

# 4.15.22

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## GLAWCAL COMMENT

### **CARICOM HEADS BECOME MORE INVOLVED**

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Based on:

**Farah, Paolo Davide, EU and CARICOM:  
Dilemmas versus Opportunities on  
Development, Law and Economic.  
Transnational Law and Governance Series,  
Routledge Publishing (New-York/London),  
October 2020**

Ideally, the world will always reside in peace. However, the harsh reality is that the world will never truly be at peace all the time. Just because the reality might seem harsh, that doesn't mean that the world should not push for peace. This was showcased by CARICOM in 2015. For over a century, the developing countries of Venezuela and Guyana had long-standing dispute.

This dispute was based on a ruling that came down in 1899 where Venezuela was handed the mouth of the Orinoco River, while the country of Guyana (a British territory at this time) was handed the Essequibo region. Everything was going smoothly until 1944 when a Venezuelan junior counsel, who assisted in the ruling, wrote a "secret memorandum" that stated that Britain and the Russian Tribunal President had colluded. When this memorandum was found, Venezuela threw out the previous agreement and refused to follow a tainted ruling. After that, the dispute only began to gain steam over the years until 2013 when Venezuela seemed to overstep. The Venezuela government attempted to charge the captain of a rig that was searching for petroleum, with Guyana's approval and in their own waters, with violating Venezuela's exclusive economic zone. This angered the Guyana government and all diplomatic relation between the two was lost. A couple years later, Venezuela went a step further. In 2015, Guyana announced that petroleum, and a large amount of it, was in the area that Venezuela had an issue with. Venezuela immediately claimed the territory and the petroleum with the Presidential Decree No. 1787.

After this decree, CARICOM issued a statement. In that statement, the CARICOM Heads of Government stated that "the need for peace and stability" is very important and should be the basis for both settling the dispute and the positive development of both countries. In response to the dispute, the CARICOM heads called for adherence to accepted principles of international law in relation to the delineation and delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf in the region. The biggest issue with the Venezuelan decree was that it affected not just Guyana, as it affected a total of 4 other CARICOM member states. Suriname, Barbados and Trinidad, and Tobago were affected. The CARICOM Heads called for Venezuela to take that part out of the decree, to which Venezuela agreed and amended. In everything that CARICOM said or did, the entire idea was to settle this dispute peacefully. In fact, CARICOM very much agreed with Guyana on the grounds to take the dispute and case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to let the dispute come to a peaceful end. It is obvious that CARICOM wants to maintain as much peace as possible in their area. It is also obvious that this area, and CARICOM, is still a work in progress. There are certain laws that need tweaking, agreements that need to be made, and disputes taken care of. CARICOM is doing everything they can to make their area a better, peaceful location



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