

Toddler shot dead in 'Diego' home

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A TWO-year-old girl asleep with both her parents and her ten-day-old baby sister below a mosquito net was shot dead early yesterday morning at the family's Diego Martin home, when either a lone gunman or gunmen opened fire on the property.

The incident occurred around 1 a.m. at the small wooden home at Good Session Drive, Palma Village.

Police said they were not aware of a motive behind the shooting, but neighbours said the father of the child (Keron Paul) had a falling out with some other people over a murder that occurred two years ago, and that may have been a factor.

Asleep in the house at the time of the shooting were the two-year-old girl, Keyra Singh; her mother, Neliya Singh, 23; her father, Paul, also aged 23; and the couple's other daughter, a ten-day-old girl.

Paul was 25 years old yesterday, but when the *Express* went to find him he was not at home, nor was he at the Forensic Science Centre, St James.

Neliya Singh spoke to reporters outside the centre, where the child's body had been taken for a post-mortem.

She said: "This morning we was on the bed around after 1 a.m. The two children's father (Keron Paul) and me was on the bed lie down, when we just hear shots start to fire.

"I dived over my children and them and we lie down there for a little while... for two minutes... and then we realise she (Keyra) get shoot and we call the police and we run down the hill, but it was too late. She dead, oh God, she dead. It was too, too late.

"They shoot from by the window. All the

she tell meh: 'Mammie, I want to go to school, and I bought a lunch kit for her to go to school. She always want to watch *Dora the Explorer*."

She also dealt with speculation her friends and neighbours had about what would have caused the gunmen to attack her family.

"People does say all kinda ting. Oh God, about how she father is gangster. Oh God, they does say all kinda thing. But let me tell you something: he never do them nothing to cause them to come and shoot up we house with our children, and we would not think of doing somebody that.

"How yuh could think about doing somebody that, boy? How yuh think about coming in somebody house and shoot them up with their children?" she asked. How am I going to start my life now? My other daughter is only ten days old... a ten-days baby."



IN MOURNING: Jeanie Moore, grandmother of little Keyra Singh, at her Diego Martin home yesterday.

—Photo: ANISTO ALVES

louvre break up. All the bullets on the ground... blood, everything on the ground." The couple then took the child to the St James Medical Centre, but she was pronounced dead on arrival.

The *Express* visited the scene yesterday afternoon and observed a marked-off bullet hole to the side of the house, which the police identified as the one that struck the child that morning. In the house, the *Express* observed a green-coloured sheet had been stained with blood, and a few furniture items in the house had been turned over.

Daughter wanted to go to school

Singh described her daughter: "She was talking already and she began walking and

now and everybody just quiet," said a man.

Sitting opposite him, another man spoke: "Here real peaceful... don't you realise the name of the road (Good Session) because the most we would have here is neighbours falling out because someone blocking their driveway. I knew the baby. She was real nice."

He even spoke about the child's father, saying: "He is not a troublesome fella. No gang leader, eh. And I don't [want] allyuh to put that in the papers."

The murder toll for 2015 stood at 373 last night, compared with 349 for the same period last year.

Children's Authority saddened

The Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, in a release yesterday, said it was saddened by the various reports of violent crimes committed against children.

The authority also extended condolences to the family of the child who lost her life in Diego Martin earlier today.

With respect to the child who is currently in hospital following Monday's murder-suicide in Penal, the authority said it has been in contact with officials at the San Fernando General Hospital to obtain a status update. *(See story below.)*

"In keeping with established protocols, the authority will wait for the child to be discharged and referred to our care by the Medical and Social Work Department," the release stated. Meanwhile, the authority has been in contact with officers of the Child Protection Unit, Tobago, in connection with the report of attempted rape of a seven-year-old girl. The matter is being addressed with the sensitivity and confidentiality which it requires, the authority stated.

Residents fearful

She also questioned what would be the current state of her husband's mind. She said she left him at the home of his father and he was very angry over what happened.

"Even self justice is served, my child not coming back and nothing will get my child back, nothing. So she will never come back," she said, explaining that even if the gunman had been captured or shot dead by law enforcement, or killed otherwise, this was doing nothing to return her daughter to her.

Neighbours who spoke to the *Express* yesterday expressed sadness over what happened. None of them wanted to be named, as they feared for their own lives with the gunman or gunmen still on the loose.

"It's a real sad thing, boy. It is a kinda scene

