



**EQUAL
OPPORTUNITY
TRIBUNAL**
Trinidad & Tobago

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

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Newsletter

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Equal Opportunity Tribunal

Hears Case on Alleged Ethnic Discrimination

On **June 17, 2025**, the Equal Opportunity Tribunal heard EOT 0001 of 2019: Raymond Ramcharitar v The University of the West Indies, a matter involving allegations of discrimination based on ethnicity. Attorney-at-Law Dinesh Rambally represented the complainant, while Attorney-at-Law Ravi Nanga appeared for the respondent. During the proceedings, attorneys argued over evidential objections. The trial is now scheduled to continue on **October 7, 2025**.

The Tribunal remains steadfast in its commitment to upholding fairness, justice, and equality for all. Stay tuned for updates as we continue to champion equal opportunity under the law.



“THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TRIBUNAL CONTINUES TO ADMINISTER JUSTICE ONE COMPLAINT AT A TIME.”

COURT SCHEDULE

OCT. 7TH	E.O.T NO. 0005-2017 NIGEL MELTZ V. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO FIRE SERVICE
OCT. 7TH	E.O.T 0001 OF 2019 RAYMOND RAMCHARITAR V. THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
OCT. 9TH	E.O.T NO. 0001 OF 2021 SAMUEL JOHNSON V. TOBAGO REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
OCT. 9TH	E.O.T NO. 0005 OF 2020 PARASRAM HEERAH V. TRINIDAD CEMENT LIMITED
OCT. 14 & 16TH	E.O.T NO. 0003 OF 2019 MAKESI SOANES V. SOUTH WEST REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
OCT. 21ST	E.O.T NO. 0004 OF 2017 COREEN ISAAC V. THE NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
OCT. 21ST	E.O.T NO. 0001 OF 2014,0001 OF 2015 AFROZA BHANJI V. SUPERPHARM LIMITED
OCT. 23RD	E.O.T 0002 OF 2024 CORINNE GREGOIRE V. CIPRIANI COLLEGE OF LABOUR & CO-OPERATIVE STUDIES
OCT. 23RD	E.O.T NO. 0003 OF 2020 CHARMAINE LEWIS V. PORT AUTHORITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

COURT SCHEDULE

OCT. 27, 28TH
& 29TH

E.O.T NO. 0011 OF 2017 NICOLE COWIE V. EMPLOYER'S
CONSULTATIVE ASSOCIATION OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

OCT. 28TH

E.O.T 0001 OF 2024 RAYMOND RAMCHARITAR V. THE
EXPRESS NEWSPAPERS LIMITED & PROFESSOR EMERITUS
THEODORE LEWIS

OCT. 30TH

E.O.T NO. 0001 OF 2025 DR. KERLENE KENNEDY V. NORTH
CENTRAL REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

Equal Opportunity Tribunal Launches Engagements with Legal Luminaries

On July 11, 2025, Her Honour Madame Justice Donna Prowell-Raphael, Chairman and Judge of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal, accompanied by members of the Executive Management Team, paid a courtesy visit to the Honourable Mr. Justice Rolston Nelson, retired Judge of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ). This marks the first in a series of strategic engagements with prominent figures in the legal community as part of an exciting new initiative by the Tribunal.

During the visit, the team highlighted the Tribunal's work, its distinctive judicial role within the national landscape, and its steadfast commitment to promoting equality and access to justice for all. Discussions also focused on the Tribunal's plans to establish an Honorary Patron Body, comprising distinguished retired judges and esteemed professionals from the community, government, and academia. These Patrons bring a wealth of experience and knowledge, providing mentorship and strategic guidance that help shape the Tribunal's policies, practices, and institutional culture, ensuring it upholds the highest standards of judicial excellence and jurisprudence.

Honorary Patrons offer insights on complex legal and social issues, support capacity-building initiatives, and serve as ambassadors who promote the Tribunal's mission within wider networks. While there are no formal obligations or financial contributions required, Patrons are encouraged to engage actively by sharing expertise, attending key events, and fostering connections that advance the Tribunal's work.

Further details on this initiative, including the distinguished individuals who will be involved, will be shared in the coming weeks. Stay connected as the Tribunal continues to build bridges of justice across Trinidad and Tobago.

(L-R): Mr. Noel Inniss Transformation Consultant; Mr. Justice Rolston Nelson Honorary Patron; Her Honour Madame Justice Donna Prowell-Raphael Chairman and Judge and Ms. Nazahah Khan Acting Registrar Equal Opportunity Tribunal.



Discrimination by Origin: The Legal Dilemma Facing Migrants

What happens when fairness stops at the border? In Trinidad and Tobago, migrants who face unfair treatment because of their foreign nationality or ethnic background may be able to claim discrimination under the Equal Opportunity Act (EOA) but the path to justice isn't always straightforward. While migrants with legal status have some recourse, undocumented individuals often face greater hurdles.

According to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal (EOT) discrimination by origin refers to unfair treatment or prejudice against individuals based on their place of birth, ancestry, or ethnic background. "Under the EOA discrimination by origin involves actions or policies that disadvantage individual because of their geographic origin, national or ethnic origins," Chairman Donna Prowell-Raphael.

