

**Globalized Election
Weekly Report
June 03 2010 to June 08, 2010**

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A **parliamentary election** was held in the **Dominican Republic** on 16 May 2010 to elect members to the 32 seats in the Senate and 183 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Polls forecasted a victory for the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) of President Leonel Fernández. Before the election, 96 of the 178 Chamber of Deputies seats and 22 of the 32 Senate seats were controlled by the PLD.

A **general election** was held in **Trinidad and Tobago** on May 24, 2010. The date of the general elections was announced by Prime Minister Patrick Manning on April 16, 2010, via a press release. The election was called over two years earlier than required by law. Polls showing that the UNC-led opposition coalition was likely to win the election were confirmed by the subsequent results.

Dominican Republic

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Dominican Republic

Capital
(and largest city) Santo Domingo

Official language(s) Spanish

Ethnic groups 73% Multiracial, 16% White, 11% Black

Demonym Dominican

Government Democratic Republic or Representative Democracy

- President Leonel Fernández
- Vice President Rafael Alburquerque

Independence From Spain:

- Date December 1, 1821
- Date From Haiti:
February 27, 1844
- Date From Spain:
August 16, 1865

Area

- Total 48,442 km²
18,704 sq mi
- Water (%) 0.7

Population

- 2009 estimate 10,090,000 (80th)
- 2002 census 8,562,541
- Density 208.2/km² (57th)
539.4/sq

GDP (PPP) 2009 estimate

- Total	\$80.339 billion
- Per capita	\$8,896
GDP (nominal)	2009 estimate
- Total	\$46.743 billion
- Per capita	\$5,176

1.INTRODUCTION

The **Dominican Republic** is a nation on the island of Hispaniola, part of the Greater Antilles archipelago in the Caribbean region. The western third of the island is occupied by the nation of Haiti, making Hispaniola one of two Caribbean islands that are shared by two countries. Both by area and population, the Dominican Republic is the second largest Caribbean nation (after Cuba), with 48,442 square kilometres (18,704 sq mi) and an estimated 10 million people.

Inhabited by Taínos since the seventh century, the territory of the Dominican Republic was reached by Christopher Columbus in 1492 and became the site of the first permanent European settlement in the Americas, namely Santo Domingo, the country's capital and Spain's first capital in the New World. In Santo Domingo stand, among other firsts in the Americas, the first university, cathedral, and castle, the latter two in the Ciudad Colonial area, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

After three centuries of Spanish rule, with French and Haitian interludes, the country became independent in 1821 but was quickly taken over by Haiti. Victorious in the Dominican War of Independence in 1844, Dominicans experienced mostly political turmoil and a brief return to Spanish rule over the next 72 years. The United States occupation of 1916–1924, and a subsequent, calm and prosperous six-year period under Horacio Vásquez Lajara, were followed by the dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina until 1961. The civil war of 1965, the country's last, was ended by a U.S.-led intervention, and was followed by the authoritarian rule of Joaquín Balaguer, 1966 – 1978. Since then,

the Dominican Republic has moved toward representative democracy, and has been led by Leonel Fernández for most of the time after 1996.

The Dominican Republic has the second largest economy in the Caribbean. Though long known for sugar production, the economy is now dominated by services. The country's economic progress is exemplified by its advanced telecommunication system. Nevertheless, unemployment, government corruption, and inconsistent electric service remain major Dominican problems. The country also has "marked income inequality".

International migration greatly affects the country, as it receives and sends large flows of migrants. Haitian immigration and the integration of Dominicans of Haitian descent are major issues; the total population of Haitian origin is estimated to be 800,000.^[12] A large Dominican diaspora exists, most of it in the United States, where it comprises 1.3 million. They aid national development as they send billions of dollars to their families, accounting for one-tenth of the Dominican GDP.

The Dominican Republic has become the Caribbean's largest tourist destination; the country's year-round golf courses are among the top attractions. In this mountainous land is located the Caribbean's highest mountain, Pico Duarte, as is Lake Enriquillo, the Caribbean's largest lake and lowest elevation. Quisqueya, as Dominicans often call their country, has an average temperature of 26 °C (78.8 °F) and great biological diversity.

Music and sport are of the highest importance in Dominican culture, with merengue as the national dance and song and baseball the favorite sport.^[2]

History

The Taínos

The Arawakan-speaking Taínos moved into Hispaniola, displacing earlier inhabitants, circa A.D. 650. The Taínos called the island *Kiskeya* or *Quisqueya* ("mother of the earth"). They engaged in farming and fishing, and hunting and gathering. The fierce Caribs drove the Taínos to the northeastern Caribbean during much of the 15th century. The estimates of Hispaniola's population in 1492 vary widely, including one hundred thousand, three hundred thousand,^[16] and four hundred thousand to two million. By 1492 the island was divided into five Taíno chiefdoms.

The Spanish arrived in 1492. After initially friendly relations, the Taínos resisted the conquest, led by the female Chief Anacaona of Xaragua and her husband Chief Caonabo of Maguana, as well as Chiefs Guacanagarix, Guamá, Hatuey, and Enriquillo. The latter's successes gained his people an autonomous enclave for a time on the island. Nevertheless, within a few years after 1492 the population of Taínos had declined drastically, due to smallpox and other diseases that arrived with the Europeans, and from other causes discussed below. The decline continued, and by 1711 the Taíno numbered just 21,000.^[22] The last record of pure Taínos in the country was from 1864. Due to intermarriage over the centuries, many Dominicans have Taíno ancestry.^{[23][24]} Remnants of the Taino culture include their cave paintings, as well as pottery designs which are still used in the small artisan village of Higüerito, Moca.

Spanish rule

Christopher Columbus arrived on Hispaniola on December 5, 1492, during the first of his four voyages to America. He claimed the island for Spain and named it *La Española*. In 1496 Bartholomew Columbus, Christopher's brother, built the city of Santo Domingo, Europe's first permanent settlement in the "New World". The Spaniards created a plantation economy on the island. The colony was the springboard for the further Spanish conquest of America and for decades the headquarters of Spanish power in the hemisphere. Christopher was buried in Santo Domingo upon his death in 1506.

The Taínos nearly disappeared, above all, from European infectious diseases to which they had no immunity. Other causes were abuse, suicide, the breakup of family, starvation,^[16] enslavement, forced labor, torture, war with the Spaniards, changes in lifestyle, and even miscegenation. Laws passed for the Indians' protection (beginning with the Laws of Burgos, 1512–1513) were never truly enforced. Yet as stated above, the Taínos did survive. Some scholars believe that las Casas exaggerated the Indian population decline in an effort to persuade King Carlos to intervene, and that *encomenderos* also exaggerated it, in order to receive permission to import more African slaves. Moreover, censuses of the time omitted the Indians who fled into remote communities, where they often joined with runaway Africans (*cimarrones*), producing Zambos. Also, Mestizos who were culturally Spanish were counted as Spaniards, some Zambos as black, and some Indians as Mulattos.

After her conquest of the Aztecs and Incas, Spain neglected her Caribbean holdings. French buccaneers settled in western Hispaniola, and by the 1697 Treaty of Ryswick, Spain ceded the area to France. France created the wealthy colony Saint-Domingue there, with a population 90% slave, and overall four times as populous (500,000 to 125,000) as the Spanish area at the end of the 18th century.

French rule

France came to own the whole island in 1795, when by the Peace of Basel Spain ceded Santo Domingo as a consequence of the French Revolutionary Wars. At the time, Saint-Domingue's slaves, led by Toussaint Louverture, were in revolt against France. In 1801 they captured Santo Domingo, thus controlling the entire island; but in 1802 an army sent by Napoleon captured Toussaint Louverture and sent him to France as prisoner. However, Toussaint Louverture's lieutenants, and yellow fever, succeeded in expelling the French again from Saint-Domingue, which in 1804 the rebels made independent as the Republic of Haiti. Eastwards, France continued to rule Spanish Santo Domingo.

In 1808, following Napoleon's invasion of Spain, the *criollos* of Santo Domingo revolted against French rule and, with the aid of Great Britain (Spain's ally) and Haiti, returned Santo Domingo to Spanish control.

