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Norton to Gov't: 'Shape Up or Stand Alone on Venezuela Crisis'



BY **ADMIN** — May 16, 2025 in **News**



Leader of the Opposition and People's National Congress Reform (PNCR) Aubrey Norton

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Opposition Leader Aubrey Norton has launched a blistering attack on the government, accusing it of dictatorship, political exclusion, and national security negligence in the face of Venezuela's escalating threats to Guyana's sovereignty over Essequibo.

In a strongly worded statement, Norton declared that the opposition "cannot and will not cooperate" with the government unless there is "meaningful engagement" and respect for the role of the opposition in national affairs. He accused the ruling People's Progressive Party (PPP) of sidelining the opposition even as Guyana faces heightened tensions over Venezuela's illegal claims to the Essequibo region.

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"Essequibo belongs to us," Norton affirmed, reiterating the opposition's unwavering support for Guyana's case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which seeks to uphold the 1899 arbitral award affirming Guyana's territorial boundaries. "We support our soldiers in their efforts to protect Guyana's territorial integrity. We wish, of course, they were given more resources to do so."

Norton condemned Venezuela's so-called "elections" in Essequibo, calling them a "violation of international law," and warned that no Guyanese should participate or be allowed to participate in any such process.

But the opposition leader reserved his strongest criticism for the Irfaan Ali administration's domestic response to the crisis, accusing it of offering concerts and political optics instead of a credible national strategy.

"While the Venezuelans are purporting to hold an election in Essequibo, the Guyana government is inviting us to a concert," Norton said. "It makes absolutely no sense."

He claimed the government ignored proposals made by the opposition during parliamentary debates and in direct meetings with President Irfaan Ali. "We were aware of Venezuela's sham elections. The government knew too, and yet did absolutely nothing. Now they come to us with a motion in parliament and expect our support. That is unacceptable."

Norton revealed that President Ali had promised to hand over the chairmanship of the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee to opposition MP Amanza Walton-Desir — a promise that remains unfulfilled. He said this broken commitment was emblematic of a broader pattern of exclusion and disrespect.

"They even planned their concerts without involving opposition-controlled regions, and now want our support for a motion? We will not provide this government with a photo opportunity," he declared.

The opposition leader went further, highlighting the government's failure to constitute the Local Government Commission despite receiving opposition nominees since last year. "They continue to be divisive. Unless the government changes course, there will be no cooperation."

Norton also linked the government's treatment of the opposition to broader governance concerns, including the controversial police response to recent unrest following the murder of 11-year-old Adrianna Younge.

"If the government has nothing to hide, why not invite an international body to investigate?" Norton asked. He criticised the use of anti-terrorism laws to charge young men allegedly involved in looting during the protests, calling it a misuse of power.

"We do not support looting or violence. But we also do not support young men being jailed under terrorism laws for petty crimes. It is a totalitarian overreach," he stated.

Norton concluded with a warning: "Any future cooperation on the Venezuela issue or any national matter will only come after the government recognizes the role of the opposition and stops operating as if it alone controls the destiny of Guyana. We will not allow it to continue."

The statement signals a hardening of the opposition's stance and raises serious questions about the government's ability to maintain national unity amid one of the most dangerous geopolitical threats in Guyana's modern history.

See full statement below:

WE CANNOT COOPERATE AND SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT SINCE IT IS OPPRESSING THE PEOPLE

We in the opposition are aware that the arbitral award of 1899 settled the question of the border between Guyana and Venezuela. Essequibo belongs to us, and we will continue our constant support to ensure Essequibo continues to be the property of Guyana. We support the case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and we believe that we will have a positive outcome, and it is our view that all parties should honor the outcome of the judgment at the ICJ.

We support our soldiers in their quest and efforts to protect Guyana's territorial integrity. We wish of course they were given more resources to do so. We denounce Venezuela's so-called elections in Essequibo.

There can be no such elections. No Guyanese should be voting or be allowed to vote in such an election. Such elections are a violation of international law and we support the actions to be taken to ensure that there are no elections held in the Essequibo which belongs to Guyana.

We are deeply concerned that the government has no plan to ensure Venezuela is kept at bay. It is ridiculous as far as we are concerned that while the Venezuelans are seeking to hold an

election purporting to have governors in Essequibo, the Guyana government is inviting us to a concert. It makes absolutely no sense.

It is ridiculous. We have made a number of proposals to the government in previous debates in the parliament and in meetings with the President, all of which the government failed to honour. We were aware that Venezuela is going to have these elections or rather sham elections and the government did absolutely nothing, but now, suddenly they are telling us about a concert and a motion in parliament.

We have passed a motion before with clear things that should have been done and the government failed to do them and so we cannot continue to support a government that is inactive on the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy and seems to only come alive when Venezuela acts up. That is unacceptable. As the opposition, we have continuously given our support to the government but the government refuses to engage the opposition.

They even had the audacity as they planned their concerts, etc. to not involve even the opposition controlled regions. They did it all by themselves but now coming to tell us that we must support a motion in parliament, that makes no sense to us. In my meeting with the president, the issue of the handing over of the parliamentary committee on foreign affairs to the opposition was raised and we were told that a meeting will be convened and Hon. Amanza Walton-Desir would have become the chairman of that parliamentary committee.

