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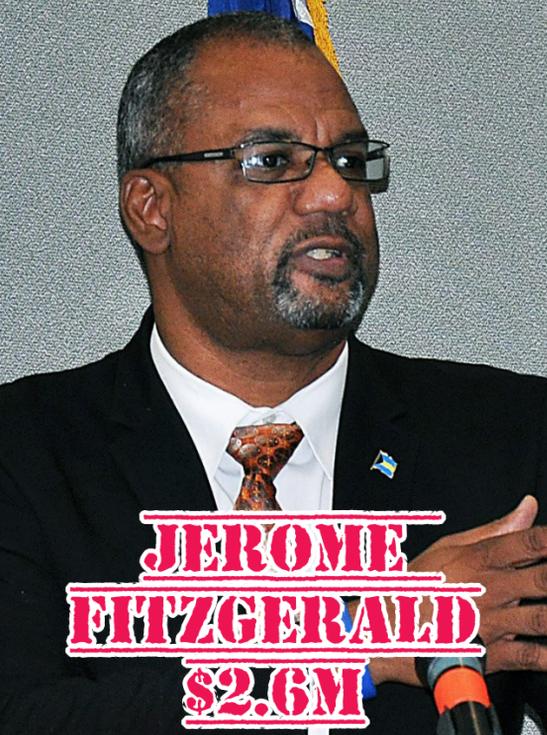
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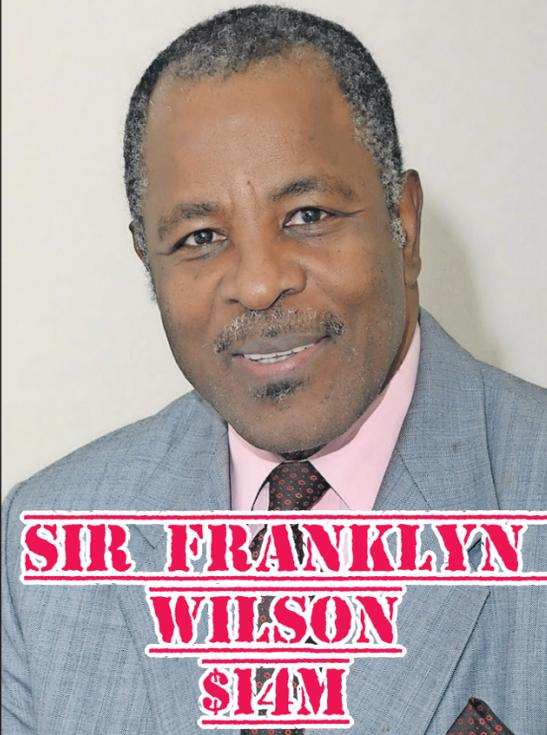
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## BPL bypassed process to dish out contracts - and guess who got them

By **KHRISNA RUSSELL**  
Deputy Chief Reporter  
[krussell@tribunemedia.net](mailto:krussell@tribunemedia.net)

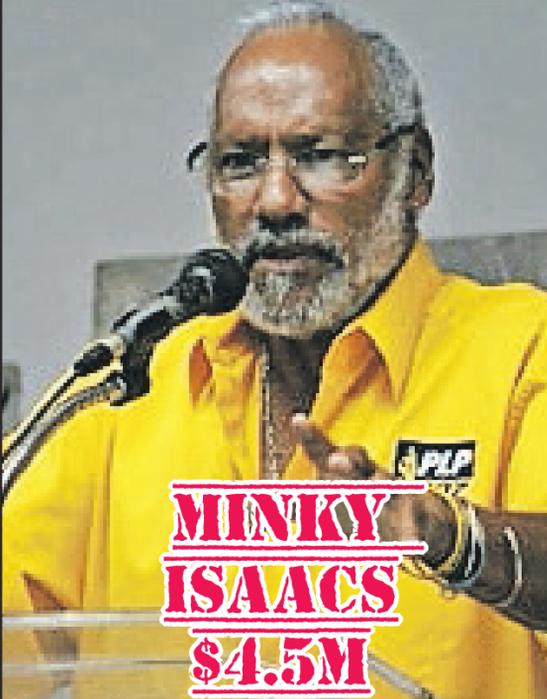
A FORENSIC investigation into Bahamas Power and Light Company unearthed glaring infractions of the tender process, revealing a company owned by the family of Jerome Fitzgerald was awarded a contract for brokerage work despite no participation in the tender process and a recommendation that another entity should be given the approval.

According to an Ernst & Young audit into BPL, in one "egregious" instance, Mr Fitzgerald's family

business, Bahamas Courier & Logistics (BCL), was awarded a contract over Pinder's Customs Brokerage, a company with the best bid. Mr Fitzgerald was minister of education in the last Christie administration.

The electricity provider spent \$2,626,001 with BCL since 2012. The audit further found in two separate instances, J S Johnson was the winning contractor in the bidding process for insurance coverage, but both contracts totaling \$14,183,159 were ultimately issued to Sunshine Insurance,

SEE PAGE THREE



**MINKY ISAACS**  
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## CEO'S PACKAGE \$34K A MONTH

By **KHRISNA RUSSELL**  
Deputy Chief Reporter  
[krussell@tribunemedia.net](mailto:krussell@tribunemedia.net)

THE Minnis administration has terminated the management services agreement between American company PowerSecure and Bahamas Power and Light (BPL), which enabled foreign BPL executives to be paid more than any Bahamian parliamentarian or executive at the electricity provider, according to

Works Minister Desmond Bannister yesterday.

Under the MSA, former BPL CEO Pamela Hill was paid a salary of \$25,000 per month and received \$6,000 each month in housing benefits, down from an initial \$8,719 monthly. She also received monthly benefits of \$3,833.33, Mr Bannister said in the House of Assembly.

SEE PAGE TWO



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## SECRET PLAN TO AXE 233 JOBS

By **RASHAD ROLLE**  
Tribune Staff Reporter  
[rrolle@tribunemedia.net](mailto:rrolle@tribunemedia.net)

POWERSECURE wanted to reduce Bahamas Power & Light's (BPL) staff by more than 200 workers, believing it could have saved the company "about \$20m" doing so, according to the company's long-concealed BPL business plan. Works Minister Desmond Bannister tabled the

document in Parliament yesterday, saying its plan for staff is not something the Minnis administration is committed to doing.

"Integral to the business plan, which the former administration agreed with, was a decision that a reduction of staff by approximately 30 per cent would result in savings of \$13m annually," Mr Bannister said. "The plan refers to the proposed reduction of staff at BPL as a 'business

necessity' and envisioned the separation of 233 BPL staff members through a redundancy process in August or October 2017, together with a possible reduction of an additional 64 staff members in September 2018. This business plan and the plan to separate 233 staff members at BPL has remained a secret of the former administration until today."

In its plan, PowerSecure said about BPL's current performance summary:

"Staffing levels are high by about 30 per cent, creating an opportunity to save about \$20m."

PowerSecure was aware that there was risk its plan for staff reduction wouldn't take off. "Political interference," it said in its discussion about risks to the execution of its business plan, would "impair making BPL a viable and solvent utility".

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PAMELA HILL, the former CEO of BPL.

Photo: Shawn Hanna/Tribune Staff

# CEO'S PACKAGE \$34K A MONTH

from page one

In addition to paying this monthly fee of \$34,833.33 for the former executive, Bahamian taxpayer dollars also paid \$27,322.46 in travel costs and \$23,637.55 in relocation costs. Mr Bannister said for quite some time, Bahamians paid travel

costs for a CEO who only lived in the Bahamas for five days each week – from Monday to Friday, but spent weekends elsewhere. She was terminated last month with immediate effect.

The executive vice president of generation and operation received a similar salary. This executive received \$33,583.33, with a salary of \$23,750, housing benefits of \$6,000 and other benefits of \$3,833.33.

The executive vice president of transmission and distribution operations cost taxpayers \$26,083.33. This included a salary of \$18,750, housing benefits of \$6,000 and other benefits of \$1,333.33.

“To put these salaries that the former administration agreed to reimburse to executives selected by PowerSecure in perspective, it must be appreciated that a member of Parliament is paid less in one year than any of the two top executives of BPL make in one month,” Mr Bannister said yesterday. “And the highest salary paid to any Bahamian executive at BPL is \$10,600 per month.

“This is indeed a wonderful example of what members opposite meant when they spoke of putting Bahamians first.”

He continued: “On August 17, 2017, the board of BPL wrote to PowerSecure to itemise certain alleged breaches of the MSA. In accordance therewith, PowerSecure had 30 days to respond thereto. Their options were to cure the alleged breaches; or to take issue with them. If they failed to cure the alleged breaches without reasonable excuse, then the MSA would be terminated.

“On September 18, 2017 PowerSecure through its local attorneys took issue with the alleged breaches and itemised certain alleged breaches by the board of BPL, both current and former. They have in their words accepted the reputation of the MSA.

“The MSA is therefore

terminated. PowerSecure has agreed to leave their personnel in place until as late as December 31, 2017 to facilitate an orderly transition.

“I wish to personally thank PowerSecure Inc for their contribution to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas during their tenure here. We anticipate moving forward under new and vibrant Bahamian leadership.”

Apart from hefty salaries, the MSA stipulated PowerSecure was to be paid an annual base management fee of \$2m.

It also provided for the payment to PowerSecure of an annual performance compensation fee, which could reach a maximum of 150 per cent of the base management fee. This equates to an additional \$3m.

As of July 25, 2017, PowerSecure has been paid a total of \$7,994,753.42.

The fee includes: \$2,666,666.71 to PowerSecure for management fees, \$901,500 for the BPL business plan, \$1.2m as a performance bonus, \$2,035,078.80 for the Harbour Island project and \$1,191,507.91 for other services inclusive of Hurricane Matthew restoration.

Earlier in his contribution, Mr Bannister said: “I wish to draw the attention of honourable members to the existence of a confidentiality clause in the MSA.

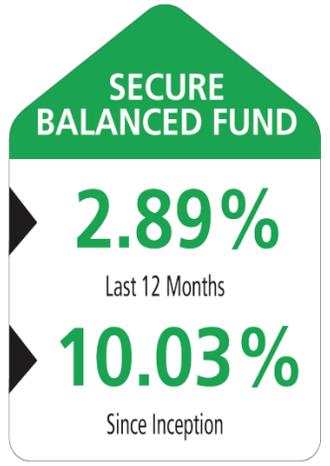
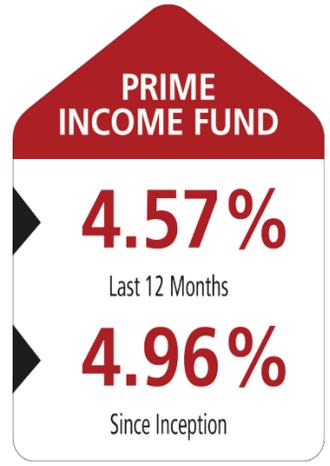
“The people’s government is one of transparency, not confidentiality. Where others conclude agreements and hide them from the people, we are unmistakably different. Where others make promises that they don’t intend to keep, the people’s government cherishes and protects the right of the Bahamian people to know.

