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NEWS

Senator concerned about destruction of Hellshire Hills

Sunday, January 20, 2013 | 11:37 AM



OPPOSITION Senator Tom Tavares-Finson is expressing deep concern about the rapid destruction of the dry tropical forest of the Hellshire hills in St Catherine by chain saw users and charcoal burners who have "descended on the area in unprecedented numbers".

He said the area of protected forest of some 114 square kilometres is one of the few remaining dry tropical forests in the world and is home to a host of some of the world's most endangered species of flora and fauna.

Tavares-Finson said that worldwide, these forests have been rapidly destroyed as they tend to be easier to access than more inaccessible rainforests.

He argued that researchers from the UWI whose work has been assisted by grants and overseas funding have now reached their breaking point, in the face of threats from the coal burners. He said that a number of researchers now fear for their personal safety and the safety of their students and are now scaling down their activities in the reserve.

Tavares-Finson says that it does not seem that the Government has the will to enforce the laws we have to protect this critical resource.

In any event, he urged the Government to move expeditiously given the huge environmental disaster on our hands.

He was speaking during his State of the Nation debate presentation in the Senate on Friday.



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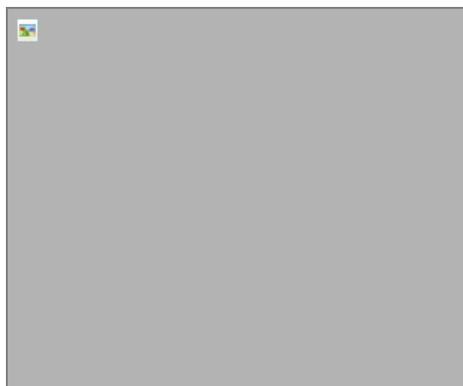
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