

Ramotar's presidency has brought nothing but continued corruption – Greenidge

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A Partnership for National Unity (APNU)'s Shadow Minister of Finance, Carl Greenidge is of the firm belief that the



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findings of the latest Latin American Public Opinion (LAPOP) Project, some of which reflect a nose-dive in the approval rating for President Donald Ramotar, are in keeping with the observations of ordinary Guyanese.

Greenidge said that the apparent lack of trust in the government which the report reflects is as a result of the capricious behaviour of the PPP Government, its problematic wages policy, poor public sector investment and widespread corruption.

Greenidge opined that President Donald Ramotar's Presidency has brought nothing but "disgrace and continued corruption."

LAPOP, which is controlled by Vanderbilt University in the United States and has conducted similar studies for over 30 years, revealed that the trust of Guyana's citizens in the Parliament had decreased, and also found that less than 10 percent of the populace agreed with Ramotar's decision to suspend the Parliament.

The APNU politician on this note said that "the public will inevitably regard the government's political process as flawed because Ramotar has a minority in the Parliament and behaves as though he has a majority and can do as he pleases". He sternly criticized Ramotar's policies which he said reflects "arrogance and political stupidity."

Additionally, the project noted that there were some fluctuations in the popularity and approval level for the President for the period during 2006, but held steady in 2012. The scale however dipped after 2012, which reflected a decline. The study was done just two months after the Head of State took office.

In providing his perspective on why there was a decline, reputable researchers Daniel Montalvo, Elizabeth Zechmeister and Mitchell Seligson said that "normal popularity erosion" might be the cause, since most newly-elected presidents' face this after the honeymoon period is over. "Nonetheless, this decrease could also be due to more structural factors, such as popular perception of economic performance,



President Donald
Ramotar

citizens sensing that the government may not be able to successfully negotiate agreements with opposition members in the parliament, or a broader public perception of a government inability to satisfy citizen demands," the report said.

Greenidge in this regard, opined that Ramotar's honeymoon period ran out a long time ago and what helped it to get there is the obvious lack of imagination in his Presidency.

The APNU Parliamentarian said that Ramotar's Presidency has brought nothing new to the table except "minority rule, brazen frauds, inconceivable scales of wickedness and treachery".

He said that the projects being considered, under Ramotar's term in office, have all been set up by former President, Bharrat Jagdeo and his administration, for PPP hacks and Jagdeo's friends.

Greenidge asserted that when urgent and definitive action is called for to ensure the betterment of the people, "the government suddenly plays possum. They operate as though they are in a wonderland and refuse to do anything that promotes the livelihood of citizens. They suddenly get, dumb, blind and deaf."

The Opposition member reminded of the government's inaction with regard to timely cleaning of drains to stop flooding, action against corruption, prosecution of criminals for blatant and dangerous crimes such as murder and money laundering, solving a legislative problem so that an illegally imposed tax is removed to avoid having to pay large fines to a Caribbean company, and reviewing tax policy to ease the burden on the poor.

In the latter case, Greenidge, who is also Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, said that the President made a promise on this, namely the VAT and NIS reform, but nothing has been done.

"Instead, the government's obsession is to try endlessly to silence the electorate, block the Opposition at all cost, and hinder the Legislature so that more damning breaches of the Constitution can take place. This government is obsessed with making the people dumb and sightless, it wants to do everything in its power to have modern day slaves".

"He (Ramotar) just sits tight and abuses the electorate whose support he needs. The Presidency is ineffectual and the public is going to penalize the PPP for that... The Presidency is in the hands of Ramotar, but his strings are pulled by the Jagdeo cronies!" Greenidge emphasised.

Also of significance is that the LAPOP said that while statistics show that Guyana's economy seems to be flourishing, citizens believe that the economy worsened in 2014.

Greenidge also agreed with the "gut feeling" of the electorate. He opined that the so-called "experts" who are writing about the great growth in Guyana have confused new buildings and more four-wheel drive vehicles on the road to mean greater prosperity.

"Many people who have bought house lots under various Government programmes have found that the \$1M house lots, for example, have been eventually seized by the banks because incomes are not enough to service such large mortgages.

"Many of the existing properties in central Georgetown and Demerara stand unoccupied and derelict, even as we experience unprecedented growth. Of course part of the growth is illusory and merely the result of the Ministry of Finance's game of rebasing the Gross Domestic Product. However, one must note that the apparent contradiction in manipulated figures and the reality is the result of exceptionally rapid growing

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income disparities,” the former Finance Minister asserted.

Further, the LAPOP also said that trust in the Parliament decreased between 2012 and 2014. Specifically, the report said that trust in Parliament slid from 59.6 percent in 2012 to 46.3 percent in 2014.

”Thus, we find that the current political upheaval in Guyana goes hand-in-hand with broad and increasing citizen dissatisfaction with Guyanese political institutions and what they are delivering”, the report said.

Greenidge said that this finding is not surprising. He opined that citizens see a problem that originated in the Parliament, but it is not being fixed by the Parliament. He said this is because the Presidency is able to have its own way or to block change where it cannot, hence deadlock and costly confrontations result.

The Opposition Parliamentarian also highlighted a part of the report which he believes the government should pay rapt attention to.

The report, he said, showed that less than 10 percent of the electorate believed that the prorogation of the Parliament, as the country faces difficult times, is a justifiable move.

LAPOP said, “Thus, we conclude by noting that there is little reason to believe that the Guyanese public is likely to take recent events as a palliative to their brewing dissatisfaction”.

Greenidge said that the PPP government would be wise to pay attention to the inference of the LAPOP statements and how it signals to its inevitable demise.

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