“An interesting provision in the MSA provided that PowerSecure was to be reimbursed for all wages, salaries, bonuses and incentive compensation, benefits, pensions and other post-employment benefits, travel and business expenses, executive recruiting fees and labour costs described in (its) business plan and reasonably incurred by the service provider in connection with the employment of the executive management.”

He said the problem was the former administration did not put any limits or caps on the salaries taxpayers had to reimburse, so BPL ended up having to reimburse PowerSecure \$76,626 for executive recruiting fees, since the people they sent to the Bahamas were not necessarily their employees.

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from page one

the company of Franklyn Wilson, a Progressive Liberal Party supporter and financier.

BPL also spent \$4,592,041 with Penta Industrial Services, the company of PLP Chairman Emeritus Errington "Minky" Isaacs. There was no indication a competitive process of obtaining alternative quotes or competing bids took place.

Other contracts approved for entities owned by former Bahamas Electricity Corporation (BEC) board members were also awarded.

Works Minister Desmond Bannister made the revelations yesterday in one of five separate communications in Parliament.

The audit, he said, identified numerous irregularities

in the manner in which the contracts were awarded since 2012, when the PLP took office. The document is dated August 15, 2017.

### Fraud

This report was commissioned as a result of concerns raised relating to fraudulent cheques paid to fictitious vendors before the general election in May.

It identified 41 fraudulent cheques to 13 fake vendors totaling \$1,886,525 and three fraudulent cheques to legitimate vendors in the amount of \$126,779, Mr Bannister said.

However, as the police are still reviewing the report, the minister said he was not at liberty to table it in the House of Assembly.

For this reason, he zeroed in on issues with the awarding of contracts.

"First the report identified numerous instances where the tender process was not followed," the Carmichael MP told parliamentarians. "Many contracts were awarded in excess of \$100,000 for which no formal tender had been performed. In other instances, there was no evidence of any procurement analysis or of other quotations being obtained."

"There were also instances where contracts were awarded to vendors who had not been selected in the tendering process, thereby rejecting the companies that had actually submitted better bids and in one egregious case, a company that did not even bid was awarded a contract over the company that had followed the process and to whom the tenders committee had approved the award of a contract."

He also said: "The government of the Bahamas is deeply concerned about these irregularities. We are committed to stamping out fraud at BPL. To this end, Ernst and Young has been instructed to pursue further investigations."

Other irregularities in the report included the awarding of a contract to Sure Tech CCTV & Surveillance for \$157,750 when the contract was never put out to tender.

Mr Bannister said legal action had to eventually be taken against the company when it failed to complete the contracted work.

Atcun Security was another company awarded work in the absence of tendering. This company was awarded a contract for \$870,684 and since 2012, \$3,685,257 was spent with the entity.

"As a result of the

contractual relationship with this company, the monthly cost for security services jumped from \$72,280 to \$94,419 an increase of more than \$22,000 per month," the minister said.

Rowcreek Company Limited was also awarded a contract for \$114,036 to provide furniture, but there is no evidence of any procurement analysis being completed or any other quotations obtained.

The audit also found other concerning matters where BPL violated business norms.

Among these are a lack

of vendor due diligence; the chairman of the corporation being involved in operational procurement activity; no clarity as to who had authority to create vendor profiles and in various cases there was no supporting documentation for payments along with missing cheques and invoices.

In April, *The Tribune* reported that from as early as 2013, Mr Fitzgerald, then the Marathon MP, sought to secure for his family's business millions of dollars in brokerage, trucking, and limousine contracts at Baha Mar while he sat in Cabinet.



THE UNVEILING of the BPL sign after its transition from BEC - but there were plans afoot to cut more than 200 jobs at the company.

## SECRET PLAN TO AXE 233 JOBS

from page one

This risk also affected its desired rate reduction bond which would have addressed BPL's legacy debt issues, a plan that would have involved adding a charge and possibly a new cost to customers' bills in order to service the bond.

Controversy erupted in August after it was revealed that PowerSecure received a "performance bonus" of \$1.1m despite persistent customer dissatisfaction with BPL since the company was contracted in 2015.

In its discussion of risks to the execution of its business plan, PowerSecure's document gives insight into why the American company may have felt entitled to the bonus.

"In the event that the rate reduction bonds are not underwritten or fully subscribed within the first year," PowerSecure wrote, the company "should not be held responsible for the impact such delay or failure has on the operational performance initiatives and be entitled to the entire performance incentive fee for the first year of the (management services agreement). The same arrangement would exist for each subsequent year."

PowerSecure planned several strategies to reduce staffing. In addition to

making some employees redundant if necessary, it planned a voluntary separation strategy through which the company would have given employees a 60-day window to elect to apply for the "separate incentive programme."

The company also planned an early retirement programme for employees "within three years of retirement".

"Approximately 17 per cent of the employees have 27 years of service or greater, which represents \$12m of the \$60m for total compensation," the company said.

The business plan revealed no clear agenda for embracing alternative energy forms as a means of generating power in the future, though PowerSecure said it planned to put BPL on the "path to a clear, more efficient generation fleet."

"A wide variety of supplies including liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), liquefied natural gas (LNG), heavy fuel oil (HFO), automotive diesel oil (ADO) and solar have been analysed and will continue to receive consideration," PowerSecure said. "The prospect of bringing LNG or LPG to the islands looks promising. However, current analysis indicates that pursuing those today may put BPL in the position of a loss leader which is misaligned with the current

financial situation at BEC. Therefore, the current plan is to procure modern HFO units that can be converted to LNG. This approach preserves the capital resources of BPL and positions The Bahamas to be a leader in advancing cleaner and less costly energy supplies as the market matures."

PowerSecure aimed to improve BPL's reliability and performance by adding 140 megawatt of "high-efficiency HFO units" to the Clifton Pier plant.

The company also wanted to procure rental units to counter the

expensive generation of power from the Blue Hills plant. PowerSecure said its analysis of an 80 MW bridge power solution showed it would create a profit of \$13.5m.

"The most expensive to repair units at Blue Hills are taken out of service first once the bridge power is online," the company said.

"The others are limited to an absolute minimum, thereby limiting repairs costs. Once new generation assets are commissioned, more than 60 per cent of Blue Hills generating capacity is retired."

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IT	C	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8:50	N/A
HOME AGAIN	T	1:10	3:35	N/A	6:15	8:40	10:45
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Published daily Monday to Friday  
Shirley & Deveaux Streets, Nassau, Bahamas N3207

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## The hazy memory of Fred Mitchell

WHILE Health Minister Dr Duane Sands has spent countless hours trying to discover how he is going to find the millions needed to bring the Princess Margaret Hospital up to an acceptable standard, we have Senator Fred Mitchell trying to defend the PLP's legacy. After reading *The Tribune's* front page today we are wondering what legacy there is to defend, but we leave that to our readers.

Among Dr Sands' many problems is the need to provide the required rooms so that patients don't have to sleep on gurneys in the hospital's hallways; the need to find a solution to care for the "borders", both the homeless children and elderly who have been abandoned at the hospital; the need to collect the funds to construct a state of the art unit that will house a new forensic lab, the morgue and a national blood bank. The list of urgent needs goes on. Not only is the Princess Margaret Hospital in Dr Sands' portfolio, but so is Sandilands Hospital, the Rand Memorial Hospital in Freeport and the various clinics throughout the many islands. Money needed to have a first class hospital has been foolishly spent on pipe dreams by the former government, leaving little to repair the inherited damage.

However, recently Mr Mitchell has complained that The Nassau Guardian reported that "the PLP left no plan in place to address natural disasters such as hurricanes. This statement," declared Mr Mitchell, "is a blatant untruth and these attempts to wilfully mislead the public by rewriting history and telling patent untruths by people who know better cannot and must not stand or left unanswered," he said.

"It was the PLP," said Mr Mitchell, "that tabled, passed and brought into force emergency disaster management legislation that led to the establishment of the National Emergency Management Agency commonly known as NEMA, the nucleus of emergency disaster management in The Bahamas."

However, on examination of this claim, historians will find that the Hurricane Andrew Emergency Response and Recovery Committee was created in the Cabinet Office in August 1992 (the new Ingraham government) to deal with the emergency and recovery efforts following the devastation caused by Hurricane Andrew that year. The Committee worked in co-ordination with the appropriate Government Ministries and Departments, including Public Works, Social Services, environmental health and the Royal Bahamas Defence Force.

The committee was instrumental in the development of policies that governed the Government's disaster preparedness and response policies and programmes for the following 20 plus years.

The committee became a permanent "emergency preparedness and response unit" in the Cabinet Office co-chaired by the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Social Services and a Lieutenant from the Royal Bahamas Defence Force (Stephen Russell). It was later transferred to the Ministry of National Security under the Direction of a Commander of the Royal Bahamas Defence Force. During the first Christie-led Government legislation formally establishing NEMA was adopted by the House of Assembly.

According to Mr Mitchell, it was the "PLP that caused for the installation of the 100 gigabyte national submarine cable designed to enhance national

communication and management in the event of a national and natural disaster such as a hurricane".

However, the improvement of communications technology and the development of redundancies has been a long-term goal of Batelco/BTC since the beginning of the Batelco privatisation initiative in 1998/99.

Also said Mr Mitchell, "emergency airport lighting is a reality because of the foresight of the PLP government to assist in safe evacuations from affected islands in the event of an emergency or natural disaster such as a hurricane".

However, we find that this was planned by the FNM during its second term in office; the installation of the emergency lights was foreshadowed during the 1997 Campaign and in Manifesto '97. The PLP coming to office in 2002 implemented plans for the emergency lights which they found in train."

And, according to Mr Mitchell, "it was the PLP government that established the country's first National Energy Policy in the era of global warming and climate and negotiated and signed onto the Paris Accord on climate change".

In fact, international negotiations to improve co-operation on the environmental front to protect the planets biodiversity and to counter dramatic impact of changing weather patterns has been ongoing for several decades. The 1992 Rio Summit is perhaps a convenient starting point for more recent negotiations and discussions.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted that year and the Kyoto Protocol were the two basic documents that shaped international discourse on climate change. Successive Bahamian Governments have participated in regional, hemispheric and international negotiations related to the subject and to credit the Christie-led PLP Government with leadership on this front would be ridiculous. The most recent Paris Agreement is simply the latest in a long line of important international environmental documents. The Bahamas has been an active participant throughout. In fact, The Bahamas hosted the First Meeting of Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity in November, 1994.

"It was the PLP government," according to Mr Mitchell, "that lobbied relentlessly in the international arena for the right of The Bahamas to access international funding at concessionary rates for energy related projects that impact the arrest of global warming."

