

COMMUNIQUE

By letter dated 21 October 2019, representations were made by the President of the Labour Party and also by the Alliance Nationale complaining of unfair treatment by the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation in the context of its reporting on the General Elections 2019.

The complainants requested a meeting with the Electoral Supervisory Commission which was held on 28 October 2019. The complainants were assisted by Counsel. They reiterated the complaints made in the said letter and in addition referred to specific broadcasts made by the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation on 14, 19 and 20 October 2019 in the course of its French news bulletin. They produced video recordings of those broadcasts in support of their following specific complaints:

- (i) on 14 October 2019, the MBC TV in its French news bulletin had broadcasted a news item using a recording made by 'lexpress.mu' and had in the process edited the said recording to make believe that there was discontent within the Mauritius Labour Party against the Leader of the Party and made various comments thereon; and
- (ii) on 19 October and 20 October 2019, the MBC TV in its French news bulletin had broadcasted a recording from an anonymous source accompanied with comments, from an unidentified reporter, to the effect that the Leader of the Mauritius Labour Party had misappropriated party funds for personal use.

After hearing the complainants and viewing the material placed before it, the Commission, after deliberation, reached the conclusion that prima facie, there was substance in the complaints made.

The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation was then invited to give its views and observations in respect of the complaints.

On 29 October 2019, the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation represented by its Director General and Mr Ravin Joypaul, Responsible Officer, News Department, accompanied by Counsel, attended the Commission and gave its views and explanations.

The Director General informed the Commission that if a right of reply were sought by the complainants, that request would be considered.

The Commission also notes that the complainants were to inform the Commission of any complaints of similar nature which would have occurred after the 20th October 2019. The Commission has not been favoured with any such information.

After having heard the representatives of the MBC, the Commission finds no reason to depart from its initial finding that there is substance in the complaints, more specifically having regard to section 4(g)(iii) of the MBC Act. The MBC is informed accordingly.

Electoral Supervisory Commission
Port Louis
29 October 2019