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President Donald Ramotar, Home Affairs Minister Clement Rohee and police top brass take a photo opportunity following the opening ceremony of the Annual Police Officers Conference

## President proposes '15 in 2015' programme to restore confidence in Police Force

Written by Gina Webmasters Published in News

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Georgetown, GINA, March 12, 2015

Professionalism, knowledge, people skills, firmness and fairness must be a hallmark of the Guyana Police Force (GPF) in the discharge of its duties, as in so doing, it inspire public confidence and trust, and be looked upon as role models for the career oriented and patriotic, President Donald Ramotar told police officers today while delivering the feature address to mark the opening of the annual Police Officers' Conference at the Officers Mess, Eve Leary.

### Peelian principles

He called on officers follow the Peelian Principles of Policing as set out by the late Sir Robert Peel, founder of the London Metropolitan Police Force in 1829. These, he said, were the technical principles, which though instituted as a guide for colonial police in the colonies of the United Kingdom, still had much relevance to today's world.

He said Sir Peel's basic guidelines for ethical policing are: every police officer should bear visibly an Identification Number to ensure accountability for his or her actions; whether the police are effective or not is not measured in the number of arrests, but on the lack of crime; trust and accountability are paramount; preventive po

to deter crime; and the most important and essential police work is accomplished on patrol in which officers become acquainted with their beats, prevent crime and by mere presence, respond to crimes in progress, manage crises, and practice their skills.

The recent survey findings of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), President Ramotar said showed the Guyana has the lowest level of public trust in the police force, regionally "and this trust has decreased over time". Despite the various views of the survey, methodology and analysis, the president said that the results that the findings have been widely disseminated and must be addressed objectively. The survey found that between 2012 and 2014, local trust in the GPF decreased 10 points, on a 0 to 100 scale, from 45.8 in 2012 to 35.4 in 2014. This was described by the president as a "worrying finding".

This issue, he expects, will be discussed and ways to reverse this trend examined. "Let me be clear, this perception is not acceptable to me or any other Guyanese should not be acceptable to any of you here today, and we must take steps to change these perceptions".

He further noted that this can only be possible if there is the will and desire to move forward and challenged all of those in attendance to not only think about the aforementioned Peelian Principles, but also about keeping their friends, families and the country safe. "If this doesn't motivate you to take that step forward then no will".

## Lead by example



The police command were urged by the president to lead by example and "have its fingers on the pulse of all areas of Guyana" by knowing where persons reside, locations on their businesses, the assets of local and foreign investors, where vehicles, aircraft and boats operate and where the entry and exit points of the borders are. People are expected to comply with the laws and regulations.

He said those who are found in contravention of the Police Act and guilty of acting in contravention of their mandate, will be dealt with.

The Community Policing Groups, it was noted by President Ramotar are doing a commendable job for the most part, but others are using their members' leverage for their individual agendas. This, the president stressed, will not be tolerated, "Betrayal of the code of ethics is cowardly and unacceptable behaviour. It must not be tolerated, and allowed to fester".

## 15 in 2015

The president then put forward his "15 in 2015 programme" to restore confidence in the Guyana Police Force. This will see the establishment of:

1. neighborhood watch programmes,
2. introduction of a problem oriented approach to solving crime
3. increased numbers of police ranks in communities
4. address the emergency 911 call system's deficits
5. more rapid response time to crimes (currently the worst in the region, rapid response center proposed)
6. establish directed patrols
7. establish a pro-active arrest model (a high certainty of arrests for a narrow set of offences)
8. more covert patrols, more aggressive traffic law enforcement
9. more interactive sessions with schools to reduce violence and crimes
10. establish drugs and weapons free zones such as near schools
11. reopening of cold-case files to solve unresolved crimes
12. establishment of a targeted policing programme (boosting confidence in sectors such as tourism, agriculture, construction, commerce and transport)
13. expansion of youth clubs
14. establish nuisance abatement programmes (curbing illegal noise nuisances) and
15. expanded intelligence ability.



*Police Commissioner Seelall Persaud addressing ranks of the Guyana Police Force*

## Corrupt practices

Speaking on the issue of corruption, the Head of State said, members of the force cannot be “walking contradictions” pretending to be paragons of virtue and on the hand surreptitiously filling their pockets.

He said those who harass innocent citizens and seek to enrich themselves must be removed.

“I expect you to exercise zero tolerance in identifying the corrupt, social deviants, the misfits who have infiltrated your ranks and then take appropriate action”.

Meanwhile, newly confirmed Police Commissioner Seelall Persaud said that in the past year, issues such as public trust, crime and traffic, and improved service public were the prime focus of the GPF, and much has been achieved. He explained that all of the first year strategic priority objectives were achieved, with regards Police Strategic Plan. Among the goals was the partnering with the United States, Pennsylvania Police Department, to realise first world practices, locally.

There was also the expansion of the COPS and Faith Initiative, to provide counselling for families affected by instances of crimes. A Chaplain Service is providing services to police ranks after violent encounters with criminals. This will take place wherever ranks are based in the ten administrative regions. A suicide helpline is set to be launched in the near future, the commissioner also said.

The well received Social Crime Prevention Programme has successfully expanded from its initial startup in A-Division, he added. Two certifying officers are permanently attached to the Kuru Kuru Training College, to ensure that every graduate successfully obtains his or her driver's licence.

The Drug Abuse and resistance education programme has also been reintroduced and more than 1,768 students from 48 schools have benefited. The Serious Organised Crime Unit (SOCU) was established and successfully resulted in several money seizures after money laundering investigations. An Audit and Inspection Unit has also been set up to better account for financial resources obtained. Each division now has a Management Information Unit to facilitate continuous analysis and monitoring of areas (hot spots) that need specific intervention. Following consultations, in hinterland communities, a plan is now being implemented to engage more closely with the private sector organisations, Natural Resources Ministry and the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs with regards to law enforcement requirements.

In closing, Commissioner Seelall revealed that there was a 31% increase in fatal accidents for 2014 compared to 2013, for 2015; thus far however, there has been a 30% decrease relative to the same period last year. For serious crimes, there was a reported 15% decrease at the end of 2014, relative to 2013. There has been a 3% reduction thus far in serious crimes compared to the same period last year, he noted.

The current period leading into elections has resulted in inter agency collaboration being at its highest, and adequate security is in place, the commissioner said.

The conference will review the 2014 initiatives and plans and those proposed for 2015, he added. It is being held under theme, “Providing effective security through partnership, enhanced public trust and capacity building”.

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