Really, Mr Mitchell, and when did this happen? In fact, all Bahamas Governments have pursued this matter at the UN and at all international lending/financial agencies.

"From my observation," continued Mr Mitchell, "Dr Minnis was merely following the management script left behind by former Prime Minister Christie in addressing Irma. The record on what the PLP government has done to better prepare The Bahamas to address the fallout from natural disasters such as hurricanes is well documented for all to see."

It really is amazing that Mr Mitchell can recall what his administration was working on but has no recollection of the programmes that they found in place and ongoing in 2002 and 2012.

Mr Mitchell would be better advised to help remedy the chaos that his government has left behind rather than try to twist historical facts.

welfare states and crippling debt.

THERE is nothing more onerous and delusional than the pipe dream of income taxes. Some suppose it to be a panacea for our financial woes, but internationally, the evidence seems to suggest that without sound fiscal management, the more access a government has to collecting revenue, the more they spend. They collect, tax and waste to benefit themselves or those close to them. They expand the social welfare net in order to create entitlement states to win the support of the electorate. Eventually you have progressively larger, unsustainable

In this country, the crux of our problems revolve around a lack of understanding of basic economics, politics permeating every area of national life and civil immaturity. We wanted independence from Great Britain, but lacked the vision, wisdom and discipline necessary for perpetual self government. We continually elect people to govern who have not been able to prove that they can manage their own personal lives and finances. The ruling class does not have enough love for this country and its people to avoid self-serving, self enriching and destructive decisions. Consecutive

governments seemed to have a 'wing it' philosophy with borrowing, spending and national development.

Increasing government access to more revenue will not solve our problems: VAT was implemented to pay down the national debt, instead the debt has increased.

It is time for our nation to grow up and become fiscally responsible. Maybe we can start by changing laws to ensure that pensionable public servants can collect one pension only instead of two or three as some are able to do. Reducing the salary of the President of the University of the Bahamas, collecting

all outstanding debts owed to the government while not writing off debts from Bank of the Bahamas and some foreign investors. Streamlining the civil service to minimise waste and increase efficiency while taxing the income of all non-Bahamian citizens in this country.

We must do what we can and avoid borrowing to waste. Government should lead by example, maybe then individuals in this country will make better personal decisions in their lives.

**JB**  
Nassau,  
September 20, 2017.

to have been engineered. Statistics you have to show where and on which island the reduction occurred. What areas of Nassau were polled? Lyford and Cable Beach?

NIB, yes IMF were correct the high-end rate needs to be increased...those earning high-level wages can afford and the fund desperately needs that money to stay liquid and able to meet their pension commitments. Did you notice fees at LPIA went up recently - very quietly but this is going to add to the already high costs of processing through this facility.

Government needs to make a policy until they change how electricity is generated, God help us if they can't in months, note Mr Prime Minister that is an exceptionally easy decision just like evacuating was... require all thermostats in office buildings, malls, supermarkets to be set at 78 degrees - in the middle of the summer we see the ladies in winter sweaters in offices - now that has to be crazy. Do men have to wear suits in the summer? Let's get practical.

Sorry Messrs IMF review team you missed the whole issue. An Income Tax at any level will be detrimental to our economy. We need more business not less.

**W THOMPSON**  
Nassau,  
September 17, 2017.

## What about the list at Bahamasair?

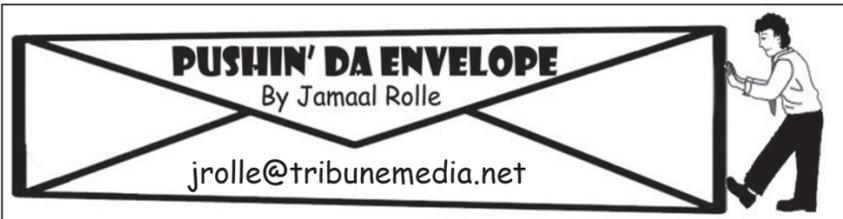
EDITOR, The Tribune.

Re: There's an elite Water list too.

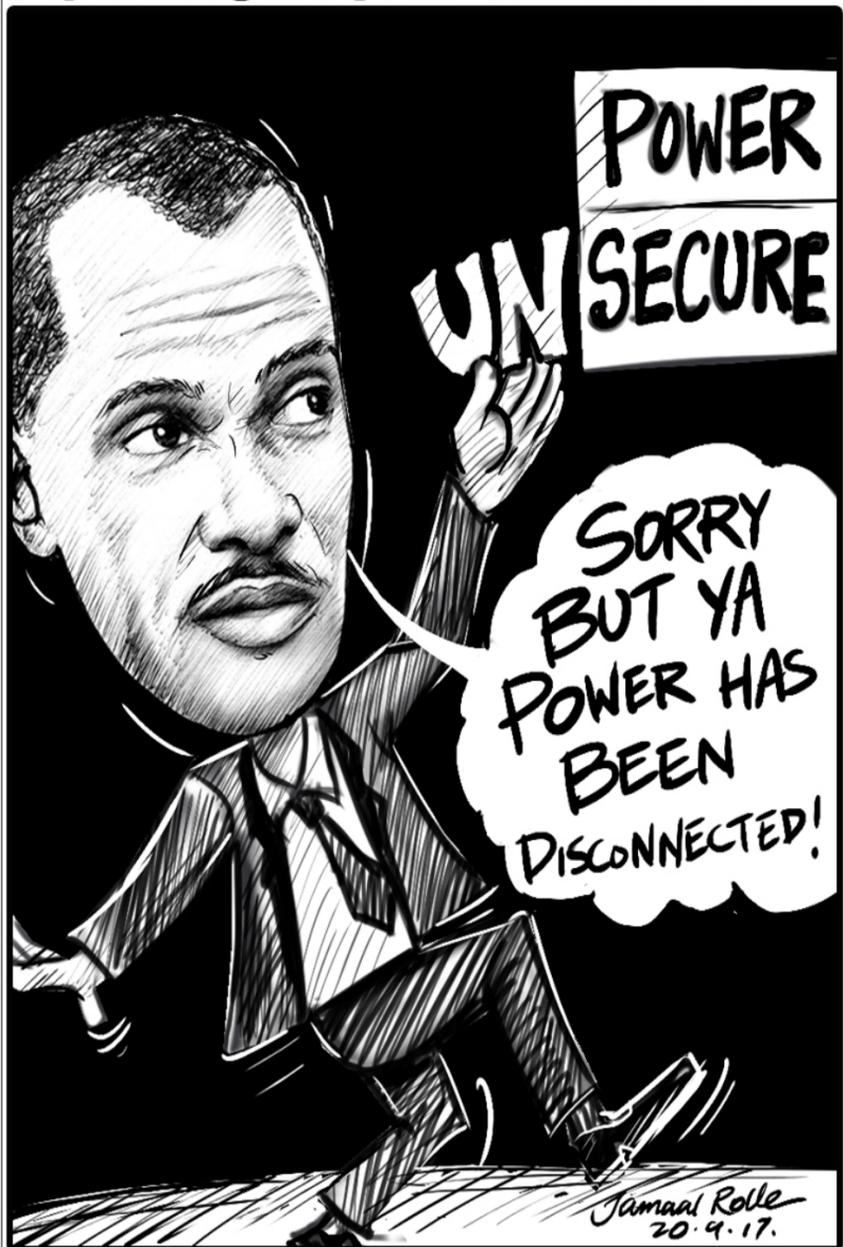
The Tribune, September 20, 2017

WHEN do we get the Elite Bahamas-Air list?

**KEN W KNOWLES, MD**  
Nassau,  
September 20, 2017.



## POWERSECURE TERMINATED



## Don't be swung by the IMF

EDITOR, The Tribune.

WELL nothing amazing the IMF promoting Income Tax - are they saying the introduction of VAT was not a success? A whopping \$1.2 billion in revenue?

Clearly their team must have met the wrong people or which is frightening those who they did meet did not put up the argument why should there be Income Tax and what would be the economic effects of reducing the spend potential of our community?

So the brilliance of the IMF suggest a 'low rate Income Tax' - don't be swung by the words 'low rate' because once introduced the low will go to medium and in five-six years to high.

Say the IMF decide a low rate is 15% taxing us at our pay-cheque, before we get what we earn. Can you afford having 15% taken away? MP's can't!

Great so the potential spend we have now is reduced by 15% ..... revenue at Customs will reduce - VAT will reduce - business will reduce - less people will be able to purchase a home. Brilliant in social engineering and fiscal management.

Okay you are looking for new revenue sources -let's start collectively we have to pay our bills in full - write down how much you owe, you know BEC/BP&L-BTC-Aliv-Real Property - Mortgage - Over-draft (if you are so lucky!) and

## LETTERS

letters@tribunemedia.net

see what you have left after aggregating that to a month?

My list to go immediately - 240,000 residents fly to the US annually - remove the returning exemption or rationalise it... 240,000 times a conservative spend in Dade County-Broward County at \$500,000 per person is \$120,000,000.00 - this has to be halved. Imagine this \$120 million being spent locally the potential impact? Forget the politics, Dr Minnis - Mr Peter Turnquest this is good for the country. Do Dade and Broward pay us for this massive spend?

Luxury items, not necessities increase duty by 6-8%.

The IMF has their evaluation backwards. Realise it the Banks now control the Real Estate market with the massive delinquent mortgage properties - why should they finance any new housing or purchase unless it comes off their list of delinquent properties?

Truth told the economy has shrunk since May 10th, I suspect the fear of being caught taking that incentives to process an application has taken \$2-600.00 out of your money.

The latest unemployment figures - simply don't believe them - they have

# Ankle bracelets are failing, says minister

By **KHRISNA RUSSELL**  
Deputy Chief Reporter  
krussell@tribunemedia.net

MINISTER of National Security Marvin Dames yesterday outlined the chronic challenges the country faces in its fight against crime, while noting murders are up 41 per cent compared to this time last year, but overall crime is down by 19 per cent.

He said the crime problems are worsened by an ineffective electronic monitoring system where 13 people with ankle bracelets have been murdered and another wearing a device was recently charged with a killing.

The minister said latest crime figures show 268 offenders are being monitored. This includes 70 for murder, 18 for attempted murder, 102 for armed robberies and 59 for firearm offences.

He told Parliament yesterday The Bahamas is probably the only country placing ankle monitoring bracelets on offenders charged with murder and other serious crimes, while not ensuring strict guidelines are enforced.

Also contributing to challenges with serious crimes is the failing CCTV Monitoring Centre. In 2012, the government of The Bahamas spent \$4.6m to establish a state of the art centre and installed 243 CCTV cameras mainly to the downtown Nassau areas and other crime hotspots

throughout the island.

However, Mr Dames said the system, one of the most vital in the fight against crime, was not being properly maintained and could not be expanded due to insufficient bandwidth, which is essential for producing quality images. This impacted nearly half or 119 of the 243 cameras. In addition, hard drives and servers were not upgraded and staffing issues at the CCTV centre were far from adequate, he said.

