

# RAJIV CHAITOO

## ATTORNEY-AT-LAW

Mecalfab House, #92 Queen Street, Port of Spain  
tel: (868) 768-4718 e-mail: [r\\_chaitoo@hotmail.com](mailto:r_chaitoo@hotmail.com)

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July 30, 2021

**The Honourable Faris Al-Rawi, M.P.**

Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago  
Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs  
Corner London and Richmond Streets  
Port of Spain

**Her Honor Donna Prowell-Raphael**

Chairman  
Equal Opportunity Tribunal  
55 Manic Street  
Chaguanas

**RE: PRE-ACTION PROTOCOL LETTER – JUDICIAL REVIEW AND CONSTITUTIONAL MOTION  
– CHAIRMAN’S FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT– VEERA  
BHAJAN**

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I refer to the matter at caption wherein I act on behalf of Ms. Veera Bhajan (hereinafter referred to as ‘my client’), Lay-Assessor of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Tribunal’). My Client is an Attorney at Law.

**This letter is sent to you in accordance with the Practice Direction on Pre-action Protocol contained in the Civil Proceedings Rules 1998 (as amended).**

I am instructed by my client as follows:

1. My client was appointed as a Lay-Assessor of the Tribunal by Her Excellency Paula Mae Weekes O.R.T.T., The President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (hereinafter referred to as ‘Her Excellency’). This appointment was made on the 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 for a period of three (3) years with effect from March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021. A copy of the instrument of appointment is hereto attached and marked “A”.
2. Following the said appointment, my client made numerous attempts via telephone and email correspondence to communicate with the Tribunal as so to immediately fulfil her lawful duties as Lay-Assessor in compliance with her appointment. A chronology of

events which transpired from March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 between the Tribunal and my client is hereto annexed and marked “B”.

3. By letter dated April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, my client was compelled to write Mr. Raiaz Haniss, Administrative Officer IV of the Tribunal wherein she requested information on the date to which she can fulfil her duties at the Tribunal, since no information was forthcoming from the Tribunal. A copy of this letter is hereto annexed and marked “C”.
4. By letter dated May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Her Honour Donna Prowell-Raphael (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Chairman’) responded to my client’s letter of April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and informed my client, *inter alia*:

***“suffice it to say that currently the Tribunal does not have the logistic and or financial wherewithal to accommodate or support the assumption of another Lay-Assessor”;***

***“Moreover given the current workflow I do not require the assistance of another Lay-Assessor, as the Tribunal is well served by the current panel”;***

***“Such an assumption will result in that person being paid a substantial salary to remain at home and do nothing. This is not only inconsistent with the policy of the Tribunal but is imprudent and irresponsible at this time of national detriment and parsimony;***

***“Ceteris paribus the Tribunal does not foresee a change to these conditions in the early course”***

Further, contained in the said letter were several allegations against my client, including but not limited to, breaching confidential communication channels, potentially dishonouring the doctrine of separation of powers and compromising the independence of the Tribunal, all of which my client categorically denies.

A copy of the Chairman’s letter is hereto annexed and marked “D”.

5. Having been lawfully appointed on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021, my client assumed duties as a Lay-Assessor of the Tribunal on the said date. Notwithstanding her lawful appointment, to date, the Chairman has unlawfully denied my client her opportunity and right to perform to her lawful duties in accordance with her lawful presidential appointment.

