



THIRTY-FOURTH
**ANNUAL
REPORT**

to Parliament

2021



Republic of Trinidad and Tobago



The logo is a three-bar symbol, representing three areas of human society in which integrity is fundamental

- SELF, COMMUNITY, CIVILIZATION.



The Integrity Commission

OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The words of Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* lead to a close reflection of the state of the Commission. *“Hold your peace!” screamed the priestess, her voice terrible as it echoed through the dark void. “You have offended neither the gods nor your fathers. And when a man is at peace with his gods and his ancestors, his harvest will be good or bad according to the strength of his arm. You, Unoka, are known in all the clan for the weakness of your machete and your hoe. When your neighbours go out with their axe to cut down virgin forests, you sow your yams on exhausted farms that take no labour to clear. They cross seven rivers to make their farms; you stay at home and sacrifice a reluctant soil. Go home and work like a man.”*

The Commission does not wish to be like Unoka, repeatedly doing the same thing yet expecting a different result, hoping for a bumper yield in governance, but not being prepared to do things differently. There is a need to cross the rivers and clear virgin forests and to forget offering sacrifices to the reluctant soil. It must cease working on exhausted farms and engage in the necessary labour to change its fortunes. There can be no appeal to the gods for excuses for a lack of desire to make the tough decisions. As a taxpayer-funded institution, the Integrity Commission must demonstrate vigorous regard for its statutory mandates and to be prepared to work with a complete understanding of the adverse impact of corruption on our present and future.

“Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability but comes through continuous struggle.”
- Martin Luther King Jr.

March 31, 2022

Mrs. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel
Clerk of the House
Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago
The Red House
Parliamentary Complex
St. Vincent Street
Port of Spain

Dear Madam,

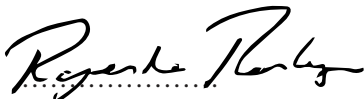
Thirty-Fourth Annual Report to Parliament for the Year 2021

The Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago respectfully submits its Thirty-Fourth Annual Report to Parliament on its activities for the year ended December 31, 2021. The Report is prepared in compliance with Section 10 of the Integrity in Public Life Act, Chapter 22:01, which states:

“The Commission shall, not later than 31st March in each year, make a report to Parliament of its activities in the preceding year, and the report shall be tabled in the Senate and the House of Representatives not later than 31st May, so, however, that the reports shall not disclose particulars of any declaration filed with the Commission.”

Kindly note that we have also submitted this Report in electronic form, as requested, to the following address: coth@ttparliament.org

Yours faithfully,



Prof. Rajendra Ramlogan BA Eng. Lit. (UWI)
LLB (UWI), LEC (HWLS), LLM (NYU School of Law)
PhD (Cantab.) FCCS
Chairman

Table of Contents

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.....	5
BACKGROUND.....	5
CHALLENGES.....	5
Independence and Autonomy of the Commission.....	5
Organisational Structure.....	8
Budgetary Constraints.....	9-10
CONCLUSION.....	10
VISION STATEMENT.....	12
MISSION STATEMENT.....	12
OUR VALUES.....	12
OBJECTIVES.....	12
COMPLIANCE.....	15
INVESTIGATIONS.....	17
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT.....	19
SPECIAL PROJECTS.....	23
Amendments to the IPLA.....	23
Digital Transformation.....	23
COMMISSION MEMBERS.....	24-28

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



BACKGROUND

The Chairman of the Integrity Commission (Commission) assumed office in the middle of January 2021. This signalled the commencement of the term of the 17th Commission. A review of the Integrity in Public Life Act, Chap.22:01 (IPLA), clearly indicates the Commission's core functions as statutorily mandated by the IPLA. These two core areas are:

- i. Filing of declarations and statements of registrable interests by persons in public life
- ii. Investigation of complaints regarding persons in public life and persons exercising public functions

On its website, the Commission states that it is the *premier state institution for promoting and preserving integrity in all affairs to make Trinidad and Tobago a corruption-free society*. This vision is articulated in a country with the low ranking on the 2020 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of 86 (one being the least corrupt).

A country where an independent senator provided a concise and eloquent statement on corruption.

“

Corruption is about selfishness and greed and must never be facilitated by right-thinking persons...

(Trinidad and Tobago Hansard, December 08, 2020).

So, what is the matter with the Commission?

”

CHALLENGES

Independence and Autonomy of the Commission

As the 17th Commission, early in its tenure, sought to understand its role, the position adopted by the Registry was that its independence and autonomy only extended to its core functions of compliance and investigation of complaints. It did not include the administrative process. Therefore, the Commission found itself in the unenviable position where administrative decisions were being deferred to public officials such as the Permanent Secretary to the Prime Minister and Head of the Public Service and the Chief Personnel Officer. The Commission was bewildered by this position in light of the clear dictate of the IPLA and the fact that some of these officers are persons in public life and subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission.