The ineffectiveness of both crime-fighting tools has contributed to the nation's overall crime picture, Mr Dames suggested.

Recent crime statistics, when compared with the same period last year further show murders are up by 41 per cent with 103 incidents up to press time. Attempted murder is down by 20 per cent compared to last year this time, with 12 incidents thus far and manslaughter had one incident.

In addition, rape is down by 15 per cent with 45 incidents, attempted rape increased 88 per cent, unlawful sexual intercourse is down 25 per cent, armed robbery is down by 35 per cent with 380 incidents, robbery down by 44 per cent and attempted robbery is up 17 per cent.

Burglaries are down 25 per cent, housebreaking down eight per cent, shop breaking down four per cent, stealing down 13 per cent, stealing from vehicles down 24 per cent and stolen vehicles are down 33 per cent.

Overall crime figures to date when compared to the same period last year are down 19 per cent, Mr Dames said.

He said: "Our government will be tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime and tough on criminals. We have made it clear that those who commit crimes will be punished for their actions. We have a zero-tolerance approach to criminal offenders."

"Permit me to share with you a sobering example of why the criminals feel so emboldened. Just over a week ago police officers attempted to stop a suspicious vehicle with two male occupants. After a short chase, the car came to a stop and the suspects were searched. One of the males had a .45 pistol in his pants with 10 live rounds of ammunition. When officers ran a background check on the suspect, he was on bail for two counts of murder and three counts of attempted murder. He was also being electronically monitored."

He also told the House: "It cannot be that we should have persons being granted bail and freely roaming our streets while armed, facing multiple charges. My ministry has been in active discussions with the Office of the Attorney General to explore avenues to ensure that persons charged with multiple similar offences committed over time, remain incarcerated up to the time of their trial without bail."

Mr Dames said the government is now in the initial phases of its crime fighting strategy.

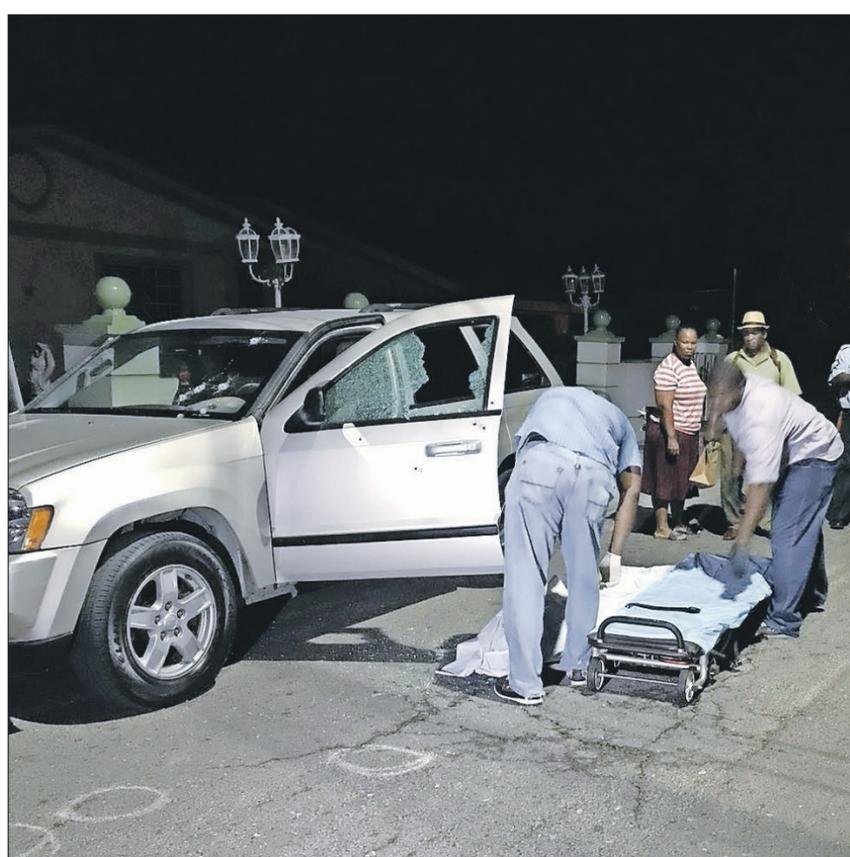
These include conducting a manpower audit of the Royal Bahamas Police Force, a zero-tolerance approach to crime, increased police visibility, targeting of hotspots and a focus on prolific offenders.

Other strategies include strengthening of police and community partnerships, and the establishment of a guns and gangs unit, which was formed Tuesday.

The government also proposes to enact legislation "very shortly" to address the conditional release of offenders into society through a parole and probation system for first time and non-violent offenders. This new process of parole will address rehabilitation, reintegration, re-offending/recidivism and reduce costs associated with incarceration.



MINISTER of National Security Marvin Dames in the House of Assembly yesterday. Photo: Shawn Hanna/Tribune Staff



THE MURDER scene last night where a man was gunned down in front of his daughters, aged four and one, who were in the car at the time of the shooting.

Photo: Terrel W. Carey/Tribune Staff

# SHOT DEAD IN FRONT OF HIS DAUGHTERS

By **SANCHESKA DORSETT**  
Tribune Staff Reporter  
sdorsett@tribunemedia.net

A 24-YEAR-OLD father of two is dead after being shot multiple times in front of his daughters while parked in a vehicle outside a residence on Tuesday night.

The killing took place shortly after 11pm and took the country's murder count to 103 for the year, according to *The Tribune's* records.

The shooting came three days after a 17-year-old teen was shot multiple times and killed while walking through Johnson Road and a week after an 11th grade Government High School student was killed while hanging out with persons in the back of his home. Those two killings both occurred in Fox Hill.

According to police, shortly after 11pm officers

received information that a man was shot off Farrington Road.

When officers arrived on the scene off Christopher Street, they discovered the lifeless body of a man in a vehicle who had been shot multiple times. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

*The Tribune* understands the victim's four-year-old and one-year-old daughters were in the vehicle at the time of the shooting, but were not harmed during the incident.

Police are on the hunt for the occupants of a white Nissan Note they believe are responsible for the murder.

Police have not identified the victim, but a source told *The Tribune* he is Shannondoah Greene.

Anyone with information on this murder is asked to contact police at 911 or 919, the Central Detective Unit at 502-9991 or Crime

Stoppers anonymously at 328-TIPS.

Investigations continue.

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# Flood alert as Maria nears

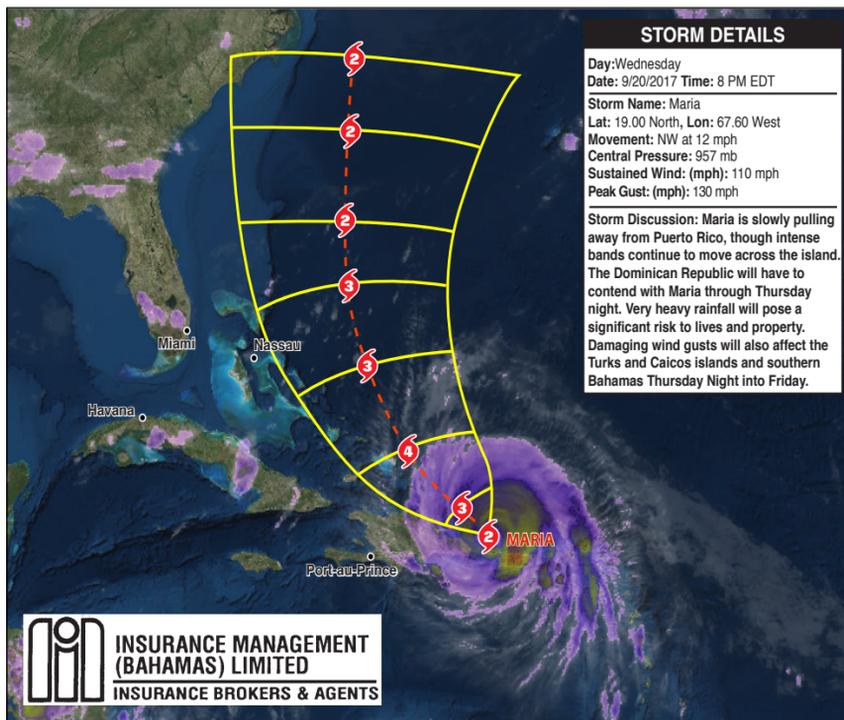
By **SANCHESKA DORSETT**  
Tribune Staff Reporter  
sdorsett@tribunemedia.net

RESIDENTS in the southeast Bahamas should prepare for “excess flooding” and tropical storm force winds as Hurricane Maria is expected to dump four to eight inches of water as it passes over the country on Friday, according to US Accuweather forecaster Dan Kottlowski.

Those islands include Mayaguana, Inagua, Crooked Island, Acklins, Long Cay, Samana Cay and the Turks and Caicos.

According to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), residents in coastal and low-lying areas are urged to take the necessary precautions ahead of the storm.

A dangerous storm surge accompanied by large and destructive waves will raise water levels by as much as 10 feet to 15 feet above normal tide levels, near and to the north of the centre of Maria as it passes the Turks and Caicos



Islands and the southeast Bahamas, NEMA said in a statement.

Mr Kottlowski said on the current forecast track the central and northern islands

seem to have “dodged a bullet”.

“Maria will make a close call for the Turks and Caicos and pass within 30 miles just east of them but

this storm will be different for them – they will get winds, tropical storm force winds but the impact will be nothing like Irma,” he said.

“As far as the Southern Bahamas is concerned, there is a good chance they will see tropical storm force winds on the current track but the winds will be on the far eastern edge so the winds will come in gusts and will not be super strong. The central and northern Bahamas is expected to have no issues at all. The biggest issue will be rough surf and that will be a problem only in eastern Bahamas. New Providence is so protected from the strong surf that hits all the islands so that won't be a big problem. Right now Maria is expected to pass well over 150 miles from New Providence, the Bahamas dodged a big bullet this time.”

A hurricane warning is now in effect for the southwest Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos, including Mayaguana, Inagua, Crooked Island, Acklins, Long Cay and Samana Cay.

A hurricane warning means that hurricane conditions can affect the above mentioned islands within 36

hours.

The island of Puerto Rico has been destroyed after Hurricane Maria made landfall there as a category four storm Wednesday morning, according to cnn.com.

Puerto Rico's office of emergency management confirmed that 100 per cent of the US territory had lost power.

Maria is forecast to move off Puerto Rico's northern shores and into open Atlantic waters Wednesday night, potentially allowing the storm to strengthen according to ABC News meteorologists.

Maria is also forecast to approach the Dominican Republic on Wednesday night, but the Caribbean nation is not expected to get a direct hit.

