

PRESS STATEMENT

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**PLP CALLS FOR THE FNM TO REVIEW THE URBAN RENEWAL PROGRAMME IN
THE WAKE OF THE PROGRAMME YIELDING RESULTS IN JAMAICA**

The Progressive Liberal Party again calls for the Free National Movement Government to seriously alter its position and the current structure of the Urban Renewal Programme (URP) in The Bahamas after Jamaica is reporting that its community policing programme is yielding results in that Country. The PLP contends that Jamaica has gleaned its community policing approach from the URP to aid in its success.

In the Nassau Guardian of Friday, September 10th, 2010 under the caption **“Community Policing yielding results in Jamaica”**, it is reported that the Jamaican Constabulary revitalized their community policing programme in the area known as “Tivoli Gardens”. **This area is regarded as one of the most violent areas in Jamaica and accounts for a high percentage of Jamaica’s violent crimes and murder rates.**

It is reported that community policing was nonexistent or very challenging in that area. Following the joint police/military operation of June 24, 2010 in Tivoli Gardens, the police are now able to go in there, step by step and win back the community through engaging the people in a new partnership. This is precisely how Urban Renewal was structured – the police would go into an area and conduct an assessment. Challenges relating to crime, disorder and social ills would be identified and addressed and then community policing officers would be there to sustain the efforts.

This is how the PLP structured the URP and it worked. Jamaica along with all the other Caribbean countries that form the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police (ACCP) had the benefit of firsthand experience when they came to The Bahamas to witness for themselves the URP in operation. Further, Mr. Paul H. Farquharson, former Commissioner of

Police made several presentations to these countries on URP and they have all embarked on introducing what we had established in The Bahamas. The URP won the ACCP Community Policing Award in 2003 for being the best (and most progressive) community policing programme in the Caribbean. **Yet, the FNM Government cancelled the Programme. After much pressure, The FNM introduced a “watered down” version of the Programme when other countries are now boasting of success.**

The PLP can confirm that this is the case since the language contained in the report is attributed to research and documents from the URP that were shared with our Caribbean counterparts. Every print media in The Bahamas would recall PLP Leader Perry G Christie MP repeatedly emphasizing the philosophy behind URP. It is taken from research by Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1998) on community policing. This same philosophy is now embodied by the Jamaican Constabulary and contained at the end of the Nassau Guardian article. It states:

“Community policing is a philosophy and an organizational strategy that promotes a new partnership between people and their police. It is based on the premise that both the police and the community must work together to identify, prioritize, and solve contemporary problems such as crime, drugs, fear of crime, social and physical disorder, and overall neighbourhood decay, with the goal of improving the overall quality of life in the area”.

Deputy Superintendent Redford Rowe is reported to say that ‘the community, when fully transformed, will again be seen as a model community... not only for Jamaica but other places in the world”.

The PLP invites the FNM Government to put aside its political differences to avoid further crime, social disorder and neighbourhood decay. The Country’s murder rate alone has already exceeded sixty-five (65) cases and there are still three months left in 2010. The Bahamas has never seen such unprecedented killings and violence. This has all occurred since the ‘altering’ of the URP under the FNM Government. As a matter of fact, The Bahamas has recorded two record breaking homicide rates (in 2007 and in 2009) and is on track for another record under the FNM administration. The significance is that most of these murders occurred in the areas where potent URPs once existed.

The PLP has concluded that part of the solution lies within the URP as it was structured under the PLP. **Return the Police to URP without further delay.** This is time for action and the PLP stands ready to partner with the FNM to make our Country safe again for our residents and visitors alike.

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