Section 5 (2) (a) of the IPLA: In the exercise of its powers and performance of its functions under the Act, the Commission- (a) shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority:

The Commission sought to obtain the views of some of the very persons referenced as ultimate authorities over the administration of the Commission. The Permanent Secretary to the Prime Minister and Head of the Public Service met with the Commission and the Registrar (Ag) and clearly explained that he was not an approving authority but merely a conduit for submissions, where necessary to Cabinet. The Chief Personnel Officer met with the Commission and the Registrar (Ag) and indicated that he had no authority over the Commission but provided guidance on the terms and conditions of employment to ensure consistency with the practices of the Public Service.

Having written to the Solicitor General, the Solicitor General advised the Commission by opinion dated September 29, 2021, as follows:

Section 5 (2) (a) states; “In the exercise of its powers and performance of its functions under the Act, the Commission- (a) shall not be subject to the directions or control of any other person or authority:”

In interpreting the sections of a statute one start by applying the literal or plain meaning rule. as is stated in R v Federal Stream navigation Co Ltd [1973] 1WLR 1373, CA – “In the first thing is to construe it according to the ordinary rules of grammar, and if a construction which satisfies those rules make the enactment intelligible, and especially if it carries out the obvious intention of the legislature as gathered from the general perusal of the whole statue, the grammatical construction ought not to be departed from it.” This section simply ensures that the Integrity Commission remains an independent entity since no person or authority can direct how the Commission exercises its powers and perform its functions.

The opinion of the Solicitor General is consistent with that of the Court of Appeal of Trinidad and Tobago. Civ. App. No. 30 of 2008 In The Matter of The Integrity in Public Life Act, 2000 as Amended and In The Matter of the Construction of Paragraphs 8 And 9 of The Schedule to the Integrity In Public Life Act, 2000 as Amended Between Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago Limited and The Integrity Commission Plaintiff/Respondent and The Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago”

Smith JA “Equally, the Commission is an autonomous creature of the Constitution, answerable to no one (See section 5(2) (a) of the Integrity Act) and vested with sweeping and invasive powers over persons and bodies under its jurisdiction. (See, for example, section 5 of the Integrity Act). Its functions are very expansive and comprehensive.

The challenge to be independent and autonomous was significant as 2021 progressed. Despite the clear position of the law, senior officers of the Commission, in assuming the role of independence and autonomy concerning administrative matters, refused to carry out several unanimous decisions of the Commission or took independent decisions without seeking guidance from the Commission.

The results were that decisions such as the submission of budgetary estimates, renewal of employment contracts, employment of staff, implementation of security policies, and closure of the Commission being taken independent of the Commission, albeit at times with the purported acquiescence of external governmental entities.



Particularly problematic was the refusal by the Registrar to allow the Commission to participate in the preparation of the Budget Estimates for 2022. This is in direct contradiction of the IPLA, the Exchequer and Audit Act, Chap.69:01 (“the EAA”), and the Ministry of Finance Call Circular dated March 24, 2021 (“the Call Circular”).

Organisational Structure

An analysis of the organisational chart was conducted based on observations of the various jobs performed by staff members, which led to the realisation that there was a total dysfunction between staffing arrangements and core statutory duties of the Commission. While it is customary for administration to be between 20% to 30% of staffing arrangements in business operations, this stood at 63% at the Commission. Compliance made up 20% of the staff, and investigations 17%. These are stark numbers that perhaps can explain the public perception of the failure of the Commission to carry out its statutory mandate. Indeed, the head of Compliance Unit stated that between 2017 and 2021, his staff had been reduced by almost 70%. Yet, an increasing number of persons in public life are required to file declarations and statements of registrable interests. At the end of 2021, the administration accounts for 33% of the staff, investigations 27%, and compliance 40%. It has been a matter of re-engineering the organisation to move resources to where they are most needed, that is, in the areas of the Commission's core functions.

Table 1.0 Staffing Arrangements as of January 31, 2021

	Total Number of Employees Taking Office	Number of Employees in Administration	Number of Employees in Investigations	Number of Employees Compliance
	30	19	5	6
Percentage		63%	17%	20%

Table 2.0 Current Staffing Arrangements as of December 31, 2021

	Total Number of Employees	Number of Employees in Administration	Number of Employees in Investigations	Number of Employees Compliance
	30	10	8	12
Percentage		33%	27%	40%

Even more worrying was the presence of just over 60% of staff members on short-term contracts of three months duration renewable at the discretion of the Commission. In the Compliance Unit, 100% of the employees were on short term contracts, with 80% similarly engaged in the Investigations Unit. This was considered to be unacceptable. It must be appreciated that for the Commission to recruit and maintain skilled and competent individuals, its terms and conditions need to be attractive so that persons are incentivised to continue their employment with the Commission. Further, given the sensitivity of the information received and dealt with daily, the Commission would need to offer fixed-term employment to uphold the overriding tenet of confidentiality and detract from creating a revolving door workplace.

For 2021, the Commission removed the arbitrariness of the renewal of the contract process by establishing a Support Services Sub-Committee of the Commission to review all renewal proposals and introduce a performance-based assessment process. Renewals are no longer based on the exercise of arbitrary and unfettered discretion, but performance appraisals are

done consistently during the life of an employment contract. The Commission also increased the duration of the short-term contracts from 3 to 6 months and included six days of sick leave.

