



**EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY**

**DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**(UNREVISED)**

**FIRST SESSION**

**WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2026**

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(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)

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Hon. Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed, GCSK	Minister of Housing and Lands,
Hon. Rajesh Anand Bhagwan, GCSK	Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK	Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries
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Hon. Gavin Patrick Cyril Glover, SC	Attorney-General
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**MAURITIUS**

**Eighth National Assembly**

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**FIRST SESSION**

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**Debate No. 17 of 2026**

**Sitting of Wednesday 24 June 2026**

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis, at 11.30 a.m.

**The National Anthem was played**

*(Madam Speaker in the Chair)*

**PAPERS LAID**

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, the Papers have been laid on the Table –  
**Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change**

The Annual Report on Performance of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Solid Waste Management Division) for the financial year 2023-2024.

**ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION****FOREIGN LABOUR – WORK PERMIT SYSTEM – SECTORAL WORKFORCE –  
ILLEGAL EMPLOYMENT – RECRUITMENT LICENSING**

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard)** (*by Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to foreign labour, he will –

- (a) state whether, prior to the implementation of the fast-track and simplified rules-based work permit system therefor as announced in the 2025-26 Budget Speech, his Ministry conducted any impact assessment on the scarcity of workers in various sectors of the economy;
- (b) state the total number of foreign workers currently employed in Mauritius sector-wise, including construction, manufacturing, agriculture and hospitality and by nationality;
- (c) state the number of foreign workers who were working illegally and had to be deported since January 2026 to date, indicating the actions, if any, taken against the employers thereof, and
- (d) table the list of agencies issued with recruitment licenses since January 2025 to date.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, hon. Minister of Labour!

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker, the consequence of an ageing population is not just on pension and on public finance, but also on the workforce. We have less and less Mauritians joining the workforce.

One of the measures announced in last year's budget for Financial Year 2025-2026 to address the acute shortage of labour and skills, which severely impinges on investment and therefore on economic growth, is to expedite the recruitment of foreign workers through a fast-track and simplified Rules-based work permit system to be managed by the Economic Development Board.

Thereafter, on 08 August 2025, Government agreed to the implementation of the Rules-based work permit system, which will be a new revamped system for the issue of work permits.

The system will be founded on the following three prerequisites –

- (a) A Standardised Job Classification and Codification through the establishment of a system to record job grades and all relevant details as outlined in various Remuneration Orders. The system will also generate a template contract, preventing employers from modifying job requirements or conditions of employment with a view to ensuring equity and discouraging exploitation;
- (b) An Accredited Employer Framework for the accreditation of employers to ensure mandatory compliance with relevant legislation, and
- (c) A Labour Market Information System, which will be a single Employment Portal with advanced AI features to assist employers and job seekers. This will provide employers with a transparent mode of advertisement, whereby job seekers will be notified of job openings.

It was also agreed that a Steering Committee chaired by the Prime Minister's Office and comprising representatives from my Ministry, the Passport and Immigration Office and the Economic Development Board will be set up to coordinate the active involvement of various stakeholders and ensure implementation of the System.

However, Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Economic Development Board that the fast-track and simplified rules-based work permit system has not yet been implemented. I am informed that a first tender exercise for the System launched by the EDB was not successful. Fresh procurement procedures have been initiated, and the bids were relaunched by the EDB on 12 June 2026.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (a) of the question, my Ministry has not yet undertaken an impact assessment on the scarcity of various sectors of the economy.

However, in January 2025, an Inter-Ministerial Committee was set up by the Government on work permit issues chaired by myself. The Committee met various stakeholders and took stock of the scarcity of labour and skill across all sectors of the economy. The Committee also heard representations, especially from Trade Unions and NGOs, on the impact which recruitment of foreign workers may have on the recruitment of Mauritian workers. We also heard concerns raised about dormitories for foreign workers in highly residential areas. And all those concerns, Madam Speaker, were taken on board in the report of the Inter-Ministerial Committee.

