

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



SPE **UNC** OF
THE HONOURABLE KAMLA PERSAD-BISSESSAR,
SC, MP

POLITICAL LEADER OF THE UNITED NATIONAL
CONGRESS
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

MONDAY NIGHT FORUM
CHAGUANAS EAST

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INTRODUCTION

Greetings

My UNC family, it's good to meet with you again! It's been a while since I've spoken with you at our Monday Night Forum, and it seems longer because of what we have to endure under this incompetent, uncaring Keith Rowley Government.

A lot has happened in these past few weeks, but what we are seeing is that the PNM has a clear agenda – and we must remain alert and ever conscious of their narrative. They answer to no one but those holding the wallet, their financiers.

Thank you

I want to thank MP Fazal Karim and the UNC supporters who over the past 3 years have helped, rebuild, renew and restructure our great party.

Many members have worked tirelessly to prepare the party for the next local and general elections.

We have done a tremendous amount of work behind the scenes and I would like to thank the hundreds of people who have worked with us over the past three years.

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Their work was reflected in the last local government elections where we got more votes than the PNM and in the recent Barataria and Belmont elections. Let us all thank Liana and Sharon and everyone associated.

Don't be distracted by the naysayers and detractors who pretend or try to give the impression that nothing is going on in the party. Nothing is further from the truth.

There are those who never want to work, never want to help, never want to mix with the rank and file, never attend a meeting, a march, a walkabout, never have a good thing to say about you and the party, calls you loyal members the worst of names (sycophants).

They don't care for you. They only want you to vote for them.

Make no mistake you have had leaders before me, you will have leaders after me BUT you will never ever have a leader who loves you more than I do. Half of me belongs to you; the other half I give to you.

Three years have passed, about 2 more to go. I ask again, anyone who is interested in helping, who wants to continue to build our great party, we welcome you. Come and work with the ones who are here working.

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Make no mistake, and I make this crystal clear when 2020 rolls around don't come to me and expect me to put you ahead of people who labour night and day for this party.

This time around don't expect to bash this party for five years and come at the last hour to try to displace you. The young and not so young hard workers in our party will have none of that.

We accept we made mistakes, we can improve. Your opinions may differ, come speak with us, join with us, lets work together to improve, no matter which party you are from we welcome you. Our doors are open and now is the time; the time is now.

I have spent most of my adult life in this party. I have worked tirelessly to build this party.

I have never bad-mouthed this party. In the worst of times and in the best of times, I have always stayed steadfast in my firm belief in the values, principles and philosophy of our great party which constitutes our vision and mission to serve all, regardless of race, religion and geography.

I worked hard because my love for you the rank and file members of this Party and of all our citizens is what matters.

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I never did anything to damage this party to benefit myself. I always understood it is you who matter most. I see this same love of the party in the eyes of the young ones coming up. I see love, loyalty and labour in them.

The future is bright. We will move forward and not repeat the mistakes of the past. We must learn, be humble, reach out, build bridges. We must listen to others who are on the fence and welcome the genuine ones into the party.

To the young ones the future of the party, you will have set backs and people will knock you down. I have one message. Get up, lift your head and keep moving forward. Keep moving forward. Be strong and proud.

I am UNC and proud! We are UNC and Proud. We are UNC and we are proud. We are UNC and we will deliver.

I thank you for your love and support.

I repeat I will always love each and every one of you.

And while I've shared my story with you, compare with this man...

[video]

I will ask you to judge for yourself. It is no laughing matter, it is a pattern of behavior.

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Bond issue by NIF Holding Company Limited

Another very serious matter is that of the National Investment Fund Holding Company Limited.

When I last raised concerns about this programme, the Prime Minister and his Minister of Finance, accused me of being unpatriotic.

I told you the Government had lied about the NIF.

(1) In May 10th 2018 Imbert announced that he was going to sell 49.9 percent of the SHARES of newly incorporated company which he announced as The National Investment Fund Holding Company.

(2) On **22nd March 2018** at a PNM meeting in Diego Martin Imbert said :

"All of these assets which total over 10 billion, will be the security for the National Investment Fund. We are going to sell units in that fund to the general public, so you can now own part of Republic Bank, WICO, OCM and MHI and so on. So we are giving back all of these assets owned by the CL group to you the people"¹

You hear LIE? THAT IS LIE.

(3) Another newspaper article told us :

"Imbert said such investors (in the fund) will benefit themselves and help the country by

¹ (Trinidad Guardian Saturday March 24th 2018, Page A13 "CL Financial companies for public offering")

generating public revenues to be used in job creation."

Further, he said ***"I am making an appeal – support your country and support yourself. Keep people in jobs"*** ²

You would be Investors. Shareholders.

