



Parliament of Sint Maarten

Staten van Sint Maarten

To the Hon. Minister of Justice
Ms. A.E. Richardson
Government Administration Building
Philipsburg

UV/425/2019-2020

Philipsburg, September 3, 2020

Re: Questions from MP C.A. Buncamper regarding concerns of Inmates Association

Hon. Minister Richardson,

Herewith I submit to you questions posed by Member of Parliament, Mr. C.A. Buncamper pursuant to article 62 of the Constitution and article 69 of the Rules of Order of the Parliament of Sint Maarten.

The letter is self-explanatory.

Yours truly,

R. Brison
President of Parliament



Claudius A. Buncamper BSc.

Member of the Parliament of Sint Maarten

Sint Maarten, August 31, 2020

President of Parliament
Parliament of Sint Maarten
Wilhelminastraat 1
Philipsburg, St. Maarten

STATEN VAN SINT MAARTEN			
Ingek. 31 AUG 2020			
Volgnr. <i>15/1165/19-20</i>			
Par.	<i>J</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>GR</i>

Subject: Questions for Minister of Justice

Dear Honorable President of Parliament:

Pursuant to article 69 of the Rules of Order of Parliament, I hereby request that you forward the attached questions to the Minister of Justice, the Honorable Minister Anna Richardson.

Thank you in advance.

Respectfully,

Claudius A. Buncamper
Member of Parliament
Faction Leader, United St. Maarten Party



Claudius A. Buncamper BSc.

Member of the Parliament of Sint Maarten

The Honorable Minister of Justice
Anna Richardson,
Government Administration Building,
Soualiga Road # 1,
Philipsburg,
St. Maarten

Ref: Concerns of Point Blanche Prison Inmates Association

Philipsburg August 31st, 2020

Honorable Minister Richardson;

During the course of last week, I read in the media of the concerns of the Point Blanche Prison Inmates Association. The association, through its representative Sjamira Roseburg, expressed its concerns about the health conditions at the institution and sounded what is being referred to as “an even louder alarm” urging the powers-that-be to “get serious about restructuring the prison system or risk facing a situation that they will not be able to control”.

The inmates main concern is the COVID-19 situation at the prison. They explained that one of the infected staff workers at the prison is a social worker who is in constant contact with inmates, in a room that they describe as too small to hold a table and a chair. The association also expressed concerns about the possibility of outsiders bringing the virus into the prison.

Other concerns expressed by the association are;

- the present capacity of the prison, as it currently stands just two persons short of the limit, which does not allow for the possibility of proper quarantining.
- The prison guard's ability to properly and effectively execute their work in the current environment.
- The rehabilitation programs which have been stopped after Hurricane Irma in September 2017.
- The lack of proper dental, medical and mental care, public telephones, recreational and educational activities, regular pest control, and a proper gymnasium/recreational area.

If the concerns raised by the representative of the inmates of the prison are legitimate, we are heading down a slippery slope which requires immediate attention. While I do have understanding for our critical financial situation, the humanitarian situation cannot be lost out of sight as these people are in the care of the state and thus need to be properly protected.

With regard to the serious COVID-19 spread we are presently having and the fact that we have had prison guards and personnel possibly infected and some testing positive for the virus, I have the following questions;

1. What measures are currently in place to avert the Corona Virus reaching and spreading among the inmates?
2. Are there any plans to start testing the inmates at the institution? If so, when?
3. What procedures are there in place in the event an inmate is tested positive for the Corona Virus?

With regards to the basic human rights that the inmates should be able to count on in our kingdom, I have also listed some questions below;

4. According to the media report, the inmates' representative mentioned that the prison facilities lack proper dental, medical and mental care. If this is the case, what is currently being done to improve this situation, as the state is responsible for these rights of the inmates?
5. Can you provide me an overview of the plans in place, or to be put in place, to ensure that the rights of the inmates are not being trampled on? This includes allowing visitations or phones calls, having recreational and educational programs in place, a clean and safe environment and providing rehabilitation programs.

Hoping to receive the answer most soonest, I remain.

Regards,



Claudius A. Buncamper BSc.
Member of Parliament
Faction leader USP