Perhaps the most significantly sought-after confirmation, from the Solicitor General, of the Commission was its ability to determine its organisational structure and the terms of employment of staff members. The opinion of the Solicitor General was received at the end of September 2021, and the Commission commenced preparation of a Note to Cabinet to transform the organisation into one with proper deployment of staff and the use of long-term contracts having regard to the nature of the work being undertaken by the Commission.

Budgetary Constraints

It was clear that the bulk of the budget was dedicated to administration with little likelihood of the Commission receiving supplemental sums to address the challenges facing the Compliance and Investigations Units in 2021.

Indeed, the budget for 2015 was \$26,887,100, but by 2021, this had shrunk to \$8,648,452 with further cuts anticipated at that time, for 2022 to be \$8,303,000. Notably, although historically significant budgets were approved, the various allocations did not reflect the organisation's core needs. Refocussing the budget to concentrate on core functions would result in a lower burden on taxpayers with a greater return on the actual performance of the Commission's statutory mandate. Additionally, the Commission is sensitive to the fact that working with reduced financial resources during this COVID-19 pandemic is not a unique challenge. Therefore, it is evident that organisational transformation would have to ensure that the Compliance and Investigations functions would improve performance without overall budgetary increases.

The Commission has restructured the organisation by reducing the costs of administration. The result is that it has met its transformed costs through internal adjustments and does not require further subventions from the Ministry of Finance. This is subject to one main caveat. The Commission has access to two (2) Associate Professionals from the Ministry of Education, which meets the cost of such employment, and an Investigator from the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force who is on secondment for one year as part of her resettlement program. Accordingly, the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force meets this individual's employment cost. Further completion of internal audits of the Compliance Unit and the Investigations Unit has revealed the need for additional staffing to address the deficiencies uncovered. This has clear implications for the 2022 budget.

CONCLUSION

The year 2021 has undoubtedly been a tumultuous one. Changing the culture in an organisation is not easy. The Commission has sought to involve staff in its change management philosophy and to remind them of the serious nature of the statutory mandate entrusted to the Commission. The Commission sought to introduce performance parameters to officers in exercising their duties. Work targets were established, and timelines for completing critical statutory tasks were created. The complexities inherent in change management are pretty apparent. The Commission respects the right of persons uncomfortable with change to choose a course that does not involve adjusting to the unfamiliarity of a changing environment. But change is necessary if the improvement is to be made in discharging the Commission's statutory mandate. The majority of staff members embraced the efforts of the Commission to transform the organisation. Those members of staff must be wholeheartedly congratulated for standing firm as the winds of change whirled around. It was indeed personally gratifying to receive quiet words of support and to hear a member of staff who was requested to change duties remark, "*I will take one for the team*". With this spirit and new staffing additions, we look forward to 2022 with greater expectations as to the fulfilment by the Commission of its statutory mandate.

The course upon which the Commission embarked in 2021 has always been collectively made and unanimously agreed upon by its members. As a single united body, the Commission stands firmly behind its decisions. The Commission's members are striving to discharge their duties and responsibilities faithfully, by their oath, and with the provisions of the IPLA.

THE COMMISSION

The Commission is a constitutional body created by Sections 138 and 139 of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Constitution and established by Section 4 of the Integrity in Public Life Act (“the Act”). Section 4 also provides for the membership of the Commission, that is to say, a Chairman, a Deputy Chairman and three (3) other members. All Commission Members must be persons of integrity and high standing; at least one (1) member must be an Attorney-at-law with at least ten (10) years’ experience. Another must be a chartered or certified accountant.



(L-R) Mr Lyndon James, Member; Ms Sandra Honoré, Professor Rajendra Ramlogan Chairman; Ms Eleanor Bridgeman-Volney, Member; and Mr Frederick Gilkes, Deputy Chairman.

VISION STATEMENT



The Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago is the premier state institution for the promotion and preservation of integrity in all affairs to make Trinidad and Tobago a corruption free society.

MISSION STATEMENT



The Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago and its team of dedicated professionals promote and facilitate the highest ethical standards by:

- ensuring compliance with the Act;
- detecting and eradicating corrupt practices and dishonest conduct;
- educating the public in an effort to eradicate corruption, improve governance and engender a national culture of integrity; and
- providing excellent customer service.

OUR VALUES



Confidentiality, Integrity, Professionalism, Teamwork

OBJECTIVES



The aims and objectives of the Commission can be succinctly described as:

- making of new provisions for the prevention of corruption of persons in public life by requiring public disclosure;
- regulating the conduct of persons exercising public functions; and
- preserving and promoting the integrity of public officials and institutions.

POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE INTEGRITY COMMISSION

The Commission shall carry out those functions and exercise the powers specified in the Act.

