

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**COLOURS CARIBBEAN DEMANDS APOLOGY FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF THE ROYAL CAYMAN ISLANDS POLICE SERVICE**

Yesterday, the Commissioner of the *Royal Cayman Islands Police Service*, Derek Byrne, told the press that statements encouraging, among other things, the hanging of gay people, do not rise to the level of a crime. To paraphrase another statement made by the Governor weeks prior, this is “absolutely unacceptable.”

Firstly, *Colours Caribbean* finds Commissioner Byrne's statement to be legally questionable at best. Threats of hanging, however dressed up, or suggestions of how to “eradicate” LGBTQIA+ people by any means go well beyond causing alarm and distress to our vulnerable community—they are exceptionally disturbing and dangerous.

To the extent that if anyone has experienced distress as a direct result, then an actual criminal offence may have been committed under **Section 88A** of the **Cayman Islands Penal Code**:

***Intentional harassment, alarm or distress***

88A.

*[1] A person who, with intent to cause a person harassment, alarm or distress—*

*[a] uses threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or disorderly behaviour; or*

*[b] displays any writing, sign or other visible representation which is threatening, abusive or insulting,*

*thereby causing that or another person harassment, alarm or distress commits an offence and is liable to imprisonment for three years or, if the offence is committed in the night, to imprisonment for four years.*

*[2] An offence under this section may be committed in a public place or a private place.*

Secondly, we observe that the statement by Commissioner Byrne has a sinister and compounding impact on LGBTQIA+ people that he should be reprimanded for as it could, itself, be construed as criminal. By his negligence, the Commissioner, hopefully unintentionally, has risked giving the ‘green light’ for people to harass, alarm and distress an already marginalised community without any criminal consequences.

That same day, a caller speaking on the radio station, *Rooster 101*, said live on air and in the presence of The Deputy Leader of the Opposition—who neglected to challenge the caller—that “anyone who is involved in the queer and lesbian lifestyle should be put in front of a firing squad...” The use of such threatening, abusive and insulting language is the sort of reaction that Commissioner Byrne has sanctioned and incited with his statement to the press yesterday.

*Colours Caribbean* therefore demands the RCIPS conduct a thorough investigation into any evidence presented to them regarding potentially criminal behaviour, as opposed to brushing it off in such an irresponsible and highly dangerous way, as the Commissioner did yesterday as many in the public are utterly appalled by the belittling of these very serious allegations.

Further, we also demand an immediate and unreserved apology by the Commissioner of the RCIPS for such an inexcusable failure of judgment. Failing that, we then demand that the Governor reconsider the position of the current Commissioner.

**Billie Bryan, Founder & President,**  
***Colours Caribbean***

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