By Friday, Maria will pass to the east of Turks and Caicos, where there's a potential for hurricane-force winds and heavy rain, but the storm is not expected to make a direct hit.

From there, the hurricane is forecast to pass by the southeast Bahamas.

## FAMILY'S FEAR AS THEY WAIT TO HEAR FROM STUDENT IN DOMINICA

By **RICARDO WELLS**  
Tribune Staff Reporter  
rwells@tribunemedia.net

THE family of a 28-year-old medical student based in storm ravaged Dominica yesterday said their concern is “growing by the minute” as they await updates after the passage of mega storm Maria.

“We talked on Monday,” the student's mother Vandora Johnson said in an emotional interview with *The Tribune*.

“He said the school was preparing to shut down

because the storm was getting close. It is now Wednesday and I need to know if he is safe.”

The heartbroken mother said she had “exhausted all options” when it came to trying to communicate with her son, Christian Johnson, who is enrolled as a medical student at Ross University in Dominica.

“He doesn't live on the school's campus. He lives across the street. When we last spoke, he sounded relaxed and fine. But that was when Maria was just a tropical storm. It didn't

jump until later on that night,” she added.

Maria, a category five storm at the time, ripped through Dominica on Monday completely destroying communicates, infrastructure and critical facilities.

On Monday night, Dominica's Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit in a Facebook post indicated that even he had to be rescued from his official residence after the powerful storm ripped the roof off his home.

On Tuesday morning, he

wrote: “We will need help, my friend, we will need help of all kinds.”

He described damage to the island as “mind-boggling.”

Yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said there are three Bahamians living and working in Dominica: two students and a businesswoman.

“In the aftermath of the passage of Hurricane Maria over that island, and in the absence of a formal Bahamas mission in Dominica, the ministry has reached out to the

sources in the community to determine the Bahamians' precise situation. The ministry stands ready to provide consular or other assistance if necessary,” a short statement from the ministry noted.

Meanwhile, the family of Mr Johnson said he's been in Dominica since August 23 taking classes at Ross University.

A search of the university's website revealed that notices were posted earlier this week, informing students that the storm was close and posed immediate threat to life and property.

An alert on the website read: “We have set a plan in place to begin a series of boat evacuations of the Ross Med community, to take them to safety on the island of St Lucia.”

It continued: “We are working with a charter boat company to utilise a number of vessels to get our people to a location of greater safety and comfort. As you can imagine, the harbours on Dominica suffered damage in the hurricane and there is much debris in the water. The first step today is for a ‘scout boat’ from the charter company to find the best location to access our people.”

“Meanwhile, the boats are being staffed with crew and stocked with

medical supplies and other supplies where they are docked on nearby islands and those boats will begin their journey to Dominica today.

“Our crisis team continues to be in communication with the US State Department about the possibility of a larger-scale military evacuation, but as of now, moving forward with our evacuation plan is our best choice.”

“We plan to begin the transport of people with taking care of the children and elderly first. Each family will be permitted to have one parent travel with their children. We will also certainly transport anyone with any serious injuries in this first group, although we are grateful to report at this time that we have few reports of injuries, and those are said to be somewhat minor.”

“We have a team dedicated to determining next steps once we get all of our people to St Lucia and we will provide more details soon regarding how long they will be there and what plans are for the continuation of classes.”

Up to press time Wednesday, *The Tribune* was working to establish a line of communication between the Johnson family and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the hopes of a resolution.



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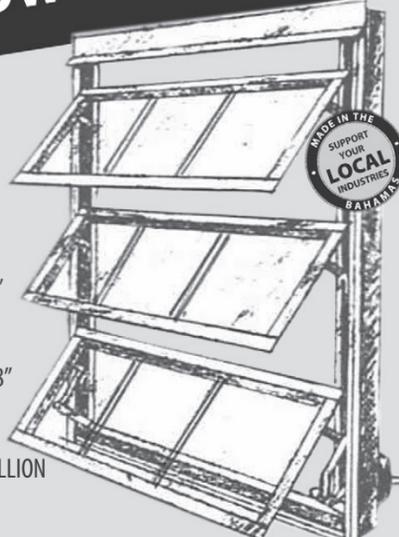
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# First govt Bill tabled for independent prosecutor

By RASHAD ROLLE  
Tribune Staff Reporter  
rolle@tribunemedia.net

THE Minnis administration tabled the first Bill of its tenure yesterday: a Constitutional Amendment Bill to establish the independent Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Making the Department of Public Prosecutions free from interference has been a long-standing policy goal of the Free National Movement and has consistently been endorsed by Constitutional Commissions appointed over the years.

The Bill tabled yesterday would not give the

DPP complete freedom from interference from the attorney general, however, as it allows the attorney general to give specified directions to the DPP in any matter involving "public policy, national security or the international obligations of The Bahamas".

Such directives must be written and signed by the attorney general, the Bill says.

Some lawyers yesterday said these exceptions could provide a loophole in the legislation that administrations could exploit.

Through the bill, the Constitution would be amended to clarify that the

attorney general would be the principal legal advisor to the government.

Meanwhile, the Director of Public Prosecutions would have the power "to institute and undertake criminal proceedings against any person before any court in respect of any offence against the law of The Bahamas," among other things.

In performing his/her duties, the director of public prosecutions "shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority," the Bill says.

The Bill also says the person who serves as DPP must be one qualified for

appointment as justice of the Supreme Court. The DPP "may hold office for a period of five years" and cannot hold office beyond age 68 but is capable of being reappointed for no more than a five-year period.

The Bill says the DPP could only be removed from office for inability to discharge the function of the office or misbehaviour.

To remove the DPP, the prime minister would have to inform the governor general, who would then appoint a tribunal consisting of a chairman and no less than two other members who would determine

if the DPP should be removed.

A referendum is required to amend the Constitution once the Constitutional Amendment Bill has been passed as is expected as the Free National Movement has all but four seats in the House of Assembly.

"This Bill," State Legal Affairs Minister Elsworth Johnson said yesterday as he tabled the Bill, "is one of the innovative and contemporary pieces of legislation that our government intends to bring."

"As an international custom," he said, "it is trite to find in the constitution in any country that you will find an independent

prosecutor. This topic of an independent prosecutor was articulated by some of our most prominent legal luminaries."

The legislation would make it so that attorneys general can't be consulted on matters relating to nolle prosequis, he said.

"What the Bill will do is all civil prosecutions will be controlled by the attorney general and criminal prosecutions by the DPP with some slight exceptions in matters of national security, public policy, the AG would still retain some hold of that," he said.

The House of Assembly will resume on September 27.

## SUNRYSE SUPPORT FOR SICKLE CELL GROUP

THE Bahamas Sickle Cell Association received a financial boost thanks to a recent donation from Sunryse Information Management. The \$3,000 contribution will assist the local non-profit group in its ongoing efforts to raise awareness and provide hope and support to persons in The Bahamas living with the illness.

Sickle cell disease is an inherited blood disorder that affects red blood cells. There are several types of sickle cell disease with the most common forms being Sickle Cell Anemia (SS) and Sickle-Hemoglobin C (SC).

Each September, the Bahamas Sickle Cell Association organises events to educate the public on the seriousness of the illness. Recognising the important role the association plays



in assisting families coping with sickle cell disease, Sunryse Information Management made the donation to support the group's 2017-2018 initiatives.

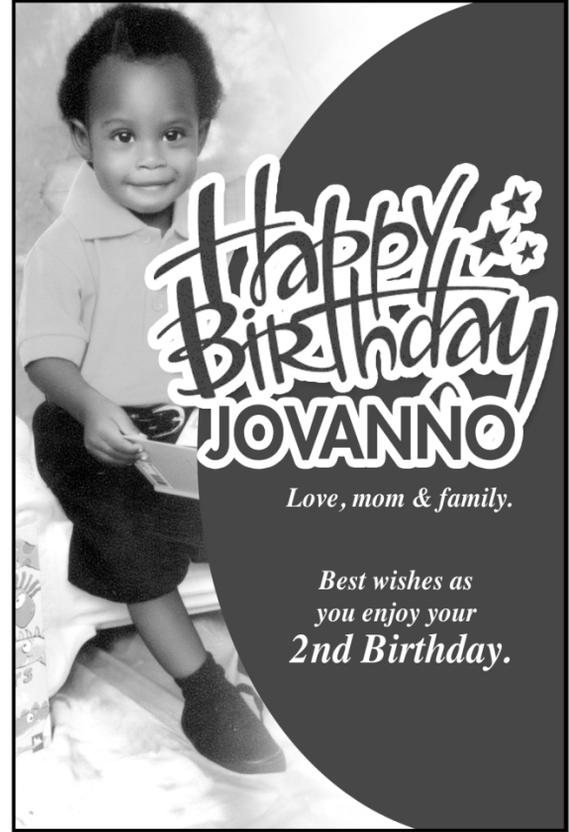
Nadine Sawyer, chief financial officer at Sunryse, said they are pleased to partner with the association.

In addition to the financial donation, the document management company has adopted the non-profit group as its official charity. To help increase awareness, Sunryse staff will wear t-shirts branded with the Bahamas Sickle Cell Association logo every Friday in

September.

"We are happy to donate to the Bahamas Sickle Cell Association. It is a cause that is close to our hearts and we appreciate the work that the association does and the positive impact it has in our community," Mrs Sawyer said. "As a company, we are committed to supporting the group not only during the global awareness month in September but throughout the calendar year."

This month, the Bahamas Sickle Cell Association will hold a series of activities geared towards education, support and awareness including fun, run walks in New Providence and Grand Bahama, an educational forum and a mini fair and raffle in New Providence. To learn more about the association, visit <http://www.bahamassicklecell.org>.



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**DR NIKKIAH FORBES**  
INTERNAL MEDICINE PHYSICIAN

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Unneeded antibiotics may also lead to harmful side effects. Come find out if you should share antibiotics with a friend. Find out if you should use antibiotics that are left over from a prescription written one year ago. Should you stop taking antibiotics for an infection when you don't feel sick anymore? Join us Thursday, September 21 as we discuss why antibiotics aren't always the answer with Dr Nikkiah Forbes.

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# Education policy in breach of international laws

By AVA TURNQUEST  
Tribune Chief Reporter  
aturnquest@tribunemedia.net

THE Ministry of Education is preparing to petition the government concerning the impact of the country's immigration policy on access to education, according to education director Lionel Sands, who acknowledged the current policy contravened international law.

Mr Sands told *The Tribune* the ministry was aware there are children who have been unable to register for school since the immigration policy was first introduced in November 2014.

The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a human rights treaty that outlines the rights of all children under the age 18, inclusive of the right to education. Once ratified, countries are bound to uphold the convention by international law.

"I understand that," he said, "and I know that, but I have this policy from the government, that is a policy and I'm bound by law to follow the policy of the government. We're waiting to see whether it will be maintained by this new administration or if they will amend it because there are still a number of students in our country who have not availed themselves to our system of education because of these roadblocks their parents are facing."

