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— L E T A L

# Monitor of Use of Lethal Force in Latin America and the Caribbean

## Trinidad & Tobago 2022

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Overview of the Study

This study examines the use of lethal force and abuse by public security officers in Trinidad and Tobago for 2018 and 2019. The indicators used in this study are restricted to deaths and injuries committed by firearms, and do not include deaths or injuries which occurred by other means. In Trinidad and Tobago public security officers refer to officers from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) as well as the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force (TTDF). However, policing functions are primarily restricted to officers from the Police Service. On rare occasions such as states of emergency, officers from the Defence Force may be called upon to do joint patrols with police officers. The laws of Trinidad and Tobago do not provide for the use of firearms by members of the Defence Force during policing operations. For the period from 2018 to 2019 there were only a few occasions



when joint patrols occurred, and there were no occasions when members of the Defence Force used firearms during joint patrols. As such, in this report, all indicators will be restricted to lethal and non-lethal force used by police officers.

## 1.2. Background and Context

Trinidad and Tobago is a two island country and is the most southerly island in the Caribbean. It is located about seven miles away from Venezuela. Trinidad and Tobago became independent from Great Britain in 1962 and became a republic in 1976. The head of state is a President, while the government is led by a Prime Minister and Ministers with responsibility for various portfolios. In 2021 Trinidad and Tobago had a population of approximately 1.34 million persons<sup>265</sup>. The most recent census, conducted in 2011, indicated that Trinidad and Tobago had a population of 1,328,019 persons (CSO, 2012).

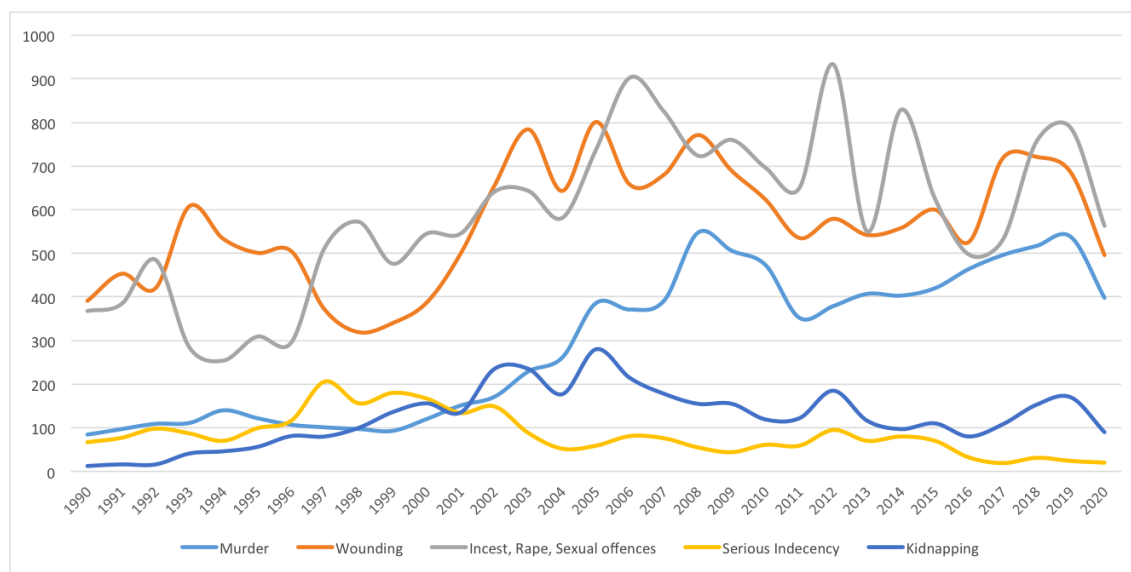
Trinidad and Tobago has a reputation as one of the countries with the highest levels of crime in the Caribbean. Official crime data for serious crimes, which are shown in Appendix 1, indicate that there was an average of 292 murders per year from 1990 to 2020. Within the last five years, that is, from 2016 to 2020, the average stood at 483 murders per year, with an average rate of 35.9 murders per 100,000 persons in the population. From 1990 to 2020 there was an average of 567 woundings and shootings per year, with the average increasing to 629 per year within the last five years. Long term trends in murders and woundings and shootings are very similar (Figure 1). This is not surprising as approximately 75% of all murders in Trinidad and Tobago are committed with firearms (Seepersad, 2016).

Rapes, incest and sexual offences have exhibited an increasing trend from 1990 to 2020, with an average of 589 offences per year during this period (Figure 1). Within the last five years the average has increased to 627 reported incidents per year. In contrast, serious indecency, which is also a sexual offence, exhibited a decline from 1990 to 2020, with an average of 85 reported incidents per year during this period. The average declined to 25 incidents per year within the last five years. Kidnappings exhibited an increase from 1990 to 2005 when this offence

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<sup>265</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2013). World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, DVD Edition.

peaked at 280 incidents. Kidnappings began to decline after 2005, reaching an average of 120 offences per year within the last five years.

**Figure 1. Serious Crimes in Trinidad and Tobago (1990-2020)**



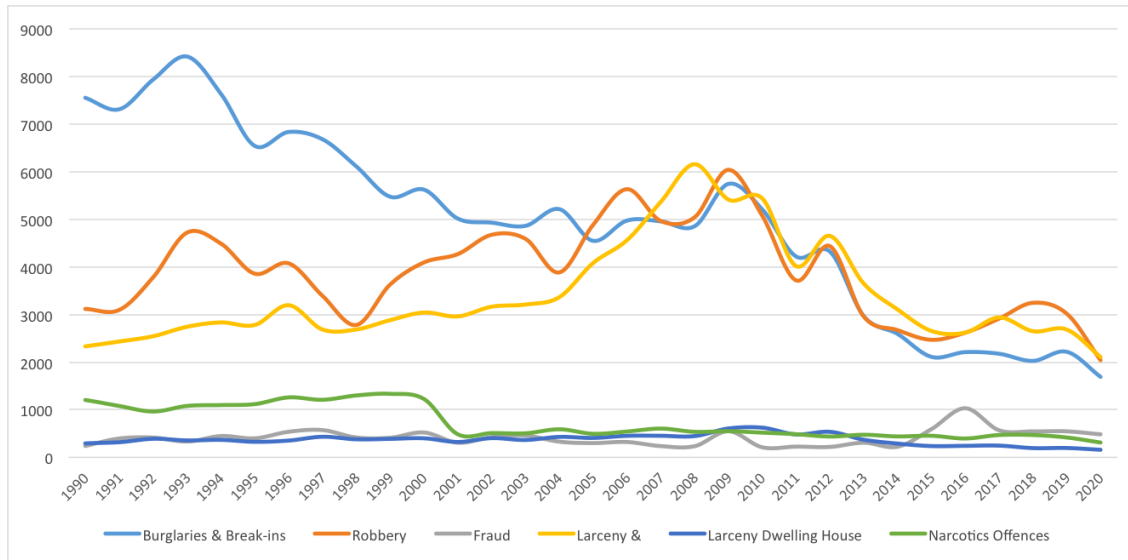
Source: TTPS

Burglaries and break-ins have exhibited a consistent decline from 1990 to 2020 (Figure 2). From 1990 to 2000 there was an average of 6920 offences per year. This declined to 2064 offences per year within the last five years. In contrast, robberies increased from 1990 to 2009, when it peaked at 6040 offences. After 2009 robberies began to decline, reaching an average of 2767 incidents per year within the last five years. Fraud offences exhibited relative stability from 1990 to 2014 with an average of 362 offences per year during this period. Fraud began to increase after 2014 to reach a peak of 1031 offences in 2016. Fraud began to decline after 2016 reaching 483 offences in 2020.

