



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

By:

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Minister of National Security

RECIDIVISM RATES

16th November, 2016

Madam President, As stated in this year's Speech from the Throne, this Government will continue its support of the Department of Corrections and its commitment to providing inmates with a range of programmes and opportunities that will ultimately prepare them for a life free from crime after their release. Today, I am pleased to highlight Bermuda's decreasing recidivism rates based on the findings for the 2015/2016 fiscal year which were recently produced by the Department of Corrections.

Madam President, the success of Bermuda's prison rehabilitation programmes can be measured by the number of offenders who return to prison within a short period of time after their release. Recidivism rate is the term used to refer to the percentage of former offenders (or prison

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discharges) who are rearrested for new offences and are returned to prison within a specified measured time period.

Madam President, after release from prison, how many offenders return to prison having committed new offences? This is one of the most frequently asked questions about any prison system. Knowledge of the recidivism rate of offenders is important because it is one of the many indicators of success of a prison system.

Madam President, to calculate our recidivism rates, the Department of Corrections used the 291 discharges for the fiscal year 2013/14. This cohort included adult males, females and younger persons.

Madam President, within 1 year after their release, 15 returned to prison. Therefore the 1 year is 5%. Within 2 years after their release, 13 more offenders had re-offended. This brings the total to 10%. Within 3 years after their release 9 more offenders had re-offended. This brings the total to 13%.

Madam President, as I have stated previously, the notion that recidivism rates in Bermuda are high, when compared to other jurisdictions...does not stand up to the data. Once again Bermuda's recidivism rates have decreased from last year. In fact, Bermuda's 2 year rate (which is the international standard of measurement) is at 10%. It cannot be disputed that there are a number of contributing factors to these all-time lows such as emigration overseas or Alternatives to Incarceration (ATIs). In any event, the low populations that we have been experiencing are proof of the success of our people, programmes and services.

Madam President, I would once again like to remind the public of the 2010 study that tracked Bermuda's recidivism rates for the period 2007 through 2010.



That study found that 38% of the male prison population for that period accounted for 62% of all custodial sentences, with some of the most chronic offenders serving up to nine sentences within the 3 year period.

Madam President, I am confident that the services provided by the Department of Corrections are effective for the majority of those incarcerated who participate in the programmes on offer. Programmes include social training, psychological interventions through group and individual sessions, and education and community service opportunities. While some inmates are mandated to complete these programmes as part of their sentence or to become eligible for parole, there continue to be many inmates that willingly enroll and they are often the better for it.

Madam President, I would like to thank the Commissioner of Corrections (Lt. Col Edward Lamb), his management team, and our Corrections Officers and support staff that provides these much needed programmes and services. Their dedication to uphold the Department of Corrections aim to provide a humane but demanding regime that reduces re-offending by presenting inmates with a range of opportunities, each linked to preparing our inmates for a life after release, is evident in the low levels of re-offending observed in recent years.

Thank you, **Madam President.**