Up until now, no action has been taken to hand over the foreign affairs committee, yet you now come seeking our assistance and cooperation. We do not intend at all to provide you with the opportunity for optics. We want genuine involvement if we are to confront the problems facing the people of Guyana, especially as they relate to the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy.

There have been no serious meetings to even discuss a plan. Yes, we made many proposals and you did not respond to them but you also failed to convene meetings so that we can discuss critical national issues. As a government, you refused to put our representatives on boards.

The President wrote to me as Leader of the Opposition indicating he wanted to set up the Local Government Commission. We have sent our nominees since last year and they have not constituted the Commission. They are showing no interest in being inclusive.

They continue to be divisive and we believe moving forward, unless the government is prepared to engage the opposition in a meaningful way, we cannot continue to cooperate with them. Apart from the treatment of the opposition as it relates to the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy, we are now embroiled in a situation in which there's the murder of an 11-year-old

child and this government refuses to invite a reputable international organisation to investigate. I say to you, the people of Guyana, to the government; if the government has nothing to hide, if the police have nothing to hide, why would you not want a reputable international organisation to investigate the death of Adrianna Younge? That is a question you must answer.

And to add insult to injury, you picked up a lot of innocent Guyanese, charged them under a terrorism law and have them languishing in the prison just because you have control over the police and there are citizens out there who might not have the level of representation. We have sought legal assistance and we will seek to ensure that those persons are released.

Let it be clear, we do not support looting and violence, but at the same time, we cannot support the charging of young men for terrorism who are involved in looting. They must be charged under the appropriate law. This government is just dictatorial. They are totalitarian.

They believe they must control the total lives of the people of Guyana. We cannot and will not allow it. The misuse of the terrorism law must come to an end.

In the light of the foregoing, we will continue our support for the people of Guyana in this controversy with Venezuela, but let it be made very clear that any future cooperation or assistance to the government on this issue will come only after the government engages and recognises the role of the opposition in this country. So all Guyanese should be aware we are supportive of our actions to protect our territorial integrity, to ensure our soldiers are safe, to ensure that we denounce the elections in Venezuela. But we are unhappy with a government that continuously promises to implement decisions and fails to do so.

The last time we debated, we were to have a proper national public relations programme. The President himself told me he was going to undertake it and it never happened. We have had enough of the government wanting our support when Venezuela acts up, but then apply dictatorial methods to the people of Guyana, depriving them of freedom, depriving them of liberty, and the government operating as if it has the Transport for Guyana.

We will bring it to an end. There will not be cooperation and support in such an environment. Thank you.



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JOB VACANCY

PROJECT ASSISTANT

The Project Assistant is responsible for assisting with the management of community-based projects – technical training and sub-grants for the small economic livelihood projects of participating member organisations.

Main Responsibilities

- Review sub-grantee funds requests and reports for approved projects.
- Facilitate capacity building through technical training workshops and day-to-day guidance.
- Assist consultants and other team members with organising field visits, meetings, monitoring visits, and community exchanges.
- Prepare monthly and annual project activity reports
- Assist with preparing grant proposals
- Curate, produce and prepare project activities for public dissemination.
- Support meetings of the Project Steering Committee.

Qualifications

- Candidate must have a Diploma in Social Sciences from a recognized tertiary institution and five (5) subjects at the CXC Level plus three (3) years of related work experience in the related field.
- Demonstrated ability to support project activities and/or events in line with established procedures, instructions and understanding of evaluation metrics for success.
- Experience organising meetings and preparing– digital and written– notes for the file.
- Demonstrated keyboard skills and computer and digital literacy to facilitate, record and produce information and reports.
- Sound knowledge of Microsoft Suite using Windows and/or IOS operating systems.
- Independent, self-motivating and have demonstrated ability to work with limited supervision.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Contact: Telephone – + 592. 624.9910 for full Terms of Reference

Deadline for Submission: Monday, 3 March 2025



JOB VACANCY

MONITORING AND EVALUATION CONSULTANT

The Consultant has responsibility for monitoring and inspection of all projects supported by IDPADA-G.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

- Develop and strengthen monitoring, inspection and evaluation procedures.
- Monitor all project activities, expenditures and progress towards achieving the project output.
- Develop indicators and a monitoring strategy for the project success.
- Monitor and evaluate overall progress on achievement of results.
- Support monitoring and evaluation of the effects and sustainable impact of the project.
- Suggest strategies to the Project Management Team for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the project by identifying bottlenecks in completing project activities and developing plans to minimize or eliminate such bottlenecks.
- Report monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and annual progress on all project activities to the Project Coordinator.
- Assist the project personnel with M&E tools and support them in their use.
- Perform other duties as required.

Minimum Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience

- Bachelor's degree in public/business management, Economics of related field.
- At least five (5) years in design and implementation of M&E in development projects implemented by NGOs/CBOs.
- In depth knowledge on M&E and development issues.
- Experience in designing tools and strategies for data collection, analysis and production of reports.
- Proven ICT, especially in the development and use of database software.
- Demonstrates excellent communication skills (oral and written).
- Strong training and facilitation skills.

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