

Senior Counsel: Pan Trinbago has no case

By SEAN NERO

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ATTORNEY-at-law Theodore Guerra SC said Pan Trinbago had no case when the organisation disclosed it was seeking legal advice on whether its Annual General Meeting (AGM) was constitutionally due this year.

Pan Trinbago president Patrick Arnold said when he was elected into office in 1996 there was no constitution — just a draft — and therefore sought legal advice about exactly when his term of office was to end.

“They were the ones who promulgated this constitution in 1997,” said Guerra, “they are the ones who provided in the constitution that members of the central executive committee shall hold office for a term of three years — such term to be completed from the date of their election to office and each member shall hold office until his removal or until the next convention.”

Pan Trinbago convened as special meeting in June, 1997 where the document was ratified.

Panmen are seeking to remove Pan Trinbago’s executive on the basis that the steelband body has failed to hold Annual General Meetings of the association in 1997, 1998 and 1999; the annual reports of the auditor, president, secretary and treasurer for the years 1997, 1998, 1999; the convention of the association which ought to be scheduled between September 1 and October 31; and the impasse between the Ministry of Culture and the association.

The Senior Counsel confirmed that 60 percent of Pan Trinbago’s financial members had signed the

petition calling for an Extraordinary Meeting. The number of signatures are in accordance with Pan Trinbago’s Constitution.

But president of the steelband body Patrick Arnold said the panmen promoting this course of action were bringing the movement into disrepute unnecessarily.

“Since our term in office we have held more general meetings than were constitutionally due,” he related.

“Why didn’t they bring up this issue before?” asked Arnold.

He said if they were attending meetings called by the steelband body they could have raised these issues legitimately instead of going underground. Arnold said that former Pan Trinbago president Arnim Smith revealed to him that during his 12-year tenure in office

no special meetings were convened annually excepted for the AGM which at that time was held every two calendar years.

This occurred for over 20 years, Arnold related, “even during Owen Serrette’s eight-year term in office.”

With respect to Pan Trinbago’s current relationship with the Ministry of Culture Arnold wanted to know if he was wrong to fight for the money owed to the individual pannists; the land at Chaguaramas; and the balance of money owed to the steelband movement from the Tessoro settlement.

“They are using the word impasse, but it was clear to me that the word was being used out of context,” said Arnold, adding, “If I am wrong for fighting for what is rightfully due to the nation’s panmen then so be it.”