

# Squatters on WASA main to get boot

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**Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) CEO Ganga Singh says 221 squatters have been found on and along the 54 inch Caroni South main pipeline.**

He made this comment yesterday before the start of WASA's 5k Father's Day Walk along the North Oropouche Trunk Main, Valencia. The trek began at Tattoo Trace and ended at Valencia Stretch.

WASA personnel and councillor Terry Rondon joined him for a walk along the 42 inch pipeline, which spans 26.8 km in length and distributes water to 100,000 residents in communities from Sangre Grande to Five Rivers, Arrouca.

The stipulated WASA requirement was a distance of ten to 15 metres on both sides of the respective mainlines.

Zeroing on the Caroni Main, Singh said: "We have done an analysis of the 54-inch trunk main pipeline. We have found 221 squatters in the process. We are sending out cautionary notices. We are taking ownership of the assets of WASA." Singh added: "If the pipeline erupted, it would be a major tsunami. It is over 30 years old."

Reverting to the North Oropouche walk, Singh reiterated they were looking for the existence of squatter settlements directly on and along the path of the trunk main.

He said: "We are looking at squatters in the area and establishing WASA ownership rights. If we have to, we will remove them. We are looking at abuses like quarrying and its impact on potable water. We have also seen gardens. People are occupying WASA property by planting."

Apart from the squatters' settlements, quarrying and gardening activities, WASA personnel were accessing the presence of illegal connections made off appurtenances on the trunk main.

For example, they were on the lookout for air valves and pump out chambers for domestic and other uses

by squatters.

The North Oropouche plant which was constructed in 1979 produces an average of 20.5 millions of gallons of water per day. It serves communities from Sangre Grande to Five Rivers including Cumuto, Wallerfield, Brazil and Maloney Gardens.

## Adopt a river programme

Singh said since the overall plan was intended to protect the watersheds they were venturing further with the Adopt A River Programme. It is expected to commence at the Guanapo River by the end of July.

Singh said they would be enlisting the aid of stakeholders from the Ministries of Energy, Agriculture, EMA and Works.

A WASA release noted the illegal activities would highlight the need for demarcation and signage indicating location of the Authority's trunk mains like Caroni, Navet and Hollis, regular security patrols of all trunk mains during the dry season and greater public awareness of protecting the water supply pipeline infrastructure.



**WASA CEO Ganga Singh, centre, and Ellen Lewis, general manager Corporate Communications, third from right, lead the 5k Father's Day Walk along the North Oropouche Trunk Main, at Valencia to highlight the importance of preserving mains and watersheds. PHOTO: ABRAHAM DIAZ**