



THE PRESIDENT  
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

May 17, 2021

The Honourable Bridgid Annisette-George  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago  
Parliamentary Complex  
Cabildo Building  
PORT OF SPAIN

Honourable Speaker,

In keeping with Section 9(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I forward herewith to you for presentation to the House of Representatives, a statement setting out the specific grounds on which my decision to declare the existence of a state of public emergency on May 15, 2021, was based.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Weekes', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Paula-Mae Weekes O.R.T.T.,  
President**



**STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT  
SETTING OUT THE SPECIFIC GROUNDS ON WHICH  
THE DECISION TO DECLARE THE EXISTENCE OF  
A STATE OF PUBLIC EMERGENCY WAS BASED**

*SECTION 9(1) OF THE CONSTITUTION  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO*



On Saturday May 15, 2021, being satisfied that a public emergency had arisen as the result of an outbreak of infectious disease, I made a Proclamation declaring that a state of public emergency exists.

Set out hereunder are the specific grounds on which my decision to issue that Proclamation was based.

This statement satisfies section 9(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, which provides that a President shall deliver to the Speaker, within three days of the making of such Proclamation, specific grounds for the decision to declare the existence of a state of public emergency, for presentation to the House of Representatives.

On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared an outbreak of the coronavirus a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC). The following day, I issued a Proclamation declaring the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) a dangerous infectious disease.

On February 11, 2020, the virus was given the name COVID-19 and one month later the WHO made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterised as a pandemic.

From the announcement of the PHEIC, the nation's public health machinery has been in overdrive, led by the Minister of Health, specialist doctors and health care workers.



A public information programme was instituted, particularly by means of regular media briefings. Protocols were established and disseminated, with an emphasis on individual responsibility. Public Health Regulations were implemented and were responsive to changes in circumstances.

After efforts from many quarters, the nation appeared to have flattened the curve, and while new infections continued, recovery was steady and the number of deaths, though each lamentable, remained low.

Unfortunately, the virus mutated introducing new and more virulent strains which inevitably reached our country, including importantly, the “Brazilian Variant”. Our circumstances have taken a sudden and distressing turn for the worse.

In recent weeks there has been a surge in the number of persons infected with COVID-19, an intensifying of symptoms, a lengthening of the period of infection, and a troubling increase in the number of deaths attributed to the virus. Two matters are of particular concern; the first is that the demographic of the infected appears to be widening, and second, our parallel health system is being stretched to its limits, in terms of both human and material resources.

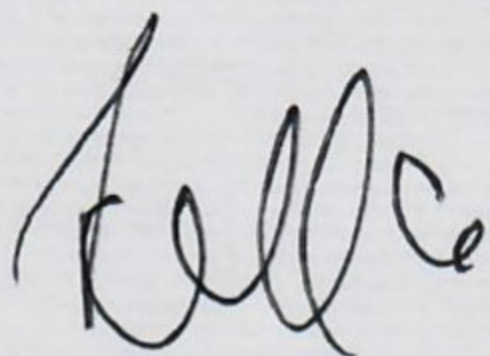
Trinidad and Tobago has arrived at alarming levels of spread and severity of the virus, and while many of our citizens have adjusted their practices to conform to the urgings of our public



health officials, others across the board have failed to follow the guidelines and protocols intended to minimise the spread of COVID-19. It is either that they have not received the messaging or are unable or unwilling to abide by it.

It is accepted internationally that COVID-19 will only be brought under control if, and when, a sufficient number of members of a population has been effectively vaccinated. Until such time, an increase in compliance with the guidelines promulgated by the Ministry of Health and other official sources is our only hope of stemming the tide.

In the above premises, I am satisfied that the outbreak of the infectious disease COVID-19 with its deleterious effects on the health of our citizenry provides grounds on which I could and should declare the existence of a state of public emergency.



**PAULA-MAE WEEKS, O.R.T.T.**

**PRESIDENT**

*May 17, 2021*