



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

By

THE HON. RENEE MING JP MP
MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY

THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS BOARD (TOOB) REPORT 2020

4th June 2021

Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to introduce to the Legislature the Treatment of Offenders Board Annual Report 2020, as prescribed by Section 8 of the Treatment of Offenders Board Act and Rule 170 of the Correction Rules 1980. The Annual Report provides an overview of the work of the Treatment of Offenders Board (TOOB), including statistics on inmate adjudications, and any recommendations for improvements to Bermuda's correctional facilities and programmes.

Mr. Speaker, much of the work of the TOOB involves visiting the inmate population at Westgate Correctional Facility, Co-Ed Correctional Facility, the Prison Farm Facility and the Right Living House Rehabilitation Programme. Ordinarily, monthly Rota Visits are conducted by two or more members of the Board. These visits allow the board to conduct site visits and meet with the both inmates and the Department of Corrections administration to address any issues or ongoing concerns regarding inmate safety and wellbeing.

Mr. Speaker, as has been a theme this year, these visits were halted due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The TOOB has conducted virtual interviews to keep abreast of the day-to-day functions of the facilities from the inmates perspectives. The TOOB Report 2020 highlights some of the negative effects that the pandemic has had on the prison population. The Board reports that the suspension of in-person visits and various other activities has resulted in increased frustrations within the facility. The Department of Corrections continues to work to mitigate increased tension within the facilities, specifically at Westgate.

Mr. Speaker, in 2020 there were fifty-five (55) adjudications conducted at the Westgate Correctional Facility. There were no adjudications at either the Co-Ed or Farm Facilities. Approximately 40% of these adjudications were in relation to prison rule infractions involving unauthorized articles; typically mobile phones and related parts. This is a 5% increase over mobile phone related adjudications in 2019. The Board reports that 13% of adjudications involved assaults on inmates or Corrections Officers. The Board attributes much of these offences to increased tensions, coupled with the added restrictions of Covid-19.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn to the Boards' observations of the infrastructure of the facilities. The Board notes that all of the facilities require maintenance, primarily due to the age of the buildings. The condition of the facilities has a direct impact on the attitudes of the inmate population. Budget constraints are an ongoing factor, however the Department of Corrections administration continues to liaise with the Ministry of Public Works to complete upgrades and improvements to the facilities. Most recently, a contract has been approved for the supply of replacement security doors at the Westgate and Co-Ed Facilities. Installation work will commence once the doors have arrived on island. Additionally, I am pleased to report that a second hot water heater was

installed at Westgate, resolving the contentious issue of a lack of sufficient hot water for inmate use.

Mr. Speaker, I remain grateful for the work of all of the members of the Treatment of Offenders Board, led by Chairperson, Ms. Zana Foggo. The Board has managed to carry out its duties while navigating Covid-19 restrictions. I am optimistic that as we move forward, post Covid-19, the Board will once again be able to visit our correctional facilities to strengthen its relationship with the inmate population in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those housed in the facilities.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker.**