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Chambers

Director of Public Prosecutions,  
P.O. Box 1031,  
Georgetown,  
Guyana

30<sup>th</sup> September, 2024

## **DPP'S CHAMBERS PRESS RELEASE - June 2024 Criminal Assizes**

The Demerara June Criminal Assizes commenced on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2024 with a total of 234 cases listed to be heard. Madam Justice Simone Morris-Ramlall, Madam Justice Jo-Ann Barlow, Justice Sandil Kissoon and Justice Navindra Singh commenced the Assizes. On June 25, following their appointments by the Judicial Service Commission (JSC), Justice Peter Hugh, Madam Justice Zamilla Ally-Seepaul and Madam Justice Sherdel Issacs-Marcus sat.

During this Assizes, the State disposed of sixty-nine (**69**) matters; **44** matters were presented in the High Court. Of these, 13 were for the offence of *Murder*, 6 for *Manslaughter*, 15 were for the Offence of *Attempt to Commit Murder*, 9 for *Sexual Offences* and *one for the offence of Accessory After the fact of Murder*.

The remaining **25** matters were nolle prosequi by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

There were 4 jury verdicts of guilty, 11 guilty pleas, 17 verdicts of not guilty by jury, 1 hung jury, 1 Aborted Trial and 14 formal verdicts of not guilty, of which 5 were no case submissions upheld by the trial judge and 9 complainants testified they did not wish to proceed with their matters.

There were a total of **49** accused in relation to these matters.

Senior State Counsel Taneisha Saygon, State Counsel Marisa Edwards, State Counsel Mikel Puran, State Counsel Praneeta Seeraj, State Counsel Yonika Roland and State Counsel Abiola Lowe completed 8 matters before Justice Barlow.

There were **2** matters for the offence of *Murder*, another **5** for *Sexual Offences* and **one** for the offence of *Manslaughter*.

In 6 of these 8 matters, the juries returned unanimous verdicts of not guilty.

In one of the 2 other matters for Sexual offences, one accused was found unanimously guilty on 2 counts of *Rape* and sentenced to 26 years' imprisonment. The complainant in the other matter testified she did not wish to proceed with the evidence and trial judge directed the jury to return a formal verdict of not guilty.

State Counsel Rbina Christmas together with State Counsel Madana Rampersaud, State Counsel Mohamed Muntaz Ali, State Counsel Yonika Roland and State Counsel Abiola Lowe prosecuted 4 matters for *Sexual Offences* before Justice Morris-Ramlall.

In one of these, the accused was found guilty by jury verdict and sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment. Another 2 accused were found not guilty by unanimous jury verdicts. While the other one accused was remanded back to prison after his jury returned hung.

State Counsel Carissa Henry, State Counsel Alvaro Ramotar, State Counsel Joy Williams and State Counsel Padma Dubraj prosecuted 5 matters in Justice Kissoon's Court. 2 matters were for the offence of *Murder* and 3 for the offence of *Attempt to commit Murder with the alternative of Felonious Wounding*.

In one of the Murder cases, there were 2 accused who both pleaded guilty to the offence. The number one accused was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment while his co-accused was sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment. They were both ordered to undergo anger management and vocational training while in prison.

The accused in the other matter was acquitted by a unanimous jury verdict.

In 2 of the 3 matters for the offence of *Attempt to Commit Murder*, the complainants declined to testify and trial judge directed the juries to return formal verdicts of not guilty. The accused in the other one was found not guilty by a jury verdict.

State Counsel Delon Fraser, State Counsel Simran Gajraj and State Counsel Mikel Puran prosecuted 13 matters before Justice Peter Hugh.

3 of these matters were for the offence of *Murder*, one for *Manslaughter*, 8 for the offence of *Attempt to Commit Murder with alternative counts of Felonious Wounding*, and one for the offence of *Accessory After the Fact of Murder*.

In one of the 3 *Murder* trials, trial judge upheld a no case submission and directed the jury to return a formal verdict of not guilty. In another one there were two accused who were indicted together and both pleaded guilty as charged. They were respectively sentenced to 17 years and 15 years' imprisonment. The other one accused was also sentenced 15 years' imprisonment. They were all ordered to undergo development programmes while in prison.

In the one *Manslaughter* case the trial judge upheld a no case submission and directed the jury to return a formal verdict of not guilty.

In 2 of the 8 matters for *Attempt to Commit Murder with alternative counts of Felonious Wounding*, one accused pleaded guilty to the alternative count and was sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment. The other one was found guilty by jury and sentenced to 9 years and 4 months' imprisonment.

In another one trial the accused was acquitted by jury. In the 4 other trials, there were all formal verdicts of not guilty. In one of these, the complainant had died. While the complainants in the others did not wish to testify. One trial was aborted after a juror was seen speaking with a family member of the accused.

The accused for the offence of *Accessory After the Fact of Murder* was acquitted by a jury verdict.

State Counsel Rbina Christmas, State Counsel Padma Dubraj and State Counsel Mtumika Lumumba prosecuted 5 matters before Justice Ally-Seepaul. 3 of these matters were for the offence of *Murder* and one each for the offences of *Manslaughter* and *Attempt to Commit Murder with alternative counts of Discharging A Loaded Firearm and Felonious Wounding*.

Of the 3 *Murder* matters, **one** accused pleaded guilty to the lesser offence of *Manslaughter* and was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment. Another **one** was found guilty of by a jury verdict and sentenced to 29 years' imprisonment. While the one other was found not guilty by a jury verdict.

