



OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO HEAD OFFICE

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Redress for 70 Year Old Pensioner

Senior Citizen Receives Pension After Two and a Half Year Wait – Ombudsman’s Report Spurs Action

A 70-year-old senior citizen has finally received his outstanding lump sum payment of \$40,000, nearly two years after his pension cheque was fraudulently encashed at a grocery in November 2022.

The payment follows the intervention of Ombudsman Jacqui Sampson Meiguel, whose special report on the matter was laid in Parliament on June 18, 2025. The report outlined the complainant’s extended struggle to obtain redress and highlighted the undue delay by the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (now the Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services) in properly addressing incidents of pension cheque fraud.

The pensioner’s application for a Senior Citizens’ Pension was approved in October 2022 with retroactive effect from August 2021, following a 14-month processing period. However, when he did not receive the expected lump sum payment, he visited the Social Welfare Division and was informed that the cheque had already been encashed. He immediately notified Ministry officials that the encashment was fraudulent and, on their advice, filed a police report. Despite his efforts, he spent the next 18 months attempting, without success, to resolve the matter directly with the Ministry.

In July 2024, the pensioner lodged a formal complaint with the Ombudsman. In her report, the Ombudsman noted that this case reflected a broader and concerning pattern in which public agencies fail to act with appropriate urgency, even when a clear path to resolution exists. In many such cases, meaningful progress is only made when the Ombudsman intervenes, and even then, sustained follow-up is often required, including the use of constitutional powers to obtain records or summon officials.

The matter was finally resolved when the Ministry contacted the complainant on Thursday, June 26, 2025, to advise that the substitute cheque was ready. He collected it the following day, Friday, June 27, bringing long-awaited closure to the case.

The Ombudsman commends the Ministry for its eventual engagement in resolving this and similar matters, and encourages the continued development of clear policies and procedures to better manage fraudulent encashment cases and ensure timely redress.

The Office of the Ombudsman of Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to promoting fair, transparent, and accountable public administration for all citizens.

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For further information, please contact:

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