

Press Release: Visit of Minister Robeson Benn to Lusignan Prison on August 22, 2020.

The Minister of Home Affairs, Robeson Benn, made an impromptu visit on Saturday, August 22, 2020 to the Lusignan Prison where he saw firsthand the Holding Bay, the burnt Lusignan Prison, and the Covid-19 isolation facility.

The Minister was accompanied by the Director of Prisons, Gladwin Samuels, DSM, Assistant Director of Prisons, Kevin Pilgrim and other Senior Officers of the Guyana Prison Service. Engineers from the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Guyana Prison Service, as well as other staff from the Ministry, comprised the team.

The Minister was briefed by the Director of Prisons and by the Officer-in-Charge Holding Bay Senior Superintendent of Prisons (ag), Deoraj Gyandat on the administration of the prison population, security challenges, COVID-19 initiatives along with other pertinent issues. Some recommendations for meeting some of the challenges were discussed.

High on the agenda will be the construction of additional areas so that social distancing can be practiced, and better supervision and management of the prisoners can be conducted. The Director, the Prison Directorate and engineers, were also tasked with detailing the development plans for the Lusignan location.

The Minister also visited the kitchen area and livestock sections and was provided with some insight into what can be achieved if requests for additional land and other resources are approved.

He was also brought up to date on the current status for court hearings at the various levels - Magisterial, High Court and Court of Appeal.

Inmates made some representations on accommodations, court hearings, legal assistance, food, familial visits, recreational diversions and counselling services.

Minister Benn expressed his concern that the conditions he observed were very unsatisfactory.

The Minister committed to working with all concerned to bring measureable improvements to the Georgetown, Mazaruni and New Amsterdam Prisons on a timely basis.

This will be pursued to ensure better public safety, a more secure environment for the prison population, aid in their rehabilitation, and provide a safer and less stressful working conditions for the prison officers and staff.



Deliberation of Visit Findings



Social Distancing



Appraisal of Gutted Lusignan Prison
by Minister of Home Affairs Benn



Minister Benn given an Orientation
of the Prison by DOP Samuels



SSOP(ag) Gyandat Indicating Damages to Inner Fence



Minister Benn Ensuring Quality of Rations