The Ephemeral Independence and Haitian occupation

After a dozen years of discontent and failed independence plots by various groups, Santo Domingo's former Lieutenant–Governor (top administrator), José Núñez de Cáceres, declared the colony's independence, on November 30, 1821. He requested the new state's admission to Simón Bolívar's republic of Gran Colombia, but Haitian forces, led by Jean-Pierre Boyer, invaded just nine weeks later, in February 1822.

As Toussaint Louverture had done two decades earlier, the Haitians abolished slavery. But they also nationalized most private property, including all the property of landowners who had left in the wake of the invasion; much Church property; as well as all property belonging to the former rulers, the Spanish Crown. Boyer also placed more emphasis on cash crops grown on large plantations, reformed the tax system, and allowed foreign trade. But the new system was widely opposed by Dominican farmers, although it produced a boom in sugar and coffee production. All levels of education collapsed; the university was shut down, as it was starved both of resources and students, since young Dominican men from 16 to 25-years-old were drafted into the Haitian army. Boyer's occupation troops, who were largely Dominicans, were unpaid, and had to "forage and sack" from Dominican civilians. Haiti imposed a "heavy tribute" on the Dominican people. Many whites fled Santo Domingo for Puerto Rico and Cuba (both still under Spanish rule), Venezuela, and elsewhere. In the end the economy faltered and taxation became more onerous. Rebellions occurred even by Dominican freedmen, while Dominicans and Haitians worked together to oust Boyer from power. Anti-Haitian movements of several kinds — pro-independence, pro-Spanish, pro-French, pro-British, pro-United States — gathered force following the overthrow of Boyer in 1843.

Independence

In 1838 Juan Pablo Duarte founded a secret society called La Trinitaria, which sought the complete independence of Santo Domingo without any foreign intervention. Ramón Matías Mella and Francisco del Rosario Sánchez, despite not being among the founding members of La Trinitaria, were decisive in the fight for independence. Duarte and they are the three Founding Fathers of the Dominican Republic. On February 27, 1844, the *Trinitarios* (Trinitarians), declared the independence from Haiti. They were backed by Pedro Santana, a wealthy cattle rancher from El Seibo, who became general of the army of the nascent Republic. The Dominican Republic's first Constitution was adopted on November 6, 1844, and was modeled after the United States Constitution.

The decades that followed were filled with tyranny, factionalism, economic difficulties, rapid changes of government, and exile for political opponents. Threatening the nation's independence were renewed Haitian invasions occurring in 1844, 1845–49, 1849–55, and 1855–56.

Meanwhile, archrivals Santana and Buenaventura Báez held power most of the time, both ruling arbitrarily. They promoted competing plans to annex the new nation to another power: Santana favored Spain, and Báez the United States.

The voluntary colony and the Restoration republic

In 1861, after imprisoning, silencing, exiling, and executing many of his opponents and due to political and economic reasons, Santana signed a pact with the Spanish Crown and reverted the Dominican nation to colonial status, the only Latin American country to do so. His ostensible aim was to protect the nation from another Haitian annexation. But opponents launched the War of the Restoration in 1863, led by Santiago Rodríguez, Benito Monción, and Gregorio Luperón, among others. Haiti, fearful of the re-establishment of Spain as colonial power on its border, gave refuge and supplies to the revolutionaries. The United

States, then fighting its own Civil War, vigorously protested the Spanish action. After two years of fighting, Spain abandoned the island in 1865.

Political strife again prevailed in the following years; warlords ruled, military revolts were extremely common, and the nation amassed debt. It was now Báez's turn to act on his plan of annexing the country to the United States, where two successive presidents were supportive. U.S. President Grant desired a naval base at Samaná and also a place for resettling newly freed Blacks. The treaty, which included U.S. payment of \$1.5 million for Dominican debt repayment, was defeated in the United States Senate in 1870^[31] on a vote of 28–28, two-thirds being required.

Báez was toppled in 1874, returned, and was toppled for good in 1878. A new generation was thence in charge, with the passing of Santana (he died in 1864) and Báez from the scene. Relative peace came to the country in the 1880s, which saw the coming to power of General Ulises Heureaux.

"Lilís", as the new president was nicknamed, enjoyed a period of popularity. He was, however, "a consummate dissembler", who put the nation deep into debt while using much of the proceeds for his personal use and to maintain his police state. Heureaux became rampantly despotic and unpopular. In 1899 he was assassinated. However, the relative calm over which he presided allowed improvement in the Dominican economy. The sugar industry was modernized, and the country attracted foreign workers and immigrants, both from the Old World and the New.

From 1902 on, short-lived governments were again the norm, with their power usurped by caudillos in parts of the country. Furthermore, the national government was bankrupt and, unable to pay Heureaux's debts, faced the threat of military intervention by France and other European creditor powers.

U.S. interventions and occupation

U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt sought to prevent European intervention, largely to protect the routes to the future Panama Canal, as the canal was already under construction. He made a small military intervention to ward off the European powers, proclaimed his famous Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, and in 1905 obtained Dominican agreement for U.S. administration of Dominican customs, then the chief source of income for the Dominican government. A 1906 agreement provided for the arrangement to last 50 years. The United States agreed to use part of the customs proceeds to reduce the immense foreign debt of the Dominican Republic, and assumed responsibility for said debt.

After six years in power, President Ramón Cáceres (who had himself assassinated Heureaux) was assassinated in 1911. The result was several years of great political instability and civil war. U.S. mediation by the William Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson administrations achieved only a short respite each time. A political deadlock in 1914 was broken after an ultimatum by Wilson telling Dominicans to choose a president or see the U.S. impose one. A provisional president was chosen, and later the same year relatively free elections put former president (1899–1902) Juan Isidro Jimenes Pereyra back in power. In order to achieve a more broadly supported government, Jimenes named opposition individuals to his Cabinet. But this brought no peace and, with his former Secretary of War Desiderio Arias maneuvering to depose him and despite a U.S. offer of military aid against Arias, Jimenes resigned on May 7, 1916.

Wilson thus ordered the U.S. occupation of the Dominican Republic. U.S. Marines landed on May 16, 1916, and had control of the country two months later. The military government established by the U.S., led by Rear Admiral Harry Shepard Knapp, was widely repudiated by Dominicans. Some Cabinet posts had to be filled by U.S. naval officers, as Dominicans refused to serve in the administration. Censorship and limits on public speech were imposed. The guerrilla war against the U.S. forces was met with a vigorous, "often brutal" response.

But the occupation regime, which kept most Dominican laws and institutions, largely pacified the country, revived the economy, reduced the Dominican debt, built a road network that at last interconnected all regions of the country, and created a professional National Guard to replace the warring partisan units.

Opposition to the occupation continued, however, and after World War I it increased in the U.S. as well. There, President Warren G. Harding (1921–23), Wilson's successor, worked to end the occupation, as he had promised to do during his campaign. U.S. government ended in October 1922, and elections were held in March 1924.

The victor was former president (1902–03) Horacio Vásquez Lajara, who had cooperated with the U.S. He was inaugurated on July 13, and the last U.S. forces left in September. Vásquez gave the country six years of good government, in which political and civil rights were respected and the economy grew strongly, in a peaceful atmosphere.

The Trujillo Era

When Vásquez attempted to win another term, opponents rebelled in February, 1930, in secret alliance with the commander of the National Army (the former National Guard), General Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina, by which the latter remained 'neutral' in face of the rebellion. Vásquez resigned. Trujillo then stood for election himself, and in May was elected president virtually unopposed, after a violent campaign against his opponents.

There was considerable economic growth during Trujillo's long and iron-fisted regime, although a great deal of the wealth was taken by the dictator and other regime elements. There was progress in healthcare, education, and transportation, with the building of hospitals and clinics, schools, and roads and harbors. Trujillo also carried out an important housing construction program and instituted a pension plan. He finally negotiated an undisputed border with Haiti in 1935, and achieved the end of the 50-year customs agreement in 1941, instead

of 1956. He made the country debt-free in 1947, a proud achievement for Dominicans for decades to come.

