



Ministerial Statement

By

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Minister of National Security

Anti-Violence Town Hall Meetings

November 21st, 2025

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to update this Honourable House on the series of public town hall meetings recently held on gun and gang violence, and to share with this House the voices, concerns, and ideas shared across our island.

The aim of these meetings was clear: to listen directly to people; to understand their lived realities; and to ensure that the National Violence Reduction Strategy (NVRs) remains grounded in the perspectives of the communities it serves.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will be aware that over recent weeks, public forums were held at St. Paul AME Church in Hamilton, Penno's Wharf in St. George's, and Dalton E. Tucker Primary School in Southampton. All three were very well attended. People came ready to speak openly, passionately, and out of a shared desire to restore safety, unity, and hope across our island.

What we heard, **Mr. Speaker,** were honest and forthright opinions. The feedback was constructive, community-minded, and focused on solutions.

Across the three meetings, several consistent themes emerged from the community:

- The need for culturally grounded programmes to support identity, especially for young Black males, including references to past initiatives such as the Ashay programme.
- A strong desire for more youth engagement, and for young people to be given a voice in shaping their own future.

- Calls to strengthen families, rebuild neighbourhood bonds, and restore a sense of community belonging.
- Emphasis on life-skills education, mentorship, and vocational pathways, including suggestions such as a trade school at the Casemates Museum, homework support in sports clubs, and a cadet programme for inmates.
- Recognition that the root causes of violence include mental health, substance misuse, poverty, cost of living, and weakened family structures.
- Requests for stronger collaboration between the Bermuda Police Service and partner agencies, including improved coordination around vehicles and licensing, port security, and the use of technology.
- Calls to reinvigorate Bermuda history, diversify school curricula, and support identity-building for young people.
- A desire for unity, trust-building, community integration, and national alignment to replace fragmentation.

Mr. Speaker, these suggestions will be considered for inclusion where appropriate, and I must emphasise that many of the ideas raised already appear within the existing National Violence Reduction Strategy.

Concerns about supporting youth, mentorship, and prevention connect directly to actions already underway. The Ministry has invested more than \$540,000 in community organisations aligned with the Strategy. We have supported several grants to sports clubs, youth mentorship programmes, tutoring and vocational initiatives, and organisations providing trauma-informed care. These are deliberate investments designed to strengthen families, build identity, and create positive pathways for young people.

Mr. Speaker, concerns around policing, safety, and enforcement are also addressed in ongoing work. The Bermuda Police Service is expanding recruitment, enhancing intelligence-led operations, and increasing its use of technology, including body-worn cameras. The BPS continues to improve coordination with partner agencies, strengthen port and border security, and use data more effectively to deploy resources.

Mr. Speaker, the town halls also heard requests for greater transparency and ongoing community involvement. These town hall meetings are part of that commitment. The Ministry of National Security is enhancing public engagement, working closely with the Gang Violence Reduction Team, and continuing to partner with community, faith, educational, and social service organisations.

The call to address root causes, including mental health, poverty, and family instability, aligns with the NVRS focus on early intervention, prevention, and reintegration. These priorities are already active pillars of the Strategy.

Mr. Speaker, the National Violence Reduction Strategy is guided by eight core goals, and what we heard in the town halls aligns closely with each of them.

At its foundation, the Strategy seeks to build strong families and supportive relationships, reflecting calls for family stability, parental accountability, and stronger neighbourhood bonds.

Mr. Speaker, the Strategy aims to strengthen community cohesion and shared responsibility, echoing the desire to reconnect, rebuild trust, and move from fragmentation to unity.

Mr. Speaker, we heard a strong push for more opportunities for young people such as mentorship, sports, trades, vocational programmes, and life-skills training. This aligns with the goal of increasing positive opportunities for youth and adults.

Concerns about reaching children early, addressing mental-health challenges, and intervening before young people enter dangerous environments reinforce the Strategy's focus on intervening early and effectively with individuals at risk.

Mr. Speaker, public feedback also underscored the need for visible safety measures, strong enforcement, and secure borders. This aligns with the goal to disrupt violence and prevent harm.

The call for structured reintegration, such as including cadet programmes, support for inmates, and opportunities for re-entry, reflects the Strategy's commitment to support rehabilitation and reintegration.

Mr. Speaker, requests for better coordination, smarter use of technology, and data-driven policing support the Strategy's aim to use data, evidence, and technology to drive decisions.

Finally, the Strategy's goal to strengthen leadership, coordination, and accountability across the system matches the community's plea for unified national action.

The alignment is clear: the public's feedback reinforces the Strategy, and the Strategy reflects the public's priorities.

Mr. Speaker, one message rose above all others:

We cannot fix this problem without each other. Government cannot do it alone. The Police cannot do it alone. We also know that no single organisation, school, or family can tackle this in isolation.

Mr. Speaker, preventing violence requires:

- mentors, coaches, and role models in every parish,
- clubs and community groups opening their doors more widely,
- neighbours reconnecting and checking in on one another,
- families seeking support when they need it,
- employers creating opportunities for young people,
- and all of us rejecting division and choosing unity.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone to read the National Violence Reduction Strategy online, understand its goals, and find a place where they can contribute. Every hand helps. Every voice matters. Every action counts, because safety is not simply a policy objective. It is a community responsibility. When we work together and for a common goal, we make this island stronger, more peaceful and more harmonious.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank every person who attended the meetings and every person who shared their views. Your insights will inform our work,

strengthen our Strategy, and help ensure that our collective approach is grounded in the realities of our communities.

The work continues, and we continue it together.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker.**