One of the main recommendations of the Inter-Ministerial Committee is that before an employer is allowed to recruit a foreign worker, he needs to demonstrate his inability to

recruit locally, in particular, the employer must have advertised the post and gone through the database of job seekers as well as the Mauritiusjobs platform to try to recruit locally. To avoid abuse, it is the Employment Information Centre (EIC) of my Ministry that issues a certificate attesting that the applicant has been unable to recruit locally. It is only upon presentation of that certificate that consideration is given for an employer to be able to recruit foreign workers.

When determining the scarcity areas in which a foreign worker can be recruited, my Ministry stands guided by the detailed list of occupation in persistent demand in Mauritius published by the Human Resource Development Council which falls under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource.

Madam Speaker, during my meeting with the Director General of the International Labour Organisation earlier this month, I asked for the technical support of ILO precisely to prepare a study on the socio-economic impact of foreign workers in Mauritius.

To address the concern raised by many people, especially neighbours, relating to the mushrooming of residential houses used as Lodging Accommodation for foreign workers in densely populated areas, Government has recently approved the Occupation Safety and Health (Centralised Lodging Accommodation) Regulations 2026.

My Ministry will now license building premises which meet international standards to accommodate hundreds of foreign workers. An employer will no longer need to convert a resident house into a dormitory. He will now be able to simply rent one or more rooms in one of those centralised accommodations duly licensed to accommodate foreign workers.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, as at 31 May 2026, the two main employing sectors employing foreign workers were the Manufacturing Sector, employing 22,949 foreign workers, and the Construction Sector, employing 15,272. That is around 80% of the foreign workers. As regards the Agriculture, Hunting and Forestry Sector, the number of foreign workers was 2,618, and for Accommodation and Food Services Activities, that is, the Hospitality Sector, the number of foreign workers was 1,941.

As far as nationality is concerned, there are currently 15,840 foreign workers from India, 14,821 workers from Nepal, 9,995 from Madagascar, and 8,975 workers from Bangladesh, amongst others. Those four countries account for over 98% of the total number of foreign workers in Mauritius.

I am tabling the requested information country-wise and sector-wise. I need to point out, Madam Speaker, that those figures do not include foreign workers holding occupation permits which are delivered by the Economic Development Board. They relate to only permits issued by my Ministry.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (c) of the question, I am informed by the Passport and Immigration Office that as at 15 June 2026, there were 6,921 irregular migrant workers in Mauritius, out of which, 2,886 were reported missing, and 4,035 were required to leave as their work permit and residence permit had expired.

I am further informed that since January 2026 to date, there has been no deportation under the Deportation Act. Since January 2026, the Police Department has intensified crackdown operations across the island targeting irregular migrants. During the period 01 January 2026 to date, the Police Department, I am informed, has conducted 49 operations resulting in the arrest of 428 illegal foreigners. Out of these, 400 migrants have already been repatriated.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that the Police has already initiated immediate action to track down illegal expatriation in the country and a hotline has been established at the Police Headquarters to report the presence of illegal expatriates.

Madam Speaker, it is a fact that an employer who employs a worker without a valid work permit commits an offence, a serious offence. And unfortunately, I am informed by the Passport and Immigration Office that since January 2026 till date, no employer has been prosecuted, let alone convicted, for having illegally recruited a foreign worker. Unless and until criminal sanctions are taken under against employers who illegally employ foreign workers without a permit, there will continue to be an incentive for foreign workers to run away and work in the black economy without any protection for employers.

At the level of my Ministry, we have sought legal advice from the State Law Office as to the sanction that our Ministry administratively can take against an employer who employs foreign workers without a valid work permit. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, the advice that we have obtained from the Attorney General's Office, was to the effect that we could not impose any penalty or other sanction on the employer who is failing to renew its work permit because the law does not give us the power today to do so administratively and we will have to amend the law to give the Ministry the power to sanction those illegal employers.

Nonetheless, to curb the practice tolerated – listen to this, hon. Leader of the Opposition – and encouraged under the previous regime of allowing employers to continue employing foreign workers after the expiration of their work permit, my Ministry has taken a policy decision that we will not entertain any application for work permit or renewal of work permit unless the employers have regularised at least 90% of the workers who are under his employment and whose work permits have been expired.