Mr Sands added: "I understand the pain and I feel the pain but I can't break the law. I've already spoken to the minister of education and we're submitting something for him to take to Cabinet. We recognise the problem."

The Bahamas became a signatory to the CRC on October 30, 1990; however, the treaty was signed with a reservation over the provisions of Article 2.

UNCRC Article 2 mandates that all children are free from discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, or family background.

The reservation read: "The government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas upon signing the convention reserves the right not to apply the provisions of Article 2 of the said convention insofar as those provisions relate to the conferment of citizenship upon a child having regard to the provisions of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas."

Article 28 outlines the right to education and specifies that primary education should be free.

The November 2014 policy shift sent shockwaves through the international community, with groups like Amnesty International and a Florida lawmaker raising grave concerns with its impact on vulnerable migrant communities.

The policy mandates that every person living in The Bahamas has a passport of their nationality with proof to legally reside in this country, among other restrictions, like the requirement for every foreign person enrolled in schools, including children born in The Bahamas to immigrants, to have a student permit.

Florida lawmaker Daphne Campbell, who was born in Haiti, wrote a letter to then Prime Minister Perry Christie about the new requirement for non-Bahamian children in February 2015.

In her letter, she called the sweeping changes "deeply disturbing", adding the policy was "not only discriminatory" but violates the United Nations' declaration and The Bahamas' own Education Act. Yesterday, Mr Sands said:

"The challenge we have is, there is this policy from 2014, there is this ruling from the Immigration Department, and it's asking us to ensure that every child in our school is legally registered and those who are actually here are here legally.

"What we've done is we've created some form of documentation to capture that type of information. The documentation says any child born to a Bahamian mother or father, or who is the child of an immigrant who has the right to work here, can be registered to attend school in The Bahamas.

"Any child whose parent does not have the legal right to be here, who came in illegally, will have to now go to the Ministry of Immigration and get a student visa. The student visa would allow the child to be registered to go to school here.

"We're holding fast to that simply because it's a requirement. We understand there may be students who don't have legal rights to be here as a consequence of that. We also understand there are some children who were born here to parents who are illegally in this country, that's a problem."

Mr Sands added: "What we're trying to do is ensure the parents rectify the problem so we can get them into schools as quickly as possible because they're here. I know there is an international obligation that all children must be in school but the law is the law and we have to abide by it, that is the challenge we are faced with.

"We are making some representation to the current government to see if there will be some change. I can't go beyond what the policy is requiring of me to do today. If the policy changes then we can make adjustments," Mr Sands said.



EDUCATION director Lionel Sands.

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# Love fails to show - so police given arrest order

By NICO SCAVELLA  
Tribune Staff Reporter  
nscavella@tribunemedia.net

A SUPREME Court judge yesterday ordered the immediate arrest of media personality Christina "Chrissy Love" Thompson after she failed to appear before her for the fourth time to face charges of contempt of court.

Justice Cheryl Grant-Thompson ordered the warrant be circulated to the Royal Bahamas Police Force as well as all border officials for Thompson's arrest.

The judge said no "reasonable" explanation was given yesterday for Thompson's failure to appear before the court, which followed her absences on two consecutive dates in August and again on September 15.

Thompson was due to appear before Justice Grant-Thompson in connection with certain contemptuous remarks she allegedly made on social media about the legal proceedings against former Cabinet minister Shane Gibson.

At the last hearing on September 15, Justice Grant-Thompson ordered the bench warrant be suspended until 9.30am yesterday for Thompson to appear in court. At the time, her attorney, Murrio Ducille, said Thompson had pre-arranged plans to take her son to school, and was thus out of the jurisdiction.

Yesterday, after the court

noted Thompson's absence, Mr Ducille raised the issue of his client's filing of a constitutional motion against the originating summons and consequent proceedings last week.

In that motion, dated September 13, 2017, Thompson declares that the constitutional rights given her under articles 17, 19, 20, 23 and/or 28 of the Constitution have been infringed upon.

She is also requesting an order that the proceedings originating from a "verbal summons" returnable on August 31, as well as the summons bearing the date of August 31, be deemed a nullity, and that the proceedings commenced by the summons be stayed pending the determination of the constitutional motion.

Thompson is also seeking vindictory damages, general damages, costs, and any other damages the court deems as just.

According to the court documents, the grounds of the constitutional motion - nine in total, include, but are not limited to: that the proceedings are an abuse of the court process; the summons failed to comply with the stipulations of section 59 of the Criminal Procedure Code; the summons presumes guilt on the part of the applicant; and that the summons failed to give the applicant a reasonable period of notice in which to defend herself.

Yesterday, Mr Ducille further submitted his client's position that Justice Grant-Thompson should refer the hearing over the constitutional motion to another judge.

Mr Ducille submitted that while he is not seeking to bring into question the court's competence in hearing and consequently managing the particulars of the motion, the "appearance" of the matter's adjudication is crucial to the motion, and thus should be heard by an "independent mind".

"That's what justice is all about," Mr Ducille concluded.

However, Justice Grant-Thompson said after hearing submissions that essentially request she recuse herself from the matter, she maintained she can hear both Thompson's contempt of court matter and the constitutional motion.

After ordering Thompson's arrest, she instructed Mr Ducille's law firm to serve the Crown with the documents pertaining to the constitutional motion by September 22, which the latter was ordered to respond to by October 20.

Mr Ducille and his team will submit their skeleton arguments on October 27, to which the Crown will reply on November 3.

She ultimately set a date of November 12 at 2pm to hear the application of Thompson's constitutional motion.



CHRISSEY LOVE

# ARCHER MUST PAY CHARITIES AND APOLOGISE

By NICO SCAVELLA  
Tribune Staff Reporter  
nscavella@tribunemedia.net

OUTSPOKEN self-styled activist Omar Archer Sr was yesterday convicted and sentenced to 21 days in prison by a Supreme Court judge for contemptuous remarks he previously made about the legal proceedings against former Cabinet minister Shane Gibson.

However, Justice Cheryl Grant-Thompson suspended the sentence for 21 days on the condition that Archer donate \$15,000 to the Cancer Society of the Bahamas in Centreville and another \$6,000 to the Bahamas Red Cross on John F Kennedy Drive.

Archer must also provide six months of community service at the Eloise Penn Ward at the Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre.

Additionally, Archer

must also "wholly withdraw" the statements he made on social media, and make a public apology in "clear" terms by the same medium. He must also request that a copy of his apology be printed on the front pages of *The Tribune*, *The Nassau Guardian* as well as *The Punch*.

Archer must then provide to the court by close of business on October 18, proof that he made the donations and apologies.

Justice Grant-Thompson said her written ruling should be available by the end of the week.

However, in delivering her ruling to both Archer and his attorney, Fred Smith, QC, yesterday, she said she took into account how when he appeared before her last week, Archer immediately expressed genuine contrition for his statements and apologised at the earliest

convenience.

Nonetheless, she said that in coming to a decision on Archer's fate, she reflected on what both right and wrong-thinking persons in society would make of Archer's controversial remarks.

She noted the possibility of how Archer's comments could adversely affect persons already sceptical about the administration of justice in the country, and said Archer, given his position in society, should strive to use his platform to persuade such persons to think otherwise.

Thus, she said Archer's sentence should be one that demonstrates the importance of maintaining the integrity of the courts and simultaneously ensure respect for the judiciary.

She then convicted and sentenced Archer for the ten factors of contempt outlined in his summons.



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# \$40,000 to unblock manhole at The Pointe

By AVA TURNQUEST  
Tribune Chief Reporter  
aturnquest@tribunemedia.net

THE government has spent nearly \$40,000 clearing a critical manhole at The Pointe without any contribution from developers, according to Works Minister Desmond Bannister, who addressed severe flooding in the downtown area.

The Bay Street area experienced significant flooding last week from The Pointe in the west to just before the Paradise Island

bridge in the east.

In a communication to the House of Assembly, Mr Bannister pointed to the blocked manhole, or inspection chamber, as a contributing factor to the flooding. He said it has been continuously blocked due to the placement of quarry over it by The Pointe developers.

Mr Bannister continued: "From Bay Street & Victoria Avenue to Dowdeswell Street, the pipes that convey the water from south to the north side of Bay Street are compromised. There are

various utility infrastructure in the channels thus restricting the flow which leads to a back-up in the system."

Other factors were trash, which impeded the flow of storm water, and the intensity of the rainfall.

Mr Bannister advised that the ministry will develop a scope of works to have all lateral drains in the area impacted to be water jetted, and the installation of additional lateral drains across Bay Street.

"For the long term," he said, "the Ministry of Public

Works will liaise with the utilities to work out the logistics for the installation of larger pipes which may involve the decommissioning of some of their systems."

Yesterday, Mr Bannister gave an account of Bahamas Power and Light's restoration efforts on the islands impacted by Hurricane Irma.

While work on all islands are expected to be complete this week, Mr Bannister said there was presently no estimate of when repairs will be completed to the network on Ragged Island.

The passage of Hurricane Irma impacted power distribution in Rum Cay, Mayaguana, Long Island, Long Cay, Inagua, Exuma, Eleuthera, Crooked Island, Bimini, Andros, Acklins and New Providence.

Mr Bannister said: "Significant damage to the distribution system was reported in Ragged Island. BPL continues to coordinate with NEMA and the Royal Bahamas Defence Force on the way forward for Ragged Island. The defence force, Ministry of Works and other agencies will commence

work in Ragged Island later this week to deliver equipment, clear debris, and conduct cleaning/elimination of waste.

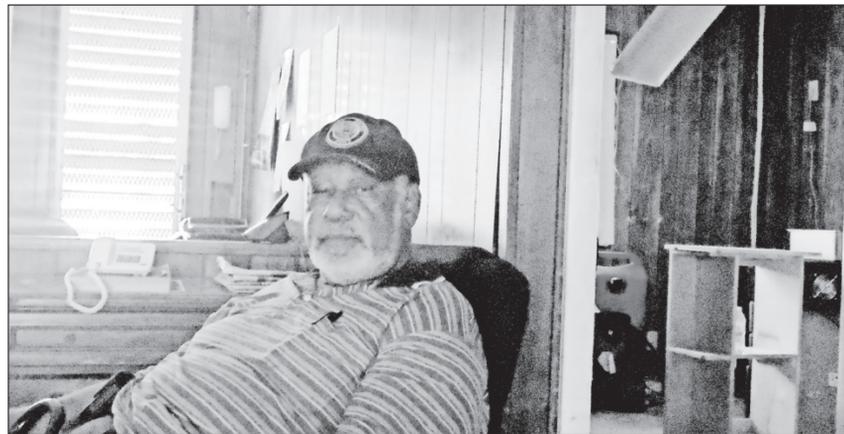
"The defence force will also construct temporary housing to be used by themselves and other agencies including BPL during the restoration," he continued.

