Investigations Unit (SIU, originally OCIU), Research Analytical Unit (RAU), Anti-Kidnapping Unit (AKU), Homicide, TTPS Drone unit, the Inter-Agency Task Force, Firearms and various divisional Task Forces and Anti-Gang Units, the Financial Investigations Branch (FIB).

Other agencies with which INVESSA is closely collaborating, includes the Trinidad and Tobago Prisons Services (TTPrS), the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU), Trinidad and Tobago Regiment (TTR)/Defense Force Intelligence Unit (DFIU), Special Naval Unit (SNU), Transnational Organised Crime Unit (TOCU) and other bodies.

# 2021 STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

In 2021, the SSA will continue to discharge its functions in line with its statutory mandate and guided by the Strategic Plan.

The Agency will continue to:

- Research and develop national policies
- Identify opportunities for increased collaboration and cooperation to suppress serious crime.
- Work with partners to improve mechanisms for the capture and analysis of information to enhance our understanding of emerging threats and
- Build the capacity to address these threats.

The SSA will take advantage of technological solutions improve systems to manage data, conduct risk/vulnerability assessments and develop viable counter-terrorism / crime plans and strategies.

The primary objectives for 2021 will be developed to deliver on the following previously mentioned core and enabling priorities:

- ◊ Detection and Prevention of Serious Crime
- ◊ Achieve Operational Excellence
- ◊ Build Organisational Capacity
- ◊ Continuing the Creation of Social and Economic Value

There is much work to be done. We shall strive to achieve our mission of “ensuring the security of the nation and the people of Trinidad and Tobago by creating and delivering the highest quality intelligence, operational support and training products and services to our local and international partners to detect, pre-empt, disrupt and dismantle current and emerging threats”.

-End-