6. Prior to my client's lawful appointment as Lay-Assessor of the Tribunal, she was self-employed in her private law practice. This was her sole source of income and exclusive means by which she supported herself and her family. Upon her lawful appointment she immediately terminated her private practice to accommodate her new appointment as Lay-Assessor. Notwithstanding her assumption of duty, from March 17<sup>th</sup> 2021, to date my client has not been paid and continues to be denied her salary and allowances commensurate with her office as Lay-Assessor of the Tribunal.
7. During the period May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, there were formal correspondences exchanged between my client and Her Excellency regarding the Chairman's action in preventing my client from serving as Lay-Assessor. These correspondences are as follows:
  - (i) By letter dated May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021 my client informed Her Excellency of the Chairman's failure to give effect to her appointment, a copy of which is hereto annexed and marked "E".
  - (ii) By letter dated May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021 my client was informed by Her Excellency that she is aware of the position taken by the Chairman and that Her Excellency continues to assiduously work towards resolving the matter. A copy of the said letter is hereto annexed and marked "F".
  - (iii) By letter dated July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, my client informed Her Excellency that from March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, she has not been given the opportunity to fulfil her lawful duties nor has she been paid her salary and in the circumstances she is giving consideration to her legal options. A copy of the said letter is hereto annexed and marked "G".
  - (iv) By letter dated July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Her Excellency informed my client that the matter has been referred to the relevant authorities and that in principle Her Excellency cannot reasonably object to my client's consideration of her legal options. A copy of the said letter is hereto annexed and marked "H".

My client was lawfully appointed as a Lay-Assessor of the Tribunal by her Excellency by virtue of the powers vested in her pursuant to **Sections 42(3) and 42(5) of the Equal Opportunity Act Chap. 22:03** (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") which provides as follows:

*“The lay-assessors **shall be appointed by the President** from among such persons **as appear to the President** to be qualified by virtue of their knowledge of or experience in law, religion, race relation, gender affairs, employment issues, education, culture, economics, social welfare or human rights and who have served in either of those fields for a period of not less than ten years or who has served in a combination of these fields which in the aggregate is not less than ten years.”* – Section 42(3) of the Act

*“The lay-assessors shall hold office for such term, not less than three years, **as may be determined by the President** at the time of their appointment and are eligible for reappointment.”* – Section 42(5) of the Act

Further, **Section 42(7) of the Act** provides as follows:

*“The President, on the recommendation of the Chairman, may terminate the appointment of a lay-assessor if—*

*(a) he becomes bankrupt;*

*(b) he misbehaves in office;*

*(c) he is nominated, elected or appointed to any other office of emolument;*

*(d) he is involved in a matter or interest which appears to the Chairman to be incompatible with the function of lay-assessors; or*

*(e) he is incapable, for whatever reason, of performing his duties and functions under this Act.*

In accordance with the Act, Her Excellency is the sole decision maker and sole officer holder vested with the powers regarding the appointment and termination of my client's appointment as Lay-Assessor of the Tribunal. The Act clearly does not empower the Chairman to make any appointments to the office of Lay Assessors. The unlawful discretion which is being exercised by the Chairman in depriving my client of her legal rights are ultra vires the Act and in excess of her jurisdiction as Chairman of the Tribunal. As such, the decision made by the Chairman in preventing, denying and failing to give effect to my client's appointment is contrary to law, unfair, unreasonable, irrational, null and void.

As a Lay-Assessor of the Tribunal, my client is legally entitled to perform her lawful duties and functions and to be paid her salary and allowances. The unlawful decision made by the Chairman is in direct breach of my client's constitutional rights enshrined under the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago. My client's right to enjoyment of her property under **Section 4(a) of the**

**Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago** is being violated as a result of the unlawful decision made by the Chairman.

At all material times my Client remains lawfully appointed by Her Excellency to serve as Lay Assessor and same has not been terminated.

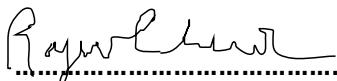
**In the circumstances, you are hereby called upon to immediately comply with Her Excellency's appointment and allow my client the opportunity to perform her lawful duties and functions as Lay-Assessor of the Tribunal. Further, you are required to pay my client her outstanding salary and allowances from March 17<sup>th</sup> 2021 to date as Lay-Assessor of the Tribunal.**

Should you fail to give effect to my client's appointment **within seven (7) days**, I have my client's firm instructions to institute judicial review and constitutional relief proceedings against you without further notice.

Please note that it is my client's fervent hope that this matter can be resolved amicably given the sensitive nature of this matter.

Please be guided accordingly.