This was accompanied by absolute repression and the copious use of murder, torture, and terrorist methods against the opposition. Moreover, Trujillo's megalomania was on display in his renaming after himself the capital city Santo Domingo to "Ciudad Trujillo" (Trujillo City), the nation's—and the Caribbean's—highest mountain Pico Duarte (Duarte Peak) to "Pico Trujillo", and many towns and a province. Some other places he renamed after members of his family. By the end of his first term in 1934 he was the country's wealthiest person, one of the wealthiest in the world by the early 1950s, and near the end of his regime his fortune was an estimated \$800 million.

In 1937 Trujillo (who was himself one-quarter Haitian), in an event known as the Parsley Massacre or, in the Dominican Republic, as *El Corte* (The Cutting), ordered the Army to kill Haitians living on the Dominican side of the border. The Army killed an estimated 17,000 to 35,000 Haitians over six days, from the night of October 2, 1937 through October 8, 1937. To avoid leaving evidence of the Army's involvement, the soldiers used machetes rather than bullets. The soldiers of Trujillo were said to have interrogated anyone with dark skin, using the shibboleth *perejil* (parsley) to tell Haitians from Dominicans when necessary; the 'r' of *perejil* was of difficult pronunciation for Haitians. As a result of the massacre, the Dominican Republic agreed to pay Haiti US\$750,000, later reduced to US\$525,000.

On November 25, 1960 Trujillo killed three of the four Mirabal sisters, nicknamed *Las Mariposas* (The Butterflies). The victims were Patria Mercedes Mirabal (born on February 27, 1924), Argentina Minerva Mirabal (born on March 12, 1926), and Antonia María Teresa Mirabal (born on October 15, 1935). Minerva was an aspiring lawyer who was extremely opposed to Trujillo's dictatorship since Trujillo had begun to make rude sexual advances towards her. The sisters have received many honors posthumously, and have many memorials in various cities

in the Dominican Republic. Salcedo, their home province, changed its name to Hermanas Mirabal Province (Mirabal Sisters Province). The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is observed on the anniversary of their deaths.

For a long time, the US supported the Trujillo government, as did the Catholic Church and the Dominican elite. This support persisted despite the assassinations of political opposition, the massacre of Haitians, and Trujillo's plots against other countries. The US believed Trujillo was the lesser of two or more evils. The U.S. finally broke with Trujillo in 1960, after Trujillo's agents attempted to assassinate the Venezuelan president, Rómulo Betancourt, a fierce critic of Trujillo. Trujillo was assassinated on May 30, 1961.

Post-Trujillo

A democratically elected government under leftist Juan Bosch took office in February, 1963, but was overthrown in September. After nineteen months of military rule, a pro-Bosch revolt broke out in April, 1965. U.S. president Lyndon Johnson, concerned over the possible takeover of the revolt by communists who might create a "second Cuba", sent the Marines days later, followed immediately by the Army's 82d Airborne Division and other elements of the XVIIIth Airborne Corps in Operation Powerpack. "We don't propose to sit here in a rocking chair with our hands folded and let the Communist set up any government in the western hemisphere", Johnson said. The forces were soon joined by comparatively small contingents from the Organization of American States. All these remained in the country for over a year and left after supervising elections in 1966 won by Joaquín Balaguer, who had been Trujillo's last puppet-president.

Balaguer remained in power as president for 12 years. His tenure was a period of repression of human rights and civil liberties, ostensibly to keep pro-Castro or pro-communist parties out of power. His rule was further criticized for a growing disparity between rich and poor. It was, however, praised for an ambitious

infrastructure program, which included large housing projects, sports complexes, theaters, museums, aqueducts, roads, highways, and the massive Columbus Lighthouse, completed in a subsequent tenure in 1992.

1978 to present

In 1978, Balaguer was succeeded in the presidency by opposition candidate Antonio Guzmán Fernández, of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD). Another PRD win in 1982 followed, under Salvador Jorge Blanco. Under the PRD presidents, the Dominican Republic experienced a period of relative freedom and basic human rights. Balaguer regained the presidency in 1986, and was re-elected in 1990 and 1994, this last time just defeating PRD candidate José Francisco Peña Gómez, a former mayor of Santo Domingo. The 1994 elections were flawed, bringing on international pressure, to which Balaguer responded by scheduling another presidential contest in 1996. This time Leonel Fernández achieved the first-ever win for the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD), which Bosch founded in 1973 after leaving the PRD (also founded by Bosch). Fernández oversaw a fast-growing economy, averaging 7.7% per year, with a drop in unemployment and stable exchange and inflation rates.

In 2000 the PRD's Hipólito Mejía won the election. This was a time of economic troubles, and Mejía was defeated in his re-election effort four years later by Fernández, who won re-election in 2008. Fernández and the PLD are credited with initiatives that have moved the country forward technologically, such as the construction of the Metro Railway ("El Metro"). On the other hand, his administrations have also been accused of corruption.

Government and politics

The Dominican Republic is a representative democracy or democratic republic, with three branches of power: executive, legislative, and judicial. The President of the Dominican Republic heads the executive branch and executes laws

passed by the Congress, appoints the Cabinet, and is commander in chief of the armed forces. The president and vice-president run for office on the same ticket and are elected by direct vote for 4-year terms. The national legislature is bicameral, composed of a Senate, which has 32 members, and the Chamber of Deputies, with 178 members. Judicial authority rests with the Supreme Court of Justice's 16-members. They are appointed by a council composed of the President, the leaders of both houses of Congress, the President of the Supreme Court, and an opposition or non-governing-party member. The Court "alone hears actions against the president, designated members of his Cabinet, and members of Congress when the legislature is in session."

The president appoints the governors of the thirty-one provinces. Mayors and municipal councils administer the 124 municipal districts and the National District (Santo Domingo). They are elected at the same time as congressional representatives.

The Dominican Republic has a multi-party political system. Elections are held every two years, alternating between the Presidential elections, which are held in years evenly divisible by four, and the Congressional and municipal elections, which are held in even-numbered years not divisible by four. "International observers have found that presidential and congressional elections since 1996 have been generally free and fair." The Central Elections Board (JCE) of 9 members supervises elections, and its decisions are unappealable.

There are many political parties and advocacy groups and, new on the scene, civil organizations. The three major parties are the conservative Social Christian Reformist Party (Spanish: Partido Reformista Social Cristiano [PRSC]), in power 1966–78 and 1986–96; the social democratic Dominican Revolutionary Party (Spanish: Partido Revolucionario Dominicano [PRD]), in power in 1963, 1978–86, and 2000–04); and the originally leftist, increasingly conservative Dominican Liberation Party (Spanish: Partido de la Liberación Dominicana [PLD]), in power 1996–2000 and since 2004.

The presidential elections of 2008 were held on May 16, 2008, with incumbent Leonel Fernández winning with 53% of the vote. He defeated Miguel Vargas Maldonado, of the PRD, who achieved a 40.48% share of the vote. Amable Aristy, of the PRSC, achieved 4.59% of the vote. Other minority candidates, which includes former Attorney General Guillermo Moreno from the Movement for Independence, Unity and Change (Movimiento Independencia, Unidad y Cambio [MIUCA]) and PRSC former presidential candidate and defector Eduardo Estrella obtained less than 1% of the vote.

Provinces and municipalities

The Dominican Republic is divided into 31 provinces. Santo Domingo, the capital, is designated Distrito Nacional (National District). The provinces are divided into municipalities (*municipios*; singular *municipio*). They are the second-level political and administrative subdivisions of the country.

Atlantic Ocean

Azua

Baoruco

Barahona

Caribbean Sea

Dajabón

Distrito Nacional

Duarte

El Seibo

Elías

Piña

Españat

Haiti

Hato Mayor

Hms.

Mrb.

Independencia

Isla Beata

Isla Catalina
Isla Saona
La Altagracia
La
Romana
La Vega
María
Trinidad
Sánchez
Monseñor
Nouel
Monte Cristi
Monte Plata
Pedernales
Peravia
Puerto Plata
Samaná
San
Cristóbal
San
de Ocoa
San Juan
San
de Macorís
Sánchez
Ramírez
Santiago
Santiago
Rodríguez
Santo
Domingo
Valverde

José

Pedro

* The national capital is the city of Santo Domingo, in the Distrito Nacional (DN).

