



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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GOVERNOR

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DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 13, 2019

DIRECTOR NOLAN ESPINDA'S STATEMENT FROM MAUNA KEA NEWS CONFERENCE

HONOLULU – As the Director of the Department of Public Safety, I have the responsibility and privilege of leading the law enforcement officers of the Sheriffs and the Narcotics Enforcement Divisions.

As you all saw, it was a deputy sheriff who was the target of the posting offering a \$5000 reward.

Just like the other people up here, as a Director I accept that a certain amount of criticism will be directed at me. That goes with being a public figure.

But this post, directed at an individual employee who day in and day out puts his life on the line as a law enforcement officer and a public servant, is shameful and should not be condoned.

The law enforcement personnel were tasked with-clearing and securing an unpermitted structure, while providing for everyone's safety in a dynamic and unstable situation. No employee should be targeted for doing his job.

In this instance, protesters securely affixed of 2X4's with nails, through a flag, screwed into a plywood barricade, into the only door to the structure. The screws were stripped so that the flag could not be removed without damage. For the safety of everyone, law enforcement did what it had to do to clear and secure the structure. They were left with no other option but to remove the flag, despite the purposefully destructive way it was intentionally attached to the barricaded door.

I stand by my law enforcement officers – this was an orchestrated controversy that directly led to this egregious social media post. The law enforcement officers who have been on the ground since the beginning have shown nothing but respect for the people gathered at the site. This kind of threatening action against law enforcement, or against anyone for that matter, is unacceptable and should not be dismissed or otherwise normalized.

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