Larceny and larceny of motor vehicles increased from 1990 to 2008, to reach a peak of 6157 offences that year. These offences then declined reaching an average of 2600 offences per year within the last five years. Larceny from dwelling houses exhibited a very gradual increase from 1990 to 2010 when it peaked at 623 offences. This offence then declined to reach an average of 207 offences per year within the last five years. Major narcotic offences remained stable from

1990 to 2000 with an average of 1170 offences per year during this period. Due to legislative changes, there was a decline in major narcotic offences after the year 2000 with an average of 484 offences per year from 2001 to 2020.

**Figure 2. Serious Crimes in Trinidad and Tobago (1990-2020)**



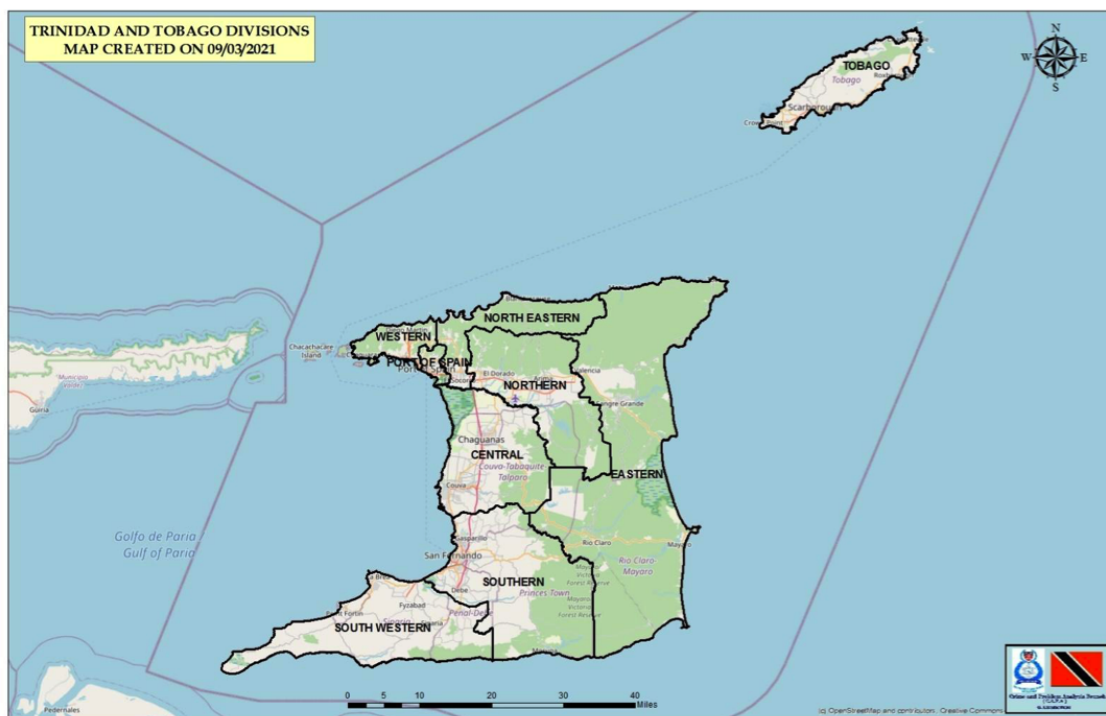
Source: TTPS

The TTPS works within this high crime context and is the state agency which is responsible for policing. As of February 2017, the TTPS had a total of 9,234 officers (TTPS, 2017). This includes full time police officers as well as Special Reserved Police (SRPs). Trinidad and Tobago is divided into nine police divisions, with each division further subdivided into police station districts. As of 2021, there were 77 police station districts in Trinidad and Tobago. Full time officers as well as SRPs are deployed across these divisions and districts, as well as within specialist units within the TTPS. Figure 3 shows the police divisions in Trinidad and Tobago.

Police use of force, and particularly deadly force, is an important issue in Trinidad and Tobago (Kuhns et al., 2011). While there has been a change from a “police force” to a “police service” this transformation is not complete, and as such, the TTPS can still be characterised as paramilitary in nature (King, 2009). Deosaran (2002) indicated that there is a tense relationship between the police

and the population, especially among persons in poorer neighbourhoods. Police use of deadly force is an issue which typically receives national attention. A series of police shootings in 2007 and 2008 received extensive criticism in local newspapers and prompted demonstrations against the police (Gonzales, 2008). Concerns about police killings of suspects in custody have gained the attention of international rights organizations (Amnesty International 2006). Despite this, the TTPS has embarked on a series of reforms which aim to professionalize the service and to improve police-public relations (see Mastrofski and Lum, 2008 who provide details on these reforms).

**Figure 3: Police Divisions in Trinidad and Tobago**



Source: TTPS

### 1.3. Legal Framework for the Use of Force in Trinidad and Tobago

The TTPS has the legal authority to use force, including deadly force, in the execution of their duties. This authority derives from the Police Service Act 2006, the Standing Orders and the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago. However, this does not mean that officers are expected to use excessive force in the execution



of their duties. The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service Use of Force Policy states “It is the policy of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service that law enforcement officers will use only that force which is reasonable and necessary, and at all times seek to protect the safety and security of himself/herself and others in the performance of official duties” (p. 2)<sup>266</sup>. The use of force policy goes on to state “The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service recognizes that the duties of police officers may involve the use of some level of force and this policy supports the lawful use of reasonable and appropriate force by officers in the performance of their duty. The use of force that is not lawful, reasonable and appropriate, is not supported by this policy and will not be tolerated” (p. 2).

