



LAW ASSOCIATION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

MEDIA RELEASE

The Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago (“LATT”) notes with concern the increasing prevalence of identity theft and the use of fraudulent documents by fraudsters in land transactions, especially with respect to the sale, purchase, and mortgage of residential property. LATT has also noted a recent judicial decision concerning identity theft in the sale of a property. The level of sophistication employed by fraudsters is such that instances of fraud can easily escape the scrutiny of trained and experienced real estate agents, attorneys-at-law and officials of financial institutions. Often, these professionals may not be able to ascertain the veracity and authenticity of documentation pertaining to the identity of parties in property transactions.

The incidence of fraud can be reduced substantially if all stakeholders are aware of and carry out their responsibilities with extra care and attention. We are therefore urging members of the public and all persons involved in the buying and selling of property to be vigilant and use all reasonable efforts to find out the true identity of sellers, mortgagors and their agents. Owners should also take steps to protect their identity and property, especially when they (a) do not live on the property being sold or (b) reside abroad, by not supplying any personal information or identification documentation to any person other than a real estate agent registered with the Financial Intelligence Unit, an attorney-at-law, or authorised officials of financial institutions.

LATT will continue to monitor the public interest in this area.

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