And this has given the necessary, expected result. Today, a lot of these employers who kept employing workers, especially in the Textile and Construction Sector after expiration of their work permits are now having to either renew the permit, pay the permit fees, or repatriate the workers before being allowed to recruit additional workers.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (d) of the question. I wish to inform the House that the operations of private recruitment agencies are governed by the Private Recruitment Agencies Act of 2023 and the Private Recruitment Agencies Regulations of 2025.

The legislation makes provision for three types of licenses, namely for the recruitment of –

- (a) citizens of Mauritius for employment in Mauritius;
- (b) citizens of Mauritius for employment abroad, and
- (c) non-citizens for employment in Mauritius.

The Private Recruitment Agencies Regulations only came into operation in October 2025. Therefore, as from January 2025 to October 2025, no agency was issued with any recruitment license by my Ministry. All licenses issued under the previous regulations by the previous regime had lapsed and were not reviewed as we were in the process of reviewing the legal framework to ensure ethical recruitment of foreign workers.

Now, following the promulgation of the Private Recruitment Agencies Regulations back in October 2025, my Ministry has, to date, issued 20 licences for the three categories.

I am tabling the list of private recruitment agencies for each category, which has been posted on the website of the Ministry, and is updated as soon as new licences are issued. I am tabling the list. This is the updated list of the applicants who have been issued private recruitment licences, and it is broken down in the three categories of licences.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you.

Yes, Leader of the Opposition, your first supplementary.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Yes, Madam Speaker. But I draw your attention to the fact that the Minister has taken more than 20 minutes to reply. I have a series of questions. I hope you will give me enough time to put my questions.

**Madam Speaker:** You have timed it. But I will be lenient.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, the House will note that with regard to the reply of the hon. Minister, the simplified rules-based work permit system is not operational. Also, no study has been carried out.

Madam Speaker, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether Government has a long-term strategic plan to address the structural mismatch in the local workforce? Or is this fast-track system merely a pro-capital reflex to safeguard the profits of employers at the expense of Mauritian citizens' employment opportunities when it will be put into operation?

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker, I do not understand the hon. Leader of the Opposition. He comes and tells us, during the budget debates that we do not have sufficient growth. The private sector tells us: 'Give us more workers. We cannot operate without the workers.' It is in all sectors, whether it is construction, textile, hospitality, restaurant, hotels. They are telling us: 'We need foreign workers because, unfortunately, a lot of Mauritian workers do not want to work at night or they do not want to work during the weekend.'

Now, we are facilitating the recruitment of foreign workers by eliminating the most controversial part of the regime, which was to give the discretion to the Minister to decide to whom he will give or will not give the permit. This was the main problem. The Minister was deciding. Now, there are clear rules. If you show us that you are unable to recruit locally, we give you the permission to import. No discretion by the Minister!

And that criteria of 'inability to recruit locally' is there, precisely, to protect local employment of Mauritians. Because you have to convince, not me, but the Employment Information Centres across the island that you have tried.

I will go further by saying that the Employment Information Centres of my Ministry go to the pain of calling the people whose names appear on the list of apparent people who have been interviewed to verify the information, whether they had been interviewed by the person, or if it is true that they declined to be recruited. It is only then that we allow the recruitment of foreign workers. So, we are taking all the necessary steps.

As far as long-term measures are concerned, again, if the hon. Leader of the Opposition had taken care to listen carefully and read carefully the Budget Speech of the hon. Prime Minister last week, he would have seen that there is a series of measures that have been identified, which will take effect to meet that skills mismatch, including investing heavily in training through the HRDC, and developing new software to identify skills mismatch and training people. So, if he had listened carefully, he would have seen that, obviously, the strategy of the Government is to reduce this mismatch in the long term.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, second question!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Yes, Madam Speaker. It is for this reason that I...

**Madam Speaker:** Question! Question!

**Mr Lesjongard:** ...the question with regard to the study. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has been apprised of the strong representations from trade unions of this country, warning of the severe dangers of indiscriminately opening our borders to more foreign labour? May we be informed why he is ignoring such a warning?

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** *Chut!* Let the Minister reply!

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker, in my answer, I stated that the Inter-Ministerial Committee received representations from trade unions. We have listened to them, and their concerns were precisely what the hon. Leader of Opposition mentioned. They do not want foreign workers to be employed at the expense of Mauritian workers. This is why, now, any applicant must convince us, and must prove that they have not been able to recruit locally.

