

The Gleaner- Probing Justice | Appealing For Judges - Shortage Of Blamed For Pile-Up Of Appellate Cases

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Seven judges - three puisne judges, three acting puisne judges, and a master-in-chamber - will be sworn in to serve in the Supreme Court today, but that will do nothing to reduce the backlog of cases at the Court of Appeal, whose president has charged that a shortage of judges is a major problem.

"We have had seven judges for the last 50 years, while the pool of courts from which we get cases has expanded significantly," Dennis Morrison, president of the Court of Appeal, told **The Gleaner** recently.

Morrison noted that over the same 50-year period, the number of judges in the Supreme Court and the parish courts has more than doubled but not so in the Court of Appeal.

"Our number remains the same, while the population of the country has also nearly doubled since Independence, and the crime rate has gone up, as is painfully obvious, exponentially," added Morrison.

He pointed out that in addition to appeals from the lower courts, there are appeals from the Disciplinary Committee of the General Legal Council and other disciplinary bodies such as those concerning surveyors and accountants, which come before the Court of Appeal. Morrison noted that there is currently a large number of appeals from the Gun Court, which came into existence in the mid-1970s.

In expressing concern over the Government's neglect to make adequate provisions for an increase in the number of appellate judges over the years, Morrison drew a reference to Trinidad and Tobago, where 12 appellate judges serve half Jamaica's population.

He noted that in Barbados and The Bahamas, four appellate judges are barely able to manage in populations of approximately 10 per cent and 12 per cent Jamaica's size, respectively.

The Court of Appeal president said that despite the amended legislation in 2008 to allow for the appointment of up to six more appellate judges, it has not materialised because of lack of space at the court building on King Street in downtown Kingston.

Last June, several years after the proposal to relocate the Accountant General's Department to allow for the expansion of the Court of Appeal was first mooted, that department finally moved into more suitable refurbished accommodation closer to the Waterfront.

The plan now is for the space formerly occupied by the Accountant General's Department to be renovated to provide additional space for the Court of Appeal.

Morrison is hoping that construction will start early this year and that the much-needed space can be available by September to allow for the appointment of the additional judges.

He noted that the judges have no control over when the construction would be completed.

The Gleaner - Finally! - Judith Pusey Heads To Supreme Court

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After nearly two decades in the lower tier of the country's judicial system, Senior Parish Judge Judith Pusey is heading to the Supreme Court. Pusey is one of four parish court judges who will be sworn in as Supreme Court judges today, the Court Management Services (CMS) has confirmed.

According to the CMS, Pusey will be appointed to act as a puisne judge during a ceremony scheduled to take place at King's House. Another parish court judge who will take the oath today to act as a puisne judge is Simone Wolfe-Reece, daughter of former Chief Justice Lensley Wolfe.

The others are Annmarie Nembhard and Natalie Hart-Hines, who will act as master-in-chambers at the Supreme Court.

Three acting puisne judges are to be appointed to their positions full time. They are Carolyn Tie, Stephanie Jackson-Haisley, and Sonya Wint-Blair.

LOOP NEWS - Court appearance of latest churchman on ‘minor’ sex rap delayed

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The St Elizabeth church elder who was last week taken into custody for allegedly sexually assaulting a minor, has been charged with the reported act.

The accused clergyman is 58-year-old Leebert Webster.

He was scheduled to appear before the St Elizabeth Parish Court on Thursday, but did not appear in court as scheduled.

His absence was attributed to his case file being still at the registrar at the Black River Police Station.

The accused is now expected to appear in court on Friday, when it is expected that an application for bail will be made on his behalf.

The church elder was taken into custody in connection with the sexual assault of the minor last year.

Reports were that the girl, who attends the church where the elder is a leader, was molested last November.

After the alleged offence was discovered, a report was subsequently made to the police in the parish.

Following the complaint, investigations were carried out, which resulted in the arrest of the churchman on December 28.

LOOP NEWS - Men freed of alleged CB heist after prosecution chickens out

LOOP NEWS CREATED : 4 JANUARY 2018 JAMAICA NEWS

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Three men who were charged in connection with the alleged theft of more than \$4 million worth of chicken meat from Caribbean Broilers in 2016, have been freed in court.

The accused men Ricardo Plummer, David Daniels and Fabian Cole, were freed in the Kingston and St Andrew Parish Court on Wednesday after prosecutors conceded that they did not have sufficient evidence to successfully proceed with the case.

The charges arose after a container loaded with chicken meat was stolen from Caribbean Broilers.

Plummer, a truck driver, along with Daniels and Cole, who operate wholesale establishments, were charged in April 2016 after the disappearance of the container.

