

A Legal 2009

2009 was a very significant year for Jamaican jurisprudence.

The Jamaican Court of Appeal wrote one of the significant decisions in our island's legal history in *Dabdoub v Vaz* requiring Jamaican Members of Parliament to abandon or revoke their foreign nationalities if they intend to continue to serve legislatively. The decision was accurate, academic and trend setting.

Most American legal scholarship was horrified at the Government of Jamaica's mendacious and unrelenting violation of the US-Jamaica Extradition Treaty, as Jamaica refused for four months on political grounds to honour a properly documented US request for extradition of a significant target of a New York Grand Jury. This decision, coupled with the inappropriate criticism of the U.S. Justice Department by Government Senator Tom Tavares-Finson, brought criticism of the Golding regime to a high point in Washington and left US-Jamaica relations in their worst condition since the days of the Manley-Castro relationship of the 1970s.

The U.S. State Department's frustration with Jamaica was mirrored by Standard and Poor's and Moodys who both downgraded Jamaica's economic ratings during the year. The bond raters at Moodys and Standard and Poor's were particularly perplexed at the timing of the dismissal of the Governor of the Bank of Jamaica during the IMF negotiations. The question of Jamaica defaulting on its sovereign obligations raised its ugly head in the financial centers of the world.

Perhaps the biggest legal story of the year was Buju Banton's arrest in Miramar and his U.S. Grand Jury indictment for Cocaine Trafficking in the Middle District of Florida. At year's end, Buju had not yet hired a lawyer as questions about his future as a reggae artiste become more pointed.

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