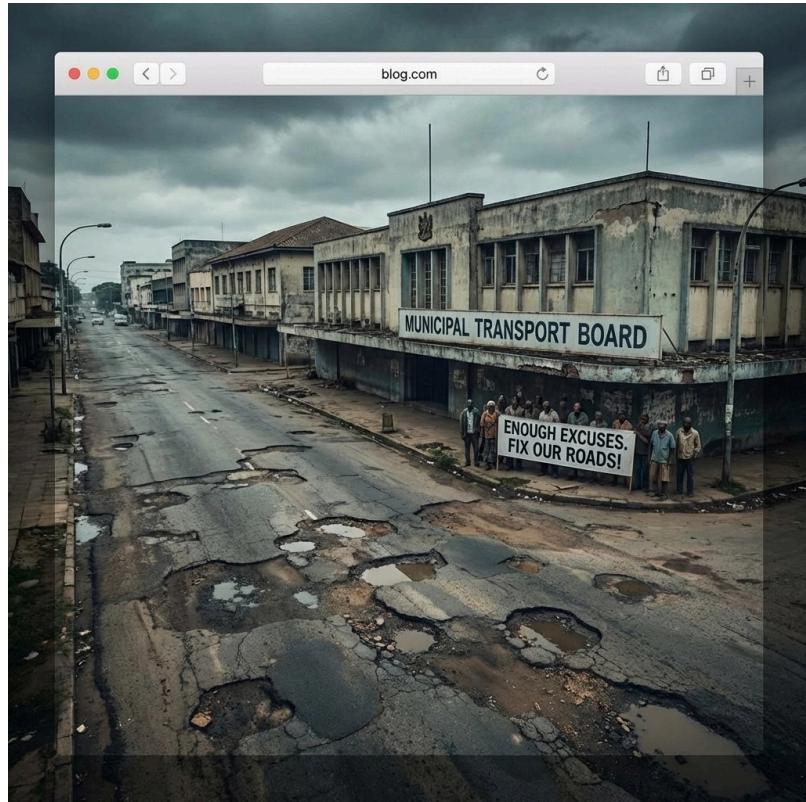


# The Excuses are Exhausting: From Potholes to the Transport Board



We've all heard them. The same tired excuses rolled out every time something goes wrong with our basic services in Barbados. Whether it's dodging another crater-sized pothole on your way to work or standing at a bus stop for two hours in blazing heat, the response is always the same: a polished excuse wrapped up in official language.

But here's the thing, Barbadians are fed up. We're tired of being told why things can't work instead of seeing them actually work. We're exhausted by administrations that have become experts in excuse-making but novices in problem-solving.

## The Pothole Blame Game: "It's Climate Change!"

Let's start with the roads. Drive anywhere in Barbados and you'll encounter potholes that could swallow a small car. But according to our officials, these aren't the result of poor maintenance or inadequate road construction, oh no, they're because of "climate change."

Really? Climate change is causing potholes?



Here's a reality check: it rains in the Caribbean. It has always rained in the Caribbean. Our ancestors knew this when they built roads that lasted decades. But somehow, in 2026, rain has become this mysterious, unpredictable force that destroys our infrastructure overnight.

The truth is simpler and more uncomfortable: potholes are the result of poor maintenance, substandard materials, and a lack of proper drainage systems. When you patch a road with inferior asphalt and don't maintain proper water runoff, of course the first heavy shower is going to create problems.

Countries with far more severe weather conditions manage to maintain their roads. Why? Because they invest in proper infrastructure and regular maintenance instead of playing the blame game with Mother Nature.

## **The Transport Board Circus: "We Can't Afford It"**

Then there's the Transport Board: or should we say the "future Mass Transit Authority"? Because apparently changing the name will magically fix the fact that buses break down constantly and people wait hours for unreliable service.

The excuses here are particularly rich. We're told the Transport Board needs to be "modernized" and that the current system is "unsustainable." Fair enough: but what's the plan while people are missing work, school, and medical appointments because the bus never showed up?



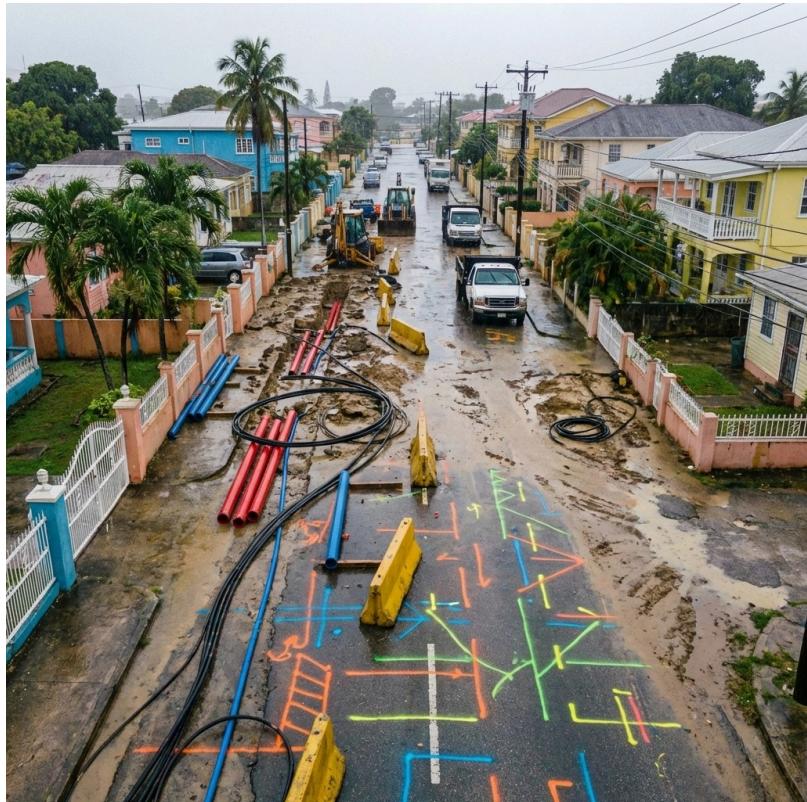
The classic line is "we can't afford to keep it nationally owned." But here's what they don't tell you: privatization doesn't automatically mean better service. It often means higher fares and reduced routes to less profitable areas. Countries around the world successfully run public transport systems: it's not rocket science, it's about management and investment.