"Migrants who are legally residing in Trinidad and Tobago are generally entitled to the protections offered by the Equal Opportunity Act. The situation for non-documented migrants is more nuanced. While the EOA aims to protect individuals from discrimination, non-documented migrants may face legal challenges in asserting these rights due to their immigration status." Historically, migration from other CARICOM states has also been significant. Trinidad and Tobago is a member of the Caribbean Community, a regional grouping of 15 full member states, seven associate members, and eight observers. Many CARICOM citizens, including those from other member states, live and work in Trinidad and Tobago.

While it's difficult to pinpoint an exact number, it's estimated that a significant portion of Trinidad and Tobago's population of about 1.5 million people, includes CARICOM citizens, with many being Trinidadians and Tobagonians themselves, as well as immigrants from other CARICOM countries. "CARICOM citizens are entitled to special protection because of

CARICOM obligation, that may be protected by the Treaty of Chaguaramas and the CCJ," Chairman Donna Prowell-Raphael.

"The Privy Council has upheld the right of non-documented migrants to seek constitutional protection in Trinidad and Tobago. The Privy Council's decision indicates that non-documented migrants have access to constitutional protections, which are fundamental rights that apply to all individuals within the jurisdiction, regardless of their legal status." While the Privy Council's decision supports the notion that non-documented migrants have access to constitutional proceedings, it does not automatically extend to statutory rights under the Equal Opportunity Act. The application of the Act to non-documented migrants would likely depend on further legal interpretation and the alignment of statutory protections with constitutional principles and International human rights norms.



"Legal migrants can file complaints with the Equal Opportunity Commission if they experience discrimination," Chairman Prowell-Raphael. "Non-documented migrants may face

barriers in accessing legal protections due to fear of deportation or lack of legal standing. "There may be broader human rights considerations that influence how discrimination claims by non-document migrants are handled. International human rights norms may encourage the protection of all individuals, regardless of immigration status, from discrimination."

According to Chairman Prowell-Raphael while the EOT provides a mechanism for addressing discrimination by origin, the ability of migrants, particularly those who are undocumented, to claim such discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago remains unresolved. "Legal migrants have clearer pathways to assert their rights, whereas non-documented migrants may face significant

challenges,” Chairman Prowell-Raphael. “It is not explicitly mention accents. essential for legal practitioners and policymakers to consider both domestic law and international human rights standards when addressing these issues.”

Those issues include accent discrimination which may occur when individuals are treated unfairly or mocked based on the way they speak, which often reflects their national, ethnic, or regional origin. This form of discrimination can intersect with broader issues of national origin or ethnicity. If mockery or adverse treatment is based on an accent that reflects a person's national or ethnic origin, it could potentially be considered discrimination by origin under the Equal Opportunity Act depending on the context and severity,” Chairman Prowell-Raphael. “While the EOA prohibits voice with respect, no matter the accent it discrimination based on origin the Act does carries.

“While offensive behaviour typically involves expressions that incite violence or hatred against a particular group, persistent mockery of an accent could contribute to a hostile environment and might be considered a form of hate speech or discrimination, depending on the context and severity if it is done because of the gender, race, ethnicity, origin or religion of the other person or some or all of the persons in the group.” Whether in workplaces, classrooms, or online spaces, repeated ridicule can foster a toxic environment that marginalizes individuals and reinforces harmful stereotypes. In such cases, what might begin as a joke could ultimately be seen as offensive behaviour under the law highlighting the importance of treating every person with respect, no matter the accent it carries.



(L-R): Dr. Dion Greenidge Executive Director and CEO of the Sagicor Cave Hill School of Business and Management presenting Her Honour Madama Justice Donna Prowell-Raphael Chairman and Judge of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal with a special award.

Leadership Champion Award, a special recognition for her outstanding contribution, engagement, and commitment to executive leadership development.

The Equal Opportunity Tribunal proudly congratulates Her Honour on this remarkable achievement. We also extend heartfelt thanks to the **Sagicor Cave Hill School of Business and Management, UWI Cave Hill** for its warm hospitality and for curating such a transformative experience.

This opportunity has further strengthened the Tribunal’s leadership capacity to champion **innovation, inclusivity, and excellence** in its service to the nation.

Group photo of participants and facilitators of the High Impact Leadership Programme.

Leading with Impact: Tribunal Chairman Honoured for Executive Leadership

Her Honour Donna Prowell-Raphael, Chairman and Judge of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal, continues to shine as a trailblazer in leadership and governance. She recently participated in the **High Impact Leadership Programme** hosted by the Sagicor Cave Hill School of Business and Management in Miami, Florida, an intensive forum that brings together senior executives, public sector leaders, and change-makers from across the region.

The programme immersed participants in expert-led sessions, collaborative group work, and thought-provoking discussions designed to strengthen competencies vital for leading in an ever-evolving regional and global landscape.

Her Honour’s dedication and dynamic participation did not go unnoticed. She was honoured with the **Executive**



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