9-21-1989

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Trinidad & Tobago: On Drug-related Violence & Government Response

by John Neagle
Category/Department: General
Published: Thursday, September 21, 1989

Late Sept. 15, Justice and National Security Minister Selwyn Richardson announced that soldiers will be put on street patrol in an attempt to curb drug-related violence. He said the decision came in response to a Sept. 7 assassination attempt against the wife of President Noor Hassanaly, and killing last month of prominent businessperson Jeffrey Stollmeyer. For several months, the country has been affected by a wave of murders, rapes and violent robberies. Richardson said, "The present criminality definitely relates to the rise in the availability of drugs." The minister said the government of Prime Minister A.N.R. Robinson has decided on an "anti-crime action plan to take effect immediately." The plan includes 24-hour police and army street patrols, an increase in coast guard patrols to interdict drug traffickers, and the recruitment of 150 more police officers. In the last year, the government has implemented legislation aimed at confiscating property and money gained through drug trafficking and limiting bail for people convicted of violent crimes. (Basic data from AP, 09/16/89)

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