



Joint Select Committee on National Security

Public Hearing Summary

Friday April 7, 2017 at 10:51 a.m.

Topic:

An inquiry into the staffing deficiencies at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the impact of these deficiencies on National Security.

Committee Members:

The following Committee Members were present at the meeting:

Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds, MP	Chairman
Mr. Prakash Ramadhar, MP	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Nigel De Freitas	Member
Mr. Michael Coppin	Member
Mr. Paul Richards	Member

WITNESSES WHO APPEARED:

The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP):

Mr. Roger Gaspard, S.C. Director of Public Prosecutions

Officials of the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs (MoAG&LA):

Mrs. Ingrid Seerattan Permanent Secretary
Ms. Helaine Boodoosingh Administrative Officer V
Mrs. Dianne George-Thomas Director, Human Resources
Mr. Nicholas Suban Senior Project Officer
Mr. Roger Sealy ICT Director

Officials of the Service Commissions Department:

Ms. Prabhawatie Maraj Director of Personnel Administration
(Ag.)
Mrs. Karen Chai Hong-Lai State Counsel II

Mrs. Coomarie Goolabsingh Executive Director, HRM
Ms. Melita St. Louis Human Resource Officer II (Ag.)

Officials of the Personnel Department:

Mr. Beresford Riley Chief Personnel Officer (CPO)
Ms. Hazel Villafana Director, HRM
Ms. Cynthia Dookran Senior HR Adviser
Ms. Susan Salandy-Moolchan Senior Stats and Cost Officer

Officials of the Ministry of Public Administration and Communication – Property and Real Estate Division:

Mrs. Shelley Sultanti-Maharaj Co-ordinator - Property and Real Estate
Division
Mr. Vishan Maharaj Senior Property & Real Estate Officer –
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KEY ISSUES DISCUSSED

- (i) The necessary steps to implement an electronic Case Management System (CMS)
- (ii) The projected timeline for completion and implementation of the electronic CMS at the DPP's Office. Discussions commenced on:
 - whether any contingency plans were considered at the project management level when the plan for the CMS implementation project was being developed
 - whether there were any cost overruns owing to the six (6) month delay in the implementation of the CMS
 - whether the DPP is satisfied with the level of adherence to the current timeline for implementation
 - the possible impact of the CMS on the operations at the office of DPP
 - the challenges that are likely to impede the Office of the DPP from maximising the benefits of the CMS

- whether any security measures were proposed to protect the CMS from cybercrime
- (iii) Resolution of the issue of dysfunctional photocopying machines at the DPP's Office. Discussion commenced on:
- The procurement of four (4) new photocopying machines which should be in operation on April 11, 2017
 - The maintenance schedule and procedures for the photocopying machines at the Office of the DPP to prevent recurrence of the issue
- (iv) The creation of contract positions as an interim measure while Cabinet approved established positions remain vacant
- (v) The allocation of a risk allowance to the remuneration packages of State prosecutors in established and contract positions. Discussion commenced on:
- the view of the CPO on whether State Counsel are presented with significant risk owing to their duties
 - the role of the CPO in advising the Salaries Review Commission (SRC)
 - the SRC's decision that consideration of the inclusion of any new allowances to office holders would be treated within its upcoming Job Evaluation Exercise and Compensation Survey
- (vi) Whether the Service Commissions Department is responsible for hiring of staff at the TTFSC
- (vii) Discussions held between the PS, MoAG&LA, DPP and DPA regarding the deficiencies at the Office of the DPP and the way forward
- (viii) Procurement of appropriate accommodation for the offices of the DPP in Port-of-Spain, San Fernando and Tobago. Discussion commenced on:
- the procedure for identifying locations for public offices by the Property and Real Estate Division
 - the appropriateness of an office location inside Gulf City Mall
- (ix) The issue of staffing deficiencies at the Office of the CPO and consideration of where responsibility falls for hiring staff at the CPO's office
- (x) The issues that accompany the implementation of the Criminal Procedure Rules, 2016

- (xi) The impact of the potential formalisation of plea bargaining with the passage of legislation currently before Parliament¹
- (xii) The issue of the DPP's office being allocated its own budget. Discussion included:
 - the action taken by the PS, MoAG&LA toward creation of a sub-head for the Office of the DPP in the next financial year, to facilitate ease in the access of funds
 - discussions held with the Director of Budgets – Budget Division, Ministry of Finance to create a Head of Expenditure for the Office of the DPP
- (xiii) The level of input that the DPP has in the development of new procedures given the implementation of the Criminal Procedure Rules, 2016 and proposed legislation.
- (xiv) The pressing need for better collaboration between all stakeholders to adequately address the deficiencies at the DPP's Office and to improve the criminal justice system going forward.

View the Hearing:

The hearing can be viewed on our YouTube page via the following link:

<https://youtu.be/JL9TmOwHpww>

Contact Information:

You may contact the Committee's Secretariat at 624-7275 ext. 2227/2232 or jscnationalsecurity@tparliament.org.

*Committees Unit
April 7, 2017*

¹ HOR Bill No. 13 of 2017 – The Criminal Procedure (Plea Discussion and Plea Agreement) Bill, 2017