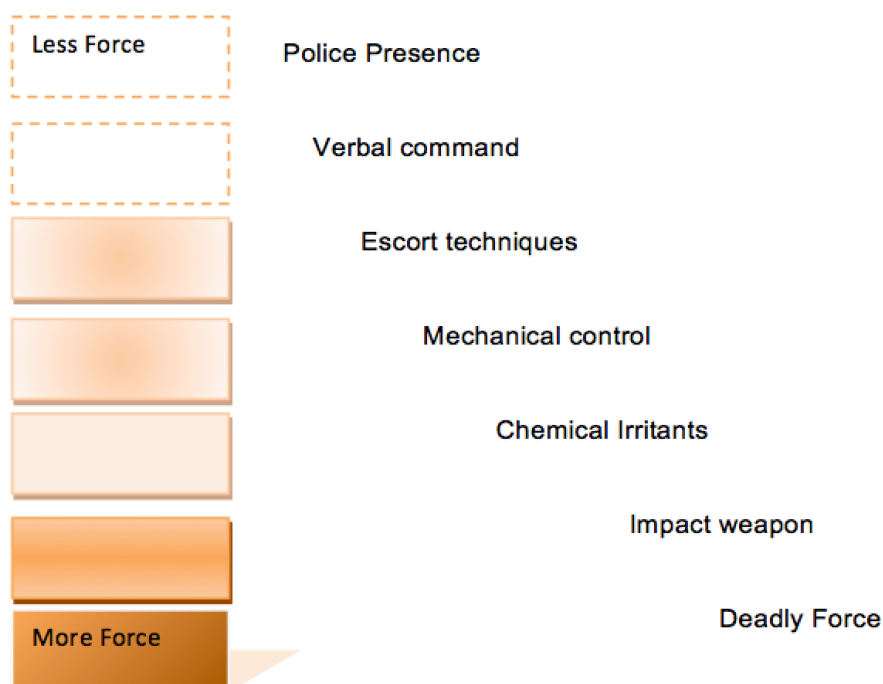
The primary guiding principle of the Use of Force Policy is that officers should use the minimum amount of force possible to deal with situations. The policy identifies several levels of force, as indicated in Figure 4. “Police presence” refers to the passive presence of officers, which many times is sufficient to keep situations under control. “Verbal commands” refer to talking to persons to get compliance and avoid confrontation. “Escort techniques” refer to low level compliance procedures which are non-obtrusive and non-violent in nature. “Mechanical control” refers to the use of physical force to subdue a subject and may include applying physical restraints. “Chemical irritants” refer to the use of substances such as pepper spray or tear gas to gain control of a subject. “Impact weapon” includes the use of a weapon such as a baton or missile while “deadly force” refers to force used for the purpose of causing or which has the substantial risk of causing death or grievous bodily harm.

The use of force policy makes it clear that the use of deadly force is a last resort and can be used only under exceptional circumstances. The policy goes on to state that “An officer may resort to the use of deadly force when the officer reasonably believes such action is immediately necessary to protect himself or others from imminent danger of death or grievous bodily harm” (p. 6). Officers may also use deadly force to prevent the escape of a suspect whom 1) the officer has probable cause to believe has committed an offence in which the suspect caused, or attempted to cause death or grievous bodily harm to any person; 2) who will pose an imminent danger of death or grievous bodily harm to any person, or persons,

<sup>266</sup> Available here: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/ekkwafe7dmb705s/TTPS%20USE%20OF%20FORCE%20POLICY.doc?dl=0>

should the escape succeed; and 3) when the use of deadly force presents no substantial risk of injury to innocent persons (p. 7).

**Figure 4: Levels of force in the TTPS Use of Force Policy**



Source: TTPS Use of Force Policy

The use of force policy goes on to provide additional circumstances under which deadly force must not be used. These include the following:

- + An officer shall not use deadly force to subdue persons whose actions are only destructive to property.
- + Deadly force shall not be used against persons whose conduct is injurious only to themselves.
- + An officer shall not discharge a weapon as a signal for help or as a warning shot.
- + An officer shall not fire from a moving vehicle, or at the driver or occupant of a moving vehicle unless the officer reasonably believes that there exists an imminent danger of death or serious bodily harm to the officer or another person and no other means are available at that time to avert or eliminate the danger.



The use of force policy also focuses on a number of additional areas which include advice on not drawing a firearm as a first resort as this limits the use of other alternatives to control the situation, mandatory use of psychological care for officers who are involved in shooting incidents, medical care for officers who are injured during an incident, reporting requirements when incidents involving the use of force occur, training requirements, and sanctions which may be imposed for the improper use of force.

#### **1.4. Investigating the use of force in Trinidad and Tobago**

In Trinidad and Tobago issues of police misconduct, which include excessive use of force, are handled by three main bodies. Two of these, the Professional Standards Bureau (PSB) and the Police Complaints Division (PCD), are internal to the Police Service, while the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) is external to the Police Service. The PCA serves as an independent civilian oversight body and investigates matters of police corruption and misconduct (Police Complaints Authority Act, Chapter 15:05, Act 17 of 1993). The PSB investigates serious police misconduct (which includes excessive use of force) while the PCD investigates disciplinary matters. In Trinidad and Tobago, where allegations of police misconduct involve very senior officers such as the Commissioner of Police, the matter is referred to the Police Service Commission.

It is important to note that the number of matters investigated by the TTPS (which includes the PCD and PSB combined) is typically higher than the number investigated by the PCA. For example, the data in Table 1 show that in 2014 the TTPS investigated 1037 matters involving police officers while the PCA investigated only 491 matters. Similarly, in 2015 the TTPS investigated 673 matters compared to only 321 investigated by the PCA. The primary reason for this difference is that the PCA is mandated to investigate only serious matters. As such, minor disciplinary matters which are internal to the police service will not be investigated by the PCA. Very serious matters such as police shootings must be investigated by the PSB as well as the PCA. In this study, data from both bodies will be used as official data to examine the extent of police use of force.

Given that all matters involving police shootings where deaths or injuries to civilians occur must be investigated by both the PSB and the PCA, it is expected that

the data on civilian deaths or injuries derived from these sources will be highly accurate. In contrast, where police officers are injured or killed by firearms, such events only come to the attention of the PSB and PCA if there is an element of police misconduct involved. This is because both bodies are specifically mandated to investigate incidents where police misconduct could occur. This means, for example, if a police officer is shot during a robbery or other crime but there is no element of police misconduct, then this matter will not come to the attention of the PSB and PCA. As such, the PSB and PCA data will underestimate the number of police officers killed or injured by firearms. More accurate data on the number of officers killed or injured by firearms can be derived from the Crime and Problem Analysis branch (CAPA) of the TTPS. This branch is responsible for compiling all crime data and when a crime occurs, CAPA records whether the victim is a civilian or a member of the police service or other protective services. Given the above, data from the PSB and PCA are considered to be the most reliable source of information on the number of civilians killed or injured by firearms used by police officers, while data from CAPA are considered to be the most reliable source of information on the number of police officers who were killed or injured by firearms.

**Table 1: Comparison of number of complaints investigated by the TTPS and the PCA**

	2014	2015
<b>PCD (disciplinary offences)</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>231</b>
<b>PSB (criminal offences)</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>442</b>
<b>TTPS Total (PCD + PSB)</b>	<b>1037</b>	<b>673</b>
<b>PCA (number of complaints received)</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>321</b>
<b>TTPS – PCA difference</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>352</b>

Sources: TTPS data sourced from Final Report of the Police Manpower Audit Committee (2017) and PCA data sourced from Police Complaints Authority 2017 Annual Report.

## 2. Methodology

This study focuses on the use of lethal force by public security officers in Trinidad and Tobago and on deaths and injuries sustained by law enforcement officers. The incidents focused on in this report include all incidents in which firearms were intentionally used by or against on-duty public security agents and which resulted in injury or death, excluding suicides, suicide attempts and accidents.