Among other things, therefore, it:

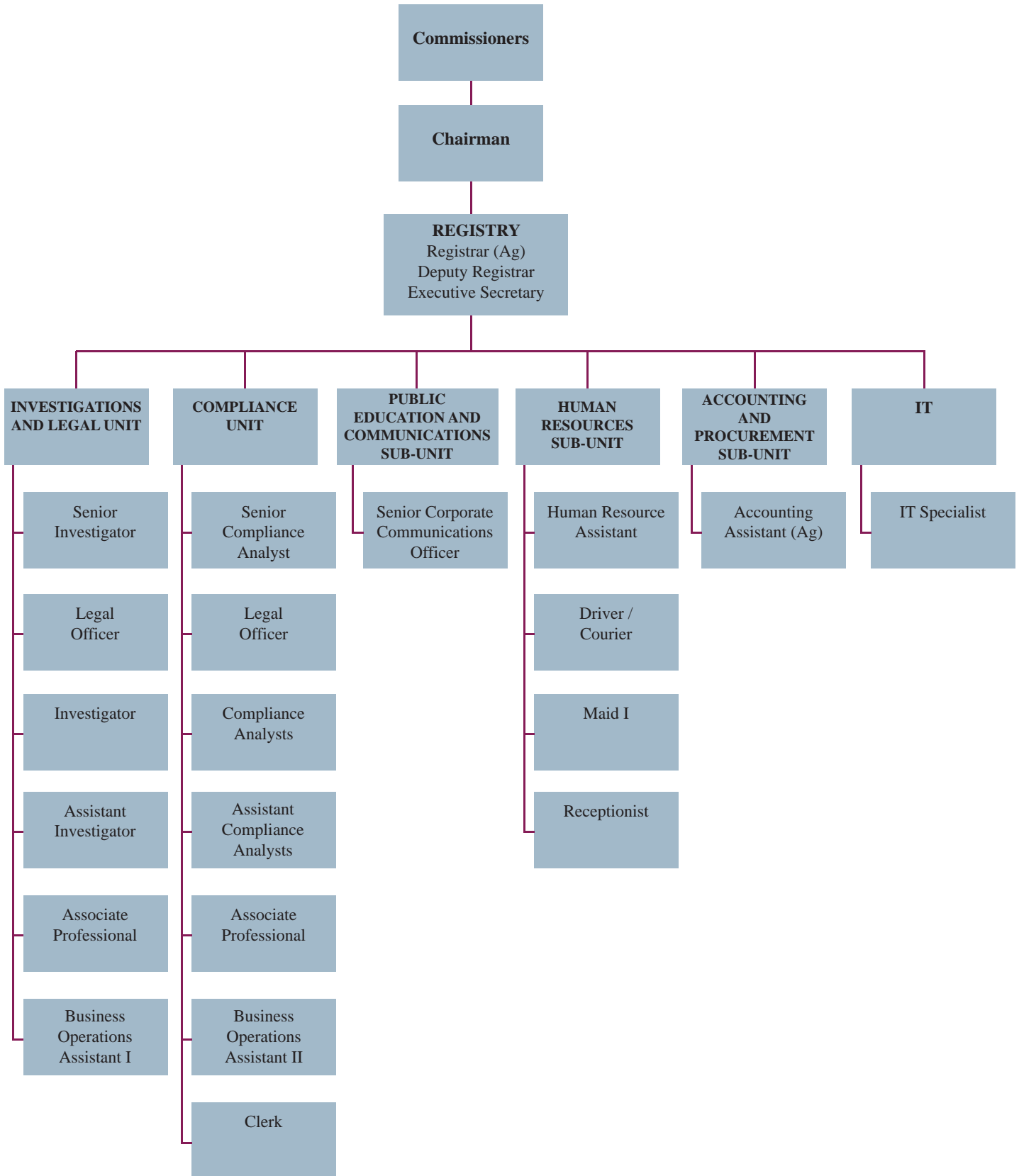
shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority;

may in all cases where it considers it appropriate to do so, make use of the services or draw upon the expertise of any law enforcement agency or the Public Service;

may for specific projects or investigations enter into contracts for the services of persons having technical or specific knowledge of any matter relating to the work of the Commission;

shall have the power to authorize investigations, summon witnesses, require the production of any reports, documents, other relevant information, and to do all such things as it considers necessary or expedient for the purpose of carrying out its functions.

ORGANISATIONAL CHART OF THE INTEGRITY COMMISSION WITH STAFFING



REPORT ON THE UNITS OF THE COMMISSION

COMPLIANCE

The 15th Commission was confronted with a critical situation pertaining to the filing of declarations by persons in public life. Based on existing data, the 15th Commission worked assiduously to develop a policy that would resolve this situation. Although there is no

statutory limit for bringing ex parte actions to address delinquency in the filing of declarations, the 15th Commission took a decision to limit its enforcement actions to six years, being declarations due in 2015 for the year 2014, similar to what obtains at the Board of Inland Revenue. This translated into an informal amnesty concerning 1,170 declarations, a necessary but unfortunate development. The result was outstanding declarations for 2014 to 2019 by 1,066 persons in public life, amounting to around **2,751** declarations.