You hear LIE?

We know now that instead of the giving citizens the opportunity to invest and own part of the company, NIF was going to borrow from you. You were going to be NIF's bank.

Let us make something clear, this is not a gift to the nation.

Your taxpayer dollars already paid for these assets.

And now they are borrowing from you. It is like you are paying for this twice over.

² (Trinidad Newsday Saturday 24th March 2018, Colm tells public: Buy units in Clico Fund)

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Government's intention is not for benefit of workers and public. That was never their motivation. They are money hungry. It is for the 1% friends, family and financiers.

The Minister of Finance boasted that his Government was making provision for the man who has untouched savings of \$100,000 and \$250,000 that he has lying around in the bank that can be withdrawn and placed in this facility.

Minister Imbert where are you living? People do not have money to buy food, to buy schoolbooks but they will have money to put in this?

That is a man totally out of touch with reality. Which "ordinary citizen" had hundreds of thousands lying around unutilized?

He and his Government are desperate for funds to spend on vanity projects for their friends and financiers, the 1%.

They found money for:

- \$130 million dollars on the Tarouba stadium;
- \$2 m for a new PM1 Benz
- \$3.5 m for the CL Financial sexual harassment matter
- \$440 m for the Red House
- \$174 m for Buccoo estate
- \$400 Million to restore buildings around the Savannah including castles

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- \$15 million for trade unions who today tell the country that Rowley is a lazy Prime Minister;
- \$150M for a Diego Martin stadium that we are advised went to a sole selected contractor
- \$16M Washington Lobbyist Art Collins
- \$3M in paintings
 - \$30 million dollars to Grand Bay St. Lucia, a toilet paper company;
 - \$59,000 roaming bill Shamfa
 - \$92,000 Darryl Smith romping weekend in Tobago
 - \$275M to buy out Massy Communications
 - \$20 m Ernst & Young audits
 - \$10.5 m PWC audits
 - \$3M for a fashion project for the man who provides the Prime Minister's suits
 - \$5M for the Prime Minister's house in Tobago
 - \$12 m Jazz festival
 - \$3M for the Chaguaramas Golf course
 - \$.25 m Golf course South
 - \$2.5 m for a fete match to open the Brian Lara Stadium
 - \$100 m for fake oil – I call on the new Commissioner of Police to investigate AV Drilling and the fake oil scandal!
 - \$13 m for the Cabo Star mobilization fee
 - \$20 m mobilization fee for the Ocean Flower 2
 - \$60 m for repairs to the fast ferries

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They say they don't have money, but they find money for these vanity projects.

They spent more in three years than the Partnership Government did in our three years.

Returning to the NIF –

Last year in his lust to tax citizens Imbert threatened people with the property tax, which was ILLEGAL.

He has people panicked, believing that they would lose their homes if they did not immediately comply.

We had to take them too court to get Imbert to admit that his actions were ILLEGAL.

Last month, again in his desperate rush to tax tax tax he rushed and implemented a tax on Playwhe winnings ILLEGALLY and was forced to repay millions to people.

And yet, hundreds, maybe thousands of smaller gamblers, who were paid at the lotto machine will never be repaid because having given up their tickets, they have no proof to claim a refund.

Do you see why we cannot trust ANYTHING this government says or does?

And that is not all.

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Recently Imbert crowed that the NIF was oversubscribed. He felt more "ordinary" people wanted to lend the Government money.

You hear LIE?

Firstly, I want to know how much of the Bonds were taken up by individual citizens, and at what value.

Because I know, and you know, that this was not for ordinary citizens. Tell us Imbert.

How much of it was taken up by state enterprises. Is the Government using state funds to create the perception that the bonds were oversubscribed?

Tell us how much of this was taken up by insurance companies? Credit unions and other licensed financial institutions.

Because I have news for them.

File No: F(SMEO) 2/21/105

It is very likely that once more Imbert has acted ILLEGALLY. And he KNOWS it ! and he KNEW it when the Bonds were being issued. And still did it, putting billions of assets in insurance companies, credit unions and other financial institutions at risk!

This is the man in charge of this country's finances!

I have evidence of this. He KNEW that he was breaking the law. He knew these financial institutions were acting illegally. HE KNEW! TOTAL INCOMPETENCE!! Which may even amount to financial impropriety and fraud!!

I have in my possession, a copy of a document dropped in my mailbox by a concerned citizen I assume, fed up of the duplicity and illegality of Imbert and Rowley.

That document is dated July 26th 2018, and reveals the fact that companies buying these Imbert bonds were going to be in violation of the new Insurance Act 2018.

This Act was debated in Parliament, assented to in June 2018 and as usual the PNM have failed to have it proclaimed up to now.

