

COMMUNITY CHRONICLE

Updating you on the progress of our mission to build safer, more sustainable communities in the Turks and Caicos Islands.



2023 YIR

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HEADLINE

Informal Settlement Unit Officially Launches in the TCI With New Online Platforms.



The Informal Settlements Unit (ISU) officially launched in the Turks and Caicos Islands, with a website and social media pages that will be a central hub where the public can access informal settlement-related information, news, and resources.

[Read more on page 02](#)



Catch up on the rest of our newsworthy stories on [page 04](#)



Strategic Lead of the ISU Justice Carlos Simons, OBE, KC, speaks with Her Excellency Governor Dileeni Daniel-Selvaratnam and Honorable Charles Washington Misick, Premier of the Turks and Caicos Islands during the launch event.

AN OFFICIAL INTRODUCTION OF THE TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS UNIT

On July 25, 2023 the Turks and Caicos Informal Settlements Unit (ISU) officially introduced the public to their new headquarters and their mission to build safer, more sustainable communities in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Led by Justice Carlos Simons, OBE, KC, the ISU is a Turks and Caicos Islands Government (TCIG) agency responsible for mitigating the proliferation of informal settlement activity. The launch itself was a public unveiling of the ISU's new headquarters in the LaPorte Plaza, Downtown Providenciales as well as their new website and social media channels.

While the new office provides a physical location for people to turn to for live assistance, the website, Facebook page and Instagram page have provided even more ways for people to connect with vital agency.

Speaking on the importance of the ISU's goals Justice Simons explained, "The principal aim of the ISU is to build safer, more sustainable communities in the Turks and Caicos Islands and to improve the standard of living and quality of life of the affected occupants by undertaking this work. We are charged with the work of stopping this illegal practice and regularizing the long-established informal settlements to bring them into line with planning and other applicable laws".

He continued, "Our organization has identified a critical need for a central information portal to provide relevant information through an effective dissemination channel such as a website and social media pages for people to access".

The new platforms have



thus far been instrumental in disseminating information to the public and keeping the ISU connected with the people of the TCI. One of the goals in creating these channels was to establish effective communication with residents of Turks and Caicos and the hope is that people continue to utilize all the methods of contact at their disposal to help the ISU in accomplishing their goals.

[Visit our website to read the full release.](#)

Strategic Lead of the ISU Justice Carlos Simons, OBE, KC, poses with Attorney General Hon. Rhondalee Braithwaite-Knowles, OBE, KC and Leader of the Opposition Hon. Edwin Astwood during the launch event.

