

**Statement by the Attorney General on the Final Report of the Investigative
Team appointed by the Honourable Attorney General to inquire and report into
the facts and circumstances surrounding CV 2020-01243 Shervon Peters
and The Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago**

January 21, 2025

Mr. President, I have been authorised by the Cabinet to make the following statement on the Final Report of the Investigative Team appointed by the Honourable Attorney General to inquire and report into the facts and circumstances surrounding CV 2020-01243 Shervon Peters and The Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. President. Members of this august Chamber will recall my previous remarks in this very Chamber on the 4th July and 9th September, 2024, when I piloted and wound-up debate on The Miscellaneous Provisions (Judicial and Legal Service) Bill, 2024, which has now been passed into law as Act **No. 14 of 2024, The Miscellaneous Provisions (Judicial and Legal Service) Act, 2024.**

The Act serves –

- a) to enable the fusion of the operations of the Civil Law Department of the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs by renaming the legal offices therein;
- b) to provide for a Chambers Manager of the Civil Law Department;
- c) to give formally to the Registrar General's Department the status as a separate department of the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs;
- d) to provide for the methodology and standards for recruitment of Children's Attorneys in the Civil Law Department; ~~and~~
- e) to provide for the Intellectual Property Office created under Section 6 of the Patents Act, to recruit staff on contracts of up to five years (renewable).

The need for this legislative reform had its genesis in the 2006 and 2008 Reports of the Committee to Enhance the Delivery of Legal Services to the People of Trinidad and Tobago, which made recommendations but were never implemented for the reorganisation of the Civil Law Department of the Ministry of Legal Affairs.

The more recent impetus for the efforts which promoted the urgent need for this long outstanding reorganisation was the 2023 infamous incident of the *missing file* in CV 2020- 01243 Shervon Peters & Others v The Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago. In this matter, a judgment of the High Court delivered on the 30th January 2023 (since set aside) awarded damages and costs in excess of \$20,000,000 against the State of Trinidad and Tobago, consequent on the failure of the State to defend a claim of malicious prosecution brought by the Claimants.

Mr. President. Arising out of this avoidable debacle, on the 2nd of February 2023, as Attorney General I formally appointed retired Mr. Justice of Appeal Stanley John and Mrs. Pamela Schullera-Hinds, retired Head, Special Branch, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service to carry out an investigation within the parameters of prescribed terms of reference and, with the mandate to report to me with recommendations within six months. This they did, with an Interim Report submitted on the 31st of March 2023, and the Final Report, submitted on the 29th of June 2023. I once again take the opportunity, formally to acknowledge my gratitude to them for their thoroughness and discerning quality of their report and recommendations.

This is the Report, The Investigative Team Report, which I now lay before this Parliament. The Investigative Report is illuminating and speaks for itself; I therefore need say little about it. Members will understand after they have read the Report why, until I had accomplished the passage of what is now **Act #14 of 2024**, I chose, deliberately, not to make this Report public. There are disclosures in there which

impact individuals. Flowing from this there emerged legal correspondence with the Investigative Team, which Team had caused the Salmon letter correspondence to be issued. It was my grave concern that, had this report been made public before now, my Office may have become embroiled in litigation with the potential, negatively to impact what I considered to be the pre-eminent public interest consideration: That of utilising the Investigative Team Report to introduce an enabling legislated platform for, and from which to commence and to engage, the process of meaningful transformative change which has been recommended since 2008. I was deeply concerned to leave little room for further stymieing that process which is now enabled with **Act No. 14 of 2024**.

Mr. President. With the laying of this Investigative Team Report I am happy to acknowledge today that this engagement and change process is already underway. I and my Team, under the leadership of the Attorney General's Consultant, Master Christie Ann Morris-Alleyne (retired Court Executive Administrator), in the consultations which have been engaged and which continue with and concerning Attorneys and members of Staff of the former Chief State Solicitor's and Solicitor General's Department (now the fused Civil Law Department), with the Registrar General and the Registrar General's Department, in respect of the addition of the Children's Attorneys to the Civil Law Department and, with the Controller of the Intellectual Property Office, greatly assisted by the Change Managers and Interlocutors who were made available to us by the Judicial Education Institute of the Judiciary, the necessary change process, training and commitment to mission and purpose is now already underway.

I can assure you, Mr. President, and through you the citizenry of Trinidad and Tobago that the future quality of legal services to be continued to be delivered by the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs is very promising.

I thank you.