

Independence Day Message 2014

By

Leader of the Opposition

Dr. The Hon. Keith Rowley

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Fellow citizens, on this the fifty-second anniversary of the Independence of Trinidad and Tobago I think it is imperative that we reflect on our journey from August 31, 1962 when our national flag was first hoisted to the point at which we ...find ourselves today.

On that faithful day in 1962, the man who steered our nation to independence, our first Prime Minister Dr Eric Williams addressed the people saying "The first responsibility that devolves upon you is the protection and promotion of your democracy. Democracy means more, much more, than the right to vote and one vote for every man and every woman of the prescribed age. Democracy means recognition of the rights of others.

Democracy means equality of opportunity for all in education, in the public service, and in private employment--I repeat, and in private employment. Democracy means the protection of the weak against the strong. Democracy means the obligation of the minority to recognise the right of the majority. Democracy means responsibility of the Government to its citizens, the protection of the citizens from the exercise of arbitrary power and the violation of human freedoms and individual rights. Democracy means freedom of worship for all and the subordination of the right of any race to the overriding right of the human race. Democracy means freedom of expression and assemble of organisation".

As a young developing nation, Trinidad and Tobago has come a long way. We have experienced the proverbial highs and lows along the way. However, through it all, our people have demonstrated formidable will and strong resilience, with the ability to work together to overcome challenges. Our dedication to our democratic rights and freedoms serves as the cornerstone upon which our nation is built. Trinidad and Tobago was, is and will always be forged from the love of liberty.

At this independence time, even as we face what many see as interference with fundamental democratic principles, I continue to have confidence in the people of our young nation. I still

hold out that the majority of us are right-thinking and are ready, willing and able to work steadfastly towards a better, brighter future.

And it is with this in mind that I, on behalf of the People's National Movement, wish you all a thoughtful, safe and happy Independence Day 2014. May God bless each and every one of you and may he richly bless our nation.