



Remarks

**The Most Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis
Prime Minister**

**Royal Bahamas Police Force
Handing Over Ceremony
of the Office of Commissioner of Police**

**Police Headquarters
East Street
Nassau, Bahamas**

30 March 2020

Your Excellency,

Distinguished guests,

Because of the extraordinary circumstances during which we meet to pass the baton from one Commissioner of Police to another, I must of necessity be brief this afternoon.

It is my intention to offer a fuller expression of gratitude to outgoing Commissioner Anthony Ferguson and an extended charge to incoming

Commissioner Paul Rolle at an appropriate time and occasion.

Today's ceremony, though brief, is a testimony to our nation's abiding commitment to the rule of law and to the national institutions which have served The Bahamas before and after our independence as a sovereign nation.

This morning in the House of Assembly we debated a resolution necessitated by the threats posed by the COVID-19 virus.

Even in this extraordinary time we are bound by the protection and the majesty of our Constitution and the institutions of state, which afford the holders of various offices of the state, the responsibility and the authority to serve the Bahamian people.

The rituals, conventions, traditions and laws of our democracy are vital to its flourishing.

Today's ceremony is one such ritual and tradition in an institution which has protected and served The Bahamas for many generations.

Commissioner Ferguson:

Thank you for your extraordinary service to our country and to the Bahamian people.

Your service culminated in and reached its high point beginning in October, 2017, when you assumed command as Commissioner.

I said to you at the Passing of the Baton at that time:

“Your guiding star must be the rule of law and fairness. You must demonstrate toughness and compassion.”

I noted then that:

“The crime problem we have, must be tackled through the judiciary; through social intervention and development efforts; through the Corrections Department; and through the Royal Bahamas Police Force.”

I also stated at the time:

“We must use every measure possible to reduce crime and to restore a more peaceful way of life for our people.

“I do not accept that any group of Bahamians should have special protection. We are a nation of laws. All Bahamians should follow those laws or face the consequences of transgression.”

You accepted that charge and have performed admirably.

During your nearly three year tenure as Commissioner you worked diligently to reduce crime and murder in our land after many years of an ever increasing crime rate.

Through enhanced policing and strong command, you led the force in the reduction of crime and a more integrated and streamlined command structure.

Through a range of innovative and vigorous policing measures, including various technological advances, you achieved what many thought impossible.

Commissioner Ferguson:

A grateful nation thanks you for your leadership and stewardship of the Royal Bahamas Police Force.

We wish you well in your retirement.

As prime minister I offer you my gratitude and best wishes.

Your Excellency:

Commissioner-Designate Paul Rolle began his tenure with the Royal Bahamas Police Force in 1983.

He holds a Master of Science degree in Criminology from the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom.

Incoming Commissioner Rolle knows the Force well having served in a number of capacities, including leadership within the

CDU, the Police Training Academy and the Anti-Corruption Unit.

He established the Force's first Cyber-crime Unit.

In 2017 he was promoted to Assistant Commissioner and assigned the Anti-Corruption portfolio.

Indeed, he was given the assignment of setting up and establishing the newly designated Anti-Corruption Branch.

In 2018, the investigation of financial crimes was included in the remit of the Branch.

Commissioner-Designate:

Your great task is to continue the work of reducing crime in our country, including through the use of policing measures and technologies that will help to prevent crime.

You must continue to instill discipline and to ensure that the values of courage,

integrity and loyalty are adhered to in the senior command and ranks of the Force.

You must also continue to modernize and to reform the Force at every level.

You assume command during a national emergency that will require great leadership, sensitivity and unity of purpose and command.

The country is looking to you and to the good men and women of the Royal Bahamas Police Force to help enforce our laws and the temporary emergency measures that will help us to combat the COVID-19 threat.

I wish you well in your new command. You have my full support and that of the Government of the Bahamas.

Your Excellency:

Allow me to conclude with some words from one of my predecessors at another passing of the baton ceremony, who noted at that time:

“Continuity and change is not only about passing the baton to the Commissioner. As importantly, it concerns the renewal of the mission of the Force and adopting new approaches to policing.

“It also concerns the need for a greater acknowledgement of the role we must all play in terms of crime prevention and crime fighting, and the reduction of violence. ...

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen:

May God continue to bless our Bahamas, especially during this extraordinary time in the life of our nation.

Let us pray God’s blessings on outgoing Commissioner Ferguson and Commissioner-Designate Rolle.

Let us also thank their wives and families for the support they have lent these fine men throughout their careers.

Thank you and good afternoon.
