

I am your worst nightmare!

ALLEGATIONS by a woman that she was finger-raped by an immigration officer before being thrown out of Barbados, have brought the spotlight on poor treatment of visitors to that eastern Caribbean island. The victim complained bitterly to the Observer yesterday that when she attempted to enter Barbados on March 14, 2011, she was subjected to two demeaning cavity searches by a female immigration officer who continuously spewed venom about other Caribbean Islanders. It was her first trip out of the island.

This story was corroborated by former Jamaican honorary consul to Barbados, Marlon Gordon. Gordon, an attorney, said that there was no excuse for wholesale discrimination against Jamaica nationals. "This arbitrary kind of behaviour that is being exhibited by the Government in Barbados has to be looked at. You can't penalise an entire nation," Gordon said.

Jaydene Thomas, a former journalist and now a practising attorney in Barbados, said the foreign ministry had for too long ignored the cries of Jamaicans who suffered at the hands of Barbadians when they visited that island. "Every time that a flight arrives from Jamaica, the nothing-to-declare line is automatically closed, she said. "We are treated like criminals by the authorities."

In relating her story to the Observer, the victim said: "The lady took me into a bathroom and told me to take off my clothes. I did as requested. After searching me and my clothes she found no contraband or narcotics. She then asked me to bend over, open my legs and spread (my private parts). She said that if I did not comply then she would see that I end up in prison in Barbados. "When I bent over and spread my (private parts) I felt something enter my (private parts) and when I looked between my legs I saw her gloved hand in my (private parts). I screamed and stood up. She then told me if I obstructed her doing a cavity search she would have me locked up. I bent over again and spread. She again inserted her fingers and poked around. I felt like I was being raped. I was so hurt and ashamed. I felt dirty and defiled," she said. "I asked her who she was and she said 'I am your worst nightmare'. She then said 'All you (expletive) Jamaicans come here to do is either steal people's man or bring drugs here,'" Myrie recounted.

The victim said the immigration officer removed her identification tag before humiliating her and that she complied because she was alone with the woman and feared what she would do to her. She was interrogated and her luggage searched by at least four other immigration officials

at intervals and was further cursed by the woman who searched her.

"She said I hate these (expletive) Jamaicans," she said.

Even though she was originally given clearance to enter the country, she said a male officer took her passport and returned with the entry permit cancelled and left her in a waiting area for more than two hours before carting her off to a small room and informing her that she would be spending the night in the cramped setting. "It was only a board cot with a small, raw sponge, there was no pillow or bed linen. The room had no windows," she said. When she entered the room, Myrie said, another traumatised woman was already in confinement.

"The cot was definitely too small for both of us to lay on at the same time so we took turns laying and sitting while we recounted our ordeal. We did this through the night," Myrie said.

Myrie said in the morning the door was flung open and three women informed them that their flight was about to leave at any minute and they would have no time to shower so they were only able to wash their faces and brush their teeth before they were carted off to the plane and sent back to Jamaica. "I did not resist any orders, nor did I refuse to answer any questions. No drugs or contraband was ever found on me or my luggage. Therefore, I must ask if the treatment meted out to me was based solely on the fact that I am a Jamaican?" Myrie said. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade said yesterday that it had received a letter of complaint from Myrie and other Jamaicans and promised that the matter would be dealt with on a government to government level.

"We have received a number of complaints on a regular basis and those matters will be investigated. The matter has been brought up at the Caricom (Caribbean Community) level and we are aware of the situation," Ann Margaret Lim, the ministry's head of communications told the Observer. However, the ministry was not able to provide actual figures of the number of Jamaicans treated unfairly in Barbados.

STORY BY KARYL WALKER Online news editor walkerk@jamaicaobserver.com

Thursday, March 24, 2011

http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Finger-raped-in-Barbados_8573453#ixzz1HcNP2f7H