



## CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

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### **MEDIA RELEASE** (For immediate release)

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### **CCJ DENIES EXTENSION OF TIME IN MURDER CASE FROM BELIZE**

**Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.** On 13 May 2025, the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) dismissed an application for an extension of time to apply for special leave in a murder case from Belize, BZ/A/CR2024/003 *William Mason a/c Danny Mason v The King*.

The applicant, William Mason, also called Danny Mason, along with four other accused, were convicted of the murder of Pastor Llewellyn Lucas on 18 July 2016. The prosecution's case was built on circumstantial evidence, that is to say, evidence which did not directly prove the facts alleged by the prosecution. In this case, such circumstantial evidence included CCTV footage, witness testimonies, and forensic evidence.

The Court of Appeal had previously dismissed Mason's appeal on 11 July 2024, finding that the trial judge's decision was based on a thorough assessment of the circumstantial evidence. Mason's attorney fell ill after the delivery of the Court of Appeal judgment and the time for the filing of an application for [special leave](#) to appeal to the CCJ expired. Mason eventually retained a new attorney from Trinidad and Tobago and filed applications to extend time to apply for special leave to appeal, and for special leave to appeal on 5 November 2024, some 117 days after the judgment of the Court of Appeal.

The Court considered whether there was a valid explanation for the delay and whether the proposed appeal had a realistic chance of success. Despite acknowledging gaps in the explanation, the Court accepted the reasons for the delay, including the attorney's hospitalisation, the length of Mason's incarceration, and the new attorney's location outside of Belize.

The Court considered the realistic chance of success of the issues raised in the proposed grounds of appeal. These included the circumstantial nature of the evidence, the weight placed on certain prosecution evidence, and whether there was any procedural impropriety leading to double jeopardy (that Mason was prosecuted twice for the same offence). The Court found that there was no realistic chance of success on these issues having regard to the evidence and findings of the courts below. Additionally, the Court noted that the issue of potential double jeopardy was raised for the first time at the CCJ; consequently, it could only be pursued in exceptional circumstances.



The Court concluded that there was no risk of a serious miscarriage of justice and no disputable point of law of general public importance.

The CCJ's decision means that Mason's conviction and sentence were, therefore, upheld.

The matter was determined by the Honourable Justices Rajnauth-Lee, Jamadar, and Ononaiwu. Mr Peter A. C. Taylor and Ms Nehanda Samuel appeared for the applicant and Ms Cheryl-Lynn Vidal SC appeared for the respondent.

The CCJ's full decision is available via [www.ccj.org](http://www.ccj.org).

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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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