


Henley and Partners involved in Grenada diplomatic passports scandal

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Henley and Partners, the private concessionaires awarded a multimillion-euro contract to act as agents of Malta's cash-for-citizenship scheme, are embroiled in yet another scandal in which a 40-year-old Pakistani national was issued a Grenada diplomatic passport in mysterious circumstances.

The man, Fahad Sultan Ahmed, holds no official diplomatic position at the Grenada High Commission in London, nor does he hold any other portfolio or assignment anywhere for Grenada.

According to various reports, Ahmed is a wealthy Pakistani businessman residing in the UK, by virtue of a visa reportedly obtained for him by Mishcon De Reya, which is the law firm that represents Henley & Partners.

This latest revelation follows allegations earlier this year that Henley and Partners, which plays a major role in promoting Grenada's citizenship by investment (CBI) programme, was involved in an alleged scheme to obtain a Grenadian diplomatic passport for a Ukrainian businessman, in exchange of a US\$1 million payment.

In August, Miami-based blogger Kenneth Rijock reported that a Ukrainian businessman paid Henley and Partners US\$1 million for a Grenada diplomatic passport that he never received. He was later refunded the money by Grenada's government.

Caribbean News Now reported that WhatsApp messages purportedly exchanged between Grenada's Prime Minister Keith Mitchell and the chairperson of Grenada's CBI Committee, Kaisha Ince showed that the latter was asked to "speak to Chris," believed to be Christian Kalin, the chairman of Henley and Partners over the report on the Ukrainian businessman.

Mitchell reportedly told Ince that the news would damage his chances of getting re-elected in the general elections due in 2018, according to Caribbean News Now.

In the messages, which Mitchell claimed were fabricated by the opposition National



The WhatsApp conversation between Mitchell and Ince (Photo: Caribbean News Now)

Democratic Congress, Ince answered that she had spoken to "Chris" and they "will put pressure on this blog writer to take the article down", something which did not materialise.

Murdered Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia had reported that in March 2017 she received "a series of harassing and threatening letters from Mishcon de Reya in London" to remove posts on Henley and Partners.

Caruana Galizia had written that she was threatened of financially ruinous action in a London court and published an email exchange with Kalin in which she was unabashedly told that her posts damaged Malta's international image.

Caruana Galizia was a harsh critic of the cash-for-passport scheme and investigated the links between Henley and Partners and the Maltese government. Prime Minister Joseph Muscat is a regular speaker at Henley and Partners events organised in places such as Dubai and Hong Kong to promote the scheme.

Claims by former Opposition leader Simon Busuttil that the Prime Minister's chief of staff Keith Schembri and Nexia BT director Brian Tonna received kickbacks from the controversial cash-for-passports scheme are currently being investigated by Magistrate Natasha Galea Sciberras.

In one of her emails, Caruana Galizia told Kalin that "Henley & Partners must be the most unpopular outfit in Malta right now after Pilatus Bank – an outfit owned by somebody who bought a St Kitts & Nevis passport from you – and that other outfit run by Joseph Muscat and Keith Schembri, with whom you signed an agreement decided upon before they came to power."