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## President, Opposition Leader meet for first time on constitutional, statutory appointments

By Tamica Garnett - May 14, 2022



*President, Dr. Irfaan Ali (third from left) and Leader of the Opposition, Aubrey Norton (left) at the meeting along with Attorney-General, Anil Nandlall (right) and Member of Parliament, Roysdale Forde*

## **— meet for the first time on constitutional, statutory appointments**

PRESIDENT, Dr. Irfaan Ali and Opposition Leader, Aubrey Norton met for the first time, officially, on Friday. The meeting was held at the Office of the President to discuss constitutional and statutory appointments.

The in-person visit followed the exchange of several pieces of written correspondence over the past few weeks. It also marked the first meeting between the President and an Opposition Leader since the government took office in August 2020.

The cordial meeting ended with an agreement from the President that the curriculum vitae (CVs) of the persons under consideration will be made available to Norton within two days, as per his request.

It was also agreed that the consultations will be guided by the Constitution and the in-person consultations will resume within a week, on a still to be determined date. This is according to a joint statement released by the two sides following the meeting.

According to the statement, Norton would have already been provided the details of the commissions along with the names of the persons being considered for the appointments to the varying commissions.

The discussion pertains to appointments to Guyana's Integrity Commission, the Judicial Service Commission, Police Service Commission and Teaching Service Commission. The Constitution provides for the appointments to the commissions to be made by the President in consultation with the Opposition Leader.

Norton attended the meeting accompanied by Member of Parliament, Roysdale Forde, while also present at the meeting was Attorney-General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Mohabir Nandlall. Norton was invited to meet with the President following a letter, dated April 29, 2022 sent by Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira. In that letter, Friday had been fixed as the date for the meeting.

"Prior to today's meeting, Leader of the Opposition by letter dated May 9, 2022, requested details of the appointments to be made," the joint statement noted.

Minister Teixeira had responded to Norton's letter on May 11; however, Norton wrote back on May 12 requesting further information regarding the names under consideration.

Minister Teixeira responded requesting specificity on the information that is being requested. That information was the CVs of the persons being considered. Speaking with the media briefly after exiting the Office of the President, Norton noted that he will be doing an assessment of the CVs before engaging again with the President.

“We agreed to engage and we engaged and we have now agreed that documents would be provided to us. You need to know about people [so] we need the CVs. Once we get the CVs, we will do what we have to do,” Norton commented.

When asked if he was satisfied with the meeting, Norton would only say: “I don’t know that there’s an issue of satisfaction, all I want to see is everything occur in keeping with law and keeping with the Constitution. I think we have been able to make this point and moving forward we will operate in keeping with the Constitution and what meaningful consultations mean.”

Norton dodged other questions asked by the media pertaining to his recognition of the government as legitimate and if other issues were discussed at the meeting.

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