Table 3.0 Outstanding Declarations from Filing Year 2014 to Filing Year 2019 as at January 2021

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
309	679	471	425	412	556

Despite the policy being articulated by the 15th Commission, no specific proposal was made in the Budgetary Estimates for 2021 to implement this project. The 17th Commission developed a project execution policy mainly utilising existing resources and commenced filing ex parte actions concerning outstanding declarations. At the end of November 2021, ex parte actions have resulted in orders being granted for **800** outstanding declarations and statements of registrable interests.

Table 4.0 Filing of Ex parte Actions from Filing Year 2014 to Filing Year 2019 as at January 2021

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of Ex parte Actions to be Filed	309	679	471	425	412	556
Number of Ex parte Actions Filed	309	251	176	64	39	1

The Commission also developed a workflow chart to improve the efficiency of the Compliance Unit. Further, the Commission expanded the percentage of employees in the Compliance Unit from 20% to 40% without exceeding its budget. This included contracting young University graduates with accounting and economics degrees as Assistant Compliance Analysts. As mentioned before, the fact that the Compliance Unit has lost around 70% of its staff since 2017, which has only been remedied in the latter part of 2021, is essentially the reason why many declarations and statements of registrable interests filed for the year 2014 and onwards have not yet been reviewed by the Compliance Unit to ascertain readiness for the issuance of a certification of compliance. The most troubling feature of Compliance is **the estimated 4,500 outstanding declarations and statements of registrable interests (including filed and not filed)** that are expected to be certified. With the current expanded staffing from three (3) to six (6) based on a monthly average of 25 reviewed declarations and statements of registrable

interests per staff member, this would result in the completion of the backlog of certification over a period of thirty (30) months. This is based on the assumption that no work would be done on new declarations and statements of registrable interests filed during that period. This is untenable, and there is a need to increase the Analysts' staffing by at least one hundred (100) per cent to have a meaningful impact on this grave problem.

It is even more distressing to note that the Compliance Unit has not, as of December 31, 2021, been able to identify the number of declarations and statements of registrable interests from 2014-2016 received from persons in public life that are yet to be certified. The reality is that there is no in-house knowledge as to the number of declarations and statements of registrable interests filed between 2014-2016 that are awaiting certification. A project to identify these declarations and statements of registrable interests has been launched with the increase in staffing of the Compliance Unit.

Table 5.0 Certification of Declarations Filed from Filing Year 2014 to Filing Year 2020

Year	No. of Persons in Public Life	No. of Persons Filing Declarations	No. of Declarations Outstanding (not Filed / Not Responding to Queries)	No. of Declarations Certified
2020	1,200	616	584	176
2019	1,229	720	529	367
2018	1,146	806	340	462
2017	1,300	903	397	573
2016	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
2015	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
2014	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available

Steps were also taken in 2021 to initiate a discussion with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to assist in guiding the Commission to pursue criminal enforcement proceedings against persons subject to ex parte orders who may have chosen to ignore the orders of the Court.

Finally, as a general observation, the Compliance Unit has accepted the challenge of becoming more performance-driven. In addition to new staff, the Compliance Unit has maintained all its staff members, despite dramatic changes to the organisational structure to ensure that it meets its statutory mandate.

INVESTIGATIONS

The Commission found that the entire process for the management of complaints contained certain shortcomings. The Commission issued a request for a status report on all outstanding investigations. The Commission discovered serious issues with performance as a requested status report found that 15 investigations were outstanding, some going back to 2013. The Commission established a Sub-Committee of the Commission on Investigations to enable increased scrutiny of the workings of the Investigation Unit on individual investigations. The Commission sought to introduce performance appraisals of the work of all investigators before the renewal of contracts of employment. Investigators are required to account for their performance before the Support Services

Sub-Committee of the Commission to discuss performance issues before contract renewal. Details were provided to the Director of Investigations as to specific concerns with performance. However, the Director of Investigations refused to attend the meetings. The Commission then took a unanimous decision not to renew his contract, yet his contract was renewed by the Registrar in defiance of the Commission's unanimous decision. The former Director of Investigations later resigned within the term of his renewed contract.

The efforts of the Commission to introduce performance parameters in the Investigations Unit to ensure that investigations are conducted with greater professionalism led to conflict, with the result being the resignation of the entire Investigations Unit. The reality is that the investigations record of the Investigations Unit, which has only led to one unsuccessful prosecution of a complaint, is best captured by the analysis of the Court in granting a stay in that matter.

***In the Matter of the Complaints of Wellington
Virgil v Basdeo Panday, 12401-3/2002.
Magistrate Marcia Murray.***

The Integrity Commission, while claiming not to be the source of the 'leaks', made no effort to cause a cessation of these 'leaks' to the newspapers. This remained so even after Mr. Hudson Phillips expressed his great dismay to the Integrity Commission about these 'leaks'. Mr. Alkins admitted this in his evidence....The Integrity Commission referred Mr. Panday to the Director of Public Prosecutions on July 18, 2002 without the benefit of the information they had requested from Mr. Hudson-Phillips....In failing to present Mr. Panday with the findings of its investigation and allowing him the full

opportunity to be heard before reporting him to the Director of Public Prosecutions the Integrity Commission was “recklessly indifferent” as to whether its “conduct was illegal” (see Rowley) and by acting as it did committed the tort of misfeasance in public office. It also failed to afford Mr. Panday his constitutional right to protection of the law. This should so offend the Court’s sense of propriety that the Court should stay these proceedings...) The Complainant’s findings, which he presented to the Director of Public Prosecutions, were therefore incomplete and misleading as to the nature and strength of the evidence against Mr. Panday.

