



GUYANA | President rejects US offer to facilitate talks with opposition

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GUYANA | President rejects US offer to facilitate talks with opposition

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, August 31, 2023 - Guyana's President Mohamed Irfaan Ali has rejected an offer from US Ambassador Sarah-Ann Lynch for her office to facilitate dialogue between the government and the opposition, pointing out that there is no need for the US involvement in brokering bipartisan talks on Guyana's development.

"I don't know why there needs to be brokerage of any conversation. I don't know that I need someone to broker conversations with the Opposition. We are a country here and we have responsibilities, and as President of Guyana, I have a responsibility for the people of Guyana, all the people of Guyana, including the Leader of the

President Ali was speaking with reporters after addressing an event at the Guyana Defence Force's headquarters at Camp Ayanganna.

The President said if Opposition Leader Aubrey Norton reaches out to him, they could have a conversation. "The Leader of the Opposition can pick up the phone tomorrow and call me and I'll answer him," he said.



United States Ambassador Sarah-Ann Lynch

Speaking on Gordon Moseley's Jump Start programme, outgoing American Ambassador to Guyana Sarah-Ann Lynch said that Washington would be willing to bring both sides to the table.

"The US stands ready to help in that role for sure. I think open dialogue, frank discussions are very important and I think bringing the people together is key to the ultimate success of Guyana so certainly the US stands ready to do whatever we

can to bring all parties together," she said.

A United States Agency for International Development Governance Assessment on Guyana had recommended power sharing to engage in order to manage the country's oil wealth efficiently.

Asked whether he would make a last-ditch effort to seek a meeting with the Opposition Leader Aubrey Norton by formally writing him, he said that was on the cards.

"I don't have to formally write someone to talks to them," he said. The President said why Mr Norton could not try calling him rather than propagate the "convenient narrative" that he was not meeting.

"It is inconvenient for the truth which is the Leader of the Opposition has no interest in meeting with the President. That narrative is too inconvenient for some to carry," he said.



On the 1st of August, 2022, at an Emancipation Day event in the Town of New Amsterdam Ali extended his hand to Norton for a handshake. Norton coldly refused, bowing instead..Norton says he is not satisfied with the performance of Ali's government, which is neglecting communities that are viewed as APNU strongholds, and African people in general.

The President reiterated that his engagement with the opposition was not confined to an individual or office but with "every single person" regardless of Mr Norton's demeanour towards him.

That includes a lawsuit by the Opposition Leader to block consultations on constitutional matters, "does not have the basic decency" to shake his hands or apologise for APNU+AFC's alleged attempt to rig the March 2, 2020 general and regional elections.

"If I come over to you and shake your hands and you refuse to shake my hands, you're telling me I want nothing to do with you. Or is my hand too filthy? I know what my hand is," he said.

With a number of key constitutional appointments requiring engagements between the President and the Opposition Leader, the two sides have not been meeting, but the President insists that he is ready to meet with the Opposition Leader at anytime, even as he shies away from committing to extending an invitation to such engagements.



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