



LAW ASSOCIATION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

MEDIA RELEASE

The Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago (LATT) refers to a recent article published in the Trinidad Newsday on the 18th October, 2021 titled “Rowley: Striking down Bail Act for murderers not wise” wherein it is reported that the Honourable Prime Minister made certain statements which appear to be in reference to the matter of Akili Charles v The Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago, a case currently before the Court of Appeal.

The Honourable Prime Minister is reported to have suggested that if the Appellant is successful in his appeal it would result in the floodgates to crime and violence being thrown wide open. He is further reported to have stated that if the law is “changed” the possibility exists that, in this land of murder and mayhem where so many tens or possibly hundreds of witnesses are being killed, an accused person charged for murder would get bail and come out, thereby negatively impacting on the willingness of witnesses to come forward.

Such statements, if in fact were made by the Honourable Prime Minister, would amount to a clear infringement of the sub judice rule. The public is reminded that the sub judice rule restricts persons from making statements about matters, that are under judicial consideration, that have the potential to influence the outcome of a case. This rule is critical to the maintenance of judicial independence and the administration of justice in any democratic society.

Whilst it is perfectly lawful to criticize the Judiciary even robustly so, too often the LATT is called upon to caution politicians about public utterances which often border on or may amount to contempt of court.

The LATT therefore calls upon office holders and, by extension, the public to refrain from making public statements that may infringe the sub judice rule.

Dated 19th day of October, 2021

Shankar Bidaisee
Secretary of the
Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago