

CJ's action unlawful ...threatens legal action

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The Judiciary and the administration of justice in this country are currently under the greatest threat in this nation's history, attorney Gerald Ramdeen has said.

Ramdeen yesterday chastised Chief Justice Ivor Archie, three unnamed Appeal Court judges and three unnamed High Court judges for participating in an "entirely unlawful" meeting to decide the fate of 53 people affected by the unresolved matters left by former chief magistrate Marcia Ayers-Caesar.

Ayers-Caesar was appointed as a High Court Judge on April 12.

On April 27 Ayers-Caesar tendered her resignation as a judge after it was realised that she had left 53 matters part heard.

Ramdeen said Ayers-Caesar needs to tell her side of the story in the matter.

This country's Judiciary has time and time again been able to withstand controversies throughout our nation's history, Ramdeen said. This may not be the case this time around, he added.

"We have managed to do very well in surviving all of those instances in our history but one wonders whether we will survive this one which has transpired over the past two months because when one looks back at what has taken place over the last two months, I can say the Judiciary and the administration of justice is under a greater threat than ever before and we are clearly in very dangerous and very perilous times, and those who are to steer us out of this are disappointing us with every step that they take," Ramdeen said.

In an attempt to address the backlog left by Ayers-Caesar the Chief Justice convened a meeting with key stakeholders on Wednesday.

Following that meeting, the Judiciary issued a release which stated that the 53 matters be restarted "de novo".

Ramdeen said three Appeal Court judges, three High Court judges, Archie as well as Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Roger Gaspard attended Wednesday's meeting along with others. He claimed that "the letter sent from the CJ's office to the people requested to attend the meeting was misleading".

The 53 people affected by the situation were not heard at that meeting, Ramdeen said.

Ramdeen questioned what gave Archie the power to convene that meeting.

“This has never been done before, where does the Chief Justice get power to do this, where does this body of persons get this power to do this?” he questioned.

Archie and no one else is above the law of this land, Ramdeen said.

He asked what would stop Archie from convening another meeting behind closed doors outside of the court to determine others matters that should be handled in the courtroom.

Ramdeen said the sad state of this country’s judiciary is evident as a Special General Meeting of the Law Association is to be held on Thursday to vote on whether a motion of no confidence will be brought against Archie.

On Friday the Judicial and Legal Service Commission (JLSC) is to appear before the High Court because of its refusal to comply with the law to answer requests for information pertaining to recent judicial appointments.

Ramdeen is the attorney for Akili Charles, who is one of the 53 whose matters are now left in abeyance by Ayers-Caesar. Ramdeen has written Archie calling on him to withdraw the decision for the matters to be restarted.

If Archie does not respond by tomorrow, Ramdeen has signalled his intention to take the matter to the High Court.