

PRESS RELEASE

January 2013 Criminal Assizes:

Goal Delivery was done on Thursday March 28, 2013 by Madam Justice Dawn Gregory bringing to an end the Demerara January 2013 Criminal Assizes. This Assizes was presided over by three judges, Madam Justice Roxane George, Justice Navindra Singh and Madam Justice Dawn Gregory. A total of 241 cases were listed to be heard during this Assizes which commenced on Tuesday January 8, 2013.

Twenty eight (28) matters were disposed of during the Demerara January 2013 Assizes in the High Court of Demerara. Justice Navindra Singh disposed of nine (9) cases for the offence of Murder in which the following verdicts were reached. There were three matters in which there was more than one accused person.

1. Two (2) no case submissions upheld
2. Five (5) guilty verdicts
3. Two (2) not guilty verdicts
4. Two (2) hung jury
5. One (1) accused person was committed to the National Psychiatric Hospital for treatment.

Madam Justice Roxane George completed seven (7) cases for the offence of Murder in which the following decisions were made:

1. Two (2) no case submissions upheld
2. Two (2) guilty verdicts
3. Three (3) not guilty verdicts

While Madam Justice Dawn Gregory completed four (4) Murder trials, one trial was aborted after the accused person was found to be unfit to make a plea by the jury;

1. Two (2) not guilty
2. Two (2) no case submissions upheld
3. One (1) accused unfit to plea.

During the Demerara January 2013 Criminal Assizes twenty-eight (28) matters were disposed of. 20 cases received attention in the High Court and eight (8) cases were nolle prosequi by the DPP for the offences of Murder and Rape of a Child Under 16 years.

In addition the DPP nolle prosequi eight (8) matters; three of these matters were for the offence of Murder and six matters for the offence of Rape. In relation to the three Murders, in one them, the accused died.

In the other two matters there was insufficient evidence at the time of the trial. One matter which was heard before Justice Singh and involved six accused persons charged with the offence of Murder, the charge against the Number 3 accused was Nolle Prosequi by the DPP because of insufficient evidence.

Of the six Rape matters that were Nolle Prosequi, four of them were for charges under the new Sexual Act and due to the Amendment the DPP discontinued the charges so that these matters can have the benefit of the Amendment. For the other two matters the virtual complainants indicated that they no longer wished to proceed with their matters.

There were 22 cases for the offence of Murder, one for the offence of Rape, and five for the offence of Rape of a Child Under 16 years.

Meanwhile during this period Justice Franklin Holder sat at the Essequibo Criminal Assizes. With effect from January he continued the October 2012 Criminal Assizes and then opened the Essequibo February Assizes on Tuesday February 19, 2013. Twenty-two cases are listed to be heard for February Assizes. During this period Justice Holder completed three (3) matters, two of which are from the February Assizes list.

The three cases completed are for the offence of Murder. In the first murder case, the accused pleaded guilty to the lesser offence of Manslaughter and was sentenced to fourteen (14) years imprisonment.

And in the other two cases the trial judge upheld a no case submission and directed the jury to return a formal verdict of not guilty.

At the same time Justice Brassington Reynolds sat in the Berbice Assizes with effect from January he continued the October 2012 Criminal Assizes and then opened the Berbice February Assizes on February 5, 2013. Six matters received attention during this period. Four (4) matters have been disposed of to date by Justice Reynolds from a list of forty-five (45) cases. This session will continue until June 17, 2013.

Of these four (4) matters, three (3) of them were for the offence of Murder and one (1) for Attempt to Commit Murder.

In two of the Murder cases, the trial judge imposed the death penalty after the jury returned with a unanimous verdict of guilty against the accused persons. And in the third murder case the accused pleaded guilty to the lesser offence of Manslaughter and was sentenced to eight years imprisonment after Justice Reynolds had considered the findings of a Probation Report which was requested by the Defence.

In the matter for the offence of Attempt to Commit Murder, the trial judge directed the jury to return a formal verdict of not guilty after the victim indicated to the court that he did not wish to proceed with the matter.

Two matters were nolle prosequi by the DPP for the offence of Carnal Knowledge. These matters were nolle prosequi because the virtual complainants indicated that they no longer wished to proceed with these matters.

The April 2013 Assizes for Demerara will be opened on Tuesday April 2, 2013. There are 219 cases listed to be heard during the Session before Justice James Bovell-Drakes, Justice Navindra Singh and Justice Brassington Reynolds. The Essequibo Assizes will commence on Tuesday May 21, 2013 before Justice

Franklin Holder while the next Berbice Assizes will start on Tuesday June 18, 2013 before Madam Justice Dawn Gregory.