



NEWS RELEASE

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GRENADA GOVERNMENT COMMITS TO FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA

ST. GEORGE'S, GRENADA, MARCH 27, 2012 _ The Prime Minister's Office categorically denies that it had anything to do with the reported termination of Mr. Rawle Titus by the Grenada Advocate newspaper.

While the Prime Minister's Office did point out its concerns over the "inaccuracies" in a report, which appeared on the front page of the March 9th edition of the newspaper, there was no "demand" for an apology.

The facts are as follows: An article, which appeared on the front page of the March 9th edition of the Grenada Advocate, attributed certain statements to Prime Minister Thomas, which were found to be inaccurate.

A cordial discussion ensued between Press Secretary, Richard Simon and Mr. Titus, who suggested that contact be made with the newspaper's General Manager, Susan Clarke, in Barbados, following which a course of action was agreed, with all correspondence copied to Mr. Titus.

When the agreed course of action did not materialize in a following edition of the Grenada Advocate, a query was sent by the Press Secretary to Mr. Titus, copied to the Barbados office of the Grenada Advocate.

On Friday March 23, 2012 at 10.00 A.M., Ms. Clarke replied, "we wish to extend our sincerest apologies for the absence of an apology in either of the editions of the Grenada Advocate on March 16 and 23, 2012. Please be assured that an apology will be carried in the next edition of our newspaper, March 30, 2012. Once again we apologise for our tardiness as well as for any embarrassment the news item published on March 9, may have caused to the Office of the Prime Minister."

On this basis the issue was considered settled.

However a further communication from Mr. Titus on Monday, on Monday, March 26 2012, which was copied to Ms. Clarke, accused the Prime Minister's office of presenting a "clear threat to press freedom" and "unnecessary tactics of intimidation", among other things.

For more information contact: PRESS SECRETARY - Richard Simon



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Neither the Prime Minister nor his office, sought directly or indirectly, the termination of Mr. Titus, and is unaware of the reason or reasons for his termination by the newspaper's management. The Grenada government has never, over the past three years, attempted to pressure or intimidate any business or media house to "tow the government's line" or to influence the dismissal of any journalist, as previous administrations have done.

Prime Minister Thomas therefore reiterates his commitment to the freedom of the media, as one element of his policy of open and transparent government.

"The Prime Minister is fully committed to the undertaking he gave prior to coming to office and maintains that position. Freedom of the media does not mean that inaccuracies and mis-information must not be challenged and/or corrected, whether it affects someone in authority or an ordinary citizen," Simon said Monday.

He noted the Prime Minister's continued commitment to the development and implementation of a media policy, as well as the passage in Parliament of a Freedom of Information Act as part of the government's 2012 legislative agenda.

"It is unfortunate that attempts to clarify or correct information is seen as intimidation or an attack on press freedom. Members of the media community are well aware that there is no attack on the freedom of the press in Grenada," the Press Secretary added.

Simon commented that under the watch of Prime Minister Tillman Thomas, Grenada will never return to the recent past, during which, among other things, the court system was used to silence the media and the threat of the law used to close down media houses.

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