



Joint Select Committee on National Security

Public Hearing Summary

Friday March 24, 2017 at 10:52 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
Ms. Nicole Olivierre, MP	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):

Ms. Ingrid Seerattan Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mrs. Nataki Atiba-Dilchan Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mrs. Dianne George-Thomas Director, Human Resources
Mr. Nicholas Suban Senior Project Officer

Officials of the Service Commissions Department:

Ms. Anastasius Creed Director Personnel Administration

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

KEY ISSUES DISCUSSED

- (i) The issue that triggered the inquiry i.e. the failure of an assigned State Attorney to appear at a preliminary inquiry in relation to a murder charge fixed to begin on Friday January 20, 2017, and the dismissal of the matter as a result
- (ii) The limited physical and human resources at the Service Commissions Department which limits its ability to perform regular functions
- (iii) The need to prioritise the needs of the Office of the DPP, in light of the implementation of the Criminal Procedure Rules, 2016, the worsening state of crime and the potential passage of legislation dealing with the abolition of preliminary inquiries¹
- (iv) The progress made towards filling vacancies at the Office of the DPP
- (v) The development and implementation of an electronic Case Management System at the Office of the DPP -
 - a) The reasons for the failure to implement the electronic Case Management System
 - b) The manual system utilised in the absence of an electronic Case Management System
 - c) The proposed timeline for the implementation of the electronic Case Management System
- (vi) The lines of communication between the DPP and the DPA
- (vii) The process followed by the Judicial and Legal Service Commission to recruit legal staff at the office of the DPP
- (viii) The proposed timelines for resolving the issues being faced at the Office of the DPP
- (ix) The negative impact of the staffing deficiencies on the operations of the Office of the DPP
- (x) The issue of remuneration packages at the Office of the DPP

¹ HOR Bill No. 12 of 2017 - The Indictable Offences (Pre-Trial Procedure) Bill, 2017

- (xi) The feasibility of establishing a Financial Crimes Unit at the Office of the DPP
- (xii) The negative impact of administrative staff shortages at the DPP's Office and the preference of obtaining specialist staff given the organisation's mandate
- (xiii) Progress made towards acquiring adequate accommodation for the DPP's offices in Port of Spain, San Fernando and Tobago and the negative effects of inadequate accommodation on staffing
- (xiv) The issue of the DPP's office being allocated its own budget.

Note: A follow-up hearing regarding this inquiry topic will be held with officials on Friday April 07, 2017.

View the Hearing:

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

https://youtu.be/n0PL_gZ9uoE

Contact Information:

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

Committees Unit
March 31, 2017