I will invite those trade unions, which are concerned about foreign workers coming ahead, to give us names because the advertisements are publicised. They are publicised on

Mauritiusjobs, on the MBC, and on the website. In fact, we are improving the system through the help of India; they are going to rebuild our system for automatic matching of job seekers and job vacancies. So, that will also simplify the system.

But let me reassure the trade unions and the Leader of the Opposition that the policy of this Government is, while we encourage, simplify and facilitate recruitment of foreign workers, it will never – I repeat – never be at the expense of Mauritian workers.

**Madam Speaker:** Third question!

**Mr Lesjongard:** The system is not being improved, Madam Speaker.

Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether a company by the name of MSK Global Services Co. Ltd, incorporated and registered on 22 October 2025, is the holder of a recruitment licence from his Ministry?

**Mr Uteem:** Unfortunately, I have just tabled the list. If I can be given a copy of the list for me to go through it?

Yes, I am informed that MSK Global Services has a recruitment licence to recruit citizens of Mauritius for employment in Mauritius. That was issued on 11 May...

**Madam Speaker:** This year?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Can the hon. Minister...

**Mr Uteem:** Sorry, hon. Leader of the Opposition. That was issued on the 12 May 2026 and is valid for three years till 11 May 2029.

**Madam Speaker:** Good! Fourth question!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Then, can the hon. Minister, therefore, explain to the House how this company, which has been incorporated on 22 October 2025, has been able to submit financial statements for the last three years, as required in the application form, to be able to obtain a recruitment licence for foreign labour? And I am tabling, Madam Speaker, ...

**Mr Uteem:** No, no, go ahead.

**Madam Speaker:** Carry on with your question!

**Mr Lesjongard:** I am just tabling a form from his Ministry.

**Madam Speaker:** You just want to table? Yes?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Yes.

**An hon. Member:** *Termine to kestion!*

**Mr Lesjongard:** ...where it is stated that documents to be submitted with the application, No. 7 – financial statements for the last three years.

**Madam Speaker:** What is the document, please?

**Mr Lesjongard:** The document is: Part III, Application for Licence Renewal or/of Licence for Recruitment for Non-Citizens for Employment in Mauritius.

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker, let me apologise. I mentioned that MSK only had a licence to recruit Mauritians to work in Mauritius. Going through the list, I am informed that they also have a licence to recruit non-citizens for employment in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, one of the things that we did when we enacted the new regulations for issuing of recruitment licence – we worked together with the United Nations, the International Organisation for Migration – was to review the criteria because under the former regime, we could not understand how people were getting licences, had absolutely no...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Uteem:** Let me finish.

**Madam Speaker:** I will ask him to...

**Mr Uteem:** I will explain.

... had absolutely no experience in recruitment, had no financial resources, had no certificate of morality, had no experience, no knowledge of the law, and they were getting recruitment licences. There were 54 recruitment licences. So, we came and we put an order. And in my Ministry, there is a department, independent of the Minister, which considers

recruitment licences, and we go by the four criteria. First, you have to demonstrate experience in recruitment.

**Madam Speaker:** These are what were in that document?

**Mr Uteem:** No, the document is the third criteria. I am just telling you the four criteria.

First is – how do you demonstrate it? Either you already had a recruitment licence in the past or you are related to a company who had a recruitment licence, or you were an employee of one of the recruitment licences. You show that you have the experience or you have a contract with a foreign recruitment agency which has the experience of recruiting. So, that is the first criteria and that is the toughest criteria to meet.

The second criteria is knowledge of the law. You meet that criteria most easily by having a letter from a legal adviser telling you that he is going to vet all the contracts and going to ensure that the workers know their rights when they come to Mauritius.

Then the third criteria is the criteria mentioned by the hon. Leader of the Opposition – your financial resources. Now, how do we determine the financial resources of a company which has just been set up and how can we not discriminate against a company that has just been set up and favour those companies which had recruitment licence?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, the minister is giving...

**Madam Speaker:** No!

**Mr Uteem:** No, listen to me. I am asking you, how do you ensure...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** And do not speak from a sitting position!

