

August 27th, 2025

ERC COMMENDS RESOLUTION OF INCIDENT INVOLVING OFFENSIVE LABEL

Georgetown, Guyana – The Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC) acknowledges the resolution of a matter involving a staff member who used a derogatory and offensive racial slur at a restaurant and bar in Georgetown and referred to a customer of another ethnicity in May this year.

The Commission was tagged in a post in which the derogatory label was written on a receipt that referred to a customer of Indigenous descent. The ERC Media Monitoring Unit preserved the post and referred it to the Investigative Unit of the Commission for action.

The Commission has been made aware that the staff member has since accepted responsibility and offered an apology, which was accepted by the Commission. Additionally, the restaurant has committed to a collaboration session on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), with ERC's support, to bring awareness to employees on the importance of respecting its customers from varying ethnic backgrounds.

The term used by the employee is prevalent and has often been used derogatorily to describe descendants of the country's first peoples. The term has a corrosive effect on national unity, perpetuating negative stereotypes that have no place in a modern, multicultural Guyana. The ERC strongly condemns the use of any ethnic slur or stigmatizing language, which is deeply harmful, fosters division, and undermines the principles of the ERC's ongoing objective of "Promoting Harmony and Good Relations." While the incident is regrettable, the Commission commends both the customer for speaking out against the unacceptable behaviour, and the staff member and restaurant management for taking swift and corrective action.

The resolution serves as a critical example of accountability and the power of dialogue in healing divisions. It is a reminder that progress is made not by ignoring faults that contribute to disharmony, but by confronting them head-on with a commitment to understanding and respect.

In the spirit of using this incident as a teachable moment for the wider public. The ERC calls on all Guyanese to be vigilant in their speech and actions, to challenge prejudice wherever it is encountered, and to embrace the path of dialogue and understanding. We urge businesses to implement mandatory sensitivity and anti-discrimination training for all staff members to create safe and welcoming environments for every citizen. Let us continue to work together to build a Guyana where every individual is treated with dignity, respect, and fairness, regardless of their ethnic background.

Ethnic Relations Commission