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Trinidad and Tobago Joins Barbados in Boycotting Mike Pompeo's Meeting in Jamaica That Excludes CARICOM Nations

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White Hall, Trinidad By. GOVERNMENT OF TRINIDAD

TRINIDAD — The Government of Trinidad and Tobago on Monday said it supports [Barbados' position](#) not to send a representative to a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Jamaica. The decision represents a strong boost to Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley, who said over the weekend that Mr. Pompeo's meeting in Jamaica, which excludes many of the 15-member CARICOM nation, could serve to divide the long-running treaty amongst Caribbean islands founded in 1973.

Trinidad Prime Minister Keith Rowley said Ms. Mottley has his country's support.

“PM Mottley has the full support of the Government and the people of Trinidad and Tobago in outlining our principles and vision of Caribbean unity. In the expectation of Caribbean unity, the Prime Minister of Barbados speaks for Trinidad and Tobago,” said Mr. Rowley.

Ms. Mottley said that as chairman of CARICOM she will not agree to send her foreign minister to attend a meeting to which some members of CARICOM were not invited. She described the move as an attempt to divide the CARICOM region.

According to the Government of Trinidad, Mr. Rowley has repeatedly stated that Trinidad and Tobago stands on its proud history of fairness on the world stage, ranging from opposition to apartheid in South Africa to opposing the U.S. invasion of Grenada.

While addressing a gala to celebrate the centenary of the birth of the late Barbados prime minister and regional integrationist, Errol W. Barrow, Saturday night, Ms. Mottley warned of possible attempts to divide CARICOM during Mr. Pompeo's two-day visit to Jamaica beginning Jan. 21.

“We don’t look to pick fights. I don’t look to pick fights, but I am conscious that if this country does not stand for something, then it will fall for anything,” she said. "As chairman of CARICOM, it is impossible for me to agree that my foreign minister should attend a meeting with anyone to which members of CARICOM are not invited. If some are invited and not all, then it is an attempt to divide this region."

According to the Jamaican Gleaner, Mr. Pompeo's trip to the land of Reggae follows the 67th holder of the office, Hillary Clinton, who also made an official stop on Jamaican shores in an election year, and his immediate predecessor, Rex Tillerson, who made a three-hour stop in the island for bilateral talks in 2018. Jamaica is expected to hold its general election in the coming months.

At the gala, Ms. Mottley added, “Conscious that this region must always check itself to ensure that we not become the pawns of others, the satellites of others, but that we keep ever most and uppermost in our minds what we must do for our people without simply becoming pawns on a chessboard for others to be able to benefit from."