Elections in the Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic elects on national level a head of state - the president - and a legislature. The president is elected for a four year term by the people. The **Congress of the Republic** (*Congreso de la República*) has two chambers. The **Chamber of Deputies** (*Cámara de Diputados*) has 183 members (until 2010 only 178 members), elected for a four year term by proportional representation in each of the provinces. The **Senate** (*Senado*) has 32 members, elected for a four year term in single-seat constituencies. The Dominican Republic has a multi-party system, with two or three strong parties and a third party that is electorally successful.

2006 Parliamentary election

Summary of the 16 May 2006 Congress of the Dominican Republic election results

Parties		Votes	%	Deputies	Senators
Progressive Bloc (<i>Bloque Progresista</i>)	Dominican Liberation Party (<i>Partido de la Liberación Dominicana</i>)	1,387,878	46.4	96	22
	Institutional Social Democratic Bloc (<i>Bloque Institucional Socialdemócrata</i>)	75,872	2.54		

	Alliance for Democracy (<i>Alianza por la Democracia</i>)	46,573	1.56		
	Christian Democratic Union (<i>Unión Demócrata Cristiana</i>)	24,868	0.83		
	Dominican Workers' Party (<i>Partido de los Trabajadores Dominicanos</i>)	16,684	0.56		
	Liberal Party of the Dominican Republic (<i>Partido Liberal de República Dominicana</i>)	14,456	0.48		
Grand National Alliance (<i>Gran Alianza Nacional</i>)	Dominican Revolutionary Party (<i>Partido Revolucionario Dominicana</i>)	931,151	31.13	60	7
	Social Christian Reformist Party (<i>Partido Reformista Social Cristiano</i>)	326,893	10.93	22	3
	National Unity Party (<i>Partido de Unidad Nacional</i>)	34,755	1.16		
	Quisqueyano Christian	23,929	0.80		

	Democratic Party (<i>Partido Quisqueyano Demócrata Cristiano</i>)				
	Green Party of Democratic Unity (<i>Partido Verde de la Unidad Democrática</i>)	14,623	0.49		
	National Civic Veterans Party (<i>Partido Nacional de Veteranos y Civiles</i>)	11,984	0.40		
	Dominican Social Alliance (<i>Alianza Social Dominicana</i>)	6,033	0.20		
	Popular Democratic Party (<i>Partido Demócrata Popular</i>)	5,400	0.18		
	Christian People's Party (<i>Partido Popular Cristiano</i>)	4,793	0.16		
Others	Revolutionary Social Democratic Party (<i>Partido Revolucionario Social Demócrata</i>)	45,744	1.53	-	-
	Movement for Independence, Unity and Change	8,538	0.29	-	-

	<i>(Movimiento Independencia, Unidad y Cambio)</i>				
	Independent Revolutionary Party (<i>Partido Revolucionario Independiente</i>)	5,458	0.19	-	-
	National Renaissance Party (<i>Partido Renacentista Nacional</i>)	2,914	0.10	-	-
	Dominican Humanist Party (<i>Partido Humanista Dominicana</i>)	2,485	0.08	-	-
Total (turnout 56.5 %)		2,991,031		178	32
Source: Junta Central Electoral and E-Polityka.pl					

2004 Presidential election

Summary of the 16 May 2004 Dominican Republic presidential election results

Candidates – Parties	Votes	%
Leonel Antonio Fernández Reyna - Dominican Liberation Party	2,063,871	57.11

<i>(Partido de la Liberación Dominicana)</i>		
Rafael Hipólito Mejía Domínguez - Dominican Revolutionary Party (<i>Partido Revolucionario Dominicana</i>)	1,215,928	33.65
Eduardo Estrella - Social Christian Reformist Party (<i>Partido Reformista Social Cristiano</i>)	312,493	8.65
Others	21,408	0.59
Total (turnout 72.8 %)	3,613,700	100.00
Source: Junta Central Electoral		

Dominican Republic parliamentary election, 2010

A **parliamentary election** was held in the Dominican Republic on 16 May 2010 to elect members to the 32 seats in the Senate and 183 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Polls forecasted a victory for the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) of President Leonel Fernández. Before the election, 96 of the 178 Chamber of Deputies seats and 22 of the 32 Senate seats were controlled by the PLD.

Background

The Dominican Republic shared the Hispaniola Island with Haiti, and seceded in 1844. After the 31-year dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo ended with his

assassination in 1961, three parties—aside from brief periods of unrest—have dominated the country's political arena.

The Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC) became a household name by electing three-time president Joaquín Balaguer in four different decades. The Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) won the 2000 presidential election, with candidate Hipólito Mejía.

In the 2004 presidential ballot, former president Leonel Fernández of the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) returned to power, winning 57.11 per cent of all cast ballots. Fernández had won the 1996 vote in a run-off, becoming the country's youngest head of state at age 42.

[Click here for the 2004 Dominican Republic Presidential Election Tracker](#)

During his first term as president, Fernández instituted a policy of higher wages for state employees in order to combat corruption. In 1997, a series of constitutional amendments were finalized with the appointment of new Supreme Court justices, in an effort to eradicate impunity.

In May 2004, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua agreed to the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). The Dominican Republic followed suit in August. The treaty seeks to reduce or eliminate taxes and tariffs on imports.

Fernández defined CAFTA as "a necessity" for the Caribbean nation, adding, "If we lose the United States as a trade ally, it would be a catastrophe. There will be no other destination for our products and services."

In the 2006 Congress of the Republic Election, political parties created two major coalitions. Final Results gave the PLD-backed Progressive Bloc 96 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 22 in the Senate. The opposition Great National Alliance finished second, with 82 lower house seats and 10 upper house seats.

[Click Here for the Dominican Republic 2006 Legislative Election Tracker](#)

Fernández introduced a series of measures to improve economic performance throughout 2006 and 2007. By the first half of 2006, the country's economy had grown by more than 11 percentage points.

One of Fernández's staple projects was the construction of a subway in Santo Domingo, the capital city. According to official figures, the project cost exceeded the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The president faced criticism for spending so many funds on the project instead of dealing with other pressing issues.

The first line of Santo Domingo's metro began commercial operations in January 2009.

Fernández ran for re-election in the May 2008 presidential ballot. He secured a new term in office with 53.83 per cent of the vote, defeating Miguel Vargas Maldonado of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD).

During his current term in office, Fernández has focused on improving the country's technological standing. The president has enjoyed a relatively stable term, riding on a more steady economy.

2010 Congress of the Republic Election

Dominican voters are called to renew the bi-cameral Congress on May 16. These will be the first legislative elections celebrated after a new Constitution was adopted in January 2010.

The three main political parties in the country are the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD), the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) and the Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC). Current president Leonel Fernández belongs to the PLD.

On May 5, PRD representatives officially accused the PLD of planning "a massive purchase of votes" in the municipality of Samaná before the Central Electoral Board (JCE).

On May 9, PLD campaign leader Francisco Javier García expressed confidence in his party achieving a commanding majority in the upcoming vote, saying, "There is no competition here. We know who is winning the election; here, nobody is talking about who will have majorities—it is clear that the PLD and the allied forces will be the majority."

Also on May 9, Fernández was criticized for actively campaigning for his party's candidates. The president is not supposed to take part in political rallies.

On May 12, the PRD presented a formal complaint before the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations (UN) saying that there are no full guarantees to participate in free and fair elections in the Dominican Republic. The PRD alleges that the PLD is abusing its access to state funds and state media for advancing its political campaign.

The OAS has deployed over 50 election observers to the Dominican Republic.

Voting took place on May 16. Initial reports stated that five people were killed and 13 wounded in clashes between PLP and PRD supporters. Turnout was tabled at 58 per cent, 1.5 points higher than in the 2006 ballot.

According to preliminary official results released on May 17, the governing PLP secured 31 seats in the 32-member Senate. A PRSC candidate secured the remaining seat. The PRD was left out of the upper house for the first time since 1970.

