



CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

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MEDIA RELEASE
(For immediate release)

No. 13:2025
2 March 2025

CCJ PRESIDENT SAUNDERS CONDUCTS MACFADYEN LECTURE IN SCOTLAND

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. On Thursday, 27 March 2025, President of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), the Honourable Mr Justice Adrian Saunders delivered the prestigious 2025 MacFadyen Lecture at the Royal Society of Edinburgh. The lecture, titled the ‘Caribbean Court of Justice at 20 years’, provided an in-depth examination of the regional court which serves as both a final court of appeal and an international court, deciding on legal issues concerning the application and interpretation of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas for Member States of the Caribbean Community.

The Macfadyen Lecture series was established in 2010 by the Scottish Council of Law Reporting to commemorate the late Rt Honourable Lord MacFadyen who had served as member of the Council. The annual event invites esteemed jurists from around the world to discuss important aspects of law and the administration of justice. Speaking to this, President Saunders stated, ‘...one of the noble things about outstanding judges is that they live on. They live on in their recorded judgments that are repeatedly cited and followed. They live on in the manner in which they influence the shape and trajectory of the law. They live on in the wonderful example they set for their children, for their peers and members of the legal profession. Lord Macfadyen surely lives on, and he will, I am sure, continue to inspire many lawyers and judges for generations to come.’

In this year’s presentation, President Saunders emphasised the vision of the CCJ to be a model of judicial excellence despite social challenges, ‘Neither parliamentary inertia (for which there may be myriad explanations) nor parliamentary indifference to the harmful consequences of an existing law provides, in my respectful view, justification for constitutional interpretation that precludes courts from affording effective remedies to persons affected by laws that trample on constitutionalised human rights, irrespective of when those laws happen to have been enacted.’

He further remarked that the CCJ remains optimistic and resilient as it approaches its 20th anniversary and looks towards a bright future, as ‘the establishment of the Court is perhaps the most impactful decision ever made by the Caribbean Community’. Guided by its ‘stewards’, the Judges and staff of the CCJ, the Court

will continue on a path of excellence although ‘...no Court, anywhere in the world, can honestly state that it has attained a state of perfection; but every court must continuously aim for perfection.’

The lecture forms part of a series of activities that the Court will engage in throughout the year to celebrate its 20th anniversary which it will observe on 16 April 2025. President Saunders’ presentation is available on the Court’s website and can be accessed here: [Twenty Years of the Caribbean Court of Justice-2025 Macfadyen Lecture](#).

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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, five states access the Court in its Appellate Jurisdiction, these being Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, and Saint Lucia. 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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