According to that document, the Minister was advised that participating in the NIF Bond issue at a certain level was permissible under the old Insurance Act.

But that when the new Insurance Act 2018 came into existence, these companies would be in violation of the Act and can be exposed to severe penalties SINCE THE BONDS ARE NOT FULLY GUARANTEED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

Did you know that?

By the way, you remember the Minister explaining over and over that the Government did not NEED to guarantee the Bonds?

You hear LIE?

And it gets even worse. This July 26th note, also advised that the same finance institutions would also be in violation of the Financial Institutions Act as it related to limits on the risk profile and exposure of licensed financial institutions and connected parties.

Citizens, since July this Government knew that their actions were putting our financial institutions at risk. Did you hear a word about that? Every Cabinet Minister knew, and remained quiet.

But the Minister jumps up and announces gleefully that he bond was oversubscribed. Not a word about the illegality of the actions caused by Imbert's failure to do his homework.

I am predicting that once more he will have to rush to Parliament to try to pass legislation to cover up his incompetence and when we ask questions, will bleat as usual that the Opposition was "unpatriotic".

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Tonight on behalf of citizens who may have invested in the NIF, or who have shares or assets in financial institutions including insurance companies, banks, credit unions, I call on Minister Imbert to tell this country whether it is true, that these institutions are NOW AT RISK if they have bought these Bonds.

Would they be in violation Section 89 (1) of the new Insurance Act 2018 now OVERDUE for proclamation? Tell us the truth Imbert!

Are they in violation NOW of the Financial Institutions Act sections 42(1) and 43 (1) and (2)? Tell us the Imbert!

What are the penalties that these institutions now being exposed to as a result of your incompetence and deliberate hiding of the facts? Tell us Imbert!

Why has the country been deliberately kept in the dark about this serious financial crisis? Tell us Imbert!

Why has the Minister of Finance deliberately put the country's financial institutions at risk?

If financial institutions were aware, did they advise their shareholders and depositors? Tell us Imbert!

I looked at every advertisement, at the website, every public statement by every cabinet Minister or paid PR

spokespersons, and there was NEVER any mention of this SIGNIFICANT risk to our financial institutions.

Why has the public never been told?

Are you going to have to come to the Parliament to ask for an increase of the credit exposure limit of licensed financial institutions BECAUSE YOU REFUSED TO GUARANTEE THIS BOND ISSUE?

I want to remind citizens - DO NOT TRUST a single word or action that this Government says or does. As I have shown you again and again, and just now, they cannot be trusted.

Not Imbert, Not Rowley, Not Sinanan, NOT ONE OF THEM. They simply cannot be trusted to do the right thing.

Claiming PP Projects – Shameless

You know what they are trying to do – so shameless – trying to take credit for projects done under the People’s Partnership Government which I led.

Health Minister Terrance Deyalsingh and the Arima and Point hospitals, and the Couva Children’s hospital as well, which they want to rename.

Community centres e.g. Bunsee Trace.

I saw the previous Minister of Sport speaking as if the aquatic, cycling and tennis centres were his accomplishments.

What they are doing is that now after 3 years and nothing to show they are going back and opening projects that were completed or nearly completed before September 2015 and claiming them.

Soon they will do it with some schools that were 90% or fully completed and that they had left idle for 3 years.

These incompetent people don’t know where to start to get a project going.

I want you to call them out on social media and via other means and tell them it’s the UNC that built that!

Start with those hospitals that incompetent Terrance Deyalsingh is claiming as PNM projects.

Ask yourselves this question. If Deyalsingh can't open a fully complete Couva hospital after 3 years who believes he organized construction of Arima and Point hospitals? Everything was in place before!

BROKEN HEALTH CARE – TERRIBLE TERRENCE

Some may call him the most wicked Minister of Health – Terrible Terrance - perhaps the most incompetent Minister in the history of Trinidad and Tobago.

A most evil man who arrogantly takes pleasure in rejecting children in need from the life fund and not opening the Couva hospital. I promise you we will amend the law when we return to office so that sick children will not suffer.

He now wants people to pay to use the hospital at Couva. What madness is this?

Tax payer's money paid for that and now they want to charge you. Have a heart. We had a plan for that hospital to earn money through medical tourism.

About 50 years ago, they promised the Arima and Point hospitals.

PP government started construction of these and had the government not changed they would have been in operation by now.

Lo and behold Terrible Terrance now goes around beating his chest about these hospitals. He is now trying to claim these two projects as PNM.

The whole country knows that these are UNC projects that you now trying to claim because you have nothing to show for yourself.

So, when they talk about those you tell it is the UNC that did that, Deyalsingh couldn't get a doghouse built.

