

DPP's Office Probing Nepotism Allegations Against Two Hanover Councillors

The Gleaner



Director of Public Prosecutions, Paula Llewellyn

Director of Public Prosecutions, Paula Llewellyn, says her office has started a probe into allegations that two councillors in the Hanover Parish Council used their position to recommended dozens of government contracts valued at millions of dollars

to family members and political affiliates.

Llewellyn says a team is reviewing the case.

She says the findings of the probe will be communicated to the Office of the Contractor General. Contractor General, Dirk Harrison, referred People's National Party councillor for the Sandy Bay Division, Lloyd Hill, and the councillor for the Cauldwell Division, Anthony Walker, to the Office of the DPP following a special investigation into the awarding of contracts by the men.

Harrison indicated that between 2012 and 2014, Hill's family members and political affiliates received a total of 65 contracts, with a cumulative value of approximately \$8.7 million, from the parish council.

He said the probe found that over the same period family members and political affiliates of Walker received 20 contracts with a cumulative value of more than \$2 million from the parish council.

The contractor general said while the probe did not find that the councillors got any money from the contracts, they did not declare their family relationships or conflicts of interest.

He argued that their actions highlight issues of misconduct, nepotism, favouritism as well as breaches of government procurement laws and regulations.

Gov't To Amend Bail Act

The Gleaner

Edmond Campbell

The Andrew Holness administration is taking steps to amend the Bail Act to prevent persons charged with murder from getting bail under certain circumstances.

Making his contribution to the Budget Debate in Gordon House yesterday, Holness said Attorney General Marlene Malahoo Forte and Minister of National Security Robert Montague would provide further details when they make their presentations to the Sectoral Debate.

Commenting on domestic violence, which accounts for 37 per cent of murders in Jamaica, the prime minister said a domestic violence coordinator would be established at every police station.

Consultative Committee

He said a consultative committee would also be established, comprising a justice of the peace, pastors, school principals and other community leaders.

"Once there is a report to a police station of an incident of domestic violence, the domestic violence coordinator will be alerted in parallel with the formal investigative procedure. He or she will visit with those allegedly involved and this visit will be followed up by visits from members of the consultative committee engaging those involved in a process of dialogue and reconciliation."

He said early intervention was critical to solving the problem of domestic violence in Jamaica. Holness also encouraged members of the parliamentary Opposition to join forces with the Government in its effort to tackle the problem of crime.

"The criminals must not feel that there is a political divide on the resolve to fight crime and violence in Jamaica," he stressed.

edmond.campbell@gleanerjm.com

Holness: Plans afoot for fixed election date

The Observer



Prime Minister Andrew Holness

KINGSTON, Jamaica — Prime Minister Andrew Holness says plans are afoot for a fixed election date.

Holness, on the campaign trail leading up to the February 25 General Election, promised to implement this if his Jamaica Labour Party won the election.

Holness today told the House, during his contribution to the budget, that he has instructed Justice Minister Delroy Chuck to table a Ministry Paper and draft legislation for the fixing of election dates.

The prime minister said if the country is serious about fiscal discipline, this is a necessary move.

“...If we are serious about fiscal discipline and obeying our own fiscal rules, elections can no longer be allowed to supervene the fiscal cycle. Neither should the country be disrupted by protracted periods of uncertainty; mobilising, demobilising and then mobilising again according to political expediency,” Holness said.

He said this comes at a significant cost to business and delays the growth agenda.

“The experience underscores the reason why Jamaica must move to a fixed election date. To this end, I have given instructions to the minister of justice to table a ministry paper and draft legislation for the fixing of election dates,” he added.

He stressed that it is a critical plank of the growth agenda, which is to reduce the uncertainty of government action, reduce time for decisions, flatten hierarchical structures, and speed up bureaucratic processes.

“This will reduce political risks and government-related risks in seven investments, thereby making Jamaica a more competitive environment,” said Holness.

The End