

## **West: No political will to tackle money laundering**

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By —Carolyn Kissoon  
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Expert in the field of extradition and money laundering laws and former director designate of the Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (FIUTT), attorney David West, has accused the Government of refusing to deal with the growing problem of money laundering in this country.

West said members of Parliament have failed in the debate of anti-money laundering policies.

“(Parliamentarians) are the guardians of our democracy. You Parliamentarians can get it done. The person on street cannot get it done. It is the political will to get it done and right now, (but) if you ask anyone it seems as though there is no political will to tackle money laundering in Trinidad and Tobago.”

West was speaking at a cocktail reception for the launch of the first local Chapter of Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) at Soong’s Great Wall Restaurant, San Fernando, on Saturday night. He addressed the issue of money laundering and how it impacts on parliamentarians.

Former vice president of the Senate Lyndira Oudit, political leader of the Movement for Social Justice David Abdulah, Chaguanas West MP Jack Warner, San Fernando West MP Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan, former PNM minister Ralph Maraj, and former parliamentarian Dr Joseph Laquis were among the guests at the function. Oudit is chairman of GOPAC. West said the FIUTT was established to implement the anti-money laundering policies of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) — an intergovernmental organization. The main objective of this task force is to develop and provide international policies to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism, he said.

He said the administrative type FIU operating in Trinidad and Tobago was not effective as it was very limited. He said suspicious transactions have been reported to the FIU, but there were problems getting that information to the law enforcement authority.

West said no one was ever prosecuted in this country for money laundering.