In the event that injuries or deaths, as defined in this study occur and involve off-duty officers, these will be considered separately. In this study all intentional shots are included, even if the victim was different from the intended (e.g., stray bullet victims). In this study public security officers include: a) national, regional and local police, b) armies or national guards when they perform public security functions, and c) members of other public agencies that perform public security functions, with the exception of prison guards. The period of study is January 01, 2018 to December 31, 2019.

It is expected that the majority of incidents will involve the use of metal projectiles or bullets as these are the typical type of ammunition used by the TTPS. However, deaths or injuries could occur as a result of other types of projectiles, such as rubber bullets, which are fired from firearms. These incidents will be identified if they are found to have occurred. In this study, bombs as well as military grade weapons will also be considered and examined separately if they are found to have been used. However, the use of such weapons by the protective services against civilians in Trinidad and Tobago is illegal and it is, therefore, not expected that any such incidents will be found.

This study will utilize two types of indicators. The first are indicators of incidence while the second are indicators of abuse. The following provides details on the indicators which will be used:

### **2.1. Indicators of incidence**

- + I-1. Absolute number of civilians killed by on-duty public security agents, by intentional gunshot.
- + I-2. Number of civilians killed by on-duty public security agents, by intentional gunshot, for every 100,000 inhabitants (rate).
- + I-3. Number of civilians killed by on-duty public security agents, by intentional gunshot, for every 1,000 public security agents (rate).
- + I-4. Number of civilians killed by on-duty public security agents, by intentional gunshot, for every 1,000 people arrested (rate).
- + I-5. Number of civilians killed by on-duty public security agents, by intentional gunshot, for every 1,000 weapons seized (rate).

- + I-6. Absolute number of on-duty public security agents killed in homicides, by gunshot.
- + I-7. Number of on-duty public security agents killed in homicides, by intentional gunshot, for every 1,000 public security agents (rate).

## **2.2. Indicators of abuse**

- + A-1. Ratio between civilians killed by intentional gunshot by on-duty public security agents and the total number of homicides.
- + A-2. Ratio between civilians killed by intentional gunshot by on-duty public security agents and public security agents killed by intentional gunshot in homicides while on duty.
- + A-3. Lethality index: Ratio between the number of civilians killed by intentional gunshot by on-duty public security agents and the number of civilians wounded by intentional gunshot by on-duty public security agents.
- + A-4. Ratio between the lethality index of civilians (civilians killed divided by civilians wounded) and the lethality index of public security agents (agents killed divided by agents wounded). All of these records correspond to people killed or wounded by intentional gunshot in incidents involving the participation of on-duty public security agents.
- + A-5. Average number of civilians killed by intentional gunshot by on-duty public security agents per incident, taking into account all the incidents that caused deaths or injuries by gunshot.

## **2.3. Data Sources**

Official data were used as one of the data sources for this study. As indicated earlier, there are two bodies which investigate the lethal and non-lethal use of force against civilians by police officers. These are the Professional Standards Bureau (PSB) and the Police Complaints Authority (PCA). The PSB is an arm of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS), while the PCA is independent of the TTPS. In the event that an officer from the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force

(TTDF) uses lethal force or injures a civilian, then the TTDF will be responsible for the investigation. However, where the incident involves joint patrols with the police and defence force, then the investigative bodies for police incidents will also be involved in the investigation. In 2018 and 2019 there were no incidents when civilians were injured or killed by members of the TTDF. In addition, no members of the TTDF were injured or killed by civilians. As such, the official data on civilian deaths or injuries by firearms are restricted to data derived from the PSB and PCA. It was indicated earlier that while the PSB and PCA have data on injuries and deaths sustained by police officers, their records are incomplete as they are focused only on incidents where police misconduct is involved. As such, data on police deaths and injuries were also derived from the Crime and Problem Analysis branch of the TTPS to ensure that all cases were counted.

This study also utilized data from news sources. The two most reputable and long-standing newspapers in Trinidad and Tobago were used. These are the Daily Express and the Trinidad and Tobago Guardian. Both newspapers are available in electronic format, and can be electronically searched. Manual as well as electronic searches were carried out using keywords. The keywords were divided into two blocks (see below). In order for a piece of news to be selected, it must contain at least one of the keywords from block A and one from block B. Manual searches were used to ensure that events which fit the study were not excluded, and included searches for other words such as firearms, bullets, shooting, etc., which are not included in Table 2. In doing searches of news reports the totality of reports on each incident is considered to give a complete picture of the number of persons killed and injured. As such, where an incident is reported over a period of two or more days, all reports of the incident are considered to arrive at the number of deaths and injuries.

## 2.4. Keywords used for electronic searches of print media

### *Block A:*

- + Army, Air Force, Marine, Navy
- + Soldier
- + Police, Law-enforcement
- + National Guard

- + Joint command, joint police-military
- + Special Squad, SWAT

*Block B:*

- + Death, dead, deadly
- + Homicide, murder, killing, casualty
- + Injury, injured, injuring, wound, wounded, wounding
- + Summary execution, extrajudicial execution
- + Lethal, mortal

In considering the data from official sources (PSB and PCA) compared to news sources (Trinidad and Tobago Guardian and Daily Express), the official sources are considered to be more reliable in terms of the information provided on civilian deaths or injuries which occur at the hands of law enforcement officers. This is because both offices (PSB and PCA) are specifically mandated to investigate every such incident and these departments, therefore, will have complete information on all incidents which have occurred. In contrast, the newspapers may not have details on every incident which occurs (for example, if an incident is treated as confidential by the police then the details will not be shared with the news media). It is also quite likely that the news media will have better information on civilian deaths than civilian injuries, since not all injuries will necessarily be reported in the news. Where deaths occur, these are more likely to be reported in the news. Given the above, official data sources (PSB and PCA) will be considered more accurate than news sources for information on civilian deaths and injuries caused by law enforcement officers.

In contrast to the above, official data sources such as the PSB and PCA will not have a complete picture of all deaths or injuries of law enforcement officers. This is because the PSB and PCA are mandated to investigate incidents which involve, or which can potentially involve police misconduct, including excessive use of force. Not all incidents where law enforcement officers are killed or injured will involve police misconduct. If there is no police misconduct involved, then such incidents will not be recorded by the PSB and PCA. A more reliable source of information on police deaths and injuries will be CAPA/TTPS<sup>267</sup> and the news media. CAPA/TTPS records details about the victims when crimes are committed, .....

<sup>267</sup> This refers to the Crime and Problem Analysis branch of the TTPS. This branch is responsible for compiling all crime statistics and other police data.



and if a person is killed or injured, CAPA/TTPS will record whether the person is a civilian or a law enforcement officer. The news media is also likely to carry details on most or all deaths of law enforcement officers, but may not necessarily carry details on every injury which occurs. Given the above, CAPA/TTPS is considered to be the most reliable source where deaths or injuries of law enforcement officers occur, but the data from the news media as well as PSB and PCA should also be considered to provide a more complete picture.

### 3. Indicators

Prior to computing the indicators in this study, each of the variables will be outlined. Variables are summarized in Table 2.

