C/190/2025

Anonymous Complaint from Whistle Blower

On 20th June 2025, we received a letter from a whistle blower making the following allegations against the Ministry of Education and Human Resource: -

a) A lack of transparency in the selection of officers to form part of a monitoring squad to check the effectiveness of private security services hired by the Ministry. The squad operated outside normal working hours against the payment of overtime.

b) Officers were being removed from the squad and replaced without reason.

c) Misuse of power by an officer to admit his children in a school in Lower Plaines Wilhems while residing in the south.

Upon query, the Ministry reported that: -

(i) In November 2017, it was decided to effect sporadic visits at Government primary and secondary schools to check whether security services were being provided as per the provisions of the relevant contract. The squad then comprised Mr. P.S, Office Management Assistant and Mr. A, Liaison Officer, along with a driver.

(ii) The visits were from 16 30hrs to 23 00hrs on weekdays and from 09 00hrs to 16 00hrs on Saturdays against payment of overtime allowance. Whenever, the need arose, visits were effected on Sundays as well.

(iii) In August 2019, the school checks were discontinued for the following reasons: -

(a) in spite of the night check, there were still cases of absenteeism and it was not acting as a deterrent;

(b) it was not worthwhile paying Rs 1,119,277 for 18 months as overtime without reaping the expected result. An average of Rs 62,180 was being paid monthly;

(c) it was a contractual obligation for the company to supervise its watchman; and

(d) in May 2019, an overtime of Rs 42,872.85 and a deduction of only Rs 5,698.27 from one security provider had been made.

(iv) The Director of Audit in its report for Financial Year 2018-2019 recommended that the Ministry should reinforce security measures and devise a proper mechanism to ensure that the Service Providers fulfil their contractual obligations, thereby safeguarding school assets from thefts and acts of vandalism by intruders. The Audit Committee recommended the setting up of a Monitoring Squad to carry out night checks in schools as the Ministry could not rely solely on electronic devices such as cameras which could be tampered with by intruders wearing masks.

(v) Four monitoring teams as follows were set up in January 2021 comprising of male Office Management Assistants and Management Support Officers in view of the nature of the work and timing: -

Days	**Frequency**	**Time**
Weekdays	Two visits weekly	18 00hrs to 23 00hrs
Saturdays	One visit monthly	13 00hrs to 19 00hrs
Sundays	One visit monthly	13 00hrs to 19 00hrs

(vi) It was noted that in spite of the monitoring of security guards in schools by the monitoring squad, there was no major improvement in terms of presence of security guards on site. The services of the monitoring squad were, therefore, stopped in October 2022.

(vii) In July 2023, the Monitoring Squad was relaunched as the four Zonal Directorates had reported the absences of security guards and that they did not wear uniforms or their badges.

(viii) The Monitoring Squad has had positive impact which had almost doubled the attendance rate from 42.48% in June 2022 to 80% in December 2024. In order to ensure 100% presence of watchmen providing night security services, it was proposed in February 2025, that checks be carried out 13 times on a monthly basis that is 11 during weekdays,1 Saturday and 1 Sunday and the arrangements would be as set out hereunder: -

Days	**Time**
Weekdays	18 00hrs to 23 00hrs
Saturdays	09 00hrs to 15 00hrs or 16 00hrs to 22 00hrs
Sundays	09 00hrs to 15 00hrs or 16 00hrs to 22 00hrs
Any day	00 00hrs to 05 00hrs

(ix) The new team comprised of a liaison officer; one Office Management Executive, two Office Management Assistants, an Office Supervisor and three Management Support officers. Additionally, one Office Management Assistant and a Management Support Officer were kept as spares.

(x) Following observation from the Finance Section regarding the costs of overtime, it was agreed that only Officers of the grades of Office Management Assistants and Management Support Officers be involved in this exercise and a new team was formed as from June 2025.

(xi) With respect to the allegation against the officer whose children were admitted to a school in the Lower Plaine Wilhems, the latter has informed that since 2023 his wife and children reside in the catchment area of the school.

On 15 July 2025, another letter was received alleging maladministration, mismanagement of funds, and fraud at the Ministry. Given the nature of the complaint, it was referred to the Financial Crime Commission and the Director of Audit for appropriate action.