



## **Ministerial Statement**

By

**Senator The Hon. Ryan Robinson Perinchief, JP**  
Minister of National Security

### **Advancing Public Safety Across the Ministry of National Security**

July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026

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**Madam President**, it has now been a little more than two weeks since I assumed responsibility for the Ministry of National Security.

During that time, I have met with the Ministry's senior leadership and received briefings on the work of its departments, units and operational teams.

These discussions have provided me with an initial understanding of the Ministry's responsibilities, the progress of its current work and the matters requiring immediate attention. They are also helping me determine its short-term priorities and strategic direction beyond the specific ministerial and legislative matters assigned to me.

While two weeks is a relatively short period, one point is already clear: a central responsibility of the Ministry is to ensure that the different elements of Bermuda's public-safety system work together.

This means facilitating coordination across policing, border protection, emergency response, national defence, disaster preparedness, cybersecurity, violence reduction, and substance-use prevention and treatment, while strengthening collaboration across Government, the private sector and the community.

**Madam President**, the Ministry's departments and operational teams continue their day-to-day work to keep Bermuda safe while strengthening policing and border security, emergency and disaster response, maritime security, substance-use services, and the supporting technology and infrastructure.

At the Ministry level, work is progressing on disaster preparedness, cybersecurity, legislative reform and the Security and Defence Review. I will provide more detailed updates as these areas progress. Today, however, I wish to focus on the matters requiring my immediate direction.

**Madam President**, in assigning me responsibility for the Ministry of National Security, the Honourable Premier identified cannabis reform and the implementation of automated speed enforcement as immediate legislative priorities.

During my initial briefings, I also reviewed the work undertaken towards an Adolescent Substance Use Treatment Programme and identified its advancement as a further immediate ministerial priority.

These are priorities for focused ministerial attention and, where required, legislative advancement. They do not replace or diminish the Ministry's everyday responsibility to protect the public and support the operational work of its departments and teams.

My intention is to advance each matter with clear timelines and defined outcomes, with initial implementation targeted for the fourth quarter of 2026.

**Madam President,** I will begin with the Adolescent Substance Use Treatment Programme. The programme will provide structured treatment and support designed around the clinical, developmental and social needs of adolescents. It will also connect with the Government's wider prevention and early-intervention work, recognising that substance misuse can overlap with family instability, disengagement from education, exposure to violence and offending behaviour.

Following my initial briefing, I met with the Department for National Drug Control to discuss and brainstorm the proposed approach. That discussion identified opportunities to refine the programme so that it delivers the greatest possible benefit for young people and their families.

My focus is on refining the work already under way and establishing a clear pathway towards commencement and implementation. I will provide a further update as this work progresses.

**Madam President,** the second immediate priority is automated traffic enforcement. I have been reviewing the work undertaken to date, including the completion and optimisation of the island-wide CCTV network and its Licence Plate Recognition cameras.

However, speed cameras cannot be treated as a stand-alone intervention or a box-ticking exercise. They are not, by themselves, a cure for dangerous driving. The programme must support the wider objectives of changing driving behaviour, improving road safety and reducing serious injuries and loss of life.

The Ministry will therefore work with the Ministry responsible for transport, the Bermuda Police Service, the Transport Control Department, the Courts and other agencies to integrate the programme into Bermuda's wider road-safety arrangements.

It must also be supported by appropriate legislation, reliable evidence-management processes, safeguards for privacy and data, and clear arrangements for processing tickets or summonses.

Implementation will be phased across the legislative, procurement, infrastructure and operational workstreams, with initial implementation targeted for the fourth quarter of 2026. Our objective is to deliver a programme that produces a meaningful public-safety benefit.

**Madam President,** the third priority is cannabis reform. The Ministry is reviewing Bermuda's cannabis-related guidance, regulations and

oversight arrangements to balance the limitations of the United Kingdom framework with the Government's commitment to safe and responsible use within an appropriately regulated system.

Policy development in this area is wide-ranging. When the public hears of any developments around cannabis, they may get excited about the prospect of a fuller conversation on recreational cannabis or the potential for a regulated legalization framework. There are strong views and factions on full cannabis reform, and I want to provide clarity about the Government's established commitment at this time.

**Madam President**, this clarity is particularly important for me to note, because I aim to be transparent with the general public, my peers, and colleagues - to maintain a high, accountable standard with people of Bermuda. With that, **Madam President**, Government's current commitment is to review and update cannabis-related guidance, regulations, and oversight, to strike a balance between the limitations of the United Kingdom framework and safe, responsible adult use. The public should be aware that the current commitment does not match public discourse, which may mean that expectations are misaligned.

**Madam President**, allow me to clarify the record, and it is my preference for the Senate and the public to hear the difference and direction of cannabis reform as it currently stands - directly from me.