The Commission has been fortunate to replace the departed investigators between October and December 2021, with a new group of investigators, now supervised by a former Head of the Anti-Corruption Bureau of the Police Service. The Unit includes two University graduates with degrees in accounting and interests in forensic accounting; former Head of a Unit of the Fraud Squad; and an officer of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force pursuing a Master of Science Degree in Forensic Accounting and Auditing seconded to the Commission through the participation in a resettlement programme.

An audit conducted by this new unit has revealed several troubling developments.

- In one instance, an investigation was closed years after it commenced when it was acknowledged that in the first place, the subject of the complaint was not a person in public life or a person exercising a public function.
- A common factor in some files would appear to be the non-examination of the specific allegations and the gathering of the relevant evidence. At the same time, extensive time and effort were being expended on peripheral matters.
- The audit revealed the existence of four hundred and sixty-two files (462). Ninety-two investigations were initiated over twenty (20) years with no evidence that such investigations were finally determined by the Commission and were considered inactive by the previous members of the Investigations Unit. Five (5) files were missing. Three hundred and thirty (330) investigative files were properly identified as closed. Twenty-seven (27) files were identified by the previous Investigations Unit as being pending, with seven (7) new active files submitted by the newly reconstituted Investigations Unit. Of great concern is on opening the first file classified previously as inactive, no investigations were in fact conducted on the complaint lodged by a member of the public.
- Many of the files can be classified as fragmented. This means that there are different components of a file, but these are stored separately with no cross-referencing. Components include compact discs, investigative reports, and analyses. A major project is to be initiated in 2022 to consolidate files and develop a cross-referencing system so as to improve the efficiency of the investigative process.

Table 6.0 Audit Report on Status of Files Subject to Investigations

Total Number of Files	Files Not Found	Files Without any Information as to Status and Classified as Inactive by Previous Investigation Unit	Files Classified as Closed by the Previous Investigations Unit	Files Classified as Active by Previous Investigation Unit	Files Classified as Active by New Investigation Unit
462	5	92	330	27	8

The Commission developed and approved a flow chart for the management of investigations from receipt of a complaint to final resolution. The Commission sought to insist on a six months’ timeline for resolving all complaints. However, with the appointment of a new Investigations Unit, there have been some inevitable delays, but this situation is swiftly addressed.

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

The Corporate Communications Unit, according to section 5 (1) (i) of the Integrity in Public Life Act (IPLA), Chapter 22:01, is charged with the responsibility to, “*carry out programmes of public education intended to foster an understanding of standards of integrity*”.

Due to the pandemic, budgetary constraints and staff reduction the outputs from the Unit were impeded. Nevertheless, the Unit provided support to the Commission by redirecting its resources to promote integrity, virtually. The Unit sought to encourage integrity in public life and also to members of the public. These initiatives were promoted via the Commission’s Social Media platforms - Facebook and Instagram. The Commission saw an increase in its Instagram followers by thirty-six percent (36%) as well as an increase in followers on its Facebook account by sixty-five percent (65%) as at December 31, 2021. Be sure to follow us on Instagram and Facebook **@IntegrityCommissionTT**.

Virtual initiatives included but were not limited to the following:

- **Competitions**
- **Educational nuggets**
- **Feedback forums**
- **Creative activities**

The Unit engaged members of the public in a meaningful and innovative manner to raise awareness about the Integrity Commission and the importance of Integrity at work, home, school and play.

International Anti-Corruption Day Observance

The Commission observed International Anti-Corruption Day on December 9, 2021. As part of its observation, the Commission published a message from the Chairman in keeping with the United Nation’s theme: “***Your right, your role: say no to corruption***”. The message was published on the Commission’s Social Media platforms *Instagram and Facebook* as well as in the three daily newspapers on December 9th:



Prof. Rajendra Ramlogan, Chairman
Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago

**INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY:
DECEMBER 09, 2021
YOUR RIGHT YOUR ROLE:
SAY NO TO CORRUPTION**

**“One of the truest tests of integrity is its blunt refusal to
be compromised”. Chinua Achebe**

“Corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be inevitable products of democracy, as they undoubtedly are today” (Mahatma Gandhi). From Independence in 1962, the history of Trinidad and Tobago has been littered with allegations of corruption at all levels of society. The litany of corruption allegations has culminated in the country’s low ranking on the 2020 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of 86 out of 180 countries, a decline of 1. In the succinct words of Senator Hazel Thompson-Ahje: “Corruption is about selfishness and greed and must never be facilitated by right-thinking persons... (Trinidad and Tobago Hansard, December 08, 2020).

