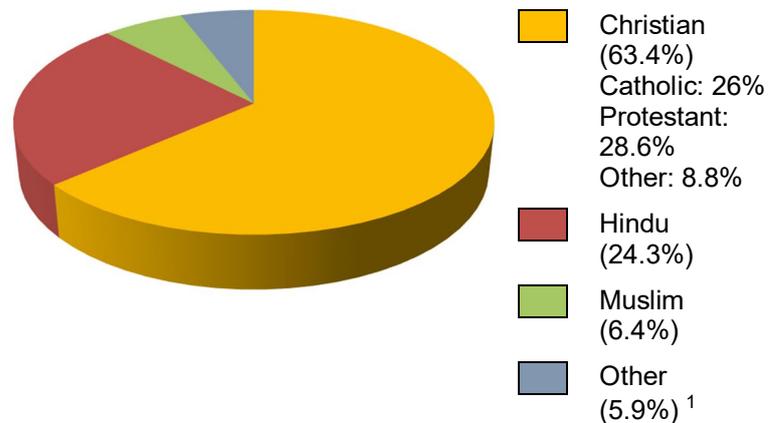
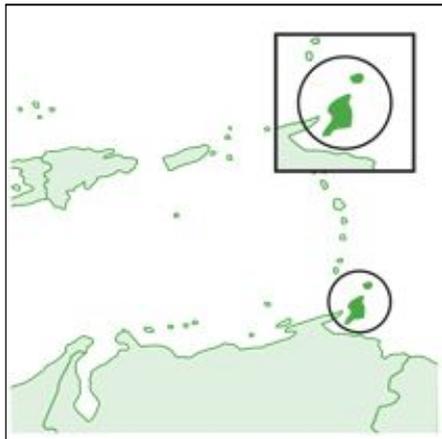


TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



Area:	Population ² :	Political system:	Major Language(s):
5,128 km ²	1.3 million	Democracy	English

Legal framework on freedom of religion and actual application

The constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion and enshrines, as fundamental freedoms, the freedom of conscience and religious belief (article 4, h).³

The law prohibits acts that promote hostility towards any group, including religious groups. Anyone engaging in hate speech especially against others on religious grounds shall be fined.

Religious groups are registered by the government. They must show that they have been active in the last year, and register as a charity, which allows them, among other things, to benefit from tax breaks, receive donations, and perform civil marriages. Missionaries belonging to registered religious groups are allowed entry to the country.

Religious education is authorised in private and public schools, with a timetable set aside for any religious group if parents request it. Attendance in such courses is voluntary. Discrimination on religious grounds is prohibited in terms of student admission or presence in school.

The government financially supports activities of the Inter-Religious Organisation (IRO), which represents most major religious groups. There is also direct funding for religious organisations, mainly Christian churches. Public and religious public schools receive state subsidies.

Government representatives regularly participate in the religious ceremonies and festivals of various faiths.⁴

Incidents

In January 2015, the Prime Minister took part in a forum organised by Seventh-day Adventists, recognising the importance of religious organisations and ensuring respect and support for them.⁵

In February 2016, Njemile Webb, a Muslim woman, accused Wonderful World, a chain selling lingerie and accessories, of refusing to hire her because she is a Muslim and wears a hijab. The company strongly denied the charge.⁶

In March 2016, a teacher at Naparima College was embroiled in a controversy because of a recording in which she is heard talking with her students, and calling for the shooting of atheists and homosexuals. The authorities are investigating the case.⁷

Given the country's ethical background and African heritage, the Catholic Church has a relative impact on the population, but it can exercise its religious activities with relative tranquillity.

Prospects for freedom of religion

The legal system of Trinidad and Tobago is favourable to religion, as something necessary and positive. The authorities are open to different faiths, and participate in celebrations. However, international media noted certain favouritism in government support for some religions over others.⁸

With respect to the period under consideration, there have been some cases of intolerance by individuals. Compared to the 2014 report, religious freedom has come under greater threat, and has thus suffered.

¹ http://www.thearda.com/internationalData/countries/Country_224_2.asp accessed on 7 March 2016.

² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-20072231> accessed on 4 May 2016.

³ http://www.thearda.com/internationalData/countries/Country_224_6.asp accessed on 7 March 2016.

⁴ <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/238788.pdf> accessed on 7 March 2016.

⁵ <http://www.news.gov.tt/content/prime-ministers-address-sda-rally#.Vujn1n3hBCA> accessed on 7 March 2016.

⁶ <http://www.guardian.co.tt/news/2016-02-27/wonderful-world-finalising-probe-hijab-case> accessed on 7 March 2016.

⁷ <http://www.trinidadexpress.com/20160315/news/naps-8216gay-rant8217-teacher-still-at-school> accessed on 15 March 2016.

⁸ http://www.thearda.com/internationalData/countries/Country_224_3.asp accessed on 7 March 2016.