

## Lawyers want CJ, JLSC's heads

[Rosemarie Sant](#)

Published:

Friday, May 5, 2017

A group of attorneys have signalled they have lost confidence in Chief Justice Ivor Archie and members of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission (JLSC), and have drafted a petition calling for the resignations of the CJ and the JLSC. The lawyers, all members of the Law Association, are now asking their colleagues to sign the petition, which they hope to move at a special general meeting they hope will be convened.

The T&T Guardian obtained a copy of the petition which was being circulated to attorneys. Among other things, it questions the deafening silence of the JLSC members, noting that "to date no statement has been forthcoming from the JLSC, despite many calls for the Chief Justice and the other members of the commission to resign."

It noted that the "JLSC has a duty to the public and in the execution of its constitutional mandate to explain to the public the circumstances in which these appointments and reappointments have been made and they have failed in this duty. "

The document expresses a loss of confidence in Archie as CJ and as head of the JLSC and loss of confidence in Justice Roger Hamil-Smith, Marjorie Thorpe and Justice Humphrey Stollmeyer as JLSC members.

The move comes one week after Marcia Ayers-Caesar resigned her position as a High Court Judge. The resignation came less than a month after her appointment and followed a fracas by prisoners at the Port-of-Spain Magistrates' Court who had part-heard matters before her.

Ayers-Caesar admitted she had failed to inform the JLSC about the part heard matters and apologised for the effect her actions had on the system.

The petition said the JLSC "was reckless and or negligent in selecting the Chief Magistrate for appointment as a puisine judge without first ensuring that she had no part heard matters or had completed any part hear matters pending at the time of her appointment."

Attempts to reach Law Association president Douglas Mendes were unsuccessful. But Southern Assembly of Lawyers president Rashard Khan told the Guardian he is aware of the petition and has sent out a note to attorneys for a meeting tomorrow. He said "as long as the petition goes forward we will abide by it."

Israel Khan SC yesterday said "something has to be done, and it is a good position that lawyers with a social conscience and thinking about Trinidad and Tobago and the Judiciary are desirous of discussing the issue."