

Our Ref:.....

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*Chambers*

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

4<sup>th</sup> June, 2024

**DPP'S CHAMBERS - Press Release for Demerara April 2024 Criminal Assizes**

The Demerara April 2024 Criminal Assizes commenced on Tuesday 2nd April, 2024 and came to an end on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2024. During this Assizes Madam Justice Simone Morris-Ramlall, Justice Sandil Kissoon, Madam Justice Jo-Ann Barlow and Madam Justice Priya Sewnarine-Beharry sat.

A total of 224 cases were listed to be heard. Of these 224 cases, twenty-three (23) matters were disposed of. Of these 23 matters, The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) presented 17 in the Demerara High Court while six (6) were nolle prosequi by the DPP.

Of the 17 matters presented, 6 were for the offence of *Murder*, 10 for *Sexual Offences* and one for the offence of *Attempt to Commit Murder*.

There were 7 formal verdicts of not guilty, 5 guilty verdicts by jury, 3 not guilty verdicts, 1 guilty plea and 1 aborted trial. A total of 19 accused appeared in these matters.

State Counsel Mohamed Muntaz Ali, State Counsel Rbina Christmas, State Counsel Marissa Edwards and State Counsel Taneish Saygon prosecuted 10 matters for *Sexual Offences* before Justice Simone Morris-Ramlall in the Sexual Offences Court.

In 3 of these cases, the accused were found guilty by jury verdicts. One of them who was indicted on 3 counts of *Sexual Activity with A Child Family Member* was sentenced to 20 years each on counts 1 and 2, and 13 years on count 3. His sentences will run concurrently.

Another one who was indicted on 2 counts for *Rape of A Child under 16 Years and Causing A Child under 16 Years to Watch A Sexual Act* was sentenced to a total of 28 years imprisonment.

The other one accused was charged for the offence of *Rape of A Child under 16 years* and was found unanimously guilty by a jury verdict. His sentence has been deferred to the 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2024.

In another 5 cases, the complainants testified they did not wish to proceed with the evidence and trial judge directed the juries to return formal verdicts of not guilty.

In one of the other 2 matters, the accused who was indicted on 5 counts of sexual offences was acquitted on all counts. The other one case was aborted after the complainant, who had commenced her testimony was ordered by the Court to seek further counselling.

State Counsel Caressa Henry, State Counsel Joy Williams and State Counsel Padma Dubraj completed 3 matters; 2 for the offence of *Murder* before Justice Sandil Kisson and one for *Attempt to Commit Murder* with an alternative count of *Wounding with Intent* Before Justice Priya Sewnarine-Beharry.

In one of the 2 trials before Justice Kisson, the jury unanimously found the accused guilty; he was sentenced to life imprisonment with possibility of parole after 25 years. The accused in the other matter was acquitted by the jury.

The accused in the one matter before Justice Beharry was found guilty by jury verdict on the alternative count and sentenced to 13 years imprisonment. He was ordered to undergo counselling in anger management and behavioral change while in prison.

Assistant DPP Tiffany Lyken, State Counsel Taneisha Saygon, State Counsel Praneeta Seeraj, State Counsel Simran Gajraj, State Counsel Rowland and State Counsel Lowe prosecuted 4 matters for the offence of *Murder* in Madam Justice Jo-Ann Barlow's Court.

In one of these, the accused pleaded guilty to the lesser offence of *Manslaughter* and was sentenced to life imprisonment with possibility of parole after serving 30 years. In another two, trial judge up held no case submissions and directed the

juries to return formal verdicts of not guilty. While in the other one matter in which two accused were indicted together, they were both acquitted by jury verdicts of not guilty for the offences of *Murder* and *Manslaughter*.

The six cases nolle prosequi by the DPP were for the offences of *Murder, Attempt to Commit Murder and Sexual Offences*. In two separate matters the accused have died while the complainants in the others submitted written statements that they did not wish to proceed with their matters in the Court.

### **Berbice Criminal Assizes**

During this time, the Berbice February 2024 Criminal Session had commenced with 104 cases listed. State Counsel Cicelia Corbin has presented 11 matters before Madam Justice Priya Sewnarine-Beharry who sat from May.

Of these 11 matters, there were 6 *Sexual Offences*, 3 for *Attempt to Commit Murder with alternative counts of Unlawful Wounding, Felonious Wounding and Wounding with Intent* and one each for the offences of *Manslaughter* and *Abduction and Causing Grievous Bodily Harm with Intent*.

In 4 of these matters, the accused were acquitted by jury verdicts of not guilty. In another 2 separate matters, the accused were found guilty by jury verdicts and are awaiting their sentences. While in 2 others, the accused pleaded guilty. Their sentences have been deferred.

In 3 others matters, trial judge directed the juries to return formal verdicts of not guilty; in two of these, the complainants testified they did not wish to proceed with their evidence, while the trial judge up held a no case submission in the other.

The DPP entered nolle prosequi in 9 matters; in one case the accused died while the complainants in the others submitted written states that they did not wish to proceed with their matters.

The Berbice June Criminal Session will commence on June 18, 2024.

## **Essequibo Criminal Assizes**

Meanwhile, the Essequibo February 2024 Criminal Assizes had commenced with 78 cases listed. State Counsel Latiffa Elliot has completed 7 matters; 6 of these were for *Sexual Offences* and one for the offence of *Attempt to Commit Murder with an alternative count of Wounding with Intent* before Madam Justice Fidela Corbin-Lincoln who sat from March.

In one of the 6 Sexual Offences matters the jury returned a majority verdict of 10 guilty to 2 not guilty against the accused. Sentence has been deferred in this matter. In 2 others, the juries returned not guilty verdicts in favour of the accused. While in the other 3 matters, the complainants testified that they did not wish to proceed with the evidence and trial judge directed the juries to return formal verdicts of not guilty.

In the one matter for the offence of *Attempt to Commit Murder with an alternative count of Wounding with Intent*, the complainant testified that he did not wish to proceed with the matter and trial judge directed the jury to return a formal verdict of not guilty.

This criminal assizes remains in progress.

## **Court of Appeal**

During April and May 2024, we appeared in 10 matters at the Court of Appeal for the offences of *Murder, Manslaughter, Sexual Offences and Simple Larceny*. The State was represented by ADPP Dionne McCammon, ADPP Diana O'Brien, ADPP Teshana Lake, ADPP Mercedes Glasford and ADPP Lisa Cave.

Two applications for bail pending appeal were granted while two others were refused. Six applications to appeal against conviction and sentence are pending for decision.

## **Demerara Full Court**

During this time, the Demerara Full Court heard one matter for the offence of Fraud. The appellant informed the Court that the application for bail was filed in the another court.

The Demerara June Criminal Assizes commenced on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2024 with 234 cases listed to be heard. Justice Sandil Kissoon, Madam Justice Jo-Ann Barlow and Madam Justice Simone Morris-Ramlall will sit in June and Justice Navindra Singh will sit from July.

While the Berbice June Criminal Session will commence on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June with 86 cases listed to be heard.

The Essequibo May Session commenced on 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2024 with 78 cases listed.