Yours respectfully,

  
.....  
**Rajiv Chaitoo**  
**Attorney at Law**

**cc Carol Hernandez**  
**Solicitor General**  
**Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs**  
**Corner London and Richmond Streets**  
**Port of Spain**

Encls.



By Her Excellency PAULA-MAE WEEKES, O.R.T.T.,  
President of the Republic of Trinidad and  
Tobago and Commander-in-Chief of the  
Armed Forces.



  
President

**TO: MS. VEERA BHAJAN**

**WHEREAS** it is provided by section 41 (1) of the Equal Opportunity Act, Chap. 22:03 (hereinafter referred to as “the Act”) that there is hereby established an Equal Opportunity Tribunal (hereinafter referred to as the “the Tribunal”) for the purposes of performing the functions detailed under the Act;

**AND WHEREAS** it is provided by section 41 (2) of the Act that the Tribunal shall consist of a Judge of status equal to that of a High Court Judge, who shall be the Chairman, and two lay-assessors as may be appointed under or in pursuance of section 42;



**AND WHEREAS** it is provided by section 42 (3) of the Act that the lay-assessors shall be appointed by the President from among such persons as appear to the President to be qualified by virtue of their knowledge of or experience in law, religion, race relation, gender affairs, employment issues, education, culture, economics, social welfare or human rights and who have served in either of those fields for a period of not less than ten years or who has served in a combination of these fields which in the aggregate is not less than ten years;

**AND WHEREAS** it is provided by section 42 (5) of the Act that lay-assessors shall hold office for such term, not less than three years, as may be determined by the President at the time of their appointment, and are eligible for reappointment;

**AND WHEREAS** you, **VEERA BHAJAN**, appear to be qualified by virtue of your knowledge and experience in law and social welfare and have served in a combination of those fields for an aggregate of not less than ten years;

**NOW THEREFORE**, I, **PAULA-MAE WEEKES**, President as aforesaid, in exercise of the power vested in me by sections 42 (3) and 42 (5) of the Act, do hereby appoint you, **VEERA BHAJAN**, a lay-assessor of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal for a period of (3) years, with effect from 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.

Given under my Hand and the Seal  
of the President of the Republic  
of Trinidad and Tobago at the  
Office of the President, St. Ann's,  
this 17<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2021

## **CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS**

- March 17, 2021 – My client contacted the Tribunal via telephone and informed the Court Administrator, Mrs. Graham of her appointment. She was asked to forward a scanned copy of her letter of appointment to the Human Resource Officer II, Mrs. Mascall-Beckles. Following the said instruction, a scanned copy of the letter of appointment was sent via email to Mrs. Mascall-Beckles who acknowledged receipt of her email on the said date.
- March 19, 2021 – My client contacted Mrs. Mascall-Beckles via email correspondence wherein she requested an update regarding her appointment. My client was informed via email that the Tribunal is awaiting the letter of appointment from the Office of the President.
- March 22, 2021 – My client received an email correspondence from the Tribunal wherein she was invited to a meeting with the Chairman on March 29, 2021. My client confirmed her attendance to the said meeting via email correspondence.
- March 27, 2021 – My client contacted Mrs. Mascall-Beckles via email correspondence wherein she requested confirmation of the time for the meeting scheduled for March 29, 2021. My client was informed via email-correspondence that the meeting has been rescheduled to after the easter break.
- April 7, 2021 – My client contacted Mrs. Mascall-Beckles via email correspondence wherein she requested an update regarding her appointment.
- April 9, 2021 – My client contacted Mrs. Mascall-Beckles via telephone for another update as she did not receive a response to her email dated April 7, 2021. My client was informed by Mrs. Mascall-Beckles that she is awaiting the instructions of the Chairman.
- April 14, 2021 - My client contacted Mrs. Mascall-Beckles via telephone for an update. My client was informed by Mrs. Mascall-Beckles that she is



awaiting the instructions of the Chairman. My client requested the Chairman's email address and she was informed by Mrs. Mascall-Beckles that she will revert to her via email regarding this request. My client received an email correspondence from Mrs Mascall-Beckles wherein she was informed that she would be contacted when arrangements have been made for her assumption and regarding her request for the Chairman's email address, my client was informed that she can communicate with Mrs. Mascall-Beckles on all matters.