"Once initial preparations are completed, BPL will send the necessary teams, vehicles, equipment and materials to the island in order to commence the reconstruction of the network."



TORNADO damage to a ceiling in Grand Bahama.

Photos: Denise Maycock



GLEN B SMITH, owner of Imperial Gardens Apartments and former developer of Imperial Park Subdivision in Grand Bahama. His apartment complex suffered damage from a tornado brought on by Hurricane Irma earlier this month.

## NOTICE

The National Museum of The Bahamas, The Antiquities, Monuments and Museum Corporation wishes to advise the Public that effective Sunday, 1st October, 2017 the following Entry Fees will come into effect at the Historic Forts.

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# APARTMENT OWNER TRYING TO REBUILD AFTER 'HORROR' TORNADO

By DENISE MAYCOCK  
Tribune Freeport Reporter  
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A FREEPORT property owner and former developer has described the tornado damage at the Imperial Gardens Apartment complex and at the Imperial Park Subdivision as a "horrible" incident.

Glen Berkley Smith, the owner of the 36-unit apartment complex on East Atlantic Drive, said the building suffered significant roof damage in the office, and seven units were destroyed.

He was pleased there were no serious injuries to anyone and is now focusing on rebuilding what was torn apart in a matter of seconds

before his eyes.

Mr Smith said the building was not insured because he could no longer afford to pay the high annual insurance premium.

"We had no insurance, that was the worst part of it," he said. "Things were so bad in Freeport for the last five or six years you can hardly afford insurance."

He estimates that it would cost somewhere around \$11,000 annually, with a two per cent deductible.

Some homeowners who sustained severe damage at the Imperial Park Subdivision also did not have insurance.

During the passage of Hurricane Irma, Grand Bahama experienced tornado activity on September



DAMAGE inside an apartment in Grand Bahama.

10. The tornado ripped off roofs and took down poles and power lines. Several businesses in Freeport were also damaged.

Mr Smith said he had just finished watching the church service of St Barnabas Church when he heard a loud noise.

"I had gotten through watching it, and I was saying that's a wonderful sermon, and then all of a sudden we heard this noise.

"It sounded like a tractor was coming from somewhere or a train, and all of sudden it hit the windows and everything went out," he said.

Mr Smith said that it all happened in a matter of seconds. Portions of the roof had gone, and windows were blown out across the street.

"A lot of tenants were in the yard making noise,

and when I went to find out what was going on, I noticed that my storage shed was at the door; it was so horrible," he recalled.

"I came out and saw the upstairs part of the roof was gone from over us," Mr Smith said. "The tenant is moving out today because we have to get that top floor repaired."

In the office space, there was roof and ceiling damage, and three windows to the front upstairs had been blown out.

Mr Smith later learned that the tornado had also destroyed several homes in Imperial Park.

"That is my subdivision; they told me one or two roofs had gone, and that was devastating to me because I did those homes and I like (the subdivision)," he said.

Although the apartment complex was built in 1982, it had withstood past hurricanes.

While the island was spared a direct hit, tornado activity was to blame for the destruction of homes and businesses.

The property owner said rebuilding would take some time.

"Of the 36 units here, about seven were damaged, so that's not too bad," Mr Smith said.

"Other than that, the wonderful thing is that no one was injured to the point where they were disabled - I think that is great," he said.

Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis and his delegation travelled to Grand Bahama last Thursday and went to the apartment complex and the Imperial Park Subdivision to assess the damage.

He was concerned over the lack of enforcement of proper building codes in the construction of houses that were severely damaged.

Dr Minnis noted that hurricane straps in the damaged homes had not been properly installed, and also observed issues with the trusses.

On Grand Bahama, some 28 families and ten businesses have been affected.

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# Davis: Govt is meddling with police force

By **SANCHESKA DORSETT**  
Tribune Staff Reporter  
sdorsett@tribunemedia.net

**OPPOSITION** Leader Phillip “Brave” Davis yesterday accused the government of “meddling” in the senior leadership of the Royal Bahamas Police Force and “subverting the Constitution” that protects and empowers the commissioner of police to carry out his duties.

In a statement, Mr Davis condemned the Free National Movement for allegedly “pressuring” and “forcing” senior officials to “abdicate their responsibilities” over the interest of the Bahamian people. He said the command of the RBPF should not be subjected to “unexplained and improper political interference”.

It has been highly speculated that Commissioner of Police Ellison Greenslade is being forced out as the RBPF’s top chief and has been asked to retire early. Sources say there is “noticeable tension” between National Security Minister Marvin Dames and Commissioner Greenslade.

*The Tribune* understands that Commissioner Greenslade has been offered the post of high commissioner to London and is set to be replaced by Deputy Commissioner Anthony Ferguson.

It was also reported that Deputy Commissioner Emerick Seymour, now in charge of Freeport, will be transferred to Nassau as deputy commissioner.

Last month, Mr Dames downplayed the noticeable

absence of Commissioner Greenslade.

When asked, Mr Dames insisted there was no reason for concern, adding that Commissioner Greenslade continues to operate in the post of top cop on a day-to-day basis.

In his statement on Wednesday, Mr Davis said the government’s perceived interference in the RBPF has resulted in the perception of a leaderless organisation.

“We remain gravely concerned about the apparent meddling by the government in the senior leadership of the Royal Bahamas Police Force that has resulted in the perception of a leaderless organisation. Our country must draw a line to protect the individuals who served our country with a sense of duty, honesty, integrity, and courage,” Mr Davis said.

“The command of the Royal Bahamas Police Force should not be subjected to an unexplained and improper political interference. The government should not set the precedent of subverting the Constitution that protects and empowers the commissioner of police to carry out his or her duties effectively. The Progressive Liberal Party strongly condemns any effort of political pressure to force any senior official to abdicate their responsibilities for a political reward over the interest of the Bahamian people. If the opposition confirms that there was an attempt to circumvent the tenure of the commissioner of police by an overreaching politician

with a blatant disregard for the constitution, it will be strongly condemned.”

Mr Davis also called the FNM’s crime plan “nonstrategic and unprioritised”.

“Our country continues to be embroiled in a vexing crime problem. The alarming spikes in armed robberies and murder necessitate us abandoning a partisan mentality and collectively holding hands to protect our neighbourhoods from being safe havens for criminals,” the statement said.

“There has been a systemic failure, and the system must respond with policies and initiatives to prevent and not just respond. During the Christie administration, we strengthened the Urban Renewal programme to readdress our country’s development challenges among young people. The government must place a sustained effort on socio-economic policies designed at addressing the causes of crime and strengthen the relationship between the police and the communities to improve intelligence gathering.

“Our communities, our citizens, our schools, our children, and particularly our young men cannot wait for a partisan debate over crime to end. They deserve their policymakers to act now to protect their interest and rights to a peaceful and a safe environment.”

Up to press time, 103 murders were recorded this year. Mr Dames said on Wednesday 45 of those killings happened since the May 10 general election.



**PHILIP DAVIS**, MP for Cat Island, Rum Cay and San Salvador speaking in the House of Assembly yesterday.  
Photo: **Shawn Hanna/Tribune Staff**



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We thank all applicants, however only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

# Fisheries face climate change danger

By RICARDO WELLS  
Tribune Staff Reporter  
rwells@tribunemedia.net

PRIME Minister Dr Hubert Minnis spoke of the risks to small island nations, such as The Bahamas, from climate change yesterday, as he referred to the findings of the world's leading weather experts, who continue to draw parallels between global warming statistics and the frequency and severity of storms.

His comments came at the Fifth Meeting of the ACP Ministers in Charge of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

During his remarks at the Melia resort, Dr Minnis called on nations across Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) to "rise to the challenge with new ideas for fisheries and aquaculture."

Reflecting on recent devastation across the

Caribbean due to the passage of hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Jose and now Maria, the Killarney MP insisted the complex challenges resulting from climate change include an increase in the amount of acid in the ocean and the loss of coral.

To that end, Dr Minnis said climate change poses just as big a risk to land and property as it does to sustainable fisheries, sustainable development and tourism – all integral segments of the respective economies of ACP states.

Dr Minnis said: "Climate change is now one of the most fundamental development challenges for countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific. Various climate models suggest the damage from natural disasters have increased sharply."

He continued: "Such

damage is likely to worsen, especially from flooding. The National Wildlife Federation in the United States notes, and I quote: 'The latest science connecting hurricanes and global warming suggest that more is yet to come. Tropical storms are likely to bring higher wind speeds, more precipitation and bigger storm surge in the coming decades.'"

On the issue of fisheries and aquaculture expansion in The Bahamas, and the need for more focused attention in the Caribbean, Dr Minnis said his government will promote investment in agriculture, mariculture and modern sea farming strategies.

He also said his administration will promote the study of the country's marine resources with a view to creating

opportunities for the artificial propagation and enhancement of local fishing spots.

Additionally, Dr Minnis said the government will create more protective breeding areas with a view to achieving the stated national goal of protecting 20 per cent of the national seabed by 2020; and seek the assistance of international organisations to provide ongoing technical and financial support to ensure the growth, protection, viability and sustainability of our marine resources.

Dr Minnis said: "Aquaculture production in Caribbean community countries, CARICOM, has been around five per cent of total fish production in recent years. In most Caribbean small island, developing states (SIDS),

the aquaculture production is nearly insignificant."

He continued: "The import of fish and fisheries products shows a steep rise with an increase of 35 per cent in just over a decade. Fish imports are currently about ten per cent, ten times higher than aquaculture production."

According to Dr Minnis, the continued increase in population in the region, together with the impact of a more demanding tourism industry and the ongoing promotion of healthier lifestyles and diets, spurs demands for healthy, safe and high-quality foods, including fish and aquaculture products.

He also stressed that more public and private sector investments are required if the aquaculture sector is to develop into a viable sector throughout the Caribbean.

At the Third Meeting of the ACP Ministers for Fisheries and Aquaculture, held in Nadi, Fiji, in 2012, a five-year strategic plan of action was adopted.

That plan sought to address key issues affecting ACP states, specifically in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

That plan also noted that ACP states lacked sufficient technical or financial resources to effectively or sustainably harvest their fishery resources.

Moreover, the plan also outlined five strategic priority areas of action: the effective management of sustainable fisheries; promoting optimal returns from fisheries trade; supporting food security in ACP states; developing aquaculture and maintaining the environment.

The ACP conference continues through today.

## WOMEN CELEBRATE 30 YEARS OF DEFENDING THE NATION

By MICHAEL TURNER II  
Royal Bahamas  
Defence Force

MEMBERS of the Royal Bahamas Defence Force's (RBDF) Woman Entry 2 celebrate their 30th anniversary this month, honouring their commitment to country and service after graduating from recruit training as members of the contingent in 1987.

Some of the members have since retired or were honourably discharged or transferred to other government agencies.

