



NEWS RELEASE

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ADDRESS TO THE NATION BY PRIME MINISTER HON. TILLMAN THOMAS

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,
GOOD EVENING,**

Many of you would know that service to the people of Grenada is the most important value in my public life. My firm belief in high ethical standards, honesty, integrity and accountability, and living those values are my guiding principles. It is for those reasons that I spent years in jail, refusing to compromise those values. It is for those reasons that I embraced everyone in the spirit of reconciliation and genuine inclusiveness. This I firmly believe was, and remains in the best interest of uniting Grenada.

Having the opportunity to lead this government as part of a team which advocated the **good governance agenda**, places upon me an honourable duty to act in the public interest at all times. **For me, it is always about people, not power.** The members of my government must also be clear as to the importance of this standard of personal responsibility. One requirement of that obligation is to combat wrong-doing regardless of who is responsible.

Fellow Grenadians,

As Prime Minister, I have been careful to act with fairness and even-handedness in dealing with violations of the public trust, by members of my Government. When former members of my government crossed a particular line in the past, I acted accordingly and will consistently do so. I give you the assurance that just as I have treated with my own government colleagues, so too, I am resolved to fight wrong-doing by those in the previous administration as the evidence would justify. **And WHO can honestly say that I am wrong for fighting wrong doing?**

Today, I advised His Excellency the Governor-General to revoke the appointment of the Hon. Joseph Gilbert as a Minister of Government. This action was taken in the public interest and in order to preserve the integrity of the Government of Grenada and to maintain the highest standards of Cabinet decision - making. The factual basis for this action, is irrefutable documented evidence, in writing, before me.

It is established that the Hon. Joseph Gilbert, in his capacity as Minister for Works, on August 23rd, 2011, wrote to a foreign company, Harbour Holdings Limited, regarding a project known as the Ocean Crest Gaming Project.

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In that letter, the Minister represented to the Company that the Government of Grenada proposed to amend existing legislation pertaining to Gaming. The Minister gave the company the assurance that it would be issued a licence to operate a gaming facility on lot 8 at the Cruise Port in St. Georges and encouraged the company to proceed to finalize its financing arrangements for the purchase of Lot 8 in light of the pending license approval.

These representations by the Minister were made in full knowledge that Cabinet had not taken any such decisions. Furthermore, the Minister did not seek Cabinet's approval for his actions, nor did he inform the Cabinet of **what he had done in its name** in an important area of public interest. In this respect, the Minister must have been aware that his conduct was wrongful or was otherwise unconcerned as to his responsibility to the Cabinet.

Ladies and gentlemen, such behaviour is not only highly irresponsible but disrespectful and abusive of the process of Cabinet. It is indefensible and cannot be condoned by this Government and should not be condoned by any other Government. **It must be clearly understood by all, that this matter is not about the survival and stability of the duly elected Government of Grenada but about preserving our core values and building of a sustainable country.**

In fact, Mr. Gilbert's actions, along with the demonstration of poor judgment surrounding it, **must strike every citizen** as being totally unacceptable on the part of a Minister of Government.

As the leader of this nation, I am deeply concerned that the Minister's inexplicable contravention of Cabinet's authority has seriously compromised the Government of Grenada, and may well lead to significant damaging consequences.

It is my responsibility to protect this nation from harmful consequences and I shall do so with all of the authority given to me as Prime Minister of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Fellow Grenadians,

I take this opportunity, to comment briefly on matters of public interest concerning the National Democratic Congress, of which I am the Political Leader. It is clear to me, that all in the leadership of our Party have a responsibility to the People of Grenada; including and especially, those tens of thousands who share our values, who sacrificed and who worked hard to remove the last administration.

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These are the people to whom we owe a debt of gratitude and to whom we owe an obligation **never to return to the corrupt practices of the former regime.** It is you the people who by voting for the NDC, have put in place a government you trusted would serve all the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique with **honour and integrity.**

I am convinced, that words and phrases like **conspiracy, division, and ‘Party-within-a-Party’** are not consistent with the NDC BRAND that the people of Grenada have known and loved. Our Party has healed itself in the past and it is our duty to do all that is necessary to ensure that the NDC remains **vibrant, powerful and capable** of serving the people of Grenada for a very long time to come.

We in the National Democratic Congress, like any other Party, would have to deal with the issue of succession at the right time. In this regard, I believe that all of us, members of the NDC, as well as our faithful supporters, would be comfortable with a **scheduled, democratic and transparent** process of change when the need arises.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The times are indeed challenging and difficult. However we have been weathering the storm relatively and comparatively well. We are doing much better than many of our neighbours. Our continued progress requires that all Grenadians work together to ride the turbulent waves. This is not the time for division and fragmentation. This is not the time for pursuing individual agendas. It is the time for collective nation-building. It is a time for greater commitment, greater sensitivity and caring and most of all a recognition that God is in control. We must give thanks for our many Blessings.

In closing, I give the public the assurance that my Government will move speedily beyond this unfortunate issue. We will continue to fulfill our mandate to govern in accordance with the principles of good governance and the provisions and conventions of the Constitution of Grenada.

Only this week, the House of Representatives approved a Motion putting into operation the Integrity in Public Life Legislation. The onus is on all Parliamentarians, in particular, and by way of example, to live up to its provisions.

Finally, I invite you all to join with me in taking a **stand against wrong-doing in public life.** We must do so in order to preserve the fabric of our society and to establish for our leaders, **clear standards** that our children would be proud to emulate. I Thank You and May God Continue to Bless our Nation

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