- April 27, 2021- My client contacted Mrs. Mascall-Beckles via telephone for an update and she was informed that Mrs. Mascall-Beckles was out of office. My client with an Office Assistance whereby she informed her of her interest in sending official correspondence to the Registrar of the Tribunal regarding her appointment. My client was informed that her correspondence can be addressed to Mr. Haniff, Administrative Officer IV. A letter dated April 27, 2021 was sent to Mr. Haniff wherein my client requested information on the date to which she is to fulfil her duties pursuant to her appointment. Ms. Nancy Arneaud, Director-Legal Services, Office of the President was copied on this letter and who acknowledged receipt on the said date via email correspondence.
- April 30, 2021 – My client contacted Mrs. Mascall-Beckles via telephone requesting confirmation on whether her letter of April 27, 2021 was received. Mrs. Mascall-Beckles confirmed receipt and indicated that she has no further updates.
- May 4, 2021 – My client contacted Mrs. Mascall-Beckles via telephone for an update and she was informed that Mrs. Mascall-Beckles was out of office.
- May 10, 2021- My client was informed via a newspaper article dated May 10, 2021 that the Tribunal's office is closed until further notice and court matters are being heard virtually.

- May 17, 2021 – My client contacted Mrs. Mascall-Beckles via email correspondence wherein she requested an update regarding her appointment. My client received an email from Mrs. Mascall-Beckles wherein she was informed that the Tribunal's update remains the same as stated in their email dated April 14, 2021, that is, she would be contacted when arrangements have been made for her assumption. My client responded via email correspondence requesting information on the steps taken thus far by the Tribunal to give effect to her appointment. Mr. Haniff and the Office of the Chairman was copied in the said email.
- May 20, 2021 – My client received a letter from the Chairman of the Tribunal dated May 19, 2021 via email and she acknowledged receipt of same.

April 27, 2021

*"by electronic correspondence"*

Mr Raiaz Haniss  
Administrative Officer IV  
Equal Opportunity Tribunal  
55-57 Manic Street  
Chaguanas

Dear Mr. Haniss,

**Re: Appointment as Lay-Assessor at the Equal Opportunity Tribunal-Veera Bhajan**

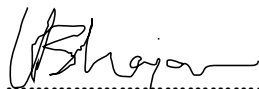
I refer to the captioned matter.

As you are aware, I was appointed the Lay-Assessor of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal for a period of three (3) years with effect from March 17, 2021, a copy of the said appointment is attached for ease of reference.

However, to date the Equal Opportunity Tribunal has not given effect to my appointment. In that regard, kindly indicate the date to which I am to fulfil my duties pursuant to the said appointment.

I look forward to your usual prompt response.

Sincerely,



.....  
**Veera Bhajan**  
**Lay-Assessor – Equal Opportunity Tribunal**

CC Ms Nancy Arneaud  
Director, Legal Services  
Office of the President of Trinidad and Tobago

Encl.

By Her Excellency PAULA-MAE WEEKES, O.R.T.T.,  
President of the Republic of Trinidad and  
Tobago and Commander-in-Chief of the  
Armed Forces.



