

Buju on the move

Imprisoned dancehall artiste Buju Banton continues to play musical chairs during the first phase of his 10-year prison sentence.

Buju — whose real name is Mark Myrie — was found guilty on drug charges in a Florida court on June 23 and is presently incarcerated at facility in Groesbeck, Texas.

BUJU... will soon be en route to Miami

Since his incarceration, the artiste has been transferred from Florida to Oklahoma to Texas, and back to Oklahoma. The Sun Sentinel newspaper in Fort Lauderdale reported yesterday that the Grammy winner will soon be en route to the Federal Correctional Institution in Miami.

Arrangements to place the artiste in a Mississippi prison went awry when prison officials discovered that a co-defendant in the case was already housed there.

Authorities then stowed the artiste in a Federal Transfer Center in Oklahoma City before moving him to Groesbeck.

David Oscar Markus, Buju's lawyer, is concerned about the current facility.

"He was at one of the worst places you can imagine — a county facility that had been converted to house federal inmates," Markus said in the Sun Sentinel report.

"The place was used for short-stay Mexican nationals who were going to be deported," he added. "It was filled with Mexican gangs. Buju was one of very few black men in there. It was really violent."

In February, Federal judge James S Moody found the artiste guilty of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine, just days after he won a Grammy for Best Reggae Album. The artiste won the award for his 2010 album Before the Dawn.

Both Moody and the Jamaican consulate urged the Federal Bureau of Prisons to move Banton from the Texas facility.

"We're very appreciative that Judge Moody stood by his initial recommendation that Buju should be in Miami," Markus said. "And he made a point to comment that Buju is a peaceful person and shouldn't be housed in a violent facility."

Markus said he plans to file an appellate brief with the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta later next month.