



CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

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MEDIA RELEASE

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CCJ GRANTS LIFE INTEREST IN LAND DISPUTE IN BELIZE

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. On Thursday, 8 October 2026, the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) delivered its judgment in the matter of *Ewart Robateau v Allen Robateau [2026] CCJ 15 (AJ) BZ*, an appeal from Belize. This appeal concerned a land dispute between two brothers over a house constructed by Ewart Robateau on land originally leased to their mother in Belize City. Ewart claimed that their mother had promised him a life interest in the property if he constructed a house on the vacant lot. Relying on that assurance, he financed the construction of the home where he raised his family and lived for approximately 34 years. In 2017, the mother transferred title to Allen Robateau who subsequently filed a claim at the High Court to recover possession of the entire property. The High Court granted Allen possession. The Court of Appeal upheld that decision.

An appeal was filed at the CCJ where it was determined that the lower courts had materially erred in their evaluation of the evidence and were plainly wrong. The Court found that Ewart's evidence that he built and paid for the house was uncontradicted and that another brother had directly testified that the mother had told all of her children of the promise she had made to Ewart of a life interest.

The CCJ concluded that the requirements of proprietary estoppel (prevents a landowner from going back on a promise) were established - that there was an assurance of a life interest given to Ewart, he relied on that assurance by investing his money in the property, he suffered detriment as a result, and that it was unconscionable for Allen to evict him. The Court allowed the appeal and granted Ewart a life interest in the property.

The appeal was heard by the Honourable Justices Rajnauth-Lee, Barrow, Jamadar, Ononaiwu, and Eboe-Osuji. Mr Mathew Morris represented Mr Ewart Robateau and Ms Michelle Trapp Zuniga and Mr Emmertice Anderson represented Mr Allen Robateau.

The full judgment is available on the Court's website at 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 Winston Anderson. 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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