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COVID-19 pandemic in Trinidad and Tobago

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COVID-19 pandemic in Trinidad and Tobago



Disease	COVID-19
Virus strain	SARS-CoV-2
Location	Trinidad and Tobago
First outbreak	Wuhan , Hubei , China
Index case	Trinidad and Tobago
Arrival date	12 March 2020 (4 months and 1 week)
Confirmed cases	123 ^[1] (2020-06-14)

Recovered	109 ^[1]
Deaths	8 ^[1]
Government website	
health.gov.tt	

The [COVID-19 pandemic](#) in **Trinidad and Tobago** is part of the ongoing global [viral pandemic](#) of [coronavirus disease 2019](#) (COVID-19), which was confirmed to have reached the [Republic of Trinidad and Tobago](#) on 12 March 2020.

Background

On 12 January 2020, the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) confirmed that a [novel coronavirus](#) was the cause of a respiratory illness in a cluster of people in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China, which was reported to the WHO on 31 December 2019.^{[2][3]}

The [case fatality ratio](#) for COVID-19 has been much lower than [SARS of 2003](#),^{[4][5]} but the [transmission](#) has been significantly greater, with a significant total death toll.^{[6][4]}

Timeline

COVID-19 cases in Trinidad and Tobago (
	• v	
	• t	
	• e	
)	
Deaths	Recoveries	Active cases

Mar Apr May Last 15 days		
Date		# of cases
2020-04-23		115(=)
2020-04-24		115(=)
2020-04-25		115(=)
2020-04-26		116(+0.9%)
2020-04-27		116(=)
2020-04-28		116(=)

2020-04-29		116(=)
2020-04-30		116(=)
2020-05-01		116(=)
2020-05-02		116(=)
2020-05-03		116(=)
2020-05-04		116(=)

2020-05-05		116(=)
2020-05-06		116(=)
2020-05-07		116(=)
Sources: Ministry of Health COVID-19 Media Release Archive ^[7]		

March 2020

On 12 March, Trinidad and Tobago recorded its first case of COVID-19. It was a 52-year-old man who had recently been to [Switzerland](#).^{[8][9][10][11][12]} He was self-isolated before he began experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Contact tracing for the passengers of the patient's flight is being conducted.^[12]

On 13 March, a second case of COVID-19 was recorded by Trinidad and Tobago.^{[13][14][15]} The patient, a 66-year-old male with an unknown travel history, presented himself at a health facility and was soon isolated. Others who may have been exposed to the patient are also being quarantined.^{[16][17][18][19]}

Two more cases were confirmed on the night of 15 March, bringing the total to 4 cases.^{[20][21][22]} A fifth case was confirmed on 16 March.^{[23][24][25]} On 17 March, another two cases were confirmed.^{[26][27]} Another two cases were confirmed on 19 March.^{[28][29][30][31]}

On 21 March, 40 more cases were confirmed. Sixty eight (68) nationals left for a 7-day cruise on the Caribbean sea on 5 March. After a suspected outbreak of COVID-19 on board, the Costa Favolosa was forced to anchor off the coast of Guadeloupe for several days. The nationals returned to Trinidad and Tobago on 17 March via a chartered flight from Guadeloupe. They were immediately screened and tested at Piarco International Airport and later taken to a quarantine facility. On 21 March it was confirmed that 40 of the 68 persons that were quarantined tested positive for COVID-19, bringing the total number of confirmed cases to 49.^{[32][33][34]}

On 25 March, COVID-19 claimed its first victim in Trinidad. He was a seventy-seven-year-old male with known pre-existing medical conditions.