There are three parts to cannabis reform. The immediate focus is on the first two components of this work: (1) hemp and hemp-derived products, and (2) medical cannabis. The proposed hemp amendments will clarify the legal treatment of hemp and consumer products currently being sold without a sufficiently clear compliance framework. The medical cannabis framework will permit appropriate access while ensuring the appropriate safeguards patients and the wider community deserve.

Drafting instructions have been issued to the Attorney-General's Chambers. The Ministry will work with Parliamentary Counsel and the relevant technical authorities to resolve the remaining matters and advance the legislation.

Initial implementation of the hemp and medical cannabis reforms is targeted for the fourth quarter of 2026.

The third part, which captures public attention and discourse, is a broader, regulated regime for adult use. Now, **Madam President**, as I described, at the risk of sounding repetitive, for clarity and transparency - this one will take longer. Let me tell you, **Madam President** and the public, the reason why. Any proposed approach must be carefully considered in light of Bermuda's constitutional relationship with the United Kingdom and the need for effective regulation, oversight and appropriate safeguards. It requires bringing in various perspectives and coordination across our community, touching on national security, health, medicines regulation,

Customs, and law enforcement so that whatever we ultimately land on has lasting support. I am erring on the side of transparency so that expectations are managed. So, when it comes to cannabis reform, two of three parts are anticipated for initial implementation this year. The third, I want us to get right together, and that will be undertaken in due course, with the appropriate information, confidence, and stakeholder engagement.

**Madam President**, beyond these immediate priorities, violence reduction and community safety will be my principal Ministry-wide policy priority over the coming months.

During my initial briefings, I reviewed the National Violence Reduction Strategy and the current work and structure of the Violence Reduction Team.

That review confirmed that the Team provides an important operational foundation through school-based prevention, community outreach, case management, family support, court advocacy, crisis response and workforce-development opportunities.

The next phase of work will therefore focus on refining the Strategy and aligning the Team's structure and operations with the resulting priorities. This will provide a clearer framework for work across prevention, intervention, enforcement, youth justice, community engagement and rehabilitation. It will also help ensure that efforts across Government and

the community are coordinated, responsive to identified needs and directed towards shared outcomes.

This will require sustained collaboration with the Police, schools, community organisations, families and individuals with lived experience.

**Madam President**, while these priorities require my immediate attention, important work continues across the Ministry's wider portfolio.

The Disaster Risk Reduction and Mitigation Team is developing Bermuda's National Risk Register, consolidating information from across Government and partner agencies to identify the hazards and threats facing Bermuda. New disaster-management legislation will support this work by modernising the emergency-management framework, clarifying responsibilities and strengthening coordinated action.

Cybersecurity also remains essential to national resilience. I acknowledge the recent tabling of the Joint Select Committee's report on the 2023 cyberattack. The Ministry will carefully consider the recommendations relevant to its remit as we reinforce Bermuda's cybersecurity framework.

To fully implement the Cybersecurity Act 2024, the Ministry is developing regulations and guidance, establishing the Cybersecurity Advisory Board and progressing the national Cybersecurity Unit. We are also conducting a National Cybersecurity Risk Assessment and developing national cyber-incident response capabilities.

This work is being undertaken across Government and with critical infrastructure operators and private-sector partners to improve Bermuda's ability to prevent, withstand and recover from serious cyber incidents.

**Madam President**, none of this work can be achieved without the people who deliver it. Recruitment and retention remain challenging, and we are exploring new recruitment methods, improving access to training and professional development, and creating clearer pathways into public-safety careers.

Our objective is to attract capable people, equip them to perform effectively and support their development throughout their careers.

**Madam President**, my first two weeks as Minister have reinforced both the breadth of the Ministry's responsibilities and the importance of approaching public safety as a shared endeavour.

There is much to do, but I have identified a strong foundation on which to build.

I wish to thank the Permanent Secretary, the Commissioner of Police, the Chief Fire Officer, the Commanding Officer of the Royal Bermuda Regiment, the Collector of Customs, the Director of the Department for National Drug Control, the Ministry's unit and team leads, and the officers and staff across the Ministry for their commitment, professionalism and candid engagement during my initial briefings.

I also thank our colleagues across Government and the community partners whose work is essential to delivering Bermuda's public-safety objectives.

My immediate focus will be on advancing the three identified ministerial and legislative priorities while giving sustained attention to violence reduction and community safety as my principal Ministry-wide policy priority.

Beyond any individual project, my central responsibility as Minister is clear: to ensure that the Ministry remains focused on protecting the public and that its work produces tangible results for the people of Bermuda.

I look forward to providing Senators and the public with further updates following the summer recess and the commencement of the new legislative session.

Thank you, **Madam President.**