

## To Protect and Serve

The motto of 'To Protect and Serve' lies at the core what is expected of every man and woman who dons the uniform of a Police Officer. It places an awesome responsibility on this category of worker, who in executing the duties of protecting and serving the public, places both life and limb at risk. It is a great human sacrifice that these as frontline workers made, in carrying out their duty.

It is a fact that heavy criticisms are often levied against the Police by the public about the manner in which they execute their duties. It has become a norm to learn of complains about Police brutality, actions that are less than humane and behaviours that are unbecoming. On the other side of the coin, the public can be its biggest enemy, as they are those who willfully break the law, are uncooperative to the Police, obstruct the Police from executing their duties and resort to violence against the Police. Along with these, they are those persons who are menaces to society, who are nothing but a threat to the safety of people. It is these circumstances and a prevailing hostile environment, that should cause the public to understand that it should be supported of the Police.

The Police like all other employees must be treated fairly and given the respect they deserve. However, the Police must work to earn the respect of the people they are paid to protect and serve. Within the corporate world, it is unlikely that an employer would retain the services of an employee who is disrespectful, uncouth, ill manner and discourteous to customers. The employee is expected to give quality service, by upholding standards of excellence. This is an expectation that comes from the training which employees would or should have received.

In much the same way, nothing less can be expected of the Police. It would be irresponsible of them if they were to determine that within their hands lies both power and authority which they can exercise at will; without showing regard for the human and civil rights of persons.

The Police as the reinforcers of law and order must be supported by the public. It is however important for the Police to win the confidence and trust of the Public. The spate of Police killings of members of the black community across the United States of America in 2014, was appalling from the

standpoint that in most cases the victims were unarmed. Worse yet, the choke hold death of a unarmed civilian who seemed not to be resisting arrest by the members of the New York Police Department (NYPD), was most disturbing.

Images carried on the social media of Face book and by Caribbean Media houses in January, 2015, showed the irritating behaviour of a female Police Officer in Trinidad, releasing the break of a wheel chair with a male wheel chair bound occupant in it, and pushing it down a street into vehicular traffic. To add insult to injury, there was also the image of an apparent Plain Clothes Police Officer, slapping the same wheel chair male occupant across the face.

What was recorded to have happened in the United States of America and Trinidad respectively, is virtually an insult to what is expected of those who are required to protect and to serve. This is irritating behaviour that societies across the world could do without. The authorities should be proactive and adopt a no tolerance approach to the behaviour or actions of law enforcement officers, who act indiscriminately and /or violate the human and civil rights of the citizens, residents and even visitors to a country.

Police Officers unlike soldiers are not trained to kill. First and foremost, policing is about enforcing the law. Police are expected to show restraint. The act of resorting to kill, arises in the instance of a real treat to the life of the officer. Our societies therefore need to guard themselves from promoting acts of violent conduct by those who are entrusted to carry out the law. Unless this is controlled and or curb, the ultimate price that is likely to be paid is one of anarchy. The Police as workers, should not find themselves as the enemies of the very people that they are to protect and serve. If this were to be the case, then it means that the member of any Police Force or Department would hardly enjoy job satisfaction, which fundamentally is what each worker should have.