**Mr Uteem:** I am coming to that. The point is how do we ensure that it is not the same criteria that we are using arbitrarily as was used under their regime? So, we ask for proof of finance and then the fourth criteria, I will come back on the proof of finance.

Fourth criteria is that you have to be a fit and proper person and have not been convicted of any offences involving dishonesty.

**Madam Speaker:** Come to the particular question!

**Mr Uteem:** Now we go to how do you assess the financial situation of a new applicant? The answer is that you provide us with a business plan. In your business plan, you will tell us what is your projected number of foreign workers who are going to come, and we see whether your company is adequately capitalised or not. If it is not adequately capitalised, we require a letter of undertaking from the shareholders that they are going to invest, they are going to inject funds in the company to meet all the necessary working capital. On top of that, all companies which are licensed to recruit foreign workers to work in Mauritius are required to deposit a guarantee of Rs1 million, either in cash or as a bank guarantee or in terms of an insurance policy. So, Rs1 million, that will ensure that they have the financial means to run the operation.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, your fifth question and time is going.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, then, therefore, I will table two documents. One is with regard to the application and the documents that are required to be submitted, and the other one is the company details.

Hon. Minister, are you aware that there is a sole director in that company and that, that gentleman is only 21 years old? Does he have any experience with regard to recruitment of foreign workers?

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker...

**Madam Speaker:** Let me see the documents. One moment, Minister. I want to see the documents before they are really tabled.

Yes, answer, time is going, please answer.

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker, let us be very clear. As a Minister, I do not know and I do not get involved in any issue of recruitment licences. My only role starts when my Ministry has rejected a licence and the applicant makes an appeal to the Minister. That is the only moment that I receive the file and I go through the file and I have to say that most of the companies which had made an appeal, have had their appeal turned down for the time being.

Now, in regard to this company, this gentleman of 21 years, and I do not know, I really do not know who are the shareholders or directors. I do not know. That is a fact. I do not know who is the director or shareholder of that company, but let me tell him to read the regulations, and maybe I should do so, so that he is under no misunderstanding of the Regulation 4...

**Madam Speaker:** Not too long, Minister.

*(Interruptions)*

Yes, I will give you another few minutes, I told you.

*(Interruptions)*

*Oui*, but I am the one who is telling...

**Mr Uteem:** Yes, let me read.

**Madam Speaker:** Un jour il faudra venir s'asseoir ici à ma place.

**Mr Uteem:** Let me read. Regulation 4(4)(a)(i) –

“the applicant –

(i) has demonstrated that the directors or senior officers of the applicant have technical knowledge and experience in the field of recruitment of workers;”

So, the shareholder may be a young person, but if he has a senior official who is going to do the work, what do I do? I discriminate against our youngster? I tell them do not invest, do not start a business? Do like them? Sit, *res lakaz*?

**Madam Speaker:** Minister, please! Last question.

**Mr Lesjongard:** No, that cannot be the last question. I have got a series of questions, Madam Speaker!

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, I am giving you more time! In any case, time has already run. I am giving you more time!

**Mr Lesjongard:** No, I need more questions, Madam Speaker, because I am...

**Madam Speaker:** No, one more question.

**Mr Lesjongard:** I am coming to another issue which was raised. With regard to recruitment agencies, can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether Lexus Recruitment Agency does not hold a licence to operate as a recruitment agency?

**Madam Speaker:** Does not?

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker, I have just tabled the list of all companies which have been issued a recruitment licence. I am aware that there is a series of applicants – this morning, my PS has informed me – that have already been approved by the committee, but

whose recruitment licence has not yet been issued because either they have not paid this guarantee, the Rs1 million, or it is still being processed. But as at today, the company mentioned by the hon. Leader of the Opposition is not on the list of companies having received a recruitment licence.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay, exceptionally, one last question.

**Mr Lesjongard:** This cannot be!

**Madam Speaker:** Otherwise, we can go on and on.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, the shareholders of that agency are the spouses of two of his closest collaborators, and the hon. Minister mentioned that this company acts as middleman between recruitment agencies and agents. The hon. Minister is a lawyer. Is he seriously suggesting to the population of this country that this loophole does not amount to a blatant conflict of interest?