#### 3.1. Variables

*Total population of Trinidad and Tobago:* The estimated population of Trinidad and Tobago is provided in the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2013) World Population Prospectus. The Prospectus estimates that in 2018/2019 Trinidad and Tobago had a total population of 1,346,917 persons. The most recent official population count derives from the 2011 Population and Housing Census which determined that the total population at that time was 1,328,019 persons. Given that the population count as per the 2011 census is dated, the population estimates derived from the UN (2013) population estimates will be used in this report.

*Number of police officers:* The TTPS is comprised of nine Police Divisions and several specialist units. Within each division/unit there are full time officers, full-time Special Reserved Police officers (SRPs), and part-time SRP officers. Part-time SRPs work for 20 hours or less per week, while full-time SRPs work for 40 hours per week as well as overtime. SRPs receive somewhat less training than full-time officers<sup>268</sup> but both groups are fully deployed at any given time, both groups carry firearms,

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<sup>268</sup> SRPs receive the General Policing Training Level I course which consists of 424 contact hours. Full-time officers receive the General Policing Training Level II course which consists of 1100 contact hours. Both groups of officers receive training in the laws which apply to the use of firearms, firearms training, and training in the Use of Force Policy.

and both groups carry out the same policing duties. Appendix 2 shows the number of officers within each division and unit within the TTPS, with the figures disaggregated to show whether the officers are full-time, full-time SRPs, and part-time SRPs. In total, as of April 2017 there were 9,234 police officers in the TTPS. Data on the number of officers were sourced from the TTPS (2017) Final Report of the Police Manpower Audit Committee. This number of officers will be used in all calculations in this report as these are the most recently available figures.

*The number of persons arrested:* Data on the number of persons arrested were sourced from the Crime and Problem Analysis branch of the TTPS. Details of the number of persons arrested in 2018 and 2019 are shown in Appendix 3. In 2018 a total of 6,059 persons were arrested for serious offences while 4,994 were arrested for minor offences, giving a total of 11,053 persons arrested. In 2019 5,030 persons were arrested for serious offences while 4,505 persons were arrested for minor offences. In all, 9,535 persons were arrested in 2019.

*Number of weapons seized:* The number of weapons seized was sourced from the Crime and Problem Analysis branch of the TTPS. Details are provided in Appendix 4. The data show that 988 weapons were seized in 2018 while 888 were seized in 2019.

*Total number of homicides:* The total number of homicides was sourced from the Crime and Problem Analysis branch of the TTPS (see Appendix 1). The figures show that 517 homicides occurred in 2018 while 538 occurred in 2019.

*Number of civilians killed by on-duty officers:* The number of civilians killed by on-duty police officers was derived from several sources. Official data from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (PSB). The data from the PSB show that 45 civilians were killed by on-duty police officers in 2018 while 39 were killed in 2019. The PCA also provided information on the number of civilians killed by on-duty police officers. This data show that 48 civilians were killed in 2018 while 43 were killed in 2019. Data from the Trinidad and Tobago Guardian indicated that 38 civilians were killed in 2018 while 39 were killed in 2019. Data from the Daily Express indicated that 44 civilians were killed in 2018 while 39 were killed in 2019. Of these four data sources, the most comprehensive figures come from the PCA which indicate that 48 civilians were killed in 2018 while 43 were killed in 2019. These figures will be used to compute the indicators in this study.

*Number of civilians wounded by on-duty officers:* The number of civilians wounded by firearms by on-duty police officers was derived from several sources. Official data from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (PSB) are presented in Appendix 6. PSB data show that 18 civilians were wounded by on-duty police officers in 2018. Unfortunately, the PSB indicated that they could not locate the records for the number of civilians injured in 2019. The PCA also provided information on the number of civilians wounded by on-duty police officers. This data show that 37 civilians were wounded in 2018 while 27 were wounded in 2019. A media search of the Trinidad and Tobago Guardian indicated that there were news reports of 19 civilians injured in 2018 and 17 injured in 2019. The Daily Express provided reports of 18 civilians wounded in 2018 and 17 wounded in 2019. The most comprehensive figures in 2018 came from the PCA which indicated that 37 persons were injured in that year. In 2019 the most comprehensive figures also came from the PCA and indicate that 27 civilians were injured. These figures will be used to compute the indicators in this study.

*Number of officers killed by gunshot:* Data for all homicides were provided by the TTPS/CAPA. The data indicate that in 2018 three (3) police officers were killed by gunshot. This included one retired senior superintendent of police who was killed on November 17, 2018. In 2019 three (3) officers were killed by gunshot. The PCA also provided information on the number of officers killed by firearms. This data show that 1 officer was killed in 2018 while 0 were killed in 2019<sup>269</sup>. A media search of the Trinidad and Tobago Guardian indicated that 6 law enforcement officers were killed by firearms in 2018 while 4 were killed in 2019. The Daily Express carried reports of 8 officers killed by firearms in 2018 and 3 killed in 2019. The most comprehensive information for 2018 derived from the Daily Express (8 officers killed) while the most comprehensive information for 2019 came from the Guardian (4 officers killed). These figures will be used to compute the indicators in this study.

*Number of officers wounded by gunshot:* Data on the number of police officers wounded by gunshot were provided by the TTPS/CAPA. These data show that in 2018 three (3) officers were wounded by gunshot while in 2019 two (2) officers were

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<sup>269</sup> The number provided by the TTPS/CAPA would be considered more accurate in this case as it would include all cases of officers killed by firearms. Such cases would only come to the attention of the PCA if there was reason to investigate the incident, which means that all incidents of officers killed by firearms would not be listed in the PCA database.

wounded by gunshot. The PCA also provided information on the number of officers who were wounded by firearms. This data show that 3 officers were wounded in 2018 while 2 were wounded in 2019. A search of the Trinidad and Tobago Guardian indicated that there were reports of 6 officers wounded in 2018 and 8 wounded in 2019. The Daily Express carried reports of 5 officers wounded in 2018 and 7 wounded in 2019. The most comprehensive information on officers wounded came from the Guardian which reported on 6 officers wounded in 2018 and 8 wounded in 2019. These figures will be used to compute the indicators in this study.

*Total number of incidents which involved deaths or injuries:* This includes incidents in which civilians or law enforcement officers were killed or injured. In 2018 PSB data showed 45 incidents where there were fatal police shootings of civilians, and 18 incidents in which non-fatal shootings occurred. This gives a total of 63 incidents in 2018. In 2019 PSB data show 39 incidents in which fatal police shootings occurred. Unfortunately the PSB indicated that they were unable to locate data on non-fatal police shootings for 2019 and so the number of incidents from this data source for 2019 is unknown. This gives an incomplete total of 39 incidents in 2019. In contrast, PCA data shows a total of 60 incidents in 2018 and 57 in 2019. The Trinidad and Tobago Guardian reported on 42 incidents in 2018 and 44 incidents in 2019. The Daily Express reported on 53 incidents in 2018 and 48 incidents in 2019. The most complete list of incidents in 2018 came from the PSB which recorded 63 incidents. In 2019 the most complete list came from the PCA which reported on 57 incidents. These figures will be used to compute the indicators in this study.