On 26 March, the second reported COVID-19 death was an eighty-year-old male with pre-existing medical conditions. He was among the rescued cruise ship passengers quarantined at Camp Balandra.^[35] The Ministry of Health also reported that one of the patients who tested positive, was quarantined and treated has since been discharged.^[36]

April 2020

On 5 April, Tobago recorded its first death, an elderly male with pre-existing conditions. By that date, the island had performed 74 tests of which three were positive.^[37] Overall the country had submitted 797 tests to [CARPHA](#) for testing, of which 104 were positive, resulting in seven deaths and one recovery.^[38]

On 15 April, a group of over 40 people stranded in [Suriname](#) are in a desperate situation. Despite multiple contacts to the Consulate and [CARICOM](#), no plans to repatriate them have been made. ^[39] On 30 April, it was reported that they have chartered a plane and will soon return home.^[40]

On 21 April, it was announced that Trinidad and Tobago will start to ramp up testing. 4,000 test kits were received from [China](#) with another 10,000 to be expected in the coming two weeks and 10,000 from [Pan American Health Organisation](#). ^[41]

A group of Trinidad and Tobago nationals stranded in [Barbados](#) chartered a plane at their own expense to take them home. ^[42]

Prevention efforts

Health Minister [Terrance Deyalsingh](#), announced that [Trinidad and Tobago](#) had decided to implement restrictions on persons traveling from [China](#). Persons who are living or who have visited China, will be barred from entering Trinidad and Tobago unless they had already been out of China 14 days prior to attempting to travel to Trinidad & Tobago.^{[43][44][45][46]} Travellers whose flights originate from Italy, South Korea, Singapore, Japan, Iran, Germany, Spain, and France are also to be restricted.^[46] On 16 March, [Prime Minister Keith Rowley](#) announced that the country will close its

borders to everyone except Trinidad and Tobago nationals and health workers for the next 14 days. Additionally, bars were to be closed and the school closures extended until 20 April.^{[47][48][49][50][51]} The closure will come into effect by midnight on 17 March.^{[52][53][54][55]}

On 13 March, Rowley announced that schools and universities would be closed across the nation for one week due to the coronavirus fears.^{[56][57]} On 16 March, the closure was extended until 20 April.^{[48][58][55]}

On 15 March, Police Commissioner of T&T [Gary Griffith](#) said he would be going into self-quarantine.^{[59][60][61][62]}

Many [Hindu](#) associations cancelled [Phagwa](#), [Navratri](#), [Ram Navami](#), and [Hanuman Jayanti](#) celebrations.^{[63][64][65]} Many other events were also cancelled or postponed.^{[66][67]}

Restrictions were put in place with regards to prisons nationwide.^{[68][69]} BPTT closed their offices in their response to the coronavirus.^{[70][71]} Deyalsingh said there were 3,000 test kits in Trinidad as of 16 March and 1000 more would be coming.^[72] Labour Minister [Jennifer Baptiste-Primus](#) announced that pandemic leave would be made available to workers with children.^{[73][74]} On 21 March, National Security Minister [Stuart Young](#) announced the closure of all borders to everyone (including nationals & non nationals) effective midnight on Sunday 22 March. He said no international flights would be allowed to enter the country. However, cargo vessels bringing food and pharmaceuticals into the country would be allowed entry.^[75]

On 6 April, Rowley extended the stay-at-home order to 30 April (later extended again to 10 May). He announced that until that date all restaurants would be closed, and several business such as supermarkets, bakeries, pharmacies and hardwares would have adjusted opening hours. He also said that people were to wear [facemasks](#) when in public, and that the government would work on distributing masks.^[76] ^[77]

Criticisms of government accounts

Even though the first case of COVID-19 was formally diagnosed on March 12th and attributed to a traveler from Switzerland, there have been suspicions about the virus circulating locally before then. A visitor to Trinidad and Tobago who returned to Alberta, Canada, was formally diagnosed with the virus there in early March.^[78] The province's chief medical officer of health made the announcement on March 11th^[78], a day before the first case in Trinidad and Tobago.

On April 16th, [Kamla Persad-Bissessar](#), the former Prime Minister and current Opposition Leader, demanded that the government "come clean" about their testing capacity as well as the "true state of the coronavirus spread in Trinidad and Tobago."^[79]

See also

- [COVID-19 pandemic in North America](#)
- [COVID-19 pandemic in Grenada](#)
- [COVID-19 pandemic by country](#)
- [Caribbean Public Health Agency](#)

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