  
President

**TO: MS. VEERA BHAJAN**

**WHEREAS** it is provided by section 41 (1) of the Equal Opportunity Act, Chap. 22:03 (hereinafter referred to as “the Act”) that there is hereby established an Equal Opportunity Tribunal (hereinafter referred to as the “the Tribunal”) for the purposes of performing the functions detailed under the Act;

**AND WHEREAS** it is provided by section 41 (2) of the Act that the Tribunal shall consist of a Judge of status equal to that of a High Court Judge, who shall be the Chairman, and two lay-assessors as may be appointed under or in pursuance of section 42;



**AND WHEREAS** it is provided by section 42 (3) of the Act that the lay-assessors shall be appointed by the President from among such persons as appear to the President to be qualified by virtue of their knowledge of or experience in law, religion, race relation, gender affairs, employment issues, education, culture, economics, social welfare or human rights and who have served in either of those fields for a period of not less than ten years or who has served in a combination of these fields which in the aggregate is not less than ten years;

**AND WHEREAS** it is provided by section 42 (5) of the Act that lay-assessors shall hold office for such term, not less than three years, as may be determined by the President at the time of their appointment, and are eligible for reappointment;

**AND WHEREAS** you, **VEERA BHAJAN**, appear to be qualified by virtue of your knowledge and experience in law and social welfare and have served in a combination of those fields for an aggregate of not less than ten years;

**NOW THEREFORE**, I, **PAULA-MAE WEEKES**, President as aforesaid, in exercise of the power vested in me by sections 42 (3) and 42 (5) of the Act, do hereby appoint you, **VEERA BHAJAN**, a lay-assessor of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal for a period of (3) years, with effect from 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.

Given under my Hand and the Seal  
of the President of the Republic  
of Trinidad and Tobago at the  
Office of the President, St. Ann's,  
this 17<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2021





**CHAIRMAN  
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TRIBUNAL**

May 19, 2021

**BY EMAIL**

Dear Miss Bhajan:

**SUBJECT: APPOINTMENT/ASSUMPTION OF LAY-ASSESSOR -  
MISS VEERA BHAJAN**

At your request, Mrs. Mascall-Beckles (HRO II (Ag)), has placed before me a thread of emails exchanged with you and an attached letter dated 27<sup>th</sup> ultimo to "Mr. Haniss" (sic). The information contained in them is not new to me, as Mrs. Beckles has taken instructions from me on all matters pertaining to your appointment and assumption. I have tried to manage her responses to you diplomatically with caution and sensitivity.

In response to the questions raised in your email of 17<sup>th</sup> instant, I can share with you that Her Excellency has graciously permitted me to clarify and update her (*inter alia*) on the constraints on the Tribunal's capacity to accommodate another lay assessor at this time. Suffice it to say that currently the Tribunal does not have the logistic and or financial wherewithal to accommodate or support the assumption of another lay assessor. Moreover, given the Tribunal's current workflow I do not require the assistance of another lay assessor, as the Tribunal is well served by the current panel. Such an assumption would result in that person being paid a substantial salary to remain at home and do nothing. This is not only inconsistent with the policy of the Tribunal but is imprudent and irresponsible at this time of national detriment and parsimony. *Ceteris paribus* the Tribunal does not foresee a change to these conditions in the early course.



I have noted your disposition to copy your emails and or to communicate with members of staff outside of the communication channel through Mrs. Beckles that has been requested by the Tribunal. Our communication channel is intended to preserve confidentiality that is a statutory hallmark of the Tribunal's work. Therefore, a report that an Office Assistant had been interrogated by you on the telephone on the hierarchy of the Tribunal and assailed by a discourse on your frustration, was troubling. We were of the view that the response in our email of April 14<sup>th</sup> tactfully dealt with the issue of assumption. Any notion that hierarchical oversight may have produced a different response was misconceived.

I view, with concern, your exhortation through a copy of the said letter to Mr. "Haniss", to the office of the President to intervene in, or have oversight of administrative matters of the Tribunal. As an attorney at law, nearing 10 years call, positioned to assist the Chairman in making decisions on quasi-constitutional issues, you ought to know that the Tribunal's independence is constitutionally guarded by the doctrine of the separation of powers that prohibits any other arm of the State (without statutory underpinning) from interfering in its internal affairs.

Not only have your exchanges defied the policies and procedures of the Tribunal but they may have disregarded the Constitution. Additionally, they have been hovering on disrespectful and seem intended to compromise and or embarrass the Tribunal's staff, while bringing rebuke and shaming the Tribunal into complying with your demands. I trust there would be no repetition.

