

Travel



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Trinidad & Tobago Tactical: Carnival celebrations, parade slated in Port of Spain between February 9-13; maintain vigilance

Current Situation

- The annual Carnival celebrations in Port of Spain will be held between February 9-13, with the main carnival parade scheduled for February 12-13.
- As part of the Carnival parade, three bands namely the Senior bands, the Junior Bands, and the J'Ouvert bands will participate starting from 07:00 (local time) onwards on February 12-13. Some of the focal points of the parade are: the Ministry of Finance Treasury Division, Queen's Park Savannah, Ariapita Avenue, St. Vincent Street, Broadway Street, and Frederick Street among others. Specific details regarding the various parade routes can be found [here](#).
- Authorities have deployed police personnel and patrols, and have also increased surveillance of parade routes in Port of Spain to prevent any gang violence during the festivities.
- Meanwhile, on January 24, the US Embassy in Port of Spain issued a security alert for elevated risks of crime and violence, such as vehicle break-ins, robberies, assaults, and shootings during Carnival celebrations.
- Violent incidents have been recorded across Port of Spain in recent weeks, including a shooting that left one individual dead near Wrightson Road, Port-au-Spain on January 8.



Assessments & Forecast

1. Given precedent, the annual parade is expected to draw a turnout in the low to mid-tens of thousands. Crowds of varying sizes are expected to organize spontaneous celebrations in Arima, Chaguanas, Mayaro, San Fernando, and Tobago on days leading up to the parade.
2. The Carnival celebrations are expected to transpire peacefully without major unrest incidents.
3. While petty crimes and pickpocketing are common during large gatherings, given recent incidents of insecurity combined with the US Embassy alert, there remains a potential for violent incidents such as shootings between rival gang members and robberies. While civilians are rarely targeted, such attacks nevertheless elevate the potential for spillover violence on bystanders in the vicinity, especially amid the high tourist footfall during Carnival celebrations.
4. With bolstered security measures implemented across the city for the duration of the celebrations, persistent attempts to tackle gang violence can be anticipated. To this end, increased security checkpoints will increase travel times and traffic congestion.
5. Although unconfirmed, road closures are likely around the US Embassy and surrounding streets, including Queen's Park East, Queen's Park West, Marli Street, and Savannah Street.
6. In addition, given the large number of spectators expected to attend the celebrations, major traffic disruptions can also be anticipated throughout Port of Spain between February 9-13.
7. With the slated closure of most public institutions, governmental offices, and businesses throughout the city between February 9-13, disruptions to public services and commercial activities are expected.

Recommendations

1. Those operating or residing in Port of Spain from February 9-13 are advised to maintain vigilance given the latent potential for gang-related violence during the Carnival.
2. Allot for disruptions to public services, business continuity, and traffic due to the slated parades and festivities.