**Table 2: Variables**

	2018	2019	
Population of Trinidad and Tobago	1,346,917	1,346,917	UN (2013) <sup>a</sup>
Number of police officers	9,234	9,234	Police Manpower Audit 2017 <sup>b</sup>
Number of people arrested	11,053	9,535	TTPS
Number of weapons seized	988	888	TTPS
Total number of homicides	517	538	TTPS
Number of Civilians Killed	45	39	TTPS/PSB
Number of Civilians Killed	48	43	PCA
Number of Civilians Killed	38	39	Trinidad and Tobago Guardian
Number of Civilians Killed	44	39	Daily Express
<b>Total used in this report</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>43</b>	

	2018	2019	
Number of Civilians Wounded	18	- <sup>c</sup>	TTPS/PSB
Number of Civilians Wounded	37	27	PCA
Number of Civilians Wounded	19	17	Trinidad and Tobago Guardian
Number of Civilians Wounded	18	17	Daily Express
<b>Total used in this report</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>27</b>	
Number of Officers Killed	3	3	TTPS/CAPA
Number of Officers Killed	1	0	PCA
Number of Officers Killed	6	4	Trinidad and Tobago Guardian
Number of Officers Killed	8	3	Daily Express
<b>Total used in this report</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	
Number of Officers Wounded	3	2	TTPS/CAPA
Number of Officers Wounded	3	2	PCA
Number of Officers Wounded	6	8	Trinidad and Tobago Guardian
Number of Officers Wounded	5	7	Daily Express
<b>Total used in this report</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	
Number of incidents <sup>d</sup>	63	39 <sup>e</sup>	TTPS/PSB
Number of incidents	60	57	PCA
Number of incidents	42	44	Trinidad and Tobago Guardian
Number of incidents	53	48	Daily Express
<b>Total used in this report</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>57</b>	

a. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2013). World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, DVD Edition.

b. TTPS (2017) Final Report of the Police Manpower Audit Committee.

c. The PSB indicated that they could not locate the data on the number of civilians injured for 2019.

d. This includes all incidents which cause deaths or injuries to civilians and law enforcement officers.

e. This figure is incomplete as it does not include incidents in which civilians were injured. The PSB indicated that they could not locate data on the number of civilians injured in 2019.

### 3.2. Computation of Indicators

The section below provides the indicators as computed using the figures in Table 2.

### **3.3. Indicators of Incidence**

I-1. Absolute number of civilians killed by on-duty public security agents, by intentional gunshot.

2018: 48 civilians killed

2019: 43 civilians killed

I-2. Number of civilians killed by on-duty public security agents, by intentional gunshot, for every 100,000 inhabitants (rate).

2018: 3.56 per 100,000 inhabitants

2019: 3.19 per 100,000 inhabitants

I-3. Number of civilians killed by on-duty public security agents, by intentional gunshot, for every 1,000 public security agents (rate).

2018: 5.20 per 1000 public security agents

2019: 4.66 per 1000 public security agents

I-4. Number of civilians killed by on-duty public security agents, by intentional gunshot, for every 1,000 people arrested (rate).

2018: 4.34 per 1000 persons arrested

2019: 4.51 per 1000 persons arrested

I-5. Number of civilians killed by on-duty public security agents, by intentional gunshot, for every 1,000 weapons seized (rate).

2018: 48.58 per every 1000 weapons seized

2019: 48.42 per every 1000 weapons seized

I-6. Absolute number of on-duty public security agents killed in homicides, by gunshot.

2018: 8

2019: 4



I-7. Number of on-duty public security agents killed in homicides, by intentional gunshot, for every 1,000 public security agents (rate).

2018: .87 per 1000 public security agents

2019: .43 per 1000 public security agents

### 3.4. Indicators of abuse

A-1. Ratio between civilians killed by intentional gunshot by on-duty public security agents and the total number of homicides.

2018: 48:517 or 1:10.77 or 9.29% of all homicides

2019: 43:538 or 1:12.51 or 7.99% of all homicides

A-2. Ratio between civilians killed by intentional gunshot by on-duty public security agents and public security agents killed by intentional gunshot in homicides while on duty.

2018: 48:8 or 6:1

2019: 43:4 or 10.75:1

A-3. Lethality index: Ratio between the number of civilians killed by intentional gunshot by on-duty public security agents and the number of civilians wounded by intentional gunshot by on-duty public security agents.

2018: 48:37 or 1.30:1

2019: 43:27 or 1.59:1

A-4. Ratio between the lethality index of civilians (civilians killed divided by civilians wounded) and the lethality index of public security agents (agents killed divided by agents wounded). All of these records correspond to people killed or wounded by intentional gunshot in incidents involving the participation of on-duty public security agents.

2018: 48/37:8/6 or 1.30:1.33 or 1.00:1.02 or .98

2019: 43/27:4/8 or 1.59:0.5 or 3.18:1 or 3.18

A-5. Average number of civilians killed by intentional gunshot by on-duty public security agents per incident, taking into account all the incidents that caused deaths or injuries by gunshot.

2018: 48/63 or .76 per incident

2019: 43/57 or .75 per incident

## 4. Comparison of Data Sources

Table 3 compares the figures derived from official sources with those derived from media sources. With respect to the number of civilians killed and the number of civilians wounded it is not surprising to find that media reporting was not as complete as the records from official sources. For example, in 2018 the TTPS/PSB reported that 45 civilians were killed compared to 48 killed as per the records of the PCA. In comparison in the same year the Guardian carried reports of 38 civilians who were killed by on-duty public security officers while the Express carried reports of 44 civilians killed. When the higher figure from the news media (44 killed) is compared to the higher figure from official sources (48 killed), the results show that in 2018 the news media reported on 91.7% of all cases where civilians were killed. In 2019 this figure stood at 90.7%.

A similar pattern of under-reporting in the media emerges when we look at the number of civilians wounded (Table 3). For example, in 2018 the TTPS/PSB reported that 18 civilians were wounded by on-duty police officers while the PCA reported that 37 civilians were wounded. This compares to reports of 19 wounded in the Guardian and 18 wounded in the Express. When the highest figure from the news media (19 wounded) is compared to the highest figure from official sources (37 wounded) the results show that the news media reported on only 51.4% of instances where civilians were wounded in 2018. In 2019 this figure stood at 63%.

It is not surprising to find that the news media reports on only some of the cases where civilians were killed or wounded. Official bodies are mandated to investigate cases where civilians are killed or wounded, and as such, would have more complete records. In contrast, the media may choose to report only those

incidents which are considered “newsworthy”, that is, events in which there may be public outcry, or inconsistencies in accounts of the events, or other factors which make the event one which the media wants the public to note. It is also not surprising to find that the media’s reporting of civilian deaths is more accurate than their reporting of civilian injuries. For example, while the media reported on 91.7% of civilian deaths in 2018, the reported on only 51.4% of all civilian woundings in the same year. Civilian deaths are more newsworthy than civilian injuries, and are thus more likely to be reported. In addition, where civilians are wounded but where the injuries are not serious, it is unlikely that such incidents would be reported in the news media.