RBDF Commodore Tellis Bethel commended the women for their long and colourful years of service, their loyalty and for their individual and collective achievements throughout their tenure. He also encouraged them to continue working towards the peace and security of our nation in whatever capacity they now serve.



MEMBERS of Woman Entry Two presenting a commemorative plaque and shirt to Dame Marguerite Pindling, and Commander Defence Force, Commodore Tellis Bethel.

Five years after the official formation of the nation's only military arm, women were finally allowed to join the rank and file of the RBDF. That decision

inevitably bore its share of challenges for the first entry of women in what had traditionally become a "man's world."

Commendably, the first

recruits, that account for nearly 20 per cent of the force's populous, these pioneering women can claim responsibility for many of the paths that have been paved for military women in the RBDF over the years.

When the 33 women who would eventually graduate to make up Woman Entry 2 entered the gates of Coral Harbour Base on September 21, 1987, it was an indication that women in the Bahamian military were here to stay. Today, the RBDF congratulates the members of Woman Entry 2, a truly extraordinary group of women who have proven their worth throughout three decades of national military evolution.

To commemorate this impressive milestone, a huge contingent representing the entry, attended several planned activities, including a courtesy call on Governor General

Dame Marguerite Pindling, on Monday as well as a courtesy call on Commodore Bethel on Friday past.

Demonstrating their inherent need to serve, last Saturday the ladies also volunteered at the Unity House, a senior citizen's Home, where they cooked and served breakfast and fellowshiped with the members, sharing stories and listening and enjoying the company of each other and their seniors.

Symbolically, the number 30 represents optimism, inspiration and most fittingly, dedication to a particular task or calling. Hence, the RBDF is optimistic that young women and other members of the Bahamian public will be inspired by these model-women who have worked hand-in-hand with their male counterparts in dedicating their lives and service to the defence and protection of our nation.

Photo: Marine Seaman Kyle Smith

entry of women stayed, served and proved their worth paving the way for the second female recruit intake. Following a grand total of 23 intakes of female

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Prof. Denise Eidemire-Shearer: Gerontology & Public Health, UWI Mona, Jamaica

**Lifestyle medicine and obesity medicine - Preparing for the 21st Century**

Dr. Robert Kushner: Nutrition, Internal & Obesity Medicine, Northwest University, Chicago

**Can cancer really be prevented by what we eat?**

Prof. Celine Heskey: School of Public Health, Loma Linda University, California

**Bariatric Surgery in the management of chronic non-communicable diseases**

Dr. Emanuele Lo-Menzo: Cleveland Clinic, Florida

**The complete approach to weight management**

Prof. Lawrence Cheskin: Weight Management Center, Johns Hopkins Medicine, Baltimore

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Prof. Celine Heskey: School of Public Health, Loma Linda University, California

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# Scotiabank support after hurricane

IN the aftermath of Hurricane Irma which resulted in unprecedented destruction across parts of the southern Bahamas and the Caribbean, Scotiabank branches in The Bahamas are accepting donations to support restoration efforts being led by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Bahamas Red Cross.

Donations can be made to: Hurricane Relief Fund, account #4005056 at the

main branch (70045). The donations can be made at any Scotiabank branch across The Bahamas, however persons are asked to please indicate that the donation is in support of hurricane relief.

Donations can also be made by account transfer - online at [scotiabank.com/bs](http://scotiabank.com/bs) or via Scotia Mobile App.

On September 8, Scotiabank announced a donation of US\$500,000 towards the relief effort

as part of its contribution to the rebuilding exercise. Half of this money will be channeled through the Canadian Red Cross that already has active societies in the affected communities, with the remainder being directed to initiatives supporting young people in these areas.

"Our thoughts remain with everyone affected by Hurricane Irma as restoration efforts continue," the bank said.

# G R SWEETING AID FOR RANFURLY KIDS

G R SWEETING once again partnered with The Ranfurly Homes For Children for the new school year.

This summer at the various The Shoe Village and Clark's stores, customers were asked if they wanted to make a donation to the home at the time of purchase.

By September, G R Sweeting had collected over \$10,000 from the public. The company then matched the public's contribution; in total donating \$21,390 dollars to the worthy cause.

LaToya Polacek, secretary of the board and chairperson of the

fundraising committee at the home, said partnering with G R Sweeting has meant a lot to the organisation.

"We are very grateful to G R Sweeting & Son Co Ltd. Through this partnership, that started in July 2014, Ranfurly is able to continue to provide a stable, safe and loving home for abused, abandoned, and neglected children."

The home currently offers a safe haven to 26 children, ranging in age from 13 to 17.

Established in 1956, the home provides everything for the children residing there, including food,

shelter, a private education and clothing. The home also provides professional counselling for all children.

The home depends on the public for 80 per cent of its income.

G R Sweeting thanked its customers for donating to such a worthy cause.

Gwen Burrows, the company's retail operations manager, said: "As The Shoe Village celebrates 20 years in business, we would like to thank our customers for their continued support and patronage."

"It is because of them that this initiative has been so successful, we are very thankful."

# POTCAKE SAYS

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- Strong computer skills
- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Strictly confidential
- Graphic design or creative skills preferred

The successful candidate will be required to perform a variety of functions including, but not limited to, the following:

- Assisting with research and recommendations for projects and events;
- Assisting with planning of regular promotion of activities;
- Coordinating marketing campaigns as directed by Department Head
- Providing assistance with standard business services and advice on business or marketing plans;
- Lending support to the overall department as needed and executing tasks as assigned by the Department Head.

**Résumés with supporting documentation should be submitted to:**  
Email: [hrmarketing242@yahoo.com](mailto:hrmarketing242@yahoo.com)  
On or before October 5, 2017



**RESCUE** workers remove rubble as they search for people trapped inside a collapsed building in the Del Valle area of Mexico City yesterday. Mexicans across the city are digging through collapsed buildings, trying to save people trapped in debris under schools, homes and businesses, toppled by a 7.1 earthquake that killed more than 200 people. Photo: **Rebecca Blackwell/AP**

# Search goes on for Mexico survivors

**MEXICO CITY**  
**Associated Press**

THE wiggling fingers of a young girl trapped in the rubble of her collapsed school in Mexico City raised hopes among hundreds of rescuers working furiously Wednesday to try to free her — a drama that played out at dozens of buildings toppled by the powerful earthquake that killed at least 230 people.

But it was the rescue operation at the Enrique Rebsamen school, where 25 people including 21 children perished, that was seen as emblematic of Mexicans' rush to save survivors before time runs out.

Helmeted workers

spotted the girl buried in the debris early Wednesday and shouted to her to move her hand if she could hear. She did, and a rescue dog was sent inside to confirm she was alive.

Hours later the crews were still laboring to free her, as images of the rescue effort were broadcast on TV screens nationwide. Workers in neon vests and helmets used ropes, pry-bars and other tools, frequently calling on the anxious parents and others gathered around to be silent while they listened for any other voices from beneath the school.

At one point, the workers lowered a sensitive microphone inside the rubble to

scan for any noise or movement. A rescuer said they thought they had located someone, but it wasn't clear who.

"It would appear they are continuing to find children," said Carlos Licona, a burly sledge-hammer wielding volunteer who came to help in any way he could. Asked if that made him optimistic, he said, "I hope so."

While optimism ran strong, by Wednesday night no living survivors had been found all day, but four corpses were found in the school, volunteer rescue worker Hector Mendez said. Mendez said cameras lowered into the rubble suggested there might be four people still inside, but

it wasn't clear if anyone beside the girl was alive.

It was part of similar efforts at the scenes of dozens of collapsed buildings, where firefighters, police, soldiers and civilians wore themselves out hammering, shoveling, pushing and pulling debris aside to try to reach the living and the dead.

By mid-afternoon, 52 people had been pulled out alive since Tuesday's magnitude 7.1 quake, Mexico City's Social Development Department said, adding in a tweet: "We won't stop." Among them were 11 people rescued at the Enrique Rebsamen school, where three people remained missing, two children and an adult. Earlier, journalists saw rescuers pull

two small bodies from the rubble, covered in sheets.

More than 24 hours after the collapse, the debris being removed from the school began to change as crews worked their way inside: from huge chunks of brick and concrete, to pieces of wood that looked like remnants of desks and paneling, to a final load that contained a half dozen sparkly hula-hoops.

Even as stunning rescues of people continued, such as a man pulled alive from the rubble of a partly collapsed apartment building in northern Mexico City, there was also a rescue of animals Wednesday.

Mexico City police said rescue workers clearing

wreckage from a collapsed medical laboratory in the Roma neighborhood found and removed 40 lab rabbits and 13 lab rats used by the firm that had occupied the building, now a pile of beams and rubble.

A helicopter overflight of some of the worst-hit buildings revealed the extent of the damage wrought by the quake: three mid-rise apartment buildings on the same street pancaked and toppled in one Mexico City neighborhood; dozens of streets in the town of Jojutla, in Morelos state, where nearly every home was flattened or severely damaged and a ruined church where 12 people died inside.

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## MARIA DESTROYS HOMES, TRIGGERS FLOODING IN PUERTO RICO

**SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO**  
**Associated Press**

THE strongest hurricane to hit Puerto Rico in more than 80 years destroyed hundreds of homes, knocked out power across the entire island and turned some streets into raging rivers Wednesday in an onslaught that could plunge the US territory deeper into financial crisis.

Leaving at least nine people dead in its wake across the Caribbean, Hurricane Maria blew ashore in the morning near the southeast coastal town of Yabucoa as a Category 4 storm with winds of 155mph (250kph).

It punished the island of 3.4 million people with life-threatening winds for several hours, the second time in two weeks that Puerto Rico has felt the wrath of a hurricane.

"Once we're able to go outside, we're going to find our island destroyed," warned Abner Gomez, Puerto Rico's emergency management director. "The information we have received is not encouraging. It's a system that has destroyed everything in its path."

As people waited in shelters or took cover inside stairwells, bathrooms and closets, Maria brought down cell towers and power lines, snapped trees, tore off roofs and unloaded at least 20 inches (50 centimeters) of rain.

Widespread flooding was reported, with dozens of cars half-submerged in some neighborhoods and many streets turned into rivers. People calling local radio stations reported that doors were being torn off their hinges and a water tank flew away.

Felix Delgado, mayor of the northern coastal city of Catano, told The Associated Press that 80 percent of the 454 homes in a neighborhood known as Juana Matos were destroyed. The fishing community near San Juan Bay was hit with a storm surge of more than 4 feet (1.2 meters), he said.

"Months and months and months and months are going to pass before we can recover from this," he said.

Gov Ricardo Rossello imposed a curfew from 6pm to 6am daily until Saturday to allow rescue crews and officials to respond to the hurricane's aftermath.

"We are at a critical moment in the effort to help thousands of Puerto Ricans that urgently need aid and to assess the great damage caused by Hurricane Maria," he said. "Maintaining public order will be essential."

One fatality has been reported but the total casualty count wasn't known.

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