Deyalsingh is a total failure and the people are paying the price for his incompetence.

Deyalsingh blames everyone. He blames the doctors and nurses. There are doctors and nurses who buying medicines and supplies and giving to patients because there is none at the hospitals.

The only "achievements" Terrible Terrance account for is:

- No adequate food supply at the nation's hospitals.

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- No adequate supply of medication at the nation's hospitals.
- Lack of drips at the San Fernando hospital – patients had to buy their own.
- No strips for diabetic patients – patients had to walk with their own.
- No Savlon and other baby products or drugs for pregnant women after they give birth.
- No napkins, towels, soap, basic drug items at the nation's hospitals on a regular basis.
- No blood test, MRI at hospitals.
- No beds up to 48 hours wait time for a bed.

Tonight I want to ask Deyalsingh about a company called Unicom.

This company has the contract for several Government projects which includes the Mt Hope School of Dentistry and the Red House Restoration project. It is our understanding that the company is also handling the Port of Spain General Hospital reconstruction project.

I call tonight on the Minister of Health and the Prime Minister to say which PNM Minister's wife works at this company. It's also alleged that the Minister and his wife are friends of the owner of the company.

Social Services – A next wicked Minister

Another heartless Minister Crichlow Cockburn who told people after the flooding that if you build your house in a lagoon you look for that.

This Minister mounted a platform and proudly announced that her greatest achievement was to take away food cards from people.

She says that over 13,000 people didn't show up for recertification. We have people who can't travel, disabled people, people in wheelchairs, single mothers, people who are afraid that when they go to the offices they may get embarrassed.

They frighten people and embarrasses them because they want a food card.

Compare this heartless government with our Direct Impact programme.

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Then boasting she removed two police officers who got the card. This is the same police who you want to leave their families home, go out to fight crime, jump in front a bullet, give their lives to save yours but insult them for a food card. Shame on you Minister Cockburn. You're a disgrace.

What are her achievements? She took away cerebral palsy grants and employment for single mothers.

They refuse to open building for disabled persons in Carlsen Field.

They refuse to give people flood relief grants.

This Minister is a total failure, incompetent, lazy and is a puppet of the 1%.

Between the tag team of Crichlow-Cockburn and Terrible Terrance, and others, poor people in this country don't have a chance.

Education

The new school term is around the corner but we have to ask

- What about books, uniforms (costs)
- What about the laptops
- Will there be school transport?
- What about the unfinished schools? This Minister opens all the schools and then in a few days' time schools closed for repairs again
- What about security for teachers and students?

CONCLUSION

UNC best option to move TT forward

My friends, our country is suffering because of this incompetent, uncaring Rowley-led PNM Government.

Any citizen who may have been on the fence, who may have held out hope that things would change – they know for certain now that this clueless, incompetent, uncaring Rowley Government cannot govern Trinidad and Tobago.

But there is always hope. I have promised you, and I intend to keep that promise, I will ensure that your party returns good governance to our beloved nation.

Again, I call on all right-thinking citizens to join with us as we work to make T&T a better place.

Already, we are seeing a surge in young people, professionals, interested in joining our party and are proving that they are up to the task of rescuing our country from this hapless Rowley Government.

The UNC has strengthened, renewed, reorganized, and our councillors are showing increased vigour and commitment.

Again I congratulate again Mrs. Sharon Maraj-Dharam on her recent win, and commend Ms. Lianna Gonzales on an

incredible fight, which saw new gains by the UNC in the Belmont district.

The UNC is the best hope to return prosperity and growth to our nation.

The UNC has prepared a vision and a plan to return stability to our nation and take us on a progressive path.

We will work towards building a society that is just, that is based on merit.

We believe in strengthening the family and promoting independence by engendering a home owning democracy.

We will continue to empower citizens through education and skill development, promoting economic independence.

The UNC believes in providing opportunities for the development of new businesses, new industries and the development of sustainable self-sufficiency, while creating a culture of being globally competitive.

I remain committed to our party's original vision, which has always been to create a better future for all citizens.

And I am ready, I am willing and I am able to work with all of you, to take on once again the mantle of leadership necessary to move our country forward.

If you believe in that vision, I ask you to join us. Stand with the United National Congress.

Let us come together, all citizens; one people, to work to make our country safer, for ourselves and our children.

Together, we can make a difference, and bring about positive change. We did it once, we can do it again!

Are you ready to move with us? Are you ready to return the party with a plan to rescue Trinidad and Tobago from this uncaring, incompetent Rowley-led Government?

Let us work together to return our beloved nation to greatness.

Remember always, half of me is yours, and the other half I give to you.

God bless and thank you all.