



BILL ESSENTIAL NO. 2 OF 2026–2027 2nd Session, 13th Parliament

BILL ESSENTIALS

SPECIAL OPERATIONS BILL, 2026

Date Introduced: **September 16, 2026**

Introduced by: **The Attorney General**