**Madam Speaker:** Okay.

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker, there is absolutely no conflict of interest because anyone, including my own child, if tomorrow she fulfills all the criteria and needs to get a licence which is independently evaluated, will I deny it? When they were in Government, their children were appointed as doctors. When there was nepotism at its peak, then it was okay.

**Madam Speaker:** Minister!

**Mr Uteem:** Today when you are getting other people trying to earn a decent living legally, the hon. Leader of Opposition is taking objection just because the person happens to be a member... But let me tell you amongst those who applied, there are agents of the MSM, there are agents close to the former Deputy Prime Minister, there are agents very close to Ms Joanna Bérenger. They have also applied. So, what do I do? I reject their application just because they are related to this company? Come on!

*(Interruptions)*

**Ms J. Bérenger:** I object!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, I have a last question.

**Madam Speaker:** Nobody... No, I am not allowing you a last question. We started at 11.35 a.m.

**Mr Lesjongard:** I told you...

**Madam Speaker:** I gave you... But I have...

*(Interruptions)*

I have...

*(Interruptions)*

One moment. I have given you extra time. You have to bow to...

**Mr Lesjongard:** I told you I have got one last question and you are not giving me that one last question.

**Madam Speaker:** No, twice, you have asked me for a last question. Twice! We can come back on the issue. You can come with specific questions and also if there is anything illegal...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Lesjongard:** C'est ça le retour de la démocratie dans cette...

**Madam Speaker:** ...if there is anything illegal, ...

*(Interruptions)*

... If there is anything illegal...

*(Interruptions)*

**Ms Anquetil:** Le MSM, la démocratie...

**Madam Speaker:** Ça suffit!

*(Interruptions)*

Chief Whip! Chief Whip, please!

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Ça suffit de tous les côtés. Ça recommence comme hier là.

I am trying to be as fair as I can. If there is anything...

**Mr Lesjongard:** If you are fair, give me my last question!

*(Interruptions)*

**An hon. Member:** *Diktatur! Diktatur koumsa!*

**Madam Speaker:** I counted, and now, I am told the Minister replied for 16 minutes. But I still gave you more time. If I keep giving you more questions, because, obviously, it is very important, then, we can stay for a whole hour!

Ms J. Bérenger, you wanted to?

**Mr P. Bérenger:** Yes! Did you hear what the Minister just said concerning hon. Ms J. Bérenger?

**Madam Speaker:** I told her I am...

**Mr P. Bérenger:** And you have allowed him to say that and sit down!

**Madam Speaker:** No! I am giving the floor now to Ms J. Bérenger.

**Mr P. Bérenger:** Oh! You did not hear when ...

**Madam Speaker:** No! She asked. I told her to wait.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** I would like the hon. Minister to substantiate. And again, he is calling me Ms Joanna Bérenger. I suppose I am an honourable. But he needs to substantiate what he just said.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, Minister, you must ...

**Mr Uteem:** Yes, I will. I am substantiating. I did not want to disclose.

**Madam Speaker:** You have... One moment! One moment!

**Mr P. Bérenger:** Disclose if you ...

**Mr Uteem:** I will!

**Mr P. Bérenger:** Lâche!

**Madam Speaker:** One moment! Don't get...

We are getting very far from what we started.

**Mr P. Bérenger:** He is always getting personal!

**Mr Uteem:** Ah!

**Madam Speaker:** Let me talk, please! Please, let me talk!

Hon. Minister, it is not proper to call an hon. Member 'Miss'. This is the second time. So, please, stop doing that, first of all.

Secondly, what was it that you said? He must substantiate?

**Ms J. Bérenger:** He must substantiate or he withdraws what he said about ...

**Madam Speaker:** About? Somebody close to you?

**Mr P. Bérenger:** This is imputing motives.

*(Interruptions)*

**Ms J. Bérenger:** About my proximity with a supposed agent.

**Mr P. Bérenger:** Lâche!

**Ms J. Bérenger:** He is imputing motives. And, again, a lot of ...

**Madam Speaker:** Minister! Okay.

**Mr Uteem:** I did not want to disclose names because it is not proper to disclose names in this Assembly. An agency extremely close to the former Deputy Prime Minister, Brabant, applied for a recruitment licence. Nothing personal.

