



The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

The Honourable Attorney General responds to the Opposition's Statements (re: "AG's dictatorial statements")

The Attorney General delivered the feature address at the Association of Real Estate Agents (AREA) breakfast meeting on the fight against anti-money laundering and financing of terrorism at the Government Campus Port of Spain on Tuesday February 14th 2017.

Reports of several aspects of the Attorney General's contribution were carried in both electronic and print media and CNC3 posted video footage of the Attorney General's actual statement. In the video clip posted by CNC3 Television entitled "Faris speaks", AG Al-Rawi clearly states that "Ninety percent of them (the suite of laws currently being drafted to combat crime) have been fashioned so that we don't need to call upon the opposition for a three-fifths majority, because I am just tired of the way in which that is treated." Regrettably, newspaper coverage in the Express and Guardian Newspapers do not quote the Attorney General verbatim.

The Leader of the Opposition has seen it fit to issue a press release today entitled "Response to AG's Dictatorial Statements" relying on no quotation from the Attorney General. Similarly, UNC Members of Parliament Tewarie and Ramdial, as well as UNC activists and commentators, have issued statements of condemnation against the Attorney General, without linking those statements to an actual quote from the Attorney General.

The Opposition's position contained in the statement of the Leader of the Opposition cannot be based on the words of the Attorney General and constitutes quite simply an expression of political and legal opinion by Mrs. Persad Bissessar SC on legislation which has NOT yet gone to Cabinet and which has NOT yet been published or for that matter laid in Parliament!

Legislation can be passed by way of a simple majority if it does not violate the enshrined rights contained in sections 4 and 5 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. It is wildly irresponsible and ridiculous to offer a legal view with respect to proposed legislation, which has not even been published.

The Country would do well to remember that the Leader of the Opposition as Prime Minister and Senior Counsel called a “Limited State of Emergency” when the grounds so to do, as provided for in the law, simply did not exist. She also announced that the Country would take criminal matters of appeal away from the Privy Council and send them to the Caribbean Court of Justice when there was no reservation in the Treaty of Chaguaramas to legally permit that step.

The country will no doubt remember that the PNM, whilst in Opposition supported amendments to the Bail Act and the Anti-Gang law, which the UNC piloted. However, the UNC in Opposition inexplicably reversed its position on both laws, resulting in the collapse of same, and the liberation of persons from incarceration including one who was recently murdered within the precincts of a Police Station.

The Opposition is strongly encouraged to await the publication of the relevant Bills before preferring advice on constitutional requirements. This Government will in accordance with the rule of law, table legislation for debate in the two Houses of Parliament which is specifically designed to facilitate the peace, order and good governance of Trinidad and Tobago.

END

DATED: February 16th 2017