

2015.02.24

3.9 Deputy M.R. Higgins of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding 2 recent incidents involving armed police in the Island:

I can assure Members this is not a planted question. Will the Minister make a statement to the Assembly setting out the full facts of the 2 recent incidents involving armed police on the Island and if not, why not? Will she also state whether the officers concerned acted correctly and proportionately and what lessons, if any, have been learned from the incidents?

The Deputy of St. Peter (The Minister for Home Affairs):

I presume the Deputy is referring to the events of Sunday, 8th February and I will happily give a statement now. The States of Jersey Police were dealing with a threat to the lives of police officers based on intelligence received from a third party. The firearms response was led by a senior officer specifically trained and experienced in the command of situations which require the deployment of armed officers. Two members of the public were stopped by armed police as part of the operation. They were both safely detained in accordance with national guidelines for the deployment of armed officers, and immediately released unharmed when it was established that they did not pose any threat. This firearms operation was successfully concluded later the same day when a suspect was detained and arrested by armed officers.

3.9.1 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Supplementary: two members of the public - one who was forced to the ground by officers, one who was detained in his car by armed officers in the country - does she believe that the police acted appropriately obviously because it was misidentification, in both cases acting on inaccurate information? Does she think it is proportionate for a member of the public to be thrown to the ground and detained while they were carrying out that raid?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Yes, I do think it was appropriate. The armed officers were responding to a threat to kill an officer. It was absolutely appropriate to deploy armed officers in this situation when they had received such a threat. They followed absolute guidelines. If you read the *Evening Post's* report of the matter one of the innocent men who was stopped said that: "While it was scary I would rather they did these things and be safe. They are highly trained officers" and both stops were carried out in textbook fashion. Both men spoke to officers after they had been stopped and they understood exactly why the police had taken the actions they did.

3.9.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Final one: would the Minister still be saying that if one of the 2 people detained had reached for, let us say, a mobile phone or something and been shot in the incident?

[10:45]

The point is armed officers should not be going out just detaining anybody. It should be based on intelligence and obviously there was faulty intelligence. They stopped the wrong car and they stopped the wrong individuals on the street. What I would say is there is a danger when armed police are used and they should be used only in cases when there is firm intelligence; does the Minister not agree?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Although it was mistaken identity, when one of the men saw the photograph of the person that they were looking for, he himself acknowledged a very distinct similarity and resemblance to the person and absolutely understood why the police officers had stopped him. You raise the point of the danger, but I must impress again that these were textbook hard stops and in fact the commanding

officer is considering using this operation as an example of best practice when training his new staff.