



# LAW ASSOCIATION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

The Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago (LATT) joins with other members of civil society in expressing its deep concerns over the matters which were brought to light in the recent judgment of the High Court in the Brent Thomas case.

The Court found, and the State appears not to have disputed, that Mr Thomas, who is not accused of committing any offence in Barbados, was arrested by members of the Barbados Police Service at a time when he had lawfully entered that country and was then delivered up to members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Force at the Grantley Adams International Airport. On any account, this constitutes the unlawful abduction of a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago from a friendly neighbouring state in violation of the Extradition laws of that country. That much has been admitted by the State.

The Law Association, therefore, welcomes and applauds the decision of the Police Complaints Authority to investigate the circumstances in which Mr Thomas was abducted by members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Force.

Given that the Attorney General is reported to have appealed the decision of the High Court, in relation to its other findings, the Law Association refrains from making any further comment on the case. We however consider it imperative that we join with others in condemning the recent statement by the Minister of National Security issued in relation to the High Court judgment. It was while discussing the role of the Police and the decision of the Court in the Brent Thomas Case, the Honourable Minister blurted out that the criminal elements have friends in the judiciary. It would have been impossible for the listening public to exclude the possibility that the Minister was suggesting that the learned judge in the Brent Thomas case was somehow doing the bidding of the criminal element. Apart from being grossly unfair, reckless statements like these undermine public confidence in the judiciary and benefit no one.

We have noted the Minister's subsequent public statement that he appreciates and greatly values the independence of the judiciary as well as the need to preserve trust and public confidence in it. We also note the Honourable Attorney General's expressed confidence that the Minister intended no attack on the judiciary. While welcome, we do not think that this goes far enough. Nothing less than an outright withdrawal of the offending statement and an accompanying apology will do. The Law Association calls upon the Honourable Minister to do so with due dispatch.

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