

Office of the Leader of the Opposition

For Immediate Release

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Opposition response to the Hon. Speakers statement

This statement is sent by the Leader of The Opposition Hon. V. Arden McLean on behalf of Opposition members Mr. Anthony Eden MLA, Mr. Alva Suckoo MLA, Mr. Christopher Saunders MLA and Mr. Bernie Bush MLA.

The public statement issued and signed by Hon. Mckeeva Bush yesterday, 24th February 2020, substantiates the rumours about his actions on 21st February 2020. In light of this confirmation, the members of the Official Opposition are now in a position to comment on this matter in a responsible manner.

Rightly, the court of public opinion recognises the seriousness of his actions, especially, as it resulted in a woman being injured, in the line of work. The hashtag #sheisupported attests to this. Women face enough challenges in the workplace: gender bias, unequal pay and inadequate benefits, without having to contend with violence and/or abuse.

Whilst we note Mr. Bush's apologies for his actions, it is clear that he is not dealing with the challenges of his grief and use of alcohol. However, what Mr. Bush fails to note in his public statement, is the very privileged and public role that he occupies as Speaker of the House. Whilst this matter remains under criminal investigation, this incident leaves a very public stain on our Legislative Assembly.

In the absence of him voluntarily choosing to stand aside to seek the professional help he clearly needs, a decision must now be taken by the Unity Government of which he is a member. Recognising that our Constitution requires a two thirds majority for the removal of the Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition contacted the Premier, yesterday, 24th February 2020, to discuss this issue and the way forward. The Premier confirmed that he is in discussions with his caucus.

The seriousness of this incident means it may very well progress into a criminal matter and the public must be cognisant that the vast majority of registered voters are potential jurors. In addition, there are disciplinary procedures within the Legislative Assembly that may be employed. However, in the interest of fairness and natural justice, our actions as legislators must not be seen to impede, prejudice or influence a criminal investigation that may result in a matter before the courts.

We must all continue to support the victim in the matter and leave judgment and atonement for Mr. Bush in the hands of his family, the electorate and the justice system.

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