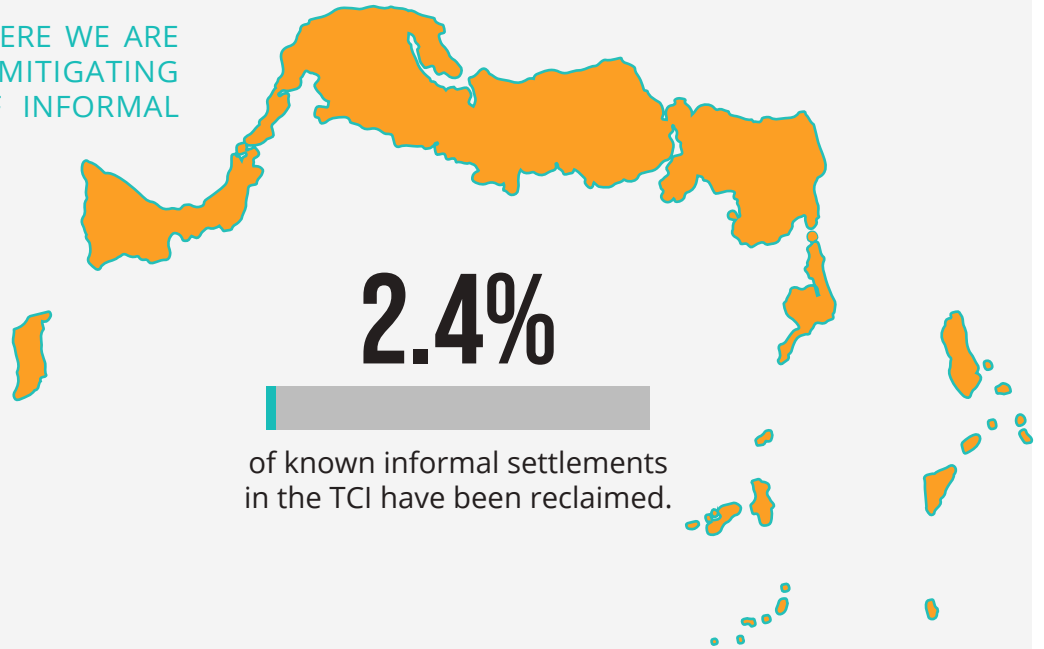
PROGRESS REPORT

A QUICK GLANCE OF WHERE WE ARE IN OUR MISSION OF MITIGATING THE PROLIFERATION OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN THE TCI.

As of December 19, 2023 the ISU has successfully reclaimed 2.4% of land occupied by informal settlements in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

That 2.4% represents 13.15 acres of the initial 544.46 acres of land identified as containing informal settlements.

Our goal is to achieve 100% reclamation.



BY THE NUMBERS

Below is a more comprehensive breakdown that details our progress by island as well as the type of land (Private or Crown).

Number of Informal Settlements identified on each island.

North Caicos	1
Grand Turk	9
Providenciales	37



Breakdown of land containing Informal Settlements by land type.

Crown Land	11%
Private Land	42%
Mixed	45%
Unknown	2%





IN THE NEWS

CONNECTING WITH THE MASSES

In order to reach as many people as possible, the ISU has reached out to the non-English speaking communities of the TCI.

Not only is the website available in both Creole and Spanish, but numerous ads have also been translated in order to reach a wider audience.

In an effort to continue building on that outreach, Justice Carlos Simons, OBE, KC has also appeared on Example of Christ: Radio Creole 95.1 FM with Pastor

Solomon Morency to speak with his listeners and inform them of the ISU's efforts.

Through a translator, Justice Simons, along with members of the Crown Land Unit and the Ministry of Physical Planning and Infrastructure Development, discussed the organization's goal to build safer and more sustainable communities in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

[Visit our website to read the full release.](#)



Strategic Lead of the ISU Justice Carlos Simons, OBE KC, speaks to the listeners of Example of Christ: Radio Creole 95.1 along with Dominique Durham, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Physical Planning and Infrastructure Development.



We recognize the challenges faced by non-native English speakers in accessing vital services, information, and opportunities. By making content available in their native language, we are striving to create an environment that fosters understanding, inclusivity, and collaboration.

Justice Carlos Simons, OBE KC, ISU Strategic Lead

HALTING FOR THE HOLIDAYS



An aerial view of the Dock Yard informal settlement.

The ISU announced on November 20, 2023 that they would put a temporary pause on all reclamation exercises scheduled through the end of 2023 until at least January of 2024.

While this decision is undoubtedly good news for

the upcoming holiday, it was primarily made to allow the necessary personnel time to properly review documents provided by those who were served eviction notices.

There have been numerous persons coming forward with papers to contest the eviction

notices they received and the ISU is adamant that all such documentation be thoroughly investigated to ensure that all affected persons are dealt with fairly.

The ISU wants to remind all persons who have been served with an "Eviction Notice" to expire on 8 December are encouraged to continue to present copies of their paperwork to the ISU or the Department of Planning Offices for review and assessment. They may do so in full reliance upon the pledge given here that such papers will be assessed carefully and fairly, and that they will not be made homeless where their documents suggest an ownership interest in the lands they occupy.

The ISU would also like to remind all persons who are considering illegally occupying land that they do not own, illegally building an unapproved structure on land that they do not own, or illegally expanding upon an unapproved structure that is erected on land that they do not own, that this practice is illegal and will result in actions being taken to remove them and the structures.

