



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA RELEASE

**ONLINE PURCHASE TAX CASE
COURIER COMPANIES WITHDRAW THEIR CLAIM
MINISTRY OF FINANCE SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDS ONLINE TAX**

The legal challenge mounted by a number of courier companies to the Online Purchase Tax was withdrawn in the High Court before Mr. Justice Rahim yesterday, Friday July 21st 2017.

The Ministry of Finance has noted a suggestion in the electronic media that the withdrawal may have been influenced by fear of victimisation on the part of the Claimant courier companies in obtaining foreign exchange. This is a ludicrous suggestion because the persons who purchase goods online do so using their personal credit cards through the commercial banks, and these personal credit cards are not in any way connected to the courier companies. Further, the very suggestion that courier companies might be victimised in some way is reprehensible because the Ministry of Finance is not in any way involved in the distribution of foreign exchange to courier companies. Foreign exchange is distributed by the commercial banks.

There is also a suggestion in the print media that the parties came to a “resolution” of the matter.

For the record, the withdrawal of the claim by the courier companies was complete and unqualified.

In fact, two of the six courier companies, who were initially part of the group mounting the challenge, now withdrawn by all, had withdrawn even prior to the trial, at much earlier stages.

The Ministry is satisfied that the courier companies withdrew from the litigation in the face of the strength of the detailed written submissions filed by the Ministry and the Office of the Attorney General in the High Court.

Clearly, the courier companies realised that they had no case with respect to the Government's legitimate right to vary or impose taxes in order to generate revenue to service the needs of the general population and the country at large.

The Ministry of Finance wishes to clarify that the announcement before Mr. Justice Rahim in the court on Friday 21st July, 2017 was facilitated by the Ministry and the Office of the Attorney General kindly agreeing to not insist that the Claimant courier companies pay the Government's legal costs.

It is unfortunate that in these circumstances any suggestion of future victimisation should be made, particularly at a time when the Ministry and the Office of the Attorney General adopted a conciliatory approach to the Claimants' unilateral decision to withdraw.

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