

13th May 2024

Statement by the Guyana Press Association

The Guyana Press Association is concerned about the lack of response from the Guyana Police Force to media queries related to an alleged sexual assault and cyberbullying made against a former Minister of Government and Member of Parliament. Based on public statements via a press conference held by a named woman, reports were made to the police in the week of May 6th - May 10th. On Friday May 10th, a query made by a journalist via the Joint Services/Press Whatsapp Group was acknowledged by Mark Ramotar, Head of the Corporate Communications (PR arm of the GPF). It has been three days since queries by numerous journalists remain unanswered by the police. These questions have been asked in a medium that includes the hierarchy of the Guyana Police Force including Commissioner of Police (Acting) Clifton Hicken and several government ministers including Home Affairs Minister Robeson Benn and Public Affairs Minister Kwame McCoy. Enquiries have also been made directly to the Crime Chief, Assistant Commissioner Wendell Blahum and Deputy Commissioner Calvin Brutus. Among the queries from the media are:

- Whether the police (At Cove and John Police Station) received a report about an alleged rape implicating a former Minister of Government Nigel Dharamlall
- Whether the police can confirm it received a report about alleged cyber bullying
- Can the police say what action has since been taken
- Has the Former Minister been invited for questioning

The lack of response to these queries raises serious questions about the police willingness and ability to not only investigate itself but also politicians of any sitting party in government.

The lack of engagement on this and many other issues has led the GPA to conclude that public trust, being a critical component of law enforcement, has dealt with a severe blow. It does appear that the Guyana Police Force is being heavily influenced politically rather than professionally.