There are some other pertinent matters that I intend to discuss with you. I will do so in person. After the Tribunal reopens its offices, a convenient meeting would be fixed for you to meet with me. In the interim, if there are other matters on which you would like to speak to me virtually, you may request a meeting with me through Mrs. Beckles.

Sincerely,

HH Donna Prowell-Raphael, CEOT  
Judge

May 24, 2021

*“by electronic correspondence and hand”*

Her Excellency Paula-Mae Weekes O.R.T.T.  
President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago  
Office of the President  
Circular Road  
St. Ann’s  
The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Your Excellency,

**Re: Appointment as Lay-Assessor of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal**

I refer to the captioned matter.

I am compelled to pen this letter to Your Excellency for the reasons laid out hereunder.

It has been sixty-eight (68) days since Your Excellency has appointed me to the post of Lay-Assessor of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal (hereinafter referred to as “the Tribunal”), for which I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude.

Since the date of my appointment, I have made no less than eight (8) attempts to communicate with the Tribunal as an initial step to commencing my lawful duties as Lay-Assessor. Notwithstanding this, to date I have not been given the opportunity to perform my lawful duties at the Tribunal and no precise date has been given to which I can commence same.

The scant regard with which I am being treated was eclipsed by the Chairman’s sole communication with me in the form of a letter of May 19, 2021 wherein I was informed, *inter alia*, that Her Honour does not require the assistance of another Lay-Assessor at the Tribunal. Further, several allegations were made against me, including but not limited to, breaching confidential communication channels, potentially dishonouring the doctrine of separation of powers and compromising the independence of the Tribunal, all of which I categorically deny.

To the contrary, all of my actions were taken solely for the purposes of seeking clarification and obtaining information with regard to my appointment. I assure Your Excellency that my communications with the Tribunal were executed professionally and diplomatically at all material times.

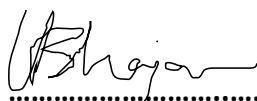
For Your Excellency's consideration, I have enclosed a copy of the Chairman's letter and a timeline detailing events which transpired from March 17, 2021 to May 20, 2021. Should Your Excellency require copies of the correspondences between the Tribunal and myself mentioned in the said timeline, I am more than willing to furnish same.

Following my appointment as Lay-Assessor of the Tribunal, I made a conscientious decision to close the doors of my private practice, which was my sole source of income and exclusive means by which I could support myself and my family.

Having taken an oath on March 17, 2021 to serve the nation of Trinidad and Tobago, I remain resolute in that commitment and I am fortified in the view that I can make a valuable contribution to the work of the Tribunal.

In the circumstances, I am hopeful that the challenges I am presently facing can be resolved as I look forward to the fulfilment of my lawful duties at the Tribunal.

Yours respectfully,



.....  
**Veera Bhajan**  
**Lay-Assessor**  
**Equal Opportunity Tribunal**

Encls.

## **TIMELINE OF EVENTS**

- March 17, 2021 – I contacted the Tribunal via telephone and informed the Court Administrator, Mrs Graham, of my appointment. I was asked to forward a scanned copy of my letter of appointment to the Human Resource Officer II, Mrs. Mascall-Beckles. Following the said instruction, a scanned copy of the letter of appointment was sent via email to Mrs. Mascall-Beckles who acknowledged receipt of my email on the said date.
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- March 22, 2021 – I received an email correspondence from the Tribunal wherein I was invited to a meeting with the Chairman on March 29, 2021. I confirmed my attendance to the said meeting via email correspondence.
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informed by Mrs. Mascall-Beckles that she will revert to me via email regarding this request. I received an email correspondence from Mrs Mascall-Beckles wherein I was informed that I would be contacted when arrangements have been made for my assumption and regarding my request for the Chairman's email address, I was informed that I can communicate with her good self on all matters.

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Mr. Haniff and the Office of the Chairman was copied in the said email.

