



CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

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MEDIA RELEASE

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CCJ DELEGATION TO VISIT BARBADOS FOR ITINERANT SITTING, CONFERENCE ON CRIME AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. From 16-20 October 2023, the Honourable Mr Justice Adrian Saunders, President of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) will lead a delegation of Judges and Court officials to Barbados for an itinerant sitting and a series of outreach activities including the CCJ Academy for Law 7th Biennial Conference.

The Conference themed “Criminal Justice Reform in the Caribbean: Achieving a Modern Criminal Justice System” will be held from 18-20 October 2023, at the Hilton Resort, Barbados. The three-day programme will provide a platform for leaders and practitioners to present their ideas to Attorneys-General, Ministers of National Security, judicial officers, Directors of Public Prosecution, Commissioners of Police, Commissioners of Prisons, attorneys, law students, and members of civil society. The Academy intends, through its conference, to facilitate dynamic discussions and generate practical recommendations that will effect meaningful change in the criminal justice systems of the region, to ensure a more sustainable and equitable future for us all.

Some of the regional and international presenters scheduled to attend and participate include the Honourable Philip J Pierre, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia and Chair of Council for National Security and Law Enforcement, the Honourable Dr Terrance Drew, Prime Minister of Saint Christopher and Nevis, Professor David Ormerod, Professor of Law at the University College London and Dr Chile Eboe-Osuji, Former President of the International Criminal Court. The conference will also cover a number of topical issues surrounding the regional criminal justice system such as sentencing, judge-alone trials, evidence-gathering, the hearsay rule, anti-gang legislation, and plea-bargaining. The effect of crime on development will also be featured.

During an interview to discuss the conference, the Chairman of the Academy, the Honourable Mr Justice Winston Anderson, CCJ Judge, explained that the theme was selected in “recognition of the real and pressing need for comprehensive reforms within the criminal justice system of the region. The aim of the conference is to explore and address the challenges and opportunities associated with achieving a more effective, fair, and efficient criminal justice system in the Caribbean region.”

As part of the Conference activities, the Academy will also host a Regional Town Hall session titled “Getting a Grip on Crime: Public Perceptions and Practical Solutions” on 18 October, which can be attended in person or virtually.

In Barbados, the CCJ will also conduct hearings at Courtroom 1 of the Court of Appeal of Barbados on 16 October 2023. This is the CCJ’s second itinerant sitting in Barbados, the first was a hearing in the Original Jurisdiction (OJ) matter, of Shanique Myrie v the State of Barbados which took place in 2013. The hearings

which will be open for public viewing, include the Barbadian matter of *Alex Tasker v the United States of America* and *Che Jain Ping and Xiao Guang Zhao v Guyana Power & Light Inc* from Guyana. The Court will also deliver judgment in *James Ricardo Alexander Fields v The State*, a criminal law case from Barbados.

In addition to the sittings and the conference, the Court will also conduct sensitisation sessions with the Barbados Bar Association and the Barbados Chambers of Commerce on 17 October 2023 to increase awareness and understanding of the Court's Original Jurisdiction. These sessions are part of a public education campaign funded by the European Union through the 11th European Development Fund. In its OJ, the CCJ determines matters involving the interpretation and application of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas which established the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.

President of the CCJ, the Honourable Mr Justice Adrian Saunders, noted that as a regional court, it is important for the public to view the CCJ at work as it contributes to building greater trust and confidence in the Court. "It has been 10 years since the CCJ last sat in Barbados. Since that time, we have heard an increasing number of cases from that State. The cases have varied enormously in their ranges of importance and complexity. For Barbados, as is the case with all States in CARICOM, the CCJ seeks to live its mission of providing accessible, fair and efficient justice. While the Court's judges and a cross-section of its staff are in Barbados, we shall be taking advantage of the opportunity to get to know better our sister isle, its judicial branch and its wonderful people."

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About the Caribbean Court of Justice:

The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) was inaugurated in Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on 16 April 2005 and presently has a Bench of seven judges presided over by CCJ President, the Honourable Mr Justice Adrian Saunders. The CCJ has an Original and an Appellate Jurisdiction and is effectively, therefore, two courts in one. In its Original Jurisdiction, it is an international court with exclusive jurisdiction to interpret and apply the rules set out in the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC) and to decide disputes arising under it. The RTC established the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). In its Original Jurisdiction, the CCJ is critical to the CSME and all 12 Member States which belong to the CSME (including their citizens, businesses, and governments) can access the Court's Original Jurisdiction to protect their rights under the RTC. In its Appellate Jurisdiction, the CCJ is the final court of appeal for criminal and civil matters for those countries in the Caribbean that alter their national Constitutions to enable the CCJ to perform that role. At present, four states access the Court in its Appellate Jurisdiction, these being Saint Lucia, Barbados, Belize, Dominica and Guyana. However, by signing and ratifying the Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Court of Justice, Member States of the Community have demonstrated a commitment to making the CCJ their final court of appeal. The Court is the realisation of a vision of our ancestors, an expression of independence and a signal of the region's coming of age.

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