

Lawyers were duped

DARCEL CHOY Wednesday, May 31 2017

ONE senior attorney who attended the specially-convened ‘summit’ which determined that the 53 cases left unresolved by former chief magistrate Marcia Ayers-Caesar be restarted “de novo,” says no such decision was made.

According to Senior Counsel Sophia Chote in a letter to Law Association president Douglas Mendes, SC, no decision was taken at last Wednesday’s meeting to have the cases restarted.

Chote was among those invited to the meeting at the Hall of Justice where, according to a brief statement from the Judiciary’s Court Protocol and Information Manager Alicia Carter-Fisher it said that a “consensus” was reached at the meeting between key stakeholders to restart Ayers-Caesar’s unfinished cases from the beginning.

Chote’s position was disclosed by attorney Gerald Ramdeen, who is representing six of the men whose cases are affected by the decision taken at the meeting. At a press conference at his Cornelio Street office, Woodbrook, yesterday, Ramdeen disclosed what Chote shared with the Law Association’s president.

She was quoted as telling Mendes, “At the end of the meeting, I would say that the majority of persons expressed the view that perhaps it was better for these matters to be started de novo. There was certainly no decision taken on the matter nor were we individually polled for our views.” She said that she and association vice president Rajiv Persad left the meeting when it ended and were not asked to view any press release nor were they told that there was going to be a press release.

“How could the people of this country be told by the Judiciary that the 53 matters are going to be restarted and at that meeting agreed that is the position and Chote who attended the meeting on behalf of the Law Association is sending a report to the Association confirming that no decision was taken at this meeting. How could the Judiciary do this to the people of this country?” Ramdeen asked.

He said the Law Association and its members who attended the meeting were misled as they were told the purpose of it was to engage in constructive discussion on the administration of justice in the magistracy.

Those who also attended the summit which was chaired by Chief Justice Ivor Archie, included three Judges of the Court of Appeal, three Judges of the High Court, four sitting Magistrates, the Registrar of the Supreme Court and the Director of Public Prosecutions.

“How could those sitting Judges of the High Court have allowed this to happen and after the Judiciary issued a release that clearly was meant to deceive and mislead and not one of them had the courage to say this is wrong, this did not happen, we did not agree,” Ramdeen said.

He said it was clear that the Judiciary misled the public by the statements made in its press release on May 25 and called on the Law Association to make a public statement on the matter immediately.

Ramdeen said that Archie must go following this and he called on Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley and President Anthony Carmona to take responsibility for what is happening. The majority of the part-heard cases was adjourned to tomorrow by Acting Chief Magistrate Busby Maria Busby Earle- Caddle. Ramdeen said a number of lawyers have planned to appear on that day to indicate to her that she ought not to preside over any proceedings that deals with the 53 matters.

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