

Now Lindquist goes after Birds in Antigua

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FORENSIC investigator Bob Lindquist has been hired by the newly elected Government of Antigua and Barbuda to look into misappropriation of public funds during the term of the former Antigua Labour Party (ALP) Administration led by Lester Bird. Lindquist is currently leading investigations into the Piarco Airport Project and other cases of suspected corruption in Trinidad and Tobago. Antigua and Barbuda's Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Justin Simon, announced yesterday that Citigate Investigative and Forensic Accounting, a specialist firm headed by Lindquist, will look into alleged diversion of funds from the country's Treasury, as well as the actions of specific public officials during the Bird Administration.

"I also expect that Mr Lindquist will assist the country in recovering some portion of the funds that have been improperly acquired at the sacrifice of the welfare of the Antigua and Barbudan people," Simon said in a public statement. Simon said the recently installed Government of Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer had promised to "right the wrongs of successive Labour Party administrations." He also noted that prior to the change of government on March 23, the country had been characterised as "being run by a government for sale." "The appropriation of government documents under the cover of darkness just days before the general elections suggested to all of us that serious misconduct in public office must have been very extensive during the Labour Party Administration.

Why else would documents in the Prime Minister's Office be moved in that manner? "The government is aware that there is a widespread clamour for swift legal action in respect of the removal of government documents including files and other records from the office of the Prime Minister and other government departments," the AG said. Simon said information in the possession of the government provides a basis for investigating the actions of specific public officials who "have taken elaborate measures to cover their tracks."

He said because of the extent and complexity of the matters to be investigated, Gerald A Watt QC has been commissioned as special counsel to work with Lindquist on the matter. Simon noted: "Mr Lindquist has led investigations in Trinidad and Tobago as early as 1988-1990 involving illegal payment to public officials in Trinidad and Tobago involving the American corporation of McDonald Douglas and Tesoro where over US\$7 million was recovered. "Mr Lindquist is leading the investigation that has, so far, led to arrests and prosecutions on matters related to Piarco International Airport construction in Trinidad."