

The following letter was published in the *Stabroek News* on the 19th June 2001 under the caption "**Law does not permit two panels**" and in the *Guyana Chronicle* on the said date under the caption "**Without legal authority**".

June 2001

Dear Editor,

Stabroek News editor's note of 9/6/01 stating that the Legal Practitioners Committee consists of 2 panels, each comprising six lawyers and a subsequent note on 16/6/01 which states that Mr. Stoby and Mr. Moriah defends this position is mind-boggling!

According to section 23 of the *Legal Practitioners Act* Cap. 4:01 there shall be a Legal Practitioners Committee consisting of not more than 15 members, with the Attorney General, Solicitor General and State Solicitor as *ex officio* members. The Attorney General shall be Chairman and in the absence of the Attorney General the Solicitor General shall be Chairman. In the absence of the Attorney General and the Solicitor General from any meeting, the members present shall elect one other member to be Chairman.

The law is clear and unambiguous and no amount of sophistry can change the written law. Therefore, the constitution of 2 panels of six lawyers, each with a named chairman, is without legal authority.

The Attorney General, Solicitor General and State Solicitor are required by law as stated in section 23 to be part of the Committee. Further, the Registrar shall perform the duties of secretary or may depute a sworn clerk. The non-inclusion and non-participation of these four persons cannot be justified.

I also wish to point out that upon carrying out investigations of any complaint, the Legal Practitioners Committee is required to report their findings to the judges of the Court. Further, reports must be signed by the Chairman and filed in the Registry. It is my understanding that no such reports have been filed in the Registry.

The most troubling aspect of this is that members of the public have a reasonable expectation that lawyers would not be unfamiliar with the law and that complaints would be dealt with by a properly constituted body in a fair and just manner and according to law.

Yours faithfully,

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