



The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs

MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND LEGAL AFFAIRS
AND MINISTER IN THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

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Media Release

For Immediate Release

Attn: News Editors

Date: May 2, 2018

Title: CLAIM AGAINST JEARLEAN JOHN AND OTHER DEFENDANTS REFILED IN THE HIGH COURT FOR EDEN GARDENS MATTER

On April 27th, 2018, the Attorney General and the Housing Development Corporation re-filed their claim against the following Defendants, Jearlean John, Henckle Lall, Graig Davis, Peter Forde, Project Specialist Ltd, Ronald Heeralal, Point Lisas Park Limited, Anthony Sampath, Patrick Soo Ting and Everil Ross for, inter alia, unlawful means conspiracy, breach of fiduciary duties and bribery.

Mr Gerald Ramdeen has indicated that he will accept service of the claim on behalf of Jearlean John. The other Defendants have been served or are in the process of being served.

The re-filing of this claim became necessary after some of the Defendants made a procedural application querying the grant of Orders by the High Court extending the time for the Attorney General and Housing Development Corporation's service of the claim on the Defendants, whilst they made applications designed to "follow the money". On 17th April 2018, the High Court set aside the Orders granting these previous extensions of time for the service of the claim.

The High Court has not determined the substantive issues in this matter, and the setting aside of the Orders of extensions of time, and the dismissal of the previous claim do not affect the State's ability to re-file this claim.

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The claim, which is now commonly referred to as “the Eden Gardens case” arises out of the misuse of public funds to acquire a property known as Eden Gardens in Chaguanas by the Housing Development Corporation for a sum substantially greater than its open market value.

On February 3, 2010, Point Lisas Park Limited purchased Eden Gardens for \$5 million. On November 28, 2011, Eden Gardens was valued for \$52 million by a reputable private valuation firm. On November 9, 2012, HDC purchased the Eden Gardens lands from Point Lisas Park for \$175 million.

The claim outlines how the eventual payment of the grossly inflated sum for the lands was as a direct result of the failure of key personnel, who controlled the Housing Development Corporation at that time, to exercise their duties as public officials by taking reasonable, responsible and sensible steps to conduct due diligence on the transaction and the value of the land being acquired. Those failures constituted breaches of duty by the First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Defendants (Jearlean John, Henckle Lall, Graig Davis, Peter Forde and Project Specialist Limited, respectively). The Sixth Defendant (Ronald Heeralal) also allegedly breached duties owed to the State.

The Defendants were all parties to an unlawful means conspiracy.

In addition, there is overwhelming evidence of the payment of a bribe by the Seventh Defendant (Point Lisas Park Limited), the seller of Eden Gardens, which was allegedly received by the Tenth Defendant (Everil Ross), an employee of the Valuation Division involved in preparing a valuation to justify the payment of \$175 million.

The Office of the Attorney General and the Housing Development Corporation, are confident that at the eventual trial of this matter it will be publicly demonstrated and determined that this is one of the most brazen and egregious cases of corruption and abuse of state resources that has been litigated to date in our country.

The State will pursue this matter and other matters of corruption that have been filed, and are soon to be filed, to conclusion.

Stuart R. Young
Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (Ag.)

End.