



LAW ASSOCIATION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

MEDIA RELEASE

Statement on Public Discourse Concerning Members of the Senate

The Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago observes with concern the recent public statements made in connection with the defeat of the Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Bill, 2026, in the Senate. The Association notes that serious allegations have been made against two unnamed Independent Senators, suggesting that they sought personal favours in exchange for their support of the Bill. These allegations have been categorically denied by members of the Independent bench.

The Law Association wishes to make the following observations:

The making of grave accusations against parliamentarians—accusations that, if true, would constitute serious misconduct—without providing sufficient particulars to permit identification, investigation, or response, is inimical to the proper functioning of our democratic institutions. Such allegations place all nine Independent Senators under a cloud of suspicion while affording none the opportunity to clear their name. If there is substance to these claims, the appropriate course is to provide the relevant details to the proper authorities so that a fair inquiry may be conducted. If such particulars cannot be provided, the repetition of unverifiable accusations serves only to undermine public confidence in our Parliament. If such particulars cannot be provided, the repetition of unverifiable accusations serves only to undermine public confidence in our Parliament and ought to be publicly withdrawn.

Additionally, the Law Association reminds all parties that the presumption of innocence is a cornerstone of our legal system. Public condemnation in the absence of proof is inconsistent with the values that ought to guide discourse in a society governed by the rule of law.

Furthermore, the Association notes with concern the tenor of recent public commentary directed at holders of constitutional office, including the Office of the President. Whatever political disagreements may arise, respect for our constitutional institutions and their officeholders is essential to the preservation of democratic governance. The Law Association calls upon all parties to conduct debate on matters of national importance with civility and due regard for the dignity of the offices concerned.

The Independent Senators occupy a unique and vital role in our bicameral Parliament. They are appointed to bring independent judgment to bear on legislation and to represent the diverse interests of our society. Attacks upon Independent Senators for voting according to their conscience—particularly in circumstances where they have articulated reasoned objections to legislation and proposed amendments that were not entertained—risk chilling the very independence that their office demands. The Association calls upon all participants in public life to:

1. refrain from making serious allegations that cannot be substantiated or properly investigated;
2. afford those accused of wrongdoing the opportunity to know the case against them and to respond;
3. maintain respect for constitutional officeholders and the institutions they represent; and
4. engage in political debate in a manner consistent with the dignity of Parliament and the expectations of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

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30th January 2026