



## Mauritius National Assembly

11.08.2020

### **SITTING OF TUESDAY 04 AUGUST 2020 - HON. SHAKEEL MOHAMED - EXTRACT OF DEBATE NO. 24 OF 07 JULY 2020 – POINT OF ORDER**

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have a second announcement to make.

During his intervention in the course of the debate on the motion of no confidence in Mr Speaker at the Sitting of Tuesday 04 August 2020, the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East (hon. Shakeel Mohamed) stated that he had with him a document purporting to be an extract of Debate No. 24 of 07 July 2020 of the Private Notice Question, in the course of which he raised a point of order.

Incidentally, the hon. Mohamed wrongly referred to the slot reserved for PNQ when, in fact, the facts which form the basis of his point of order arose during the intervention of hon. Prime Minister in the course of the debate on Anti-Money Laundering and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. 5 of 2020).

The point of order was to the effect that an hon. Member could not refer to a document unless he tables the document which he was quoting from. He went on to state that the video footage of the proceedings, after he had raised the point of order, shows Mr Speaker addressing the hon. Prime Minister in the following terms “get ready to table the document”.

However, the hon. Member alleges that when one consults the Hansard, referring to the document he had in his hand, nowhere he could find the above words.

In so doing, hon. Mohamed set out to adduce evidence on an instance of impropriety of the conduct of the Speaker in support of the motion of no confidence in Mr Speaker.

I have caused an internal inquiry to be conducted to ascertain the veracity of the evidence adduced by hon. Mohamed to that effect.



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The inquiry from the Hansard Editor in regard to the above has revealed the following –

- (i) Once the unrevised version of the Hansard is uploaded on the website of the National Assembly, the relevant extracts of the debate, that is, the instances where Mr Speaker and hon. Members have intervened are selected, printed, sent to them for minor corrections, if any.
- (ii) She has confirmed that she has sent the relevant extracts from the unrevised version of the Hansard to the hon. Member for necessary action and he has not returned same to the Hansard Unit.
- (iii) The extracts of my interventions were also sent to me on 09 July 2020 for necessary action. The Hansard Editor has also confirmed that I returned the file back to her and that no corrections/alterations have been effected by me.
- (iv) She further confirmed that the words which hon. Mohamed alleges to be missing in the Hansard, which, in fact, reads as follows, I quote, “Hon. Prime Minister, be ready to table any document you are quoting from.”, were at all material times, and are still, in the Hansard on the website of the National Assembly.

As far as the uploading of the Hansard is concerned, the PICT Manager has confirmed the following –

- (i) Debate No. 24 of 07 July 2020 was uploaded on the website on 08 July at 10.42 p.m.
- (ii) According to the audit trail, the said debate was the subject of further updates on 10 July at 4.24 p.m., on 13 July at 2.44 p.m., on 17 July at 5.18 p.m. and on 22 July at 5.37 p.m.
- (iii) That the words which hon. Mohamed has allegedly stated to be missing in the Hansard, which, in fact, reads as follows, I quote, “Hon. Prime Minister, be ready to table any document you are quoting from.”, were at all times, and are still, present in the Hansard on the website of the National Assembly.



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It is clear from the above that the evidence adduced by hon. Mohamed in support of an impropriety in the conduct of Mr Speaker is unfounded.

It is obvious that the hon. Member has insinuated that the Hansard has been tampered with. In so doing, the hon. Member has instilled the doubt in the minds of hon. Members and the nation at large as to the accuracy and authenticity of the Official Report which is published under the authority of the Assembly.

In the light of the internal enquiry reports mentioned earlier, the findings are abundantly clear that the hon. Member has misled the House.

I consider that such a vile, gratuitous and baseless accusation against the Chair strikes at the very root and dignity inherent in the highest institution, whose primary mission is above all the passing of laws to shape the future of our country.

The hon. Mohamed ought to have realised that casting aspersion on the authority of the Chair could only undermine the people's confidence essential to the good running of Parliament.

In the circumstances, I take the view that a mere apology from the hon. Member would not be adequate and would not cure the wrong caused by an act of such a magnitude.

Hon. Members may wish to note that Standing Order 49 (8) gives the Assembly the necessary powers to deal with such particular circumstances, I quote –

“Nothing in this Order shall be deemed to prevent the Assembly from proceeding against any Member for any breach of order not specified herein or from proceeding in any other way it thinks fit in dealing with the breaches of order herein mentioned.”

Having said so, I leave the matter in the hands of the House for whatever action it may deem appropriate to take.

Thank you.