

**Akiko Gono**

President  
Présidente  
Präsidentin  
Presidenta

**Luc Triangle**

Acting General Secretary  
Secrétaire général par intérim  
Geschäftsführender Generalsekretär  
Secretario General en Funciones

**Dr the Hon Keith Rowley**  
**Prime Minister**  
**Trinidad and Tobago**

**The Hon Colm Imbert**  
**Finance Minister**  
**Trinidad and Tobago**

**By email**

**CTUG/OT**

**19 June 2023**

**Breaches of collective bargaining laws and principles in Trinidad and Tobago**

Dear Prime Minister and Finance Minister

This Labour Day, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), representing 200 million working people around the world organized in trade unions – one of them the Trinidad and Tobago national trade union centre the NATUC - is appalled to learn that the government you lead is breaching both the law and fundamental principles and rights at work when it comes to collective bargaining in Trinidad and Tobago's public enterprises.

You will be well aware that the world's workers are facing a cost of living crisis as a result of profiteering by private sector companies especially in the energy and food sectors, using the excuse of the financial pressures caused by the global financial crisis over a decade ago, and the more recent COVID pandemic and war in Ukraine. The price rises working people face are often made worse by government action to squeeze public service provision, and action to hold down the wage rises that provide the most effective way to protect working people's standards of living. Far from wage rises being part of the problem, they are a major part of the solution to the cost of living crisis.

Trinidad and Tobago's working people are not immune from these global trends, and nor, it seems, are they immune from the interference of your government in the process of collective bargaining.

We understand that the government is – contrary to the Civil Service Act and the Industrial Relations Act – hindering the rights of Trinidad and Tobago's government employees from exercising the fundamental right to free collective bargaining as set out in International Labour Organisation core conventions that you are bound to uphold by virtue of your membership of the ILO, and which your country ratified fifty years ago, by preventing collective bargaining commencing, or in other cases refusing to allow management to deliver realistic and affordable – in some cases moderate - wage rises negotiated in good faith with trade unions.

We are informed that this has led to over seventeen thousand monthly and daily-paid Government employees going without any increase in their wages for between nine and twelve years, and that academic staff at Cipriani College of Labour and Cooperatives (CCLC) last had a salary increase in 2007, an appalling irony given its roots in the labour movement. Captain Cipriani must be turning in his grave.

This is cruel and unacceptable behaviour on behalf of your government, and we urge you to change course and allow management and unions to engage in free collective bargaining so that working people in Trinidad and Tobago can feed their families, pay their living costs, and contribute to the health

of the economy.

We urge you in particular to start by honouring and implementing the wage and salaries increases freely negotiated on behalf of workers at the Port Authority and the National Insurance Board with the management of the respective entities.

The world trade union movement stands in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the NATUC. We will not stand idly by while they fight for justice and respect, and we promise we will continue to support the unions of Trinidad and Tobago, if necessary through international action and solidarity.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luc Triangle', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Luc Triangle  
Acting General Secretary

Cc Michael Annisette, General Secretary, NATUC Trinidad and Tobago