

## Trinidad and Tobago - Judicial system

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The judicial system follows the model of the UK, with some local variations. The Supreme Court of Judicature (/knowledge/Supreme\_Court\_of\_Judicature.html) consists of the High Court of Justice and the Court of Appeal. The former includes a chief justice and 10 puisne judges. Its jurisdiction and its practices and procedures follow closely those of the High Court of Justice in England. Civil actions and proceedings (/knowledge/Proceedings.html) are usually heard by only one High Court judge (/knowledge/High\_Court\_judge.html) but may be tried by a jury of nine members. A High Court judge with a jury of 9–12 members tries criminal offences. The Court of Appeal consists of the chief justice and three other justices. Minor offenses are handled by district courts, including traffic courts. The judicial system also includes the Industrial Court and Tax Appeal Board, and a system of magistrate (/knowledge/Magistrate.html) courts. All criminal cases are first sent to a magistrate's court. Appeals may be made to the Court of Appeal and, prior to 2003, were carried to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the United Kingdom. On 9 June (/knowledge/June\_9.html) 2003, Caribbean leaders met in Kingston, Jamaica, to ratify (/knowledge/Ratification.html) a treaty (/knowledge/Treaty.html) to establish the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ). The first session of the CCJ was scheduled for November 2003. Eight nations—Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent (/knowledge/Saint\_Vincent.html) and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago—officially approved the CCJ, although 14 nations were planning to use the court for appeals.

The judiciary (/knowledge/Judiciary.html) is independent of the other branches and free from outside interference. Criminal defendants are presumed innocent and are afforded the right to representation by counsel. In practice, the civil and criminal dockets are badly backlogged due to inadequate resources and inefficiency.

In an ongoing dispute about using the death penalty, the government of Trinidad and Tobago (/knowledge/Trinidad\_and\_Tobago.html) withdrew as a party to the American Convention on Human Rights but remained obligated until May 1999 to the Organization of American States to afford all of the rights set out within the American Declaration. In June 1999 the government carried out five executions, the first to take place in the country in five years.

**Also read article about Trinidad and Tobago (/knowledge/Trinidad\_and\_Tobago.html) from Wikipedia**

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