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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2019**

**For Immediate Release**

### ***NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCIES CONTINUE TO SUPPORT FLOOD RELIEF EFFORTS***

The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) finds it rather unfortunate and categorically denies the recent statements attributed to the Chairman of the Penal-Debe Regional Corporation, Dr Allan Sammy, in which he alleges that the ODPM has not assisted the burgesses of the Corporation.

This Office, therefore, finds it necessary to respond to these comments, particularly given the hundreds of man-hours that its members of staff and other arms of the Ministry of National Security and the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government have invested in bringing relief to the burgesses of the Corporation.

On Thursday 12 December 2019, the ODPM was contacted by the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, for assistance in coordinating the evacuation of persons from flooded areas in the Penal-Debe Corporation. The Disaster Management Unit of that Ministry provides the first response to disasters in municipal corporations.

The ODPM in its role as the national disaster coordinating agency, immediately contacted the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, which expeditiously dispatched teams to the Corporation. These teams joined with the Disaster Management Unit of the Penal-Debe Corporation, the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service, and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and together, they tirelessly evacuated families from water-logged homes to safer ground. In addition, the joint units assisted in distributing food and other relief supplies to these families in an effort to relieve their discomfort.

Personnel of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force were also deployed into the Mayaro-Rio Claro Regional Corporation where similar operations were conducted.

Further, to support the ground evacuation operations, the ODPM coordinated with the Strategic Services Agency (SSA) for air reconnaissance to be conducted of the affected areas. All these operations continued into Friday and are ongoing today, Saturday 14 December 2019.

The ODPM therefore categorically refutes Dr Sammy's allegations and reaffirms that this Office, as well as all other arms of the Ministry of National Security, remain ready and committed to providing support to the Disaster Management Units of the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, immediately upon request as outlined in the National Disaster Response Framework.

**PHOTOS AND CAPTIONS:**



**Photo and Caption 1:** Members of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force supporting the distribution of relief items in the Penal- Debe Regional Corporation.



**Photo and Caption 2:** Members of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force supporting the distribution of relief items in the Penal-Debe Regional Corporation.



**Photo and Caption 3:** A member of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force providing relief supplies to a family in the Mayaro-Rio Claro Regional Corporation.

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**Issued by:**

*Public Information, Education and Community Outreach Unit*

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