



Office of  
the Prime Minister

**THE HANDING-OVER CEREMONY OF THE OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF POLICE  
OF THE ROYAL BAHAMAS POLICE FORCE**

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**HON. PHILIP DAVIS, QC, MP  
PRIME MINISTER & MINISTER OF FINANCE**

**5<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2022**

Your Excellency...

Distinguished Guests...

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Formal policing in The Bahamas goes back to 1840.

This makes The Royal Bahamas Police Force one of the longest-established institutions in our country.

Traditions, such as today's Handing-Over Ceremony from one Commissioner to another,

symbolise not just the continuity of the institution, but also the continuity of our democratic traditions.

At a time when so many other democracies are experiencing significant challenges, we should be justifiably proud that, here in our Bahamas, the fundamental role and responsibilities of policing are so deeply entrenched.

This transfer to new leadership today, at its heart, is a renewed commitment to the fight against crime.

Our administration is also committed to the wider responsibilities of policing, which is to maintain public order and safety, and to enforce the law.

I might add that, during the past 49 years since Independence, this is only the second Commissioner of Police to be appointed by a Progressive Liberal Party Administration. And so in the Commissioner, we think it important

that he is able to work within our approach to policy, which reflects both the progressive values we represent, and the mandate upon which we were elected.

First and foremost, this means that we see policing in general, and the fight against crime in particular, as an effort that must be conducted in partnership with the Bahamian people.

In our platform document, 'A Blueprint for Change', we made a solemn commitment to strengthen the nation's security by

“...enhancing crime fighting methodologies in our aggressive war against crime”.

We stand firmly behind that commitment.

That said, we do not view policing as something which is to be inflicted upon our citizens and residents.

The reflexive, heartless approach of recent years of ‘just lock them up’, is not one that we endorse or share.

To be clear, however, we will continue to increase our muscular response to crime, and violent crime in particular.

We will continue to use every available resource to dismantle the gangs which plague our society, and work with neighbouring countries to stop the flow of illegal weapons into The Bahamas.

Gangs and weapons are the two critical factors driving the high murder rate we are currently experiencing, with the almost weekly tit-for-tat killings between gangs.

But more aggressive policing on its own, is not the whole answer.

We understand that fighting crime requires more than just responding to an offence.

It's also about conflict resolution, prevention, intervention, punishment, and rehabilitation.

The Government will continue to spend more on community policing and 'violence-disrupters'.

And we will continue to offer safety net programs for young people.



Just last week, the Urban Renewal Programme was formally relaunched, to assist in this effort.

Other initiatives, such as 'Swift Justice', and the 'Citizens' Justice and Security Programme' will continue to strengthen our approach.

We will also continue to invest in education and job programmes that can confront and overcome the sense of hopelessness felt by so many young men, who resort to a life of crime as a means of gaining self-esteem and opportunity.

And with the building of a new prison, and an expansion of rehabilitation schemes, we will do what we can to ensure that when people complete their jail sentences, and re-join society, they are supported and enabled to ensure that they do not re-offend.

Along with these initiatives, which are focussed on the offender, we are also extremely mindful of the need to offer better support to those who are victims of crime.

Every criminal act impacts upon those who are victims of it.

But those who are victims of serious, life-changing crimes, need more, along with the encouragement to trust the police to do their job, and not engage in any individual, vigilante efforts.

I set out these thoughts in relation to policing to highlight the charge given to both the outgoing and incoming Commissioners.

The background and experience of these two gentlemen represent some of the finest in the policing tradition of our country.

Since joining Royal Bahamas Police Force in 1983, outgoing Commissioner Paul Rolle has enjoyed a distinguished career in law enforcement.

Among his many assignments, Commissioner Rolle served as Officer-in-Charge of the Central Detective Unit, Head of the Police Training College, and Officer-in-Charge of the Crime Detection Unit (CDU), during which

time he concluded and placed more than 2,400 cases before the Supreme Court.

After attaining the rank of Assistant Commissioner of Police in 2017, Mr. Rolle was instrumental in establishing the Anti-Corruption Unit.

My government and I thank Mr. Paul Rolle for his public service, and wish him well in his new assignment.

To the incoming Commissioner of Police, Deputy Commissioner Clayton Fernander, I say 'welcome' and 'congratulations'.

He is also a career law enforcement officer with almost four decades of policing, administrative and investigative experience.

He has worked in the Traffic Division, the Criminal Investigations Department, and served as a Divisional Commander; on the Selective Enforcement Unit.

He has been part of the Central Detective Unit, and, as Assistant Commissioner was a member of the Senior Executive Leadership Team when, in 2017, he assumed

responsibilities for the Crime Management Portfolio.

Following his return to active duty in September 2021, Mr. Fernander took on a new and more challenging role when he assumed the Criminal Investigations and Intelligence Portfolio as Deputy Commissioner of Police.

In 2013 he was shot during an attempted armed robbery, an incident which not weaken his resolve to serve in law enforcement. We

look forward to him bringing the same  
courage and tenacity to his role as  
Commissioner.

Your Excellency...

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is arguable that the job of policing in our  
country has never been more challenging or  
more demanding.

The change of leadership signified by today's  
handing-over ceremony, contains within it my  
administration's commitment to strengthen



the rule of law, the preservation of good law and order and the maintenance of the peace, and a resolute determination to win the fight against crime in our country.

Commissioner Fernander is the right man for the job.

Thank you.

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