PLD secretary-general Reinaldo Pared Pérez said that the party will secure between 100 and 104 mandates in the 183-seat lower house. PRD leader Miguel Vargas Maldonado asserted that his party "made gains" in Congress compared to the 2006 ballot, adding that this will allow it to "contain the totalitarian rush" of the sitting government.

César Pina Toribio, a government spokesperson, referred to the PLD's landslide in the ballot, declaring that the Dominican people "have not given us a full license to do whatever we please with power."

OAS observers denounced "the use of state media for the purpose of proselytism," and an imbalance caused by the absence of caps for private campaign donations.

Final results gave the PLD a clear victory with 105 seats in the lower house, and 31 mandates in the upper house. Official turnout was tabled at 54.15 per cent.

Political

Players

President: Leonel Fernández - PLD

The president is elected to a four-year term by popular vote.

Legislative Branch: The *Congreso de la República* (Congress of the Republic) has two chambers. The *Cámara de Diputados* (Chamber of Deputies) has 178 members, elected to four-year terms by proportional representation. The *Senado* (Senate) has 32 members, elected to four-year terms in single-seat constituencies.

Results of Last Election:

President - May 16, 2008

	Vote%
Leonel Fernández - Dominican Liberation Party (PLD)	53.83%
Miguel Vargas Maldonado - Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD)	40.48%
Amable Aristy Castro - Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC)	4.59%
Eduardo Estrella - The Fourth Way (LCV)	0.47%
Guillermo Moreno - Movement for Independence, Unity and Change (MUCA)	0.44%
Pedro de Jesús Candelier - Popular Alliance Party (PAP)	0.15%

Trajano Santana - Independent Revolutionary Party (PRI)	0.04%
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Congress of the Republic - May 16, 2010

	Vote%	Dep.	Sen.
Dominican Liberation Party (PLD)	54.61%	105	31
Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD)	41.90%	75	--
Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC)	1.46%	3	1
Revolutionary Social Democratic Party (PRSD)	0.62%	--	--
Dominicans for Change (DC)	0.48%	--	--
Movement for Independence, Unity and Change (MIUC)	0.48%	--	--
Independent Revolutionary Party (PRI)	0.24%	--	--
Christian Democratic Union (UDC)	0.12%	--	--
Democratic Institutional Party (PDI)	0.05%	--	--
Dominican Social Alliance (ASD)	0.02%	--	--
Green Party of Democratic Unity (PVUD)	0.02%	--	--

Election

The election coincided with 155 municipal elections and elections for 20 seats in the Central American Parliament. The Central American Parliament representatives were being elected for the first time, having previously been appointed to their posts. More than 6 million people were eligible to vote in the election.

Controversy

The election was conducted amidst sporadic violence with an opposition Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) supporter being killed and three wounded in a clash between government and opposition supporters in San Cristóbal. The dead man was identified as the bodyguard of a PRD mayoral candidate, who was said to have been shot four times with a submachine gun and died in hospital. One of the injured men was the driver for the present mayor. In addition a PLD leader died on 16 May after being surprised whilst purchasing identity documents. A third person had lost their life on 15 May in clashes between PLD and PRD supporters in Samana.

Election commission officials and representatives from the PRD and PLD made appeals for calm during the election. President Leonel Fernández said that the violence would not affect the poll results.

An election monitoring mission from the Organization of American States said that it had received complaints of fake or purchased identity documents being used to vote. Nonetheless, it ratified the election as mostly free and fair.

Results

Summary of the 16 May 2010 Congress of the Dominican Republic election results

Parties and alliances	Votes	%	Deputies	Senators
Dominican Liberation Party (<i>Partido de la Liberación Dominicana</i>) and allies	1,808,817	54.61	105	31
Dominican Revolutionary Party (<i>Partido</i>	1,387,696	41.90	75	0

<i>Revolucionario Dominicana) and allies</i>				
Social Christian Reformist Party (<i>Partido Reformista Social Cristiano</i>)	48,308	1.46	3	1
Revolutionary Social Democratic Party (<i>Partido Revolucionario Social Demócrata</i>)	20,681	0.62	—	—
Dominicans for Change (<i>Dominicanos por el Cambio</i>)	15,932	0.48	—	—
Movement for Independence, Unity and Change (<i>Movimiento Independencia, Unidad y Cambio</i>)	15,824	0.48	—	—
Independent Revolutionary Party (<i>Partido Revolucionario Independiente</i>)	7,990	0.24	—	—
Christian Democratic Union (<i>Unión Demócrata Cristiana</i>)	3,919	0.12	—	—
Democratic Institutional Party (<i>Partido Demócrata Institucional</i>)	1,734	0.05	—	—
Dominican Social Alliance (<i>Alianza Social Dominicana</i>)	556	0.02	—	—

Green Party of Democratic Unity (<i>Partido Verde de la Unidad Democrática</i>)	520	0.02	—	—
Total (turnout 54.15%)	3,311,977	100.00	183	32
Source: Junta Central Electoral, european pressphoto agency				

In addition to the results presented above the PLD had 91 mayors elected of the 155 positions. The PRD and Social Christian Reformist Party won 58 and the Partido Popular Cristiano and the Christian Democratic Union won one apiece. The PRD blamed the 32 single-seat senate constituencies for their poor showing. The single seats led to a lack of proportionality with them failing to take any despite winning 42% of the vote. The PRD increased its overall vote share to 42% whilst the PRSC saw its vote share slump to 2% from 24% in 2002.

The leader of the opposition PRD has alleged fraud and blackmail were carried out by the ruling PLD. It has been alleged that in some constituencies the number of votes cast exceeded the number of registered voters. A press conference in which the PRD were to have presented evidence of fraud was cancelled with no explanation, while leaders of the PRD have called its current party president to step down. The PRD has established a commission to coordinate challenges against the results.

Trinidad and Tobago

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Trinidad and Tobago

Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Capital Port of Spain

Largest city San Fernando

Official language(s) English

Ethnic groups Africans, Indians, Venezuelans, Spaniards, French Creoles, Portuguese, Chinese, Britons, Lebanese, Syrians, Caribs

Demonym Trinidadian, Tobagonian

Government Parliamentary republic

- President George Maxwell Richards

- Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar

Legislature Parliament

- Upper House Senate

- Lower House House of Representatives

Independence

- from the United Kingdom 31 August 1962

Area

- Total 5,128 km² (172nd)
1,978 sq mi

- Water (%) negligible

Population

- July 2009 estimate 1,299,953 (152nd)

- Density 254.4/km² (49th)
659.2/sq mi

GDP (PPP) 2009 estimate

- Total \$25.922 billion

- Per capita \$19,818

GDP (nominal) 2009 estimate

- Total \$20.380 billion

- Per capita \$15,580^[2]

1. INTRODUCTION

The **Republic of Trinidad and Tobago** is an archipelagic state in the southern Caribbean, lying northeast of the South American country of Venezuela and south of Grenada in the Lesser Antilles. It shares maritime boundaries with other nations including Barbados to the northeast, Guyana to the southeast, and Venezuela to the south and west.

The country covers an area of 5,128 square kilometres (1,980 sq mi) and consists of two main islands, **Trinidad** and **Tobago**, and numerous smaller landforms. Trinidad is the larger and more populous of the main islands; Tobago is much smaller, comprising about 6% of the total area and 4% of the entire population which is estimated at 1.3 million (2005). The nation lies outside the hurricane belt.

Trinidad and Tobago was a Spanish colony from the times of Christopher Columbus to 1802, when it was ceded to Britain. The country obtained

independence in 1962. Unlike most of the English-speaking Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago's economy is primarily industrial, with an emphasis on petroleum and petrochemicals. Trinidad and Tobago has a sound macroeconomic framework and a long tradition of institutional stability. It scores relatively well in many of the 10 economic freedoms, and its economy has grown at an average rate of close to 7 percent over the past five years. The government has tried to diversify the economic base, and the country has evolved into a key financial center in the Caribbean region.

Trinidad and Tobago is known for its Carnival and is the birthplace of steelpan, calypso, soca, and limbo.

