

Announcement

Honourable Members

I have an announcement to make.

I wish to inform the House that, on Wednesday 05 May 2021, I received a letter from the Hon. Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare in relation to the utterance of some derogatory words in the course of the proceedings of the parliamentary sitting of Tuesday 04 May 2021, which is being widely and diversely commented in the media.

In the light thereof, I caused an internal investigation to be carried out, under the supervision of the Clerk of the National Assembly, with a view to ascertaining if the alleged derogatory words had in fact been uttered and, if so, by whom.

Moreover, in the course of the investigation, it also came to light that a video footage of the relevant time at which the alleged derogatory words were uttered was being circulated on Facebook and it appeared that there is a discrepancy between the Parliament TV version, which is the official version, and the Facebook version.

Honourable Members

I have to report that –

- According to the video footages, some derogatory words had, in fact, been uttered;
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- however, it has not been possible to unequivocally identify the person having uttered same; and
- it has been deemed most appropriate to seek and obtain the forensic expertise of the Cyber Crime Office of the Mauritius Police Force for assistance in this matter.

Honourable Members can rest assured that, once I will be in presence of the findings of the said experts, I will report on this matter accordingly.

Moreover, on this same subject, I wish to inform the House that, on 05 May 2021, I also received an email from the Hon. Fourth Member for Vacoas and Floreal (Ms Anquetil) – I quote:

“requesting that you (that is, myself) instruct the Technical Department which is responsible for audio and video recordings of proceedings in the Assembly to ensure safe custody of all recordings and to prevent any unlawful tampering with these recordings.” - unquote;

and further stated – I quote:

“You will appreciate that both allegations will have to be properly investigated, hence the need to ensure the authenticity of evidence.” - unquote.

The House would appreciate that a letter of such a tenor from a Honourable Member is most regrettable, inasmuch as it is tantamount to casting doubts on the integrity of the Assembly and of the officers serving same.

I thank you.