

Funding the Future

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CayCompass, a Cayman Island news service, is [reporting](#) that the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office has refused to release details about a complaint filed by the former head of a special investigation into corruption within the island's judiciary. According to CayCompass:

"The complaint, made last year by the operation's former Senior Investigating Officer Martin Bridger as well as its legal advisor Martin Polaine, made various accusations regarding the conduct among certain members of the local judiciary, as well as staffers at the attorney general's office. "

Any complaint at that level should be taken very seriously indeed, but apparently not, especially when it relates to a British Overseas Territory much used by members of the [British Establishment](#) for their own tax dodging purposes. As always, the [safe pair of hands](#) appointed by the British monarch to maintain the appearance of probity and good governance, has apparently dismissed the complaint without explanation:

"Governor Duncan Taylor dismissed all aspects of the complaint earlier this year and refused to comment on it or release any details. He stated at the time that he had full confidence in members of Cayman's judiciary. The UK foreign office said it did hold certain information about the initial complaint, but said the details should be exempted from release under Britain's Freedom of Information Act."

But it gets even more shocking. According to CayCompass the FCO seeks to justify their refusal to release the complaint on the basis that the information it contains might damage public confidence in the governance of the islands:

"We judge that disclosure of the information requested could lead to a loss of confidence within the international community, which could impact negatively on the Cayman Islands' reputation and, more directly, on its financial services industry."

This is, of course, nonsense. Sensible investors will smell a cover-up, and suspect the worst. The only sensible thing to do to de-toxify the issue is to go for complete transparency. Publish the complaint and the outcome of subsequent investigations.

And finally, yet again the FCO tries to pretend that when dealing with the Cayman

authorities it is somehow dealing with an independent sovereign state:

“Disclosure would be prejudicial to the effective conduct of international relations between the United Kingdom and the Cayman Islands, which depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between the governments...”

This is yet more nonsense. Just for the record: the Cayman Islands are a UK Overseas Territory. The UK government is directly responsible for their defence and foreign affairs and has responsibility for the governance of the islands. The Cayman Head of State is the British monarch, who appoints a Governor to preside over the islands' executive council, which has the role of a cabinet. British common law and local statute applies; the Queen's Privy Council in London acts as the final court of appeal. And the UK government is guarantor of any public debt incurred by the Cayman Island government. In other words the British government is largely running the show. And apparently doing a rather poor job of it.

NB: [Reposted from Tax Justice Network blog, with permission](#)