Instead of actual solutions, we get rebranding exercises. The Mass Transit Authority sounds impressive, but will it show up on time? Will the buses have working air conditioning? Will routes cover the areas that need them most? Or will it just be the same problems with a shiny new name?

## **The Utility Coordination Mirage**

Here's another favorite: road repairs are delayed because of "coordination with other utility companies." This excuse has been floating around so long it could qualify for a pension.

The narrative goes like this: "We can't fix the road until we coordinate with Cable & Wireless, the Barbados Light & Power Company, and the Barbados Water Authority to make sure we don't disturb their infrastructure."



On the surface, this sounds reasonable. In practice, it's often a bureaucratic shell game where everyone points to someone else as the reason nothing gets done. Meanwhile, residents deal with broken roads for months or even years.

The question is simple: if other countries can manage utility coordination without leaving roads looking like war zones for extended periods, why can't we? Is our coordination really that much more complicated, or is it just easier to use "coordination issues" as a catch-all excuse for inaction?

## Water and Garbage: The "Global Issues" Defense

Basic services like water supply and garbage collection get their own special category of excuses. When taps run dry, we hear about "equipment maintenance" or "global supply chain issues affecting spare parts." When garbage piles up, it's due to "staffing challenges" or "equipment breakdowns."

Here's the pattern: individual problems are always blamed on massive, uncontrollable forces. It's never poor planning, inadequate budgeting, or mismanagement. It's always something bigger than anyone could have predicted or prevented.

But Barbadians aren't buying it anymore. We see countries with similar resources providing consistent water and waste management services. We know these aren't unsolvable problems: they're management problems.



The most frustrating part is that these "temporary" disruptions become permanent features of daily life. A "short-term" water outage stretches into weeks. "Emergency" garbage collection schedules become the new normal. What starts as an excuse for poor service becomes acceptance that poor service is just how things are.

## **The Rebranding Trap: New Names, Same Problems**

Perhaps the most insulting trend is the belief that changing names and creating new authorities will somehow fix underlying problems. The Transport Board becomes the Mass Transit Authority. Departments get reorganized and renamed. New logos are designed and new mission statements are written.

But here's what doesn't change: the actual service delivery.

You can call a broken-down bus whatever you want: it's still broken down. You can rebrand a pot-hole-filled road department with the most modern-sounding name in the world, but if the roads are still full of potholes, what exactly has been achieved besides wasting money on new letterheads?



This rebranding obsession reveals something troubling about how our leaders think about problems. Instead of focusing on fixing the actual issues: unreliable buses, poor roads, inconsistent water supply: they focus on perception management. It's easier to change how something looks than how it works.

## **The Real Cost of Excuse Culture**

While officials perfect their excuse-making skills, ordinary Barbadians pay the real price. Workers lose jobs because unreliable transport makes them late. Students miss educational opportunities. Businesses suffer when basic infrastructure fails.

Tourism, our economic lifeline, gets affected when visitors experience the same infrastructure problems that locals deal with daily. No amount of marketing can overcome the reality of poor basic services.

The excuse culture doesn't just affect individual services: it creates a mindset where accountability becomes optional. When there's always an external factor to blame, there's never a need for internal change or improvement.

## **When Do We Stop Accepting Excuses?**

The question isn't whether Barbados faces challenges: every country does. The question is whether we're going to keep accepting excuses instead of demanding solutions.

Other small island states manage to provide reliable public transport, maintain decent roads, and deliver consistent basic services. They face similar weather patterns, similar economic constraints, and

similar coordination challenges. The difference isn't in their circumstances: it's in their approach to problem-solving.

Barbadians deserve better than a government that's become fluent in excuse-making but struggles with actual governance. We deserve officials who see problems as challenges to solve, not communications crises to manage.

The excuses are exhausting because they represent something deeper: a system that has given up on actual improvement and settled for managing public expectations downward.

It's time to demand more. Not better excuses: better results. Not creative explanations: creative solutions. Not new names for old problems: actual fixes for real issues.

The people of Barbados have been patient. We've been understanding. We've accepted delays and disruptions and temporary measures that became permanent fixtures.

But patience isn't endless, and understanding has its limits. At some point, the excuses run out and the demand for real progress takes over.

That point isn't coming; it's here.