The cost of corruption in TT is mindboggling. A recent parliamentary debate reported a statement by Senator Wade Mark over our national debt: “we are dealing with the future of our country; we are seeing where the debt is rising exponentially and growing. And there is a price that we will pay. And not we, Madam President, future generations will pay. That is why I was able to demonstrate that we started off in 2010 at \$39,000 per head, man, woman and child owing that, and by the end of 2020, we are somewhere around 70 something, 75 or thereabout thousand dollars”. (TT Hansard March 23, 2021). Put this in perspective. According to Trading Economics, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in TT has averaged USD9.11 billion from 1962 to 2019, reaching an all-time high of USD27.87 billion in 2008. This would mean that our GDP has been close to USD500 billion over that period. In 2018, the Secretary- General of the United Nations, in an address to the UN Security Council, stated that the global cost of corruption is at least 5 per cent of the world’s GDP. If we apply this to TT, the loss due to corruption is around USD25 billion. According to Finance Minister Imbert, our national debt at February 2021 stood at TT\$124.73 billion or USD18.3 billion. If all the monies lost to corruption are returned to our Treasury, we would repay our national debt and still have USD7 billion left over. Man, woman, and child would no longer be liable for paying TT\$75,000.00 to clear the national debt, and instead would receive a rebate of TT\$35,000.

In this national scenario the Integrity Commission can be found, one of the statutory weapons established by Parliament to address corruption. The long title of the Integrity in Public Life Act (IPLA) states that it is an “Act to make new provisions for the prevention of corruption of persons in public life...”. A review of the webpage of the Integrity Commission reveals its ambitions. “The Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago is the

premier state institution for the promotion and preservation of integrity in all affairs, to make Trinidad and Tobago a corruption free society”. Alas, the Integrity Commission, in its latest re-incarnation, which is approaching two decades, is considered by many as an underachieving institution. We must go beyond saying no to corruption. Words are insufficient. We must act and do so rapidly. There is no room for dithering. It is, indeed, appropriate to return to the words of Chinua Achebe. “Hold your peace!” screamed the priestess, her voice terrible as it echoed through the dark void. “You have offended neither the gods nor your fathers. And when a man is at peace with his gods and his ancestors, his harvest will be good or bad according to the strength of his arm. You, Unoka, are known in all the clan for the weakness of your machete and your hoe. When your neighbours go out with their axe to cut down virgin forests, you sow your yams on exhausted farms that take no labour to clear. They cross seven rivers to make their farms; you stay at home and offer sacrifices to a reluctant soil. Go home and work like a man.”

Like Unoka, we are doing the same thing over and over, yet expecting a different result. We hope for a bumper yield in governance, but we are not prepared to do things differently. We have need now to cross the rivers and clear virgin forests and to forget offering sacrifices to the reluctant soil. We must cease working on exhausted farms and engage in the necessary labour to change our fortunes. There can be no appeal to the gods for excuses for our lack of desire to make the tough decisions. Taxpayer-funded institutions like the Integrity Commission must demonstrate vigorous regard for their statutory mandates and be prepared to work with a full understanding of the adverse impact of corruption on our present and future. "Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability but comes through continuous struggle." - Martin Luther King Jr.

So, on this day that is dedicated by the global community as Anti-Corruption Day, every single citizen must pledge to bend his or her back to the task of ridding our society of the scourge of corruption. There must be a unity of purpose that transcends the parochialism of politics. An even greater burden is cast on the Integrity Commission and its staff members. There is no room for ego or thirst for power. It is time for unrestrained service. As a nation we must go beyond saying no to corruption. Only then will we rise like a rose growing from concrete.

Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete?
Provin nature's laws wrong it learned how to walk without havin feet
Funny it seems but, by keepin its dreams
It, learned to breathe fresh air
Long live the rose that grew from concrete
When no one else even cared
No one else even cared...
The rose that grew from concrete (The Rose that Grew from Concrete, Tupac Shakur)

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Amendments to the IPLA

The Commission has completed an extensive review of the IPLA and has approved certain amendments to be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

Digital Transformation

In February 2021, correspondence was received from a person in public life inquiring as to why declarations and statements of registrable interests could not be filed online. It was then discovered that online filing of declarations and statements of registrable interests were prohibited. Background research saw evidence of intent by the Commission to deal with information technology transformation and online filing of declarations and statements of registrable interests since May 27, 2013. This was expressed in an address to the Tobago House of Assembly by the Integrity Commission Legal Counsel on Investigations and Compliance, who told participants that the Commission was reviewing its forms and was considering the submission of returns electronically since it was trying to do away with the paper environment. Subsequently, a Strategic Plan 2016-2021 was approved in 2016 purporting to do the same. Unfortunately, until 2021, nothing has been done in this area.