May 20, 2021 –

I received a letter from the Chairman of the Tribunal dated May 19, 2021 via email and I acknowledged receipt of same.



**CHAIRMAN  
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TRIBUNAL**

May 19, 2021

**BY EMAIL**

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There are some other pertinent matters that I intend to discuss with you. I will do so in person. After the Tribunal reopens its offices, a convenient meeting would be fixed for you to meet with me. In the interim, if there are other matters on which you would like to speak to me virtually, you may request a meeting with me through Mrs. Beckles.

Sincerely,

HH Donna Prowell-Raphael, CEOT  
Judge



THE PRESIDENT  
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

May 25, 2021

Ms. Veera Bhajan  
218 Cacandee Road  
Felicity  
Chaguanas

Dear Ms. Bhajan

I thank you for yours of May 24, 2021 with its attachments.

To say that I am distressed about the present state-of-affairs is an understatement. By way of correspondence and a visit, the Chair of the Tribunal made her concerns and position known to me. I hold a particular view. This office has sought and continues assiduously to pursue the amicable and fair resolution of this matter.

I ask that you remain committed to the office to which you have been appointed and have faith that, in due course, you will enter upon the duties and functions thereof.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paula-Mae Weekes'.

**PAULA-MAE WEEKES O.R.T.T.,  
PRESIDENT**



July 6, 2021

*“by electronic correspondence and hand”*

Her Excellency Paula-Mae Weekes O.R.T.T.  
President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago  
Office of the President  
Circular Road  
St. Ann's  
The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Your Excellency,

**Re: Appointment as Lay-Assessor of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal**

I refer to the captioned matter.

I thank Your Excellency for your letter dated May 25, 2021, and for your dedicated efforts to bring this matter to an amicable resolve.

It has now been one hundred and thirteen (113) days since my appointment as Lay-Assessor of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal (“Tribunal”) and to date the Tribunal has failed to give effect to my appointment. As such, having assumed duties as the Lay-Assessor of the Tribunal on March 17, 2021, to date I have not been given the opportunity to fulfil my lawful duties nor have I been paid my salary and allowances. The present state-of-affairs continue to adversely affect my career, amongst other things.

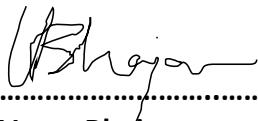
After mature consideration and deliberation, I have formed the respectful view that the actions of the Chairman of the Tribunal, Her Honour Donna Prowell-Raphael is contrary to law. Whilst I am sincerely appreciative of Your Excellency's efforts and I remain hopeful that this matter can be amicably resolved, I wish to inform Your Excellency that I am considering my legal options regarding the continued denial and failure of the Chairman of the Tribunal to give effect to my appointment.

In that regard, I invite any feedback regarding the present state-of-affairs and any concerns Your Excellency may have regarding the consideration of my legal options at this stage.

I stand committed to the office to which I have been appointed and I eagerly look forward to serving the nation of Trinidad and Tobago.

Again, I wish to sincerely thank Your Excellency for your kind intervention in this matter.

Yours respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Bhajan', written over a dotted line.

**Veera Bhajan**  
**Lay-Assessor**  
**Equal Opportunity Tribunal**



THE PRESIDENT  
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

July 13, 2021

Ms. Veera Bhajan  
218 Cacandee Road  
Felicity  
Chaguanas

Dear Ms. Bhajan,

**Re: Appointment as Lay-Assessor of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal**

I thank you for your letter of July 6, 2021. Please forgive my tardiness in replying, since I was awaiting the outcome of further efforts to resolve the matter at caption.

The entire issue has been referred to the relevant authorities, whose intervention I trust, will meet with greater success than mine. They are now seized of the chronology of the matter and in possession of all material correspondence.

In principle, I cannot in all of the circumstances, reasonably have any objection to your considering your legal options, but I commend and thank you for your patience in awaiting a favourable resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paula-Mae Weekes'.

**PAULA-MAE WEEKES O.R.T.T.,  
PRESIDENT**