



OFFICE OF THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
RALPH E. GONSALVES
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

19th April, 2026

To: All Media Houses in St. Vincent and the Grenadines
c/o The Editor/Manager
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Dear Editor/Manager,

I write to bring to your urgent attention a grave and unfolding threat to the constitutional foundations of our democracy. At stake are principles we collectively hold dear: the supremacy of our Constitution, the rule of law, and the separation of powers.

As you are aware, following the 2025 General Elections, election petitions are presently before the Court challenging the eligibility of Dr. Godwin L. Friday and Mr. D. Fitzgerald Bramble to be nominated and elected to Parliament. These petitions turn on the Court's interpretation of Section 26 of the Constitution, concerning persons who, by their own act, have sworn allegiance to a foreign power.

After initially dismissing these petitions as "frivolous," the Government has now taken the extraordinary step of tabling a retroactive constitutional amendment which, if applied, would have an effect on the outcome of those Election Petitions by altering the law in the midst of ongoing litigation.

This development is without precedent in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. There has never been an attempt to amend the Constitution:

- With one week's notice;
- Without consultation with the public or the parliamentary opposition;
- Without any official explanation from the Prime Minister or the Attorney General; and
- In circumstances where the practical effect is to pre-empt judicial determination of a live matter before the courts.

Similarly, while there are myriad examples within the Caribbean and worldwide of politicians whose eligibility has been challenged – legally and politically – on the basis of their dual citizenship, there is not a single example of a government amending the constitution to sidestep such a challenge.

While constitutional amendments are a legitimate exercise of parliamentary power, that power must be exercised responsibly and for general, prospective purposes. It cannot properly be used to resolve a specific, pending dispute.

The interpretation of the Constitution is the exclusive province of the Courts. A retroactive amendment, directed at a live election petition, does not simply change the law; it risks interfering with the administration of justice by effectively dictating the outcome of proceedings properly before the judiciary.

Such a course raises serious concerns about:

- The integrity of the judicial process;
- The principle that laws should not operate retroactively to affect accrued rights;
- The proper limits of Parliament’s constitutional amendment power; and
- The role of election petitions as a cornerstone of electoral fairness and accountability.

Election petitions are not ordinary litigation. They exist to ensure that elections are conducted in accordance with the law as it stood at the time. To alter that legal framework after the fact undermines legal certainty and public confidence in the electoral process.

No responsible democracy should permit the Constitution to be amended in a manner that appears designed to shield individuals from judicial scrutiny in an ongoing case. Constitutional power, however broad, is not without limits. It must be exercised consistently with the fundamental structure and values of the Constitution itself—values which include democracy, the rule of law, and the separation of powers.

It is precisely these foundational principles that are now at risk.

I therefore respectfully urge you, in your joint capacities as journalists and members of the mass media, to make your voice heard. The Press has always played a vital and vocal role in safeguarding our democratic traditions. Your considered intervention at this moment would help to affirm the importance of constitutional restraint, democratic principles and institutional integrity.

I also urge you to use your good offices to encourage the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to reconsider this course and to allow the Court to determine the pending petitions in accordance with the law as it stood at the time of the election.

This is not a partisan appeal. It is an appeal to principle. If actions of this nature go unchallenged, they risk establishing a precedent by which any government, present or future, may endlessly revise our Constitution – without public consultation – for personal gain or protection. That would have lasting adverse consequences for our democracy.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. observed that “our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” This is such a moment.

For the sake of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, I urge you to speak.

Sincerely yours,



Ralph E. Gonsalves
Leader of the Opposition

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