



## CAISO: Sex and Gender Justice

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### CAISO Calls on Parliament to Protect LGBTQI+ Citizens and Amend Legislation

CAISO calls upon Parliament to follow the Court of Appeal Justices' clear position that it is beyond time to usher Trinidad and Tobago out of the bounds of colonialism and colonial-era laws that are holding back our ability to fulfil human rights obligations. In particular, CAISO notes with deep concern that colonial-era laws continue to justify discrimination and violence against LGBTQI+ people in Trinidad and Tobago. And most importantly, these same outdated, colonial laws are used to prevent urgent and needed protections in related and recent legislation, namely the Equal Opportunity Act, which can be amended by act of Parliament at any time, as it is not saved. We do not accept discrimination, stigmatisation, and impoverishment as our lot in life here in Trinidad and Tobago and will continue to advocate for legal protection, justice, and inclusion.

This judgement is another substantive setback in our pursuit of justice for the LGBTQI+ citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. We remain resolute in our belief that we, as a community, are deserving of rights, inclusion, and protection. And we will embody that belief to the best of our ability, every day, until it becomes a reality. **We fully support Jason Jones' decision to appeal to the Privy Council. We stand in solidarity with our fellow LGBTQI-led organisations who have spoken out about this regrettable ruling, and those of us who continue to do the work on the ground commiserating and communing with those of us who need support.** We call on the Parliament to follow the guidance of the courts and make the changes we need to ensure that rights and freedoms are protected and upheld for all people of Trinidad and Tobago.

The latest Court of Appeal Judgement is gravely disappointing and a devastating blow to human rights. And while it most certainly impacts the LGBTQI+ community broadly, it has wide-reaching impacts on how we protect human rights, citizenship, and people who are marginalised. Given the rise in anti-gender and anti-rights movements, globally and regionally, and increased anti-LGBTQI+ backlash since 2018, the Appeal Court ruling is devastating and can potentially result in increased violence against community members.

CAISO: Sex and Gender Justice reiterates our commitment to leading and championing the amendment of the Equal Opportunity Act (EOA). Specifically, we want the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to add LGBTQI+ status, Health Conditions, and Age to the list of protected statuses under the EOA. And we will continue to lobby for sexual orientation and



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gender identity to be added to the list of protected classes under Section 4 of the Constitution. Over the past five years our work has focused on evidence-based advocacy, informed by the provision of legal and psychosocial services to LGBTQI+ people who have experienced a violation as a result of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics.

***CAISO: Sex and Gender Justice*** is a feminist civil society organisation that seeks to mobilise a forward-thinking, visionary, and human rights approach to wholeness, justice, and inclusion for Trinidad and Tobago's LGBTQI+ communities, through developing analysis, alliances, and advocacy. ***CAISO: Sex & Gender Justice*** is a registered non-profit organisation in Trinidad and Tobago. Founded in June 2009 as Coalition Advocating for the Inclusion of Sexual Orientation, ***CAISO changed its name in 2016 to CAISO: Sex and Gender Justice*** to align closer with the growth in our areas of focus, namely wholeness, justice, and inclusion. LGBTQI+ persons in Trinidad and Tobago who have experienced a violation, or who need help determining same, may contact the programme for legal and psychosocial support via phone at **868-28-CAISO (282-2476)** or via email at [wholenessandjustice@caisott.org](mailto:wholenessandjustice@caisott.org).

### CAISO RESOURCES & PUBLICATIONS

- [Beyond Decriminalisation](#): Policy Paper on Laws & LGBTQI+ Inclusion and Protection (2023)
- [Insights from Wholeness and Justice](#) (2020-2021; 2022; 2023)

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