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
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
The impact of the potential formalisation of plea bargaining with the passage of legislation currently before Parliament

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

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.

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@ttparliament.org.

Committees Unit
April 7, 2017

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