History

Historian E.L. Joseph claimed that Trinidad's Amerindian name was *Iere*, derived from the Arawak name for hummingbird, *ierèttê* or *yerettê*. However, Boomert claims that neither *cairi* nor *caeri* means hummingbird and *tukusi* or *tucuchi* does. Others have reported that *kairi* and *iere* simply mean *island*.^[citation needed] Christopher Columbus renamed it "La Ysla de la Trinidad" ("The Island of the Trinity"), fulfilling a vow he had made before setting out on his third voyage of exploration.

Tobago's cigar-like shape may have given it its Spanish name (*cabaco*, *tavaco*, *tobacco*) and possibly its Amerindian names of *Aloubaéra* (black conch) and *Urupaina* (big snail) (Boomert, 2000), although the English pronunciation is */tə beɪɡoʊ/*, rhyming with *plumbago* and *sago*.

Trinidad

Both Trinidad and Tobago were originally settled by Amerindians of South American origin. Trinidad was first settled by pre-agricultural Archaic people at least 7,000 years ago, making it the earliest-settled part of the Caribbean.

Ceramic-using agriculturalists settled Trinidad around 250 BC and then moved further up the Lesser Antillean chain. At the time of European contact Trinidad was occupied by various Arawakan-speaking groups including the Nepoya and Suppoya, and Cariban-speaking groups such as the Yao, while Tobago was occupied by the Island Caribs and Galibi.

Christopher Columbus encountered the island of Trinidad on 31 July 1498. Antonio de Sedeño first settled Trinidad in the 1530s as a means of controlling the Orinoco and subduing the Warao (Whitehead, 1997). Cacique Wannawanare (Guanaguanare) granted the St Joseph area to Domingo de Vera e Iburgüen in 1592 and then withdrew to another part of the island (Boomert, 2000). San José de Oruña (St Joseph) was established by Antonio de Berrío on this land. Walter Raleigh arrived in Trinidad on 22 March 1595 and soon attacked San José and captured and interrogated de Berrío obtaining much information from him and from the cacique Topiawari (Whitehead, 1997).

In the 1700s, Trinidad belonged as an island province to the Viceroyalty of New Spain together with Central America, present-day Mexico and Southwestern United States (Besson, 2000). However Trinidad in this period was still mostly forest, populated by a few Spaniards with their handful of slaves and a few thousand Amerindians (Besson, 2000). Spanish colonisation in Trinidad remained tenuous. Because Trinidad was considered underpopulated, Roume de St. Laurent, a Frenchman living in Grenada, was able to obtain a Cédula de Población from the Spanish King Charles III on 4 November 1783.

This Cédula de Población was more generous than the first of 1776 and granted free lands to Roman Catholic foreign settlers and their slaves in Trinidad willing to swear allegiance to the Spanish king. The land grant was thirty two acres for each man, woman and child and half of that for each slave brought. As a result, Scots, Irish, German, Italian and English families arrived. Protestants benefited from Governor Don José María Chacon's generous interpretation of the law. The French Revolution (1789) also had an impact on Trinidad's culture as it resulted

in the emigration of Martiniquan planters and their slaves to Trinidad who established an agriculture-based economy (sugar and cocoa) for the island.

The population of Port of Spain increased from under 3,000 to 10,422 in five years and the inhabitants in 1797 consisted of people of mixed race, Spaniards, Africans, French republican soldiers, retired pirates and French nobility (Besson, 2000). The total population of Trinidad in 1797 was 17,718; 2,151 of which were of European ancestry, 4,476 were "free blacks and people of colour", 10,009 were slaves and 1,082 Amerindians.

In 1797, General Sir Ralph Abercromby and his squadron sailed through the Bocas and anchored off the coast of Chaguaramas. The Spanish Governor Chacon decided to capitulate without fighting. Trinidad became a British crown colony, with a French-speaking population and Spanish laws (Besson, 2000). The conquest and formal ceding of Trinidad in 1802 led to an influx of settlers from England or the British colonies of the Eastern Caribbean. The sparse settlement and slow rate of population increase during Spanish rule and even after British rule made Trinidad one of the less populated colonies of the West Indies with the least developed plantation infrastructure. Under British rule new estates were created and slave importation increased to facilitate development of the land into highly profitable sugar-cane estates, but mass importation of slaves was still limited and hindered, arguably, by abolitionist efforts in Britain,

The Abolitionist movement and/or the decreased economic viability of slavery as a means of procuring labour both resulted in the abolition of slavery in 1833 via Slavery Abolition Act 1833 (citation 3 & 4 Will. IV c. 73), which was followed by its substitution by an "apprenticeship" period. This was also abolished in 1838 with full emancipation being granted on August 1. An overview of the populations statistics in 1838, however, clearly reveals the contrast between Trinidad and its neighbouring islands: upon Emancipation of the slaves in 1838, Trinidad had only 17,439 slaves, with 80% of slave owners having less than 10 slaves each (pgs. 84–85)

In contrast, at twice the size of Trinidad, Jamaica had roughly 360,000 slaves. Upon Emancipation, therefore, the incipient plantation owners were in severe need of labour, and the British filled this need by instituting a system of indenture. Various nationalities were contracted under this system, including Chinese, Portuguese and Indians. Of these, the Indians were imported in the largest numbers, starting from May 1, 1845, when 225 Indians were brought in the first shipment to Trinidad on the *Fatel Rozack*, a Muslim-owned vessel. Indentureship of the Indians lasted from 1845 to 1917, over which more than 147,000 Indians were brought to Trinidad to work on sugarcane plantations.

They added what was initially the second largest population grouping to the young nation and their labour developed previously underdeveloped plantation lands. The Indenture contract was exploitative, such that historians Hugh Tinker were to call it "a new system of slavery". Persons were contracted for a period of five years with a daily wage (25 cents in the early 20th century) after which they were guaranteed return passage to India. Coercive means were often used to obtain labourers, however, and the indenture contracts were soon extended to 10 years after the planters complained that they were losing their labour too early.

In lieu of the return passage the British authorities soon began offering portions of land to encourage settlement, however the numbers of people who did receive land grants is unclear. Indians entering the colony were also subject to particular crown laws which segregated them from the rest of the Trinidad population, such as the requirement that they carry a "Pass" on their person once off the plantations, and that if freed, they carry their "Free Papers" or Certificate indicating completion of the indentureship period.^[17] Despite this, however, the ex-Indentureds came to constitute a vital and significant section of the population, as did the ex-slaves.

The cacao (cocoa) crop also contributed greatly to the economic earnings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. After the collapse of the cacao crop (due to disease and the Great Depression) petroleum increasingly came to

dominate the economy. The collapse of the sugar cane industry concomitant with the failure of the cocoa industry resulted in widespread depression among the rural and agricultural workers in Trinidad and encouraged the rise of the Labour movement in the 1920 -1930 period. This was led by Tubal Uriah "Buzz" Butler, who, in combination with his Indian partners (notably Adrian Cola Rienzi) aimed to unite the working class and agricultural labouring class to achieve a better standard of living for all, as well as to hasten the departure of the British. This effort was severely undermined by the British Home Office and by the British-educated Trinidadian elite, many of whom were descended from the plantocracy themselves. They instigated a vicious race politicking in Trinidad which aimed at dividing the class-based movement on race-based lines, and they succeeded, especially since Butler's support collapsed from the top down. The Depression and the rise of the oil economy led to changes in the social structure. By the 1950s oil had become a staple in Trinidad's export market and was responsible for a growing middle-class among all sections of the Trinidad population.

Tobago

Columbus reported seeing Tobago on the distant horizon, which he named *Bellaforma*, but did not land on the island. The name of Tobago is thought to probably be a corruption of its old name, "Tobaco".

The Dutch and the Courlanders established themselves in Tobago in the 16th and 17th centuries and produced tobacco and cotton. Tobago changed hands between British, French, Dutch and Courlanders from modern-day Latvia. Britain consolidated its hold on both islands during the Napoleonic Wars, and they were combined into the colony of Trinidad and Tobago in 1889.

As a result of these colonial struggles, Amerindian, Spanish, French and English place names are all common in the country. African slaves and Chinese, Indian, and free African indentured labourers, as well as Portuguese from Madeira,

arrived to supply labour in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Emigration from Barbados and the other Lesser Antilles, Venezuela, Syria, and Lebanon also impacted on the ethnic make-up of the country.

