



**2nd Floor
95-97 Frederick Street
Port-of-Spain
Trinidad, W.I.**

Tel: 1-868-625-9350
Tel: 1-868-225-8715
Tel: 1-868-225-8716
Tel: 1-868-225-8717

E-mail:
admin@lawassociationtt.com
ttlassociation@gmail.com

Website:
www.lawassociationtt.com

Centre for Arbitration and
Dispute Resolution – CADR

Tel: 1-868-221-4944

Email:
arbitration.facility.latt@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Appointment of Judges in Trinidad and Tobago

The Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to transparency and accountability in the selection and appointment of judges. In that regard, we do appreciate that the relative secrecy in which appointments to the judiciary are currently made has the potential to encourage suspicion and amplify disquiet especially in the darkness of a vacuum of information.

For the moment, though, the Constitution does not require more and the process is one which has been in existence since independence. That process includes the receipt of applications by interested candidates who are interviewed and their suitability evaluated in private by the Judicial and Legal Services Commission in accordance with published criteria. Such consultations as may take place are also done in private.

It may be that the time has come to re-evaluate current arrangements with a view to ensuring greater transparency and accountability and to buttress confidence in the process.

We recognize the right of every citizen to pose legitimate questions regarding appointments to the judiciary, even if done forcefully, but always respectfully. Care must be taken, however, in the manner of questioning decisions made by the Commission as there is an imperceptible and illusive line beyond which the expression of even genuine disagreement may undermine the confidence which the public must continue to have in the administration of justice.

We do however have immediate concerns about the fact that a judge was appointed and took up office leaving behind outstanding, part-heard matters. It is unfair that anyone should suffer the expense and anxiety of an avoidable, repeat trial. The full extent of the prejudice which may have been caused is not yet known. We will be seeking to engage with the Honourable Chief Justice, the Honourable Attorney General and the Director of Public Prosecutions over the coming days to assist in finding a workable solution.

Douglas L Mendes S.C.

President
Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago
24th April 2017