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PRESS RELEASE

RSVGPF Strengthens Ties with the Barrouallie Community

June 04, 2024 - Kingstown: On Thursday, May 30, 2024, the community of Barrouallie witnessed a remarkable display of unity and collaboration as senior and junior ranks of the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force (RSVGPF) took to the streets, meeting community members at their homes and in public spaces. This initiative aimed to showcase a more approachable and relatable side of the police.

This effort took on added significance as it occurred on the eve of the final day of the National Firearm Amnesty Initiative (NFA2024), underscoring the critical importance of this campaign. Officers engaged with residents, addressing a wide range of concerns and fostering a spirit of cooperation. The community walkabout culminated in a well-attended town hall meeting at "The Square," where locals passionately voiced their grievances and shared valuable insights on enhancing police-community relations.

As is customary, community leaders and members of the police high command delivered remarks. One notable voice was Justice of the Peace, Mr. Alston Anderson, who urged the patrons to revert to the times when the Barrouallie community held its members accountable. He reminisced about a period when the community took collective responsibility for each other's conduct and encouraged the audience to revive that spirit.

Addressing the National Firearm Amnesty Initiative, Mr. Anderson appealed to those in possession of illegal firearms to seize the opportunity to remove these weapons from the streets, aiming to restore Barrouallie to a time when disputes were settled responsibly. He also strongly advocated for the return of a police station within the Barrouallie community, emphasizing that a stronger police presence within the heart of the community, rather than on its outskirts, could help prevent the occurrence of many crimes.

Divisional Commander of the Western Policing Division, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Mr. Engil Richards, expressed his dedication and that of the officers under his command to the cause of reducing criminal activity in the district. He took the opportunity to present statistics highlighting the efforts the RSVGPF has been making to combat criminal activity. ASP Richards acknowledged that there is always room for improvement but emphasized that the police are deeply committed to maintaining peace on the streets.

Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) in charge of Crime, Mr. Trevor Bailey, delivered a bold and clear warning to those in possession of illegal firearms and ammunition: "You have until midnight on May 31, 2024, to hand them in. You can even bring it to me now, you have nothing to worry about. Just put it in a bag and place it at my feet; I will know what to do with it." He emphasized that the recent amendments to the Firearm Act are no joke, announcing that the days of serving 2 or 3 years for firearm offenses are over. "Now it's 10 or more years and fines reaching up to hundreds of thousands." He underscored the importance of these amendments to the national

security interests of SVG and reminded listeners that the benefits of these changes are contingent on everyone participating. ACP Bailey also provided an update on the National Firearm Amnesty, reporting that so far, 17 firearms and 327 rounds of ammunition have been surrendered.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Mr. Frankie Joseph, in his remarks, reminded community members of the importance of working hand in hand with the police. He emphasized that, despite its challenges, the RSVGPF is deeply committed to collaborating with every community. "You can always feel comfortable talking to us," he assured. He also addressed the recent robbery of a financial institution in the area, reminding attendees that the individuals involved will be brought to justice.

The concluding remarks were delivered by Commissioner of Police (Ag) Mr. Enville Williams. He assured the listeners that the RSVGPF has already taken steps to ensure that a police station is returned to the Barrouallie community, with only a few logistical issues remaining to be resolved. He also mentioned that the government has given assurances that police stations in several communities around Saint Vincent are earmarked for renovation and reconstruction in some cases. COP Williams emphasized the role of the family and the community in the fight against crime, asserting that discipline must be maintained at home. He highlighted that the crimes in a nation are a reflection of the values within the family. He thanked the community for their support and promised them an improvement in the service provided by the RSVGPF.

Following the remarks, community members were given the opportunity to voice their numerous concerns, each of which were thoughtfully addressed by the Commissioner of Police and his executive team. By the end of the engagement, it was evident that the event had successfully fulfilled its objective. Additionally, the Barrouallie community was treated to live entertainment courtesy of the RSVGPF Band, providing an opportunity for residents to socialize with the rank and file in a more relaxed setting.

The RSVGPF recognizes the importance of open dialogue with communities and is committed to maintaining strong relationships with the various communities in and around Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. This event highlighted the force's dedication to working collaboratively with the public to ensure safety and security for all.

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