Independence

Trinidad and Tobago became an independent nation (from the United Kingdom) in 1962. The presence of American military bases in Chaguaramas and Cumuto in Trinidad during World War II profoundly changed the character of society. In the post-war period, the wave of decolonisation that swept the British Empire led to the formation of the West Indies Federation in 1958 as a vehicle for independence. Chaguaramas was the proposed site for the federal capital. The Federation dissolved after the withdrawal of Jamaica and the government chose to seek independence on its own.

In 1976, the country severed its links with the British monarchy and became a republic within the Commonwealth, though it retained the British Privy Council as its final Court of Appeal. Between the years 1972 and 1983, the Republic profited greatly from the rising price of oil, as the oil-rich country increased its living standards greatly. In 1990, 114 members of the Jamaat al Muslimeen, led by Yasin Abu Bakr, formerly known as Lennox Phillip, stormed the Red House (the seat of Parliament), and Trinidad and Tobago Television, the only television station in the country at the time, and held the country's government hostage for six days before surrendering.

Since 2003, the country has entered a second oil boom, a driving force which the government hopes to use to turn the country's main export back to sugar and agriculture. Great concern was raised in August 2007 when it was predicted that this boom would last only until 2018. Petroleum, petrochemicals and natural gas continue to be the backbone of the economy. Tourism and the public service are the mainstay of the economy of Tobago, though authorities have begun to

diversify and the island. The bulk of tourism visitor arrival on the islands are from Western Europe.

Politics

Trinidad and Tobago is a republic with a two-party system and a bicameral parliamentary system based on the Westminster System. The head of state of Trinidad and Tobago is the President, currently George Maxwell Richards. The head of government is the Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar. The President is elected by an Electoral College consisting of the full membership of both houses of Parliament. The Prime Minister is elected from the results of a general election which takes place every five years.

The President is required to appoint the leader of the party who in his opinion has the most support of the members of the House of Representatives to this post; this has generally been the leader of the party which won the most seats in the previous election (except in the case of the 2001 General Elections). Tobago also has its own elections, separate from the general elections. In these elections, members are elected and serve in the Tobago House of Assembly.

The Parliament consists of two chambers, the Senate (31 seats) and the House of Representatives (41 seats). The members of the Senate are appointed by the president. Sixteen Government Senators are appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister, six Opposition Senators are appointed on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition and nine Independent Senators are appointed by the President to represent other sectors of civil society. The 41 members of the House of Representatives are elected by the people for a maximum term of five years in a "first past the post" system.

From 24 December 2001 to 24 May 2010, the governing party has been the People's National Movement led by Patrick Manning; the Opposition party was the United National Congress led by Kamla Persad-Bissessar. Another recent

party was the Congress of the People, or COP, led by Winston Dookeran. Support for these parties appears to fall along ethnic lines with the PNM consistently obtaining a majority Afro-Trinidadian vote, and the UNC gaining a majority of Indo-Trinidadian support. COP gained 23% of the votes in the 2007 general elections but failed to win a single seat. Prior to May 24 2010, the PNM held 26 seats in the House of Representatives and the UNC Alliance (UNC-A) held 15 seats, following elections held on 5 November 2007.

After just two and a half years, Prime Minister Patrick Manning dissolved Parliament in April 2010, and called a general election on May 24, 2010. After these general elections, the new governing party is the People's Partnership led by Kamla Persad-Bissessar. Persad-Bissessar and "the People's Partnership" wrested power from the Patrick Manning-led PNM, taking home 29 seats to the PNM's 12 seats, based on preliminary results.

There are 14 municipal corporations (two cities, three boroughs, and nine Regions) which have a limited level of autonomy. The various councils are made up of a mixture of elected and appointed members. Elections are due to be held every 3 years, but have not been held since 2003, 4 extensions having been sought by the government. Local Government elections are next due in July 2010.

Trinidad and Tobago is a leading member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), of which only the Caribbean Single Market (CSM) is in force. It is also the seat of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), which was inaugurated on 16 April 2005. The CCJ is intended to replace the British Judicial Committee of the Privy Council as the final Appellate Court for the member states of the CARICOM. Since its inauguration, only two states, Barbados and Guyana, have acceded to the appellate jurisdiction of the CCJ. The CCJ also serves as an original jurisdiction in the interpretation of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, to which all members of CARICOM have acceded.

Administrative divisions

Trinidad and Tobago is split into Regional Corporations and Municipalities. The island of Tobago is governed by the Tobago House of Assembly, and there are 9 corporations and 5 municipalities in the island of Trinidad:

Regions of Trinidad and Tobago

Regional corporations and municipalities of Trinidad and Tobago

	Flag Corporations	Area (km ²)	Population	Population density (/km ²)	Urban centres
1	Port of Spain City Corporation	13.45	49,031	3,650	Port of Spain
2	San Fernando City Corporation	18.64	55,419	2,970	San Fernando, Marabella
3	Chaguanas Borough Corporation	59.65	67,433	1,130	Chaguanas, Cunupia, Endeavour, Felicity, Montrose
4	Arima Borough Corporation	11.15	32,278	2,890	Arima

5	Point Fortin Borough Corporation	23.88	19,056	800	Point Fortin, Guapo, Teschier
6	Couva- Tabaquite- Talparo Regional Corporation	719.64	162,779	230	Claxton Bay, Couva, Point Lisas, St. Mary's, Tabaquite, Talparo
7	Diego Martin Regional Corporation	127.53	105,720	830	Carenage, Diego Martin, Maraval, Westmoorings
8	Penal-Debe Regional Corporation	246.91	83,609	340	Penal, Debe
9	Princes Town Regional Corporation	621.35	91,947	150	Moruga, Princes Town
10	Rio Claro- Mayaro Regional Corporation	852.81	33,480	40	Mayaro, Rio Claro, Guayaguayare
11	San Juan- Laventille Regional Corporation	220.39	157,295	710	Barataria, Laventille, Morvant, St. Joseph, San Juan

12	Sangre Grande Regional Corporation	898.94	64,343	70	Guaico, Sangre Grande, Toco, Valencia
13	Siparia Regional Corporation	510.48	81,917	160	Cedros, Fyzabad, La Brea, Santa Flora, Siparia
14	Tunapuna-Piarco Regional Corporation	527.23	203,975	370	Arouca, Curepe, Piarco, St. Augustine, Trincity, Tunapuna

Trinidad and Tobago general election, 2010

Trinidad and Tobago general election, 2010

All 41 seats to the House of Representatives

24 May 2010

	First party	Second party	Third party	
	Kamla Persad-Bissessar			
Leader	Kamla Persad-Bissessar	Patrick Manning	Winston Dookeran	
Party	United	People's	Congress	of

	National Congress	National Movement	the People
Leader's seat	Siparia	San Fernando East	Tunapuna
Last election	15 seats, 29.73%	26 seats, 45.85%	0 seats, 22.64%
Seats before	15	26	0
Seats won	21	12	6
Seat change	+6	-14	+6

Fourth party

Leader	Ashworth Jack
Party	Tobago Organisation of the People

Last election	0 seats
Seats before	0
Seats won	2
Seat change	+2

Previous	Prime	Minister
Patrick Manning		
People's National Movement		

Subsequent	Prime	Minister
Kamla Persad-Bissessar		
United National Congress		

A **general election** was held in Trinidad and Tobago on May 24, 2010. The date of the general elections was announced by Prime Minister Patrick Manning on

April 16, 2010, via a press release. The election was called over two years earlier than required by law. Polls showing that the UNC-led opposition coalition was likely to win the election were confirmed by the subsequent results.

With preliminary results showing the People's Partnership coalition likely to win a majority of 29 out of a possible 41 seats, Patrick Manning conceded defeat on election night. The final outcome has the People's Partnership winning 29 seats, and the PNM winning 12 seats. As a consequence of the People's Partnership's win, Kamla Persad-Bissessar of the People's Partnership coalition was elected Trinidad and Tobago's first female Prime Minister.

