



Norton throws caution to the wind amidst PNC's internal struggles

By Staff Reporter - April 2, 2024



Opposition Leader Aubrey Norton

–blames opposition's incoherence on fellow party members' lack of institutional knowledge, personal ambitions

DESPITE glaring reports stating otherwise, Opposition Leader Aubrey Norton, while refuting the accusation that he governs the People's National Congress-Reform (PNC-R) with an iron fist, blamed the opposition's incoherence on some of his colleagues' lack of institutional knowledge of the PNC-R and their personal ambitions over the party's interests.

This is the case despite Norton, on several occasions, ruffling the feathers of his fellow opposition colleagues by making unilateral decisions on matters of importance, while leaving them in the dark.

During a press conference last Thursday, Norton was asked about the accusations of the opposition being incoherent and if it is true that he governs the PNC-R with an iron fist.

In response, Norton said that the opposition meets to discuss matters of national importance. "We meet and discuss matters of national interest," Norton said, noting that since he was elected as leader of the PNC-R, members have been "involved in discussions."

The PNC-R Leader went on to accuse some members of the party of pursuing "ambition" over the party's interests. This comes at a time when senior members of the party, Roysdale Forde and Ganesh Mahipaul expressed an interest in contesting for the party's leadership.

He said: "There are some persons in the party and I could show you recently, who make it their duty to create the impression that there isn't [sic] discussions."

The incumbent PNC-R leader then indirectly slammed a party member for some statements made on the Guyana-Venezuela controversy.

He said: "Yet one person who has no responsibility for foreign affairs goes out and make[sic] comments, and then the person with responsibility for foreign affairs, who consulted with me, went out and make [sic] comments; now there is not much you can do when ambition is more important than the party's interests."

As he continued to deliver blows to this party members, Norton said that he does not believe the opposition's incoherence is related to the hosting of meetings.

"And the other thing too is the absence of institutional knowledge.

If you were not in the party over the years and these discussions were occurring, you would not have an idea of what is happening; and so you go and write in the era of social media looking for popularity," he said.

Although Norton has placed the blame for the opposition having differing views at the feet of some members of the party, Norton's leadership of the party has been heavily criticised both internally and externally from the inception of his tenure. As a result, this has led to several party members taking a step back in different ways.

For instance, in December, there were reports that Opposition Chief Whip Christopher Jones was taken aback after he found out that Norton had withdrawn an "urgent" parliamentary motion to address Venezuela's actions against Guyana.

Following Norton's address to the House, Jones interjected and asked the Speaker about the motion.

"Mr Speaker, I crave your indulgence and your guidance. The APNU+AFC submitted a motion of urgent public importance last Friday. Could you guide us in terms of how we proceed with that motion, sir?" the Opposition Chief Whip questioned.

In response, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Manzoor Nadir said: "I discussed that with the Leader of the Opposition, and we had agreed that I will allow him to make a statement and that motion will not go forward."

Unaware of the agreement between the Speaker and Norton, Jones appeared to have been caught off guard by Nadir's response.

Moreover, this year, the Opposition Leader unilaterally rearranged the shadow cabinet, resulting in many of his colleagues being shocked by these major changes.

For example, A Partnership for National Unity + Alliance For Change (APNU) Member of Parliament (MP), Jermaine Figueira was stripped of his portfolio as Shadow Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport.

In an invited comment on Norton's recent decision, Figueira told the Guyana Chronicle that he was initially "flabbergasted" by the decision, but has since accepted his fate.

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