



GUYANA NEWS

## Teixeira accuses opposition of terrorist tactics



Gail Teixeira

By Stabroek News December 31, 2021



Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira yesterday accused APNU+AFC MPs of engaging in terror tactics during Wednesday's failed bid to derail the second reading and passage of the Natural Resource Fund Bill.

While calling on every section of society to condemn the Opposition's behaviour, the Minister said that the core issue remains that the legislative arm of government was violated and repeatedly defiled.

"What happened on December 29 was preplanned, organized and orchestrated prior to the event of December 29. People came in with whistles, people came in with placards, people came in and knew where to go to the control room to disrupt the internet," she said.

"We were totally disabled in the National Assembly. There was no internet. The control room had been invaded and disconnected and disrupted. This was terrorist tactics...None of what happened yesterday (Wednesday) was spontaneous," she added.



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During Wednesday night's session, the Parliamentary floor was invaded by the Opposition members who were blaring whistles and shouting in an effort to drown out Finance Minister Dr Ashni Singh. Eventually, a group led by MP Annette Ferguson snatched the Speaker's Mace and made a run for it but was unsuccessful.

Recounting the events, Teixeira said that the floor space between the Opposition and government sides in the House is sacred and should never be breached while in session. She added that by breaching the space and surrounding Singh as he made his presentation, the APNU+AFC Opposition engaged in an act of intimidation.

"This is not acceptable behaviour. In fact, we mustn't take lightly what happens with the mace...the mace is the authority of the legislature. It is a symbol of the authority of the National Assembly and any attempt to remove it is, therefore, an attempt to undermine, to overthrow the authority of the National Assembly, which is our legislature...what happened with the Mace is one which is a treacherous act. Treacherous because they tried to undermine and disrupt one of the three branches of government," she posited.

She further contended that the Opposition attempted to provoke the government into an altercation but they were unsuccessful. She said that the errant members will have to be sanctioned and dealt with accordingly.

Without naming Stabroek News, Teixeira also criticised a Page One Comment in yesterday's edition of the newspaper which rapped both the opposition and the government.

Teixeira erroneously contended that the Page One Comment stated that the misbehaviour of the MPs would not have occurred had the government not proceeded with the bill. The Page One Comment did not say this. Teixeira then went on to draw a comparison between her erroneous conclusion and domestic violence.



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“What the newspaper did by saying that well we shouldn’t have brought the (Natural Resource Fund) bill then this would not have happened was almost like saying to a woman that was beaten all the time well you caused it. Your poor husband beats you all the time, well you don’t know how to behave yourself, you don’t cook properly, (and) you are not there to greet him when he comes home,” the Minister told a press conference yesterday.

The Page One Comment said: “The grotesque defiling of Parliament yesterday by APNU MPs which included the seizing of the Speaker’s Mace must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. APNU – and in particular its main component – the PNCR were not so long ago pilloried for their conduct during the drama that followed the March 2, 2020, general elections as they hoped for vulgar rigging to get them back into office. Thankfully that enterprise was repulsed only for APNU to further undermine its public image yesterday by engaging in the most reprehensible behaviour in this hallowed chamber. All those MPs who participated in this tomfoolery must be placed before the Privileges Committee and stern action taken against them”.

The newspaper added that the PPP/C’s decision to railroad the NRF bill through parliament was equally unacceptable. It further stated that the PPP/C’s penchant for dominating all of the space available to it – and in this case-control of the oil wealth that each and every citizen of this country is a part stakeholder of – is legend.

“By passing a bill which gives it absolute oversight control, the PPP/C government has already effectively undermined the Board of Directors it intends to put in place. This board is already handicapped and will be looked at with great suspicion as if they were handmaidens of Freedom House. President Ali must take full responsibility for this failure.

“Yesterday’s debacle in the House in several acts underlines how far removed the ordinary citizens of this country are from any sensible leadership in securing their interests,” the Stabroek News said.

Teixeira used her platform to criticise the page One Comment along with several other civil society organisations for objecting to the government's NRF bill. Teixeira said "We have a newspaper today that makes a comment (that) the Opposition should not have done what they did but guess what, they blamed the PPP/C and say we caused it because we went ahead with the bill."

At no point in the Page One comment, did the Stabroek News accuse the government of provoking the Opposition's disruption.

Nevertheless, Teixeira said that taking the middle road is unacceptable in this case and called on both civil society organisations and the newspaper to choose a side. She said that the Opposition's attempt to seize the ceremonial mace is unprecedented.

"I just saw a statement from the Guyana Human Rights Association that just basically pretends as if nothing happened last night. They make a comment about us passing the bill but nothing about what happened last night... Where is the civil society organizations that get so offended?" she questioned.

"So what that newspaper does, and I hope the representative of a newspaper is here, by saying plague on both houses and saying (not its exact words) that basically it's saying that we can't ever take a position that is critical of the APNU+AFC," she added, before going on to list instances where civil society organisations have remained silent during the APNU+AFC time in government.



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