

PRESS STATEMENT

**Hon. Mia Amor Mottley Q.C., M.P.
Leader of the Opposition
Political Leader, Barbados Labour Party**

As we speak today, Barbados faces the most serious economic challenges since Independence, threatening our way of life and our very stability as a nation.

It is a time that calls for all hands on deck and the best minds working together for Barbados.

It is against this background, that towards the end of 2013, I called upon the Government of Barbados to establish an Eminent Persons Group to allow us to start the New Year with the most qualified persons in Barbados assisting in saving the country.

The concept of a non-partisan multi sectoral group is one that has been widely used across the world. In fact, it is an approach proposed previously by the Barbados Labour Party. In our ranks I looked around and I could think of no better or more qualified persons than our former Prime Minister, the Rt. Honourable Owen Arthur, who served this country with distinction for fourteen years, and Mr. Erskine Griffith GCM, a former Director of Finance who was at the forefront of the resolution of all of our major economic challenges for the past forty years.

I believed then, as I do now, that Barbados needs its best brains and its most experienced persons at this time.

In these circumstances, I sincerely regret Mr. Arthur's un-willingness to be considered for a nomination to this Eminent Persons Group, had the government agreed to its formation.

In this vein, I apologise for any offence he may have taken.

It is also regrettable that a letter written by Mr. Arthur, addressed to Mr. Kerrie Symmonds and read and discussed at our Parliamentary Group meeting on 30th December could now find its way to the front page of today's Nation Newspaper.

I hope that we can now put this matter behind us and proceed with the people's business.

As Leader of the Opposition, I give Barbadians the assurance that the team I lead will not be distracted but will remain focused on the dire conditions of our country and the plight of thousands of Barbadian families who within days may have to face their future without the security of a job.

The overwhelming support and attendance at the first Peoples' Assembly on Sunday re-affirm my resolve and confirm that the Barbados Labour Party is indeed on the right track. The views expressed, the experiences shared and the solid suggestions offered underscore the importance of these assemblies.

Let us do this together.

I invite you to join us again, tomorrow night, Tuesday at The Foundation School at 7.00 as we host the second Peoples' Assembly. Dr. Peter Laurie and Bishop Wilfred Wood will join us in continuing the national conversation about how best we can work together to resolve our problems by putting Barbados first.

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