In the 2 separate matters for the offences of *Manslaughter* and for *Attempt to Commit Murder with alternative counts of Discharging A Loaded Firearm and Felonious Wounding*, the trial judge directed the juries to return formal verdicts of not guilty. In one, trial judge up held a no case submission. In the other, the complainant testified that he did not wish to proceed with the matter.

Senior Counsel Taneisha Saygon, State Counsel Caressa Henry, State Counsel Praneeta Seeraj and State Counsel Christopher Belfield completed 2 matters before Justice Navindra Singh.

Of these 2 matters, one was for the offence of *Murder* and the other for the offence of *Manslaughter*.

In the Murder trial, there were two accused who were each indicted on 2 counts; they pleaded guilty to each count of Murder. The number one accused was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment on each count while the number 2 was sentenced to 25 years on each count. Their sentences will run concurrently.

And in the matter for the offence of *Manslaughter*, trial judge upheld a no case submission and directed the jury to return a formal verdict of not guilty.

State Counsel Madana Rampersaud, State Counsel Alvaro Ramotar, State Counsel Nafeeza Baig and State Counsel Marisa Edwards completed 5 matters before Madam Justice Sherdel Issacs-Marcus.

**One** of these was for the offence of *Murder*, 2 for *Manslaughter* and another 2 for *Attempt to Commit Murder with the alternative count of Wounding with Intent*.

The accused in the **one** Murder trial pleaded guilty as charged and was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment. He will become eligible for parole after serving 15 years. He was ordered to undergo anger management while in prison.

In **one** of the 2 matters for the offence of *Manslaughter*, the jury returned a not guilty for the accused. In the other **one**, trial judge up held a no case submission and directed the jury to return a formal verdict of not guilty.

Of the **2 matters** for *Attempt to Commit Murder with the alternative count of Wounding with Intent*, one accused was acquitted by a jury verdict. The complainant in the other trial testified that he did not wish to testify. The trial judge then directed the jury to return a formal verdict of not guilty.

The **24** matters nolle prosequi by the DPP were for the offences of *Murder and Malicious Damage to Property, Manslaughter, Wounding with Intent to Murder, Attempt to Commit Murder, Sexual Offences, Abduction and Robbery with Violence, Wrongful Confinement and Abduction for Ransom.*

In **2** of these matters the accused were both medically certified as being unfit to stand trial. While **3** complainants have since died. The complainants in the other **matters** submitted written statements in which they indicated they did not wish to proceed with their matters.

### **BERBICE ASSIZES**

During this time the Berbice Criminal Assizes was in progress with 86 cases listed to be heard. State Counsel Cecelia Corbin has completed 9 matters before Madam Justice Simone Morris-Ramlall.

Of these 9 matters, 2 were for the offence of *Murder*, 5 *Sexual Offences* and one each for the offences of *Attempt to Commit Murder* and *Abduction*.

In **one** of the Murder trials, the accused pleaded guilty to the lesser offence of *Manslaughter* and was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. The accused in the other matter was acquitted by a jury verdict of not guilty.

Of the 5 matters for Sexual Offences, one accused pleaded guilty to 4 counts of Rape of A Child under 16 years and was sentenced to 8 years imprisonment on each count. His sentences are to run concurrently. In 2 others, trial judge up held a no case submissions and directed the juries to return formal verdicts of not guilty. And in the other 2, the juries returned verdicts of not guilty.

In 2 other separate matters, one for the offence of *Attempt to Commit Murder* and the other for *Abduction*, the respective juries returned unanimous verdicts of not guilty.

The DPP Nolle Prosequi 8 matters; 7 of these for Sexual Offences and one for the offence of *Attempt to Commit Murder*. The complainants in these matters submitted written statements they did not wish to proceed with their matters.

The Berbice June Assizes continues until October.

## **ESSEQUIBO ASSIZES**

The Essequibo May Criminal Assizes had commenced with 78 cases listed. State Counsel Latiffa Elliott has prosecuted 3 matters for *Sexual Offences* before Madam Justice Damone Younge.

In 2 of these matters the complainants testified they did not wish to proceed with their matters and trial judge directed the juries to return formal verdicts of not guilty. In the one other matter, the jury returned a unanimous verdict of not guilty.

The Essequibo Assizes continues into October.

The Demerara October 2024 will commence on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2024 with 183 matters listed to be heard. Justice Navindra Singh, Madam Justice Jo-Ann Barlow, Justice Sandil Kissoon, Madam Justice Sherdel Isaacs-Marcus and Justice Peter Hugh are rostered to sit.

The Berbice October Criminal Assizes will commence on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October. Madam Justice Zamilla Ally-Seepaul will sit during this Assizes.

While the Essequibo October Criminal Assizes will start on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October. Madam Justice Damone Younge will continue to sit.

## **Court of Appeal**

During June, July and August, we appeared in 9 appeals at the Court of Appeal for the offences of *Murder, Manslaughter, Sexual Offences, Possession of Narcotics and Ammunition, Causing Death by Dangerous Driving and Assault Causing Actual Bodily Harm*.

Assistant DPP, Mrs. Diana O'Brien, Assistant DPP Teshana Lake, Assistant DPP Mercedes Glasford and Assistant DPP Lisa Cave appeared in these matters.

There were 5 applications to appeal against conviction and sentence; 3 of these applications were dismissed. One appellant was allowed his application and he will face a new trial. While one other appellant's application was allowed in part, the COA upheld his conviction and sentence, but reduced his years of eligibility for parole from 35 years to 20 years.

There were 4 applications for bail pending appeal. 3 of these were withdrawn. One other was granted.