**Table 3: Comparison of data sources**

	<b>Official Sources</b>	<b>News Media</b>	<b>Percent reported in the media <sup>a</sup></b>
Number of civilians killed	2018 TTPS/PSB: 45 2018 PCA: 48 2019 TTPS/PSB: 39 2019 PCA: 43	2018 Guardian: 38 2018 Express: 44 2019 Guardian: 39 2019 Express: 39	2018: 91.7%  2019: 90.7%
Number of Civilians wounded	2018 TTPS/PSB: 18 2018 PCA: 37 2019 TTPS/PSB: - 2019 PCA: 27	2018 Guardian: 19 2018 Express: 18 2019 Guardian: 17 2019 Express: 17	2018: 51.4%  2019: 63.0%
	<b>Official Sources</b>	<b>News Media</b>	<b>Percent reported in official sources <sup>b</sup></b>
Number of public security officers killed	2018 TTPS/CAPA: 3 2018 PCA: 1 2019 TTPS/CAPA: 3 2019 PCA: 0	2018 Guardian: 6 2018 Express: 8 2019 Guardian: 4 2019 Express: 3	2018: 37.5%  2019: 75.0%
Number of public security officers wounded	2018 TTPS/CAPA: 3 2018 PCA: 3 2019 TTPS/CAPA: 2 2019 PCA: 2	2018 Guardian: 6 2018 Express: 5 2019 Guardian: 8 2019 Express: 7	2018: 50.0%  2019: 25.0%

a. In computing the percentage, the highest figure from media sources (Trinidad and Tobago Guardian and Daily Express) is compared to the highest figure from official sources (i.e. TTPS/PSB and PCA).

b. In computing the percentage, the highest figure from official sources (i.e. TTPS/CAPA and PCA) is compared to the highest figure from media sources (Trinidad and Tobago Guardian and Daily Express).

It is interesting that in the case of on-duty public security agents killed or wounded, that the opposite pattern is observed. That is, the media carries more complete reports than official sources. For example, in 2018 The Guardian indicated that 6 officers were killed while the Express reported that 8 officers were killed. In contrast, TTPS/CAPA provided records of 3 officers killed while the PCA had records of 1 officer killed. These results show that in 2018 official sources provided information on 37.5% of all incidents which were reported in the media. In 2019 this figure stood at 75%.

When we examine the number of on-duty officers who were wounded the results show that in 2018 the Guardian published information on 6 officers who were wounded while the Express published information on 5 officers wounded. In contrast, the TTPS/CAPA provided records of 3 officers who were wounded that same year, while the PCA also provided records of 3 officers wounded. As such, official sources reported on 50% of all incidents compared to the news media. A similar pattern emerges for 2019 where official sources reported on only 25% of all incidents in which officers were wounded.

The discrepancy in the figures from official sources when compared to news media sources may have occurred since official sources only carry records of cases which they actually investigate. Official sources in Trinidad and Tobago are mandated to investigate cases where there are allegations of corruption, foul play, or any other circumstance which may warrant an investigation. It may be the case that not all instances where on-duty officers are killed or wounded are investigated, and hence not recorded, by official sources. In contrast, the news media may provide a more complete reporting of these incidents since such incidents are generally considered to be newsworthy.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study examined use of force by public security agents in Trinidad and Tobago and focused on 2018 and 2019. Statistics relevant to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service were examined as this was the only public security agency which was involved in civilian deaths or injuries with the use of firearms used while in the line of duty. Data were derived from several sources to ensure complete coverage of events of importance, which included civilian deaths and injuries cau-

sed by firearms used by on-duty law enforcement officers, and firearm deaths or injuries sustained by on-duty law enforcement officers. The sources of information which were used included the Professional Standards Bureau and the Police Complaints Authority, both of which are mandated to investigate all incidents of the use of excessive force by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. Data also derived from the Crime and Problem Analysis branch of the Police Service. Two news sources were also examined and included the Trinidad and Tobago Guardian and the Daily Express.

The data show that 48 civilians were killed while 37 were injured in 2018 by firearms used by public security officers. In the same year 8 public security officers were killed while 6 were injured by firearms. In 2019 43 civilians were killed while 27 were wounded by firearms used by public security agents. In the same year 4 public security agents were killed while 8 were injured by firearms.

The rate of civilians killed in 2018 was 3.56 per 100,000 inhabitants in Trinidad and Tobago. The rate declined slightly to 3.19 in 2019. When considered in the context of the number of public security agents, the rate of civilians killed in 2018 was 5.20 for every 1000 public security agents. In 2019 the rate declined to 4.66 civilians killed for every 1000 public security agents. When considered in the context of the number of persons arrested, the rate of civilians killed was 4.34 for every 1000 persons arrested in 2018. This increased slightly to 4.51 for every 1000 persons arrested in 2019. When considered in the context of the number of weapons seized, the rate was 48.58 civilians killed for every 1000 weapons seized in 2018. In 2019 this figure stood at 48.42 civilians killed for every 1000 weapons seized. The results also show that in 2018, an average of 0.76 civilians were killed for every encounter between civilians and law enforcement officers in which firearms were used. In 2019 this average stood at .75 civilians killed for each encounter between law enforcement officers and civilians in which firearms were used.

The data also show that in 2018 .87 public security officers were killed for every 1000 public security officers. This rate declined to .43 per 1000 in 2019. When the number of public security agents killed was compared to the number of civilians killed it was discovered that in 2018 for every 6 civilians killed one officer was killed. In 2019 this rate increased to 10.75 civilians killed for ever officer killed by firearms.

While the PSB and PCA are mandated to investigate each incident where a civilian was wounded or killed by a law enforcement officer, the results show that each body has slightly different statistics. For example, in 2018 records from the PSB show that 45 civilians were killed by law enforcement officers with the use of firearms. In contrast, records from the PCA show 48 civilians killed in the same year. Similarly, in 2019 the PCA indicates a higher number of civilians killed than the PSB (43 vs. 39). A similar pattern emerges when examining the number of civilians wounded. For example, PSB records show 18 civilians wounded by firearms in 2018 compared to 37 civilians wounded according to PCA records. These findings suggest that the records at the PCA are more complete than the records at the PSB. Alternatively, it may suggest that the PSB may not be aware of all incidents involving civilian deaths or injuries. Where the PSB is not aware of an incident, it will not be investigated by that body. Given the disparities in the statistics between the PCA and PSB, it is recommended that clear communication and data sharing protocols be developed so that both agencies become aware of all incidents where civilian deaths or injuries occur so that investigations would be conducted by both bodies as mandated by law.