The 17th Commission has taken up the mantle of digitisation transformation, and staff is currently preparing terms of reference for the execution of a digitisation project. In the interim, as of November 2021, the Commission has instituted an online mechanism for submission of electronic filing of declarations and statements of registrable interests consistent with the laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

COMMISSION MEMBERS



Professor Rajendra Ramlogan, Chairman

Prof. Rajendra Ramlogan is the Commercial and Environmental Law professor at the University of the West Indies. Professor Ramlogan obtained a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of the West Indies. Professor Ramlogan graduated with a Masters of Law in International Legal Studies from the New York University School of Law and a Doctorate in International Environmental Law from the University of Cambridge. Professor Ramlogan is a Fellow of the Cambridge Commonwealth Society. Before his university career, Professor Ramlogan worked in the local oil industry and also enjoyed a stint as a Foreign Intern at the highly prestigious Washington DC law firm, Wilmer, Cutler and Pickering (now Wilmer Hale).

Professor Ramlogan has published numerous books and articles covering subjects such as Business Law, Commercial Law, Judicial Review, Sustainable Development, International Environmental Law, National Environmental Legal systems (Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba), Environmental Health, Environmental Refugees, International Environmental Crimes, Development and the Environment, Environmental Democracy, Human Rights in Japan, International Security and Energy Joint Ventures.



Mr Frederick Gilkes, Deputy Chairman

Mr Frederick Gilkes was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago on December 17, 2018. Mr Gilkes has served as a partner at JD Sellier + Co. for thirteen (13) years and as the firm's Chief Executive Officer for one (1) year. He currently serves as Head of Chambers at the Caribbean Commercial Law Chambers and as a Senior Ordinary Member of the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago. His extensive experience in the legal field spans Civil Litigation, Industrial Relations Litigation, Intellectual Property Litigation, Admiralty Law and Banking, Securities and Securities Law.

He was admitted to practise law in Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada and its dependencies, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the British Virgin Islands, in 1988, 1994, 2006, 2014 and 2020, respectively. Mr Gilkes has also served as Director of critical companies in Trinidad and Tobago. He has tutored and lectured at the Faculty of Law, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, principally in Criminal Law and Contract Law. He is also a certified mediator and has a keen interest in football.



Ms Eleanor Bridgeman-Volney, Member

Ms Eleanor Bridgeman-Volney was appointed Member of the Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago on August 03, 2018, and is currently in her second term of appointment. Ms Bridgeman-Volney served in the Inland Revenue Division of the Ministry of Finance for thirty-five (35) years. During the period 1992 to 2015, she functioned in critical positions such as the Head of the Legal Section, in the capacity of Senior State Counsel and later as Chief State Counsel, and as one of the Board's Managers.

She was admitted to practise law in Trinidad and Tobago in 1979. In 2008, she was also appointed as a Member of the Permanent Double Taxation Team of the Ministry of Finance. She is passionate about Latin and ballroom dancing and is an avid gardener. She also has a penchant for events management.



Ms Sandra Honoré, Member

Ms Sandra Honoré was appointed Member of the Integrity Commission on December 17, 2020. She entered the then Ministry of External Affairs in 1979 and had assignments to the country's Embassies in Brazil and the United States of America. She was assigned to the Office of the Prime Minister from 1990 to 1996. At the Foreign Ministry, she served as Director of the CARICOM and Caribbean Affairs Division, Chief of Protocol and Director of the Americas Division. She was Chief of Staff to the Assistant Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS) from July 2000 to July 2005, supervising many aspects of the Organisation's work on Haiti.

Ms Honoré was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary on September 11, 2007 and assigned as Ambassador to Costa Rica in December 2008. In 2013, the United Nations Secretary-General named her Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), where she served from July 2013 until the end of that Mission in October 2017.



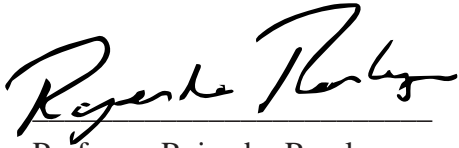
Mr Lyndon Brent James, Member

For the past nineteen years, Lyndon Brent James has been a qualified Chartered Accountant and was appointed to the Seventeenth Commission of the Integrity Commission in March 2021.

Mr James has had extensive experience in the oil and gas sector as a financial professional, with his formative years as an auditor examining the financial statements and internal controls of various companies over a wide array of business sectors. Mr. James is also involved in various charitable organisations within Trinidad and Tobago, on a national scale, and is a keen sports fan.

SUBMISSION OF REPORT

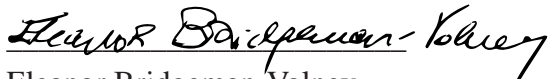
This report is submitted to the Parliament, pursuant to Section 10 of the Act on this 31st day of March, 2022.



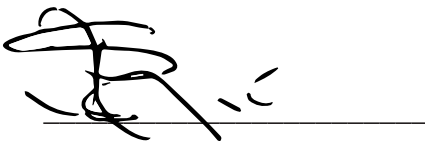
Professor Rajendra Ramlogan
Chairman



Frederick Gilkes
Deputy Chairman



Eleanor Bridgeman-Volney
Member



Sandra Honoré
Member



Lyndon James
Member



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