[Visit our website to read the full release.](#)

SUPPORT SPOTLIGHT



TCI Crown Land Unit

The mission of the ISU is one that relies on the support of many different government departments and agencies as well as the support of our community. One of those supporting agencies is the Crown Land Unit.

The Crown Land Unit ensure that Crown land holdings in the Turks and Caicos Islands are managed so as to provide sustainable long-term benefits to all TC Islanders and as such, they play an integral role in identifying Crown Land that is illegally occupied.

Below is a brief outline of the process of applying for Crown Land. For more details be sure to visit the [Crown Land Unit website](#).



WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE SERVED WITH A NOTICE OF NON-COMPLIANCE

- If your structure is found to be illegally occupying Crown Land, you will be served with a notice to remove the structure.
 - If the structure is unoccupied after 28 days, reclamation procedures are commenced.
 - If the structure is occupied, persons will be evicted before reclamation procedures commence.
 - If persons wish to contest the notice, they must visit a Crown Land Unit office.



Note that all Crown Land acquisitions are certified by the Crown Land Unit and registered at Land Registry. It is advised to have legal representation involved in the application process.

Options for existing leases (Residential)

Option 1

If you would like to renew the lease for an additional two (2) years.

- Pay any outstanding rent/fees
- Pay any outstanding mesne profit
- Complete the appropriate form and submit it along with the application fee to any Crown Land office.
- Await the Crown Land Unit's response to schedule an inspection and valuation before they make a decision.

Option 2

If you would like to purchase the freehold title.

- **You must first be able to lease the parcel before you are eligible to purchase the freehold title**
- Pay any outstanding rent/fees
- Pay any outstanding mesne profit
- Complete form [CPL1](#) and submit it along with the application fee to any Crown Land office.
- Await the Crown Land Unit's response to schedule an inspection and valuation before they make a decision.

Option 3

If you would like to surrender the lease.

- Complete form [R.L.11](#) and submit it along with the application fee to any Crown Land office.
- Await the Crown Land Unit's response to schedule an inspection and valuation before they make a decision.

The Crown Land Unit is not currently accepting applications for new residential allocations. The options listed above are for existing Crown Land Lease holders.

If you are interested in acquiring a commercial allocation, please visit the [Crown Land Unit website](#) for more details.



MAKING CONNECTIONS

The ISU is on the lookout for talented individuals to join the team. Our mission is as expansive as it is vital and we will need motivated and capable team members to accomplish our goal.

If you are interested in joining our team, visit the [careers](#) page on our website to see what positions are available and start your application today.



Take a closer look at the Strategic Lead of the current ISU team.

TEMPORARY SURVEYORS

The ISU listed the position for temporary surveyors to aid us in collecting census data regarding the known informal settlements.

The application period has now closed, but this is a position that we will call upon again for future assessments.

If this position interests you, keep an eye on our [careers](#) page for future updates.



JUSTICE CARLOS SIMONS, OBE KC STRATEGIC LEAD

Justice Carlos Simons OBE KC is the Senior Partner of the firm Miller Simons O'Sullivan. He holds an MA Degree in History and Politics from the University of London (1979); a Diploma in Law from the City University, London (1982) and the degree of Utter Barrister from the Inns of Court School of Law (1983). He was called to the Bar of England and Wales in July 1983 as a member of Grays Inn.



He was admitted as Attorney of the TCI Supreme Court in January 1984 and began practice with Ian M. Miller & Company, the predecessor of Miller Simons O'Sullivan. Since then, he has led the Firm's civil and commercial litigation practice, specializing in contractual, tortious and equitable claims and judicial review applications.

In recognition of his leadership within the legal profession he was appointed King's Counsel (KC) in January 2002, and for his public service efforts (including stints as a member of the House of Assembly) he was appointed to the rank of Officer of the British Empire (OBE) in June 2002. He also currently holds the positions of Notary Public and Justice of the Peace.

Justice Simons was the first Turks and Caicos Islander to serve on the Supreme Court of these Islands, and he served the Judiciary faithfully from 2020 to 2022.