Background

The 2007 general elections awarded 26 of the 41 seats in the House of Representatives to the People's National Movement (PNM) and 15 to the United National Congress-Alliance (UNC-A). Despite receiving almost 23% of the votes cast, the Congress of the People (COP) received no seats. Several smaller parties, including the Tobago United Front/Democratic Action Congress, also failed to secure any seats. PNM leader Patrick Manning retained the position of Prime Minister, while UNC-A leader Basdeo Panday remained Leader of the Opposition.

These were the first elections for a House which had been expanded from 36 seats to 41. Previous elections were mostly decided by five marginal seats—Barataria/San Juan, Mayaro, San Fernando West, St. Joseph and Tunapuna. The 2007 election raised the number of marginal seats to 10, with Chaguanas East, Lopinot/Bon Air West, Princes Town South/Tableland (renamed Moruga/Tableland for the 2010 election), Pointe-à-Pierre and Tobago East ending up among the marginals.

Screening

April 7, 2010, was the start of screening of 41 new candidates for the People's National Movement. The screening began in Manning's San Fernando East constituency, with the other 40 electoral districts following. April 13, 2010, was the start of screening for the United National Congress. Screening for the UNC-A is held at the party's headquarters, which is at the Rienzi Complex in Couva. Screening for the Congress of the People began on April 1, 2010.

Nomination Day

Nomination day for the election was May 3, 2010.

Candidates

Winning candidates are in bold fonts.

Constituency	People's Partnership	PNM	NNV
Arima	Rodger Samuel (COP)	Laurel Lezama Lee Sing	
Arouca/Maloney	Anna Maria Mora (COP)	Alicia Hospedales	
Barataria/San Juan	Fuad Khan (UNC)	Joseph Ross	
Caroni Central	Glenn Ramadharsingh (UNC)	Sheila Madoo-Kurban	
Caroni East	Tim Gopeesingh (UNC)	Harold Ramoutar	Prakash Persad
Chaguanas East	Stephen Cadiz (UNC)	Mustapha Abdul-Hamid	
Chaguanas West	Austin "Jack" Warner (UNC)	Ronald Heera	
Couva North	Ramona	Ramdial Nal Ramsingh	

	(UNC)		
Couva South	Rudy Indarsingh (UNC)	Anthony Khan	
Cumuto/Manzanilla	Colin Partap (UNC)	Darryl Mahabir	
D'Abadie/O'Meara	Anil Roberts (COP)	Karen Nunez- Tesheira	
Diego Martin Central	Nicole Dyer-Griffith (COP)	Dr Amery Nigel Browne	Telesford
Diego Martin North/East	Garvin Nicholas (UNC)	Colm Imbert	Melissa Ochoa
Diego Martin West	Rocky Garcia (COP)	Keith Rowley	Zawadi Abu Bakr
Fyzabad	Chandresh Sharma (UNC)	Joel Primus	
La Brea	Ernesto Kesar (UNC)	Fitzgerald Jeffrey	
La Horquetta/Talparo	Jairam Seemungal (UNC)	Nadra Nathai- Gyan	
Laventille East/Morvant	Kwasi Mutema (COP)	Donna Cox	Umar Khan
Laventille West	Makandal Daaga (COP)	NiLeung Hypolite	
Lopinot/Bon Air West	Lincoln Douglas (COP)	Neil Parsanlal	
Mayaro	Winston Peters (UNC)	"Gypsy" Clifford Campbell	
Moruga/Tableland	Clifton De Coteau (UNC)	Augustus Thomas	
Naparima	Nizam Baksh (UNC)	Faiz Ramjohn	

Oropouche East	Roodal (UNC)	Moonilal	Christin Ramdial
Oropouche West	Stacy (UNC)	Roopnarine	Heather Sedeno
Pt Fortin	Nyahuma Obika (COP)	Paula Scoon	Gopee-
Pointe-à-Pierre	Errol McLeod (UNC)	Christine Kangaloo	
Port-of-Spain North/St Ann's West	Annabelle Davis (UNC)	Patricia McIntosh	Fuad Abu Bakr
Port-of-Spain South	Gisselle Russel (COP)	Marlene McDonald	Travis Mulraine
Princes Town	Nela Khan (UNC)	Anwarie Ramkissoon	
San Fernando East	Carol (COP)	Cuffy-Dowlat Patrick Manning	
San Fernando West	Carolyn Bachan (COP)	Seepersad- Junia Regrello	Indrani Abu Bakr
Siparia	Kamla Bissessar (UNC)	Persad- Deokiesingh	Vidya
St Ann's East	Verna St. Greaves (UNC)	Rose Joanne Thomas	Christian Dookie
St Augustine	Prakash (COP)	Ramadhar Balchandra Sharma	
St Joseph	Herbert Volney (UNC)	Kennedy Swaratsingh	
Tabaquite	Suruj (UNC)	Rambachan Farouk Mohammed	
Tobago East	Vernella	Alleyne- Gizel	Thomas-

	Toppin (TOP)	Roberts		
Tobago West	Delmon Baker (TOP)	Terrence Williams		
Toco/ Sangre Grande	Rupert Griffith (UNC)	Eric Panther"	"Pink Neil Taylor	De Silva
Tunapuna	Winston (COP)	Dookeran Esther Gendre	Le	

Results

The election was won by the People's Partnership coalition, causing Kamla Persad-Bissessar of the UNC to be the country's first female Prime Minister.^[5] Persad-Bissessar's coalition won 29 of 41 seats, causing incumbent Prime Minister Patrick Manning to concede defeat. Manning's PNM was reduced to 12 seats. In her victory speech, Persad-Bissessar stated: "The honor you've given me is without parallel ... I accept it with deep honor and gratitude."

Summary of the 24 May 2010 House of Representatives of Trinidad and Tobago election results

Parties	Votes	%	Seats
People's Partnership Coalition	432,026	59.81	29
People's National Movement	285,354	39.50	12
New National Vision	1,998	0.27	0

Independents	349	0.02	0
Total valid (turnout 69.45%)	719,727	100.00	41
Invalid	2,595		
Total	722,322		
Source: EBC			

Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago, a major island in the south Caribbean, held a general election on May 24 for all 41 seats in the House of Representatives, whose members are elected through classic FPTP, a remnant of British rule, along with the country's Westminster system, although it is a republic.

The father of independence, Eric Williams and his People's National Movement (PNM), dominated politics between 1956 and 1981. The PNM, of which current Prime Minister Patrick Manning is a member, has traditionally found most support with black Afro-Trinidadians, and the PNM has been a usually conservative and economically right-wing party. Unemployment and labour conflicts during Williams' tenure has helped the rise of parties on the left, mostly supported by Indo-Trinidadians. Blacks and Indians make up around 40-45% each of the country's population.

The main opposition is now the United National Congress, a social democratic party founded in 1988 from a split in the then-ruling National Alliance for Reconstruction. The UNC's ancestor is the United Labour Front, which used to be the main opposition to the Williams PNM in the latter years of his rule. The UNC formed government between 1995 and 2001. Ahead of this election, the UNC formed the 'People's Partnership' with the Congress of the People and the Tobago Organization of the People – Tobago is historically the 'small sidelined' island of the country, like Barbuda, Nevis or Rodrigues in their respective countries. Here are the results:

UNC and allies 59.81% winning 29 seats (21 UNC, 6 COPE, 2 TOP/ +14)
PNM 39.5% winning 12 seats (-14)

Still in the region, voters in Suriname on May 25 elected an opposition alliance including former dictator Dési Bouterse (a wanted drug dealer), defeating the incumbent New Front led by soon-to-be ex-President Ronald Venetiaan. Dési Bouterse ruled the country unofficially for most of the 80s as military dictator of an officially socialist republic, and cracked down in 1982 on internal opponents, killing a number of them in a case which remains open to this day. He was also sentenced to 11 years in jail in the Netherlands for drug trafficking and the Netherlands has an arrest warrant for him, which prevents his exit from the country, although he cannot be prosecuted as a former head of state. Dési Bouterse's Mega Combinatie won 23 seats against 14 for the New Front, while other parties won the remaining 15 seats out of the 52 at stake. Dési Bouterse is already a candidate for the indirect presidential ballot in July, where a two-thirds majority is required. Venetiaan is retiring.