



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
MINISTRY OF FINANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 14th 2019

MEDIA RELEASE

Express Editorial Misleads Public Again

The Hon. Colm Imbert, Minister of Finance, has noted yet another uninformed and misdirected editorial in the *Trinidad Express*.

Today's *Trinidad Express* Editorial of March 14th, 2019 continues its campaign to mislead the reading public and undermine public confidence in state entities such as Caribbean Airlines (CAL).

The reality is that the *Trinidad Express* published a wholly misleading and sensationalist story about the safety of Caribbean Airlines' aircraft, which if not addressed, would have damaged public confidence in our national airline. As line Minister for Caribbean Airlines, it is the responsibility of the Minister of Finance to protect our national airline from fake news.

In truth and fact, contrary to the alarmist campaign initiated by the *Trinidad Express*, CAL was never operating possibly defective aircraft at the risk of passengers' lives. Indeed, Caribbean Airline's current fleet of Boeing 737-800s is perfectly safe and the airline took pains to say so and reassure the public despite the histrionics of the *Express*.

Further, the *Trinidad Express* must know that the Government has no legal authority to instruct American Airlines on what to do with its flights or aircraft. That is the responsibility of the Trinidad and Tobago Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) here or the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in the USA.

For the record, the CAA functions independently of the Government and no Minister is authorized to interfere with or override their authority on how our airspace is managed. If a Minister were to attempt to instruct the CAA with respect to the airworthiness of aircraft, the *Trinidad Express* would be the first to scream loudly about political interference in the functions of an independent regulatory agency.



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The call to prohibit flights or aircraft remained at the sole discretion of the CAA, which, like the Government, was monitoring the progress of the story internationally. It is noteworthy that following the prohibition order of the FAA yesterday, the CAA took immediate and appropriate action to prohibit the use of the Boeing 737-8 Max and 737-9 Max aircraft in our airspace, in accordance with its statutory mandate. That is the right and proper way for matters of this nature to be addressed. Any other approach would be akin to anarchy.

- END -

Colm Imbert, MP
Minister of Finance