



COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA MINISTRY OF HOUSING & WATER CENTRAL HOUSING AND PLANNING AUTHORITY

East Coast squatters must end attempt to disrupt national development

The attempts by persons to disrupt government's development program is nothing but mischievous and an attempt to shift focus. In keeping with the government's mandate to reopen Enmore Sugar Estate, the areas under illegal occupation are required by GuySuCo for cane cultivation. Multiple notices were issued to the squatters who occupied lands at sections of LBI, Chateau Margot, Success and more recently extended to Le Ressonvenir, Felicity, Montrose, Brothers, Vryheids Lust and Better Hope. Despite joint efforts by GuySuCo, NICIL and the Ministry of Housing and Water, calling on squatters to vacate the lands, they continue to be defiant. Interventions made thus far:

August 22nd, 2020-Minister of Housing and Water, the Hon. Collin Croal acting on an invitation from Chairman of the Better Hope/Success/ La Bonne Intention NDC, Mr. [REDACTED] visited South Success, where he was briefed on the situation.

September 8, 2020-Squatters met with a team led by Minister of Housing and Water, the Hon. Collin Croal, along with Chief Executive Officer of the Central Housing and Planning Authority, Sherwin Greaves, NICIL and GuySuCo visited squatters of South Success. The Minister engaged group leader Ms. [REDACTED] who committed to assisting the process of data collecting.

September 9, 2020-Chief Executive Officer of the Central Housing and Planning Authority, Deputy Manager of the Community Development Department, Ms. Donell Bess-Bascom met with a group of persons who identified themselves as community leaders. Group Leader Ms. [REDACTED] committed to providing the Housing Ministry with a list of persons who have application and those who are interested in applying.

September 30, 2020- NICIL, GuySuCo and Law enforcement visited and engaged squatters asking them to remove. Persons who were willing to relocate were escorted out of the location with their belongings. Others opted to defy law enforcement and became confrontational.

October 1, 2020-Following reports that the group leaders

were collecting money from persons under the pretext that it was payment for allocation, the Ministry made several attempts to contact them but to no avail. Persons have reported that they have made payments ranging between \$75,000 to \$300,000 on promises of allocation in the Success area.

The information for the squatters as promised by group leader Ms. [REDACTED] was not presented to the Ministry, hence the outreach at the Chateau Margot Primary School. A total of 703 persons were attended to at that exercise.

October 5, 2020- Ministry of Housing and Water deployed a team for further data collection on the number of households dwelling in the area. This exercise was met with hostility from squatters. An assessment of the data so far revealed that several persons illegally occupying these lands are already property owners; some have rented their houses, while others have been collecting money from persons to squat.

October 9, 2020, -A meeting was held with Minister Home Affairs, the Hon. Robeson Benn, Senior Officers of the Guyana Police Force, CEO of NICIL, CEO and officials of GuySuCo and a decision was taken for GuySuCo to proceed with its land preparation activities in the area. GuySuCo's strategy to flood various areas was outlined. **Flood fallowing is a common practice in the sugar industry, going back to decades.**

October 17, 2020-The Civil Defense Commission deployed a team to determine the number of households and to conduct a needs assessment exercise. This information will guide the further plans for these persons as the possibility of setting up a shelter is being explored.

All efforts to engage the squatters in a peaceful resolution of the situation and for them to peacefully vacate were met with hostility. NICIL had also issued similar notices.

Prime Minister Brigadier Mark Phillips offered shelter to families but this offer was once again refused. Transportation was even offered to assist with the removal of materials which were brought on the lands by the squatters. They were also reminded about their right to apply for houselots and were encouraged to do so immediately.

THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA REMAINS COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH THE SQUATTERS AS WE WORK TOWARDS THE PROVISION OF HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR ALL.

The above outlined efforts were made and demonstrate every attempt to remain humane and calm. However as has been the norm, persons continue to use this sensitive matter as a political football, much to the disadvantage of those involved in this illegal activity.