



## CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

**134 HENRY STREET  
PORT OF SPAIN  
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**  
Telephone: (868) 623-2CCJ Fax: (868) 624-4710  
Website: [www.ccj.org](http://www.ccj.org)

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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**As Court Term opens, CCJ President asserts that the Court will always protect the rights of citizens of the region**

**Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.** As the Caribbean Court of Justice's 2021/2022 Court Term opened on Monday 4 October, the Court President, the Hon. Mr Justice Adrian Saunders issued a message which summarises the work of the Court for the 2020/2021 year and how the work of the organisation, impacts citizens of the Caribbean Community.

President Saunders noted that despite the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the CCJ continued to provide uninterrupted service to the region, holding fifty-five (55) hearings in its fully virtual courtroom. He also observed that in the past year, the first-ever case initiated by one Member State of CARICOM against another was filed in the Court's Original Jurisdiction. In the Original Jurisdiction, the Court decides on issues related to the Caribbean Single Market Economy (CSME) relating to the freedom of movement of labour, goods, services, capital and establishment.

Apart from its judicial work, the President also highlighted some of the other noteworthy deliverables completed by the Court during the past court year. These include the finalisation of Judicial Discipline Regulations to accompany the revised Judicial Code of Conduct, which was adopted in 2020 and the implementation of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to measure the progress of the execution of the Court's five-year Strategic Plan.

In keeping with its strategic goal of supporting the regional justice system, the CCJ, as the executing agency for the Canadian-funded Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening (JURIST) Project, also supported the implementation of several initiatives such as business continuity plans for Courts, case flow management, court administration and the procurement of ICT equipment to enhance the delivery of justice across the region. Additionally, through a partnership with affiliates such as the CCJ Academy for Law (CAL), Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO) and the UN's Global Judicial Integrity Network, the Court also assisted with the rollout of legal and judicial education programmes throughout the region and beyond.

Acknowledging that despite these successes, there is still more work to be done, the President asserted that "...we shall continue, fearlessly as always, to advance the rule of law in the region; we shall always protect the rights of the people, and we shall strengthen the legal framework underpinning the Caricom Single Market and Economy."

The President also urged citizens of the region to learn more about the Court and how it serves the region. He affirmed that “The CCJ is your Court and we believe all citizens of CARICOM must know how their Court works and how what we do impacts on you.”

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The five-minute feature can be accessed via: [The Work of the CCJ and You](#)

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 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.

For more information please contact:  
The Public Education & Protocol Unit  
Tel: (868) 623-2225 exts. 2252, 2296  
Email: pecu@ccj.org