The allegations were that Plummer drove a trailer onto the company's premises on Arnold Road in Kingston, and removed a container with more than 600 cases of chicken meat.

There were reports that some of the stolen meat was found at shops operated by Daniels and Cole.

Prosecutors Detail Background of Lottery Scam Suspect

Prosecutors allege the last suspect fighting charges in what's believed to be the first large-scale Jamaican lottery scam tried in U.S. courts funneled money between the two countries through her airline job.

Jan. 4, 2018, at 12:38 p.m.

By BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The last suspect fighting charges in what is believed to be the first large-scale Jamaican lottery scam tried in U.S. courts funneled money between the two countries through her airline job, prosecutors allege in new court filings.

Melinda Bulgin, of Providence, Rhode Island, also has had legal training, contradicting her assertion that she was confused about her legal rights when questioned by authorities, Assistant U.S. Attorney Clare Hochhalter argues.

The government is opposing Bulgin's effort to have statements and other evidence from alleged illegal interrogations in Jamaica and Rhode Island in 2015 disallowed at trial. Bulgin maintains her rights to have an attorney present and to not incriminate herself were violated.

Hochhalter argues that Bulgin wasn't entitled to U.S. Constitution protections in Jamaica and that during interrogations on U.S. soil she was made aware of her rights and didn't "unequivocally" request an attorney.

Bulgin denied in court documents that she had any form of legal training, even though she studied forensic science — the application of science to criminal and civil law — at Pace University in New York," Hochhalter said, calling her "an intelligent, successful scammer.

A hearing on the matter is scheduled Jan. 22 in federal court in North Dakota, where the case began when a state resident lost her life savings of more than \$300,000 in 2011. At least 90 Americans lost a total of more than \$5.7 million to the scam, authorities say.

The suspects are accused of calling victims about bogus lottery winnings, persuading them to pay advance fees to receive the purported winnings, then keeping the money without paying out anything to the victims. Hochhalter said Bulgin was caught while transporting cash between the U.S. and Jamaica "on one of her many virtually free trips to Jamaica as a then-employee of Delta Airlines."

A federal investigation resulted in conspiracy, fraud and money laundering charges against 27 people. All have pleaded guilty or been convicted except Bulgin and two suspects who remain fugitives in Jamaica.

Bulgin was to stand trial this month, but the prosecution and defense requested it be delayed due in part to "voluminous" evidence. U.S. District Judge Daniel Hovland has moved the trial to mid-September.

CAYMAN NEWS - Jamaican LGBT activist calls for hate-speech pastor's ban

(CNS): A Jamaican LGBT activist is calling on that country's government to ban Pastor Steven Anderson, an American hate preacher who is planning to visit the island later this month. Anderson was banned from several countries, such as Canada, UK, Botswana and South Africa, after calling for gay people to be stoned to death and praising the mass shooting at an Orlando nightclub. His hate-filled sermons include calling for women to be removed from the workplace, banned from voting or reading books of their choice. Anderson, who leads the Faithful Word Baptist Church in Tempe, Arizona, has also called medical doctors sorcerers.

It is not clear who has invited the controversial pastor to Jamaica but Anderson and a small delegation are planning what they call a "missions trip" to the country on 29 January for several days.

However, Jay John, a local activist for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, has started a petition calling on the Jamaican government to stop the trip. Jamaica continues to court controversy because of the discrimination that many LGBT people face in the country and the retention of outdated British buggery laws. But despite the culture of homophobia, some Christians in Jamaica are calling for change and Bishop Howard Gregory, the head of the Anglican Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, has spoken against the colonial-era sodomy laws.

Another prominent LGBT activist, Maurice Tomlinson, filed a constitutional challenge against the buggery laws last year, which is proceeding through the Jamaican courts. This comes at a time in Jamaica when the local press and human rights advocates are beginning to push for the advancement of LGBT rights and better treatment for these minority groups.

In his petition John notes that Anderson is not just bringing anti-gay hate speech to Jamaica but that he is an individual who approves of terrorism, given his support for the Orlando Massacre.

"Clearly the pastor has no respect for humanity and his messages go against our democratic ideals and our motto, 'Out of many, one people', the activist stated. "Pastor Anderson's messages attack and demean women, seeing women as second class citizens, unequal to men, discrediting them as holistic beings who are workers, academics and leaders. The pastor refers to women as 'home keepers and not office keepers' and sees women who work as having loose morals."

He said the Jamaican people are asking the government to show leadership and stand as an example to fellow Caribbean countries to denounce terrorism and violence against marginalised groups.