**Mr P. Bérenger:** I do not even know.

**Mr Uteem:** Brabant! You don't know who is Brabant? Your...

**Mr P. Bérenger:** I don't know whether he has applied!

**Mr Uteem:** Okay, but you know he is close to you!

**Mr P. Bérenger:** What has that had got to do with...

**Mr Uteem:** I am going to come to it! I am going to come to hon...

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Member!

**Mr Uteem:** ... to the hon. First Member of Vacoas & Phoenix, Constituency No. 16.

**Madam Speaker:** Floréal! Vacoas & Floréal.

**Mr Uteem:** Floréal! Vacoas & Floréal, Constituency No. 16.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr P. Bérenger:** *Li pa...*

**Mr Uteem:** Her own...

*(Interruptions)*

Her own...

*(Interruptions)*

Her own...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, are we not losing time now?

**Madam Speaker:** What can I do?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Uteem:** Let me answer! Let me answer!

*(Interruptions)*

Let me answer! Let me answer!

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** And people are speaking from a sitting position!

**Ms J. Bérenger:** He is always getting personal! Always!

**Mr Uteem:** Let me answer! Can I answer?

**Mr P. Bérenger:** Always! You allow him.

**Mr Uteem:** Can I answer?

**Madam Speaker:** I don't allow him! And you...

**Mr P. Bérenger:** You allow him!

**Madam Speaker:** And you are speaking to me from a sitting position! I am trying to be as fair as I can.

I said we will stop this game. You will table!

*(Interruptions)*

You will table!

*(Interruptions)*

You will table!

*(Interruptions)*

That's enough!

(Interruptions)

That's enough! We have gone...

(Interruptions)

**An hon. Member:** *Les li reponn!*

**Madam Speaker:** That's enough!

(Interruptions)

**Ms J. Bérenger :** *Depi talerla li pe koze. Les leader lopozişion...*

(Interruptions)

**Madam Speaker:** Let us...

**Mr Uteem:** 30 seconds to...

**Madam Speaker:** No, no need! Because I have stopped the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Lesjongard:** No, Madam Speaker. I protest strongly that you are not giving me my last supplementary!

**An hon. Member:** *Debout!*

**Madam Speaker:** I am not going to give you another supplementary question. You know full well that I have always given more time than needed, globally speaking.

J'ai déjà noté tout le temps que je vous ai donné. Ne venez pas me dire que je suis injuste. Vous pouvez le penser. Chacun a le droit de penser ce qu'il veut. Après, quand vous passez votre temps à dire que *this has been the practice before*, vous voulez que je fasse comme mes prédécesseurs ? C'est ça que vous voulez ?

**Mr Lesjongard:** I have not said that, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Ah bein ! Alors, arrêtez de me traiter comme-ci je ne sais pas ce que je fais. Vous hurlez dans tous les sens. Je dois prendre le temps qu'il faut pour pouvoir agir et réagir.

Bien sûr, je ne suis pas parfaite. Mais là, je vais arrêter. *This PNQ is over!*

Hier, c'était pareil. Je ne sais pas ce qui se passe !

**Mr Lesjongard:** Hier, je n'ai pas posé de questions.

**Madam Speaker:** Pas vous ! Mais vous avez accusez ; je ne vais pas revenir là-dessus.

Okay, now, time is up for PNQ!

*(Interruptions)*

People can think what they want, okay?

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker, I ... explanation!

**Madam Speaker:** No! Minister, I am not going...

*(Interruptions)*

Minister, I am not...

**Mr P. Bérenger:** Shame!

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** I am not going to let you. Please, bow down to my decision. Bow down to my decision!

**Mr Uteem:** ... serious allegations...

**Ms J. Bérenger :** ...fait des *allegations* !

**Mr P. Bérenger:** He makes allegations; you allow him, and then he says we make...

**Mr Uteem:** I have to state...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Ça suffit ! Ça suffit !

*(Interruptions)*

I am raising ; *Je m'en vais* !

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr P. Bérenger:** Shame! Shame!

*Dir sa deor!*

**Ms J. Bérenger:** *Jenito, to ferm lizie! Jenito to pa trouve? Jenito to pe amene ilegalman!*

*At 12.16 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.*