



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
MINISTRY OF FINANCE

For immediate release

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MEDIA RELEASE

EXPRESS DOUBLES DOWN TO CONTINUE ITS CAMPAIGN OF MISINFORMATION REGARDING LAND ACQUISITION FOR THE NEW TOBAGO AIRPORT TERMINAL

The Minister of Finance, Hon. Colm Imbert, MP, has observed that having been publicly chastised by the Judiciary for publishing inaccurate information, rather than accepting that it has misled the public, the Express Newspaper has chosen to double down and continue its campaign of uninformed commentary and misinformation with respect to the true facts regarding the acquisition of land for the construction of the new airport terminal building in Tobago.

For example, the Express is now insisting in its editorial today (Sunday August 14, 2022) that there is nothing “*uninformed*” about publishing the following completely false statements:

- *The authorities had short-circuited the process in evicting residents while the matter was before the court.*
- *That an injunction had been granted by the court with respect to the land acquisition process*
- *That a stay had been granted by the court with respect to the land acquisition process*

However, this is simply a repetition of the nonsense published in the previous Express editorial of Friday August 12, 2022.

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For the record, **again**, the matter was NOT before the court when the warrant of possession was executed for the particular structures and lands that were the subject of the exercise on Thursday August 11, 2022.

And further, as confirmed by the Judiciary in its press release of August 12, 2022, there was NO injunction or stay granted by the court with respect to this land acquisition matter.

The Express also inaccurately stated that the airport project has been the responsibility of the Minister of Finance for the last 30 years whereas the land acquisition process for the new airport terminal in Tobago *“has only taken roughly a year”*, so that *“throwing the blame on residents looking to secure their future hardly seems fair”*.

This is also utter nonsense. It is a matter of public record that the contract for the design and construction of the new airport terminal building in Tobago under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance was signed on **January 28, 2020**, which is 2 ½ years ago, not 30 years ago. It is obviously convenient for the Express to forget the various Governments and Ministers that have been in office in Trinidad and Tobago over the last 30 years.

Further, it is a matter of public record that as a result of forward planning, the land acquisition process for the new airport terminal commenced in **March 2019**, which is over **THREE years ago**, and not *“roughly a year”*, as falsely alleged by the Express.

Today’s editorial is typical of the Express. Having published dangerous misinformation and being called out for its nonsense, it resorts to ad hominem attacks rather than dealing with the factual issues.

If it is deemed to be intemperate for correcting the public record and rebuking a newspaper for publishing rubbish in a situation which the Judiciary has quite appropriately described as volatile, then so be it. The Minister of Finance will continue to point out and expose this type of media misconduct as and when required. The public has a right to know the true facts, as opposed to misinformation.

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The Honourable Colm Imbert M.P.

Minister of Finance