

Guyana Discards UN Process in Border Dispute with Venezuela

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“We have indicated very clearly to the secretary-general of the United Nations that the Good Officer’s Process to which we have adhered faithfully does not seem to offer any prospect of moving forward,” Greenidge said.

“The feeling is that as it has evolved, it has served as a cover – not deliberately on the part of the UN of course – but it has served for a cover under which Guyana’s sovereignty has been threatened,” the minister said.

Greenidge’s remarks came less than a week after Venezuela officially asked UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to appoint a new Good Officer.

The appointment of a new Good Officer has to be made by consensus and Greenidge declined to say whether Guyana would cooperate in the choice.

The border controversy, Guyana insists, must be settled by the International Court of Justice.

“I don’t know what else you can do in terms of mediation when you think in terms of what has been happening over the years and the only option that is left would be for a judicial resolution of this matter,” the foreign minister said.

Greenidge said Georgetown has decided to take up an offer by Ban to send an emissary on a fact-finding mission to Guyana and Venezuela.

The foreign minister said that the 25-year-long conciliation process has not helped to resolve the controversy over the 1899 Arbitral Tribunal Award establishing the land boundary between the two neighboring South American countries.

Rather, Greenidge argued, Venezuela has used the opportunity to continue to violate Guyana's territorial integrity.

The dispute took on new urgency May 20, when a subsidiary of U.S.-based ExxonMobil announced the discovery of a significant oil deposit in the coastal waters of the contested Essequibo region.

A week later, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro issued a decree asserting his country's sovereignty over the waters off the coast of Essequibo, a resource-rich area of 167,839 sq. kilometers (64,800 sq. miles) administered by Guyana but claimed by Caracas.

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