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Citizenship is not for sale – PM Gonsalves

The Government has once again pointed out the dangers of the Citizenship by Investment (CBI) program, while cementing government's decision that Vincentian passports and citizenship are not for sale.

Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves speaking during a press conference at Cabinet Room on Tuesday said that CBI is slowly coming to an end and as a result unscrupulous companies and individuals are trying to get Vincentian passports in the CBI pool.

"I have warned this country about the dangers of selling our passports and selling our citizenship. I don't want to go through all the arguments now, because you know them, if you're listening to me, I said I'm opposed to selling the passports and the citizenship...in principle, I'm opposed on the grounds of practicality. I'm opposed on the grounds that it is not sustainable and that it is reckless to run your country's finances on selling passport and citizenship," the PM said on Tuesday.

He added that the United States of America (USA), Canada and Britain have all signaled that CBI has to end and implemented measures to dissuade CBI, including visa restrictions.

"You have to apply for visa now from certain of those countries, and the Europeans now have put it inside of their parliament...the European Union parliament has already addressed that question and is going through the parliamentary process. It's just a matter of time. I saw it coming. It took a little longer..." Dr. Gonsalves said.

The Prime Minister said that a rush to cash in on CBI, means less scrutiny on people who want to obtain passports, making it easier for criminals to obtain the passport of another country.

"There are so many corrupt practices involved in what I'm talking about, and they want to subvert our democracy. They want to buy it...I'm warning the country..." Dr. Gonsalves said.

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