The data in this report suggest that the number of civilians killed and injured is large, given the size of the population, and given that approximately one person is killed in every encounter between law enforcement officers and civilians when firearms are used (.76 civilians killed per incident in 2018 and .75 killed per incident in 2019). This suggests the need for on-going training in the Use of Force policy and the need for research to help understand the factors which may affect the use of force in Trinidad and Tobago. Currently, the effectiveness of training on the Use of Force policy is unknown, and it is not known what factors affect the use of force (for example, whether officers of specific divisions are more likely to use force, or whether officers with specific types of training are less likely to use force, etc.). Systematic research on the use of force in Trinidad and Tobago is needed so that appropriate measures could be taken to reduce the likelihood that officers would resort to the use of force when they interact with civilians.



## Appendix 1

### Serious Crimes for Trinidad and Tobago 1990-2020

	Murder	Wounding shooting	Poss. of arms and ammunition	Incest, Rape, Sexual offences	Serious Indecency	Kidnapping	Burglaries & Break-ins	Robbery	Fraud	Larceny & Larceny Motor Vehicles	Larceny Dwelling House	Narcotics Offences
1990	84	391	-	367	67	13	7546	3115	245	2331	299	1211
1991	97	453	-	384	77	16	7313	3099	396	2434	318	1078
1992	109	420	-	485	98	16	7938	3786	415	2545	390	963
1993	111	608	-	284	87	41	8419	4722	332	2743	355	1080
1994	140	533	-	254	70	46	7635	4490	447	2834	367	1098
1995	122	501	-	309	99	56	6542	3858	399	2781	326	1118
1996	107	505	-	295	116	81	6835	4075	537	3196	352	1259
1997	101	370	-	514	206	80	6682	3393	572	2686	432	1209
1998	97	319	-	572	156	100	6112	2780	417	2686	379	1300
1999	93	340	-	476	180	136	5475	3629	411	2882	388	1334
2000	120	387	-	545	167	156	5623	4094	522	3042	400	1225
2001	151	499	-	545	134	135	5016	4269	308	2961	323	485
2002	171	655	-	641	149	235	4930	4675	425	3164	403	509
2003	229	784	-	643	88	235	4863	4590	459	3210	365	505
2004	261	643	-	581	52	177	5214	3885	329	3364	429	589
2005	386	801	-	738	59	280	4548	4883	300	4081	408	495
2006	371	657	-	903	81	214	4973	5633	322	4560	452	542
2007	391	680	-	825	76	178	4958	4965	236	5365	453	604
2008	547	771	-	724	55	155	4855	5043	234	6157	446	536
2009	506	689	-	760	44	155	5744	6040	548	5415	606	549
2010	473	623	-	696	61	119	5207	5075	211	5438	623	519
2011	352	535	-	650	59	122	4220	3718	225	4018	481	486
2012	379	579	-	933	95	185	4321	4436	219	4652	536	437
2013	407	542	-	550	70	116	2967	2958	307	3650	370	474
2014	403	558	-	829	80	97	2592	2672	223	3106	289	439
2015	420	600	-	625	70	110	2111	2469	592	2655	237	453
2016	464	526	-	497	32	80	2210	2618	1031	2619	242	396
2017	496	718	1162	531	19	108	2176	2913	568	2938	246	469
2018	517	721	1264	757	31	153	2026	3246	545	2650	194	469
2019	538	686	1082	788	24	170	2217	3018	546	2684	196	417
2020	398	496	993	563	20	90	1690	2041	483	2107	159	311
Average	292	567	-	589	85	124	4934	3877	413	3386	370	728
Average 2016-2020	483	629	1125	627	25	120	2064	2767	635	2600	207	412

Source: TTPS/CAPA

## Appendix 2

### Number of Officers in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service

Divisions	Regular	Srp full time	Srp part time	Total
Central	431	169	74	674
Eastern	385	193	64	642
North Eastern	326	119	56	445
Northern	629	291	127	1,047
Port of Spain	338	205	53	596
South Western	427	65	57	492
Southern	613	192	92	897
Tobago	280	123	73	476
Western	303	120	30	453
<b>Total for divisions</b>	<b>3,732</b>	<b>1,477</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>5,722</b>
Units	Regular	Srp full time	Srp part time	Total
ACIB	31	20	-	51
Air Support Unit	-	2	-	2
AKU	-	6	-	6
Audio Visual	-	2	2	4
Background Investigations	-	31	-	31
CAPA	37	4	3	44
CCTV	-	22	-	22
CGIU	61	2	-	63
Child Protection Unit	115	4	-	119
CID/CRO	85	42	-	119
Community Policing	27	5	-	32
Complaints	44	21	-	65
Court and Process	122	96	-	218
CTU	12	-	-	12
E999	57	11	-	68
FIB	26	-	-	26
Finance	41	33	-	74
Fraud Squad	69	7	-	76
Guard & Emergency Branch	203	79	-	282

Units	Regular	Srp full time	Srp part time	Total
ACIB	31	20	-	51
Homicide	260	54	-	314
Human Resource Branch	77	75	12	164
IATF	160	119	-	279
MOPS	-	3	-	3
Mounted and Canine	90	8	-	98
OCNFU	98	3	-	101
Police Academy	94	42	2	138
Police Band	62	-	-	62
Police Hospital	-	2	-	2
Professional Standards Bureau	18	-	-	18
Rapid Response Unit	-	223	-	223
Retirees Association	-	1	-	1
Special Branch	231	15	-	246
Traffic & Highway Patrol Branch	278	63	7	348
Transport & Telecom	56	24	-	80
TOTAL FOR UNITS	2354	1019	26	3399
GRAND TOTAL	6086	2496	652	9234

Source: Final Report of the Police Manpower Audit Committee Vol. 2 (2017) Tables 7 and 8.

## Appendix 3

### Number of persons arrested in Trinidad and Tobago in 2018 and 2019

	2018	2019
<b>MAJOR OFFENCES</b>		
Murder	143	94
Breaking Offences	498	440
Fraud Offences	203	209
General Larceny	471	332
Kidnapping	123	101
Larceny Dwelling House	37	51
Other Serious Crimes	649	507
Poss Of F/Arm & Ammo	1766	1328
Poss Of Narcotics For Trafficking	596	527
Robbery	989	801
Serious Indecency	23	13
Sexual Offence	257	373
Wounding/Shooting	304	254
<b>MINOR OFFENCES</b>		
Assault of Police & Peace Officer	107	123
Embezzlement ,False Pretense, Fraud	24	20
Indecent Assault	25	18
Malicious Wounding	104	92
Minor Larceny	160	113
Other Minor Crimes	228	171
Possession House Breaking Implements	5	6
Possession Of Narcotics	4275	3892
Praedial Larceny	31	33
Unlawful Possession	26	31
Larceny Dwelling House	9	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,053</b>	<b>9,535</b>

Source: TTPS/CAPA

## Appendix 4

### Number of firearms seized in Trinidad and Tobago in 2018 and 2019

	2018	2019
<b>FIREARM TYPE</b>		
Revolver	286	197
Pistol	508	473
Shotgun	70	91
Homemade Shotgun	59	46
Rifle	35	63
Trap gun	15	0
Flare gun	0	0
Machine gun	0	0
Sub-machine gun	14	16
Other	1	2
Air rifles	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>888</b>

Source: TTPS/CAPA

