

## PRESS RELEASE

The Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago is alarmed at the recent killing of an accused person in the precincts of the Rio Claro Magistrates' Court while that accused was in lawful custody.

### **Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago**

established by the  
Legal Profession Act 1986



It cannot be overstated that all persons who are involved in the administration of justice must not only be, but must at all times feel safe and secure in the discharge of their responsibilities. Accused persons fall within that category of persons.

The Association views this particularly brazen killing as a frontal attack on the criminal justice system, which if not addressed with alacrity, can lead to loss of public confidence in the administration of justice and the consequent erosion of the rule of law in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Association wishes to remind the Hon. Minister of National Security as well as the other relevant and responsible authorities that the issue of security at the nation's courts is not a new one. In the past there have been attacks on litigants, members of the media, prosecutors, attorneys-at-law and magistrates.

The security and logistical arrangements that continue to exist in the San Fernando Magistrates' Courts are, unfortunately, still not the best that can be devised. This situation in San Fernando is potentially explosive and steps should be immediately taken to prevent another riot by prisoners.

The Association is aware that implementation of a system for the remanding of accused by video-link, rather than the risky and time-consuming method now utilized of transporting prisoners to their respective courts may be considered. In light of current events, the Association strongly urges the relevant authorities to redouble their efforts in

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order to have this new system fully operational within the shortest possible time.

The Association has already signified its guarded support for the abolition of preliminary inquiries in favour of paper committals. It had also some time ago submitted a 40-point Crime Plan to the Hon. Minister of National Security.

The Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago has supported and will continue to support the Government in all reasonable reforms necessary to protect the integrity of the criminal justice system and to deal with the current crime situation, once in keeping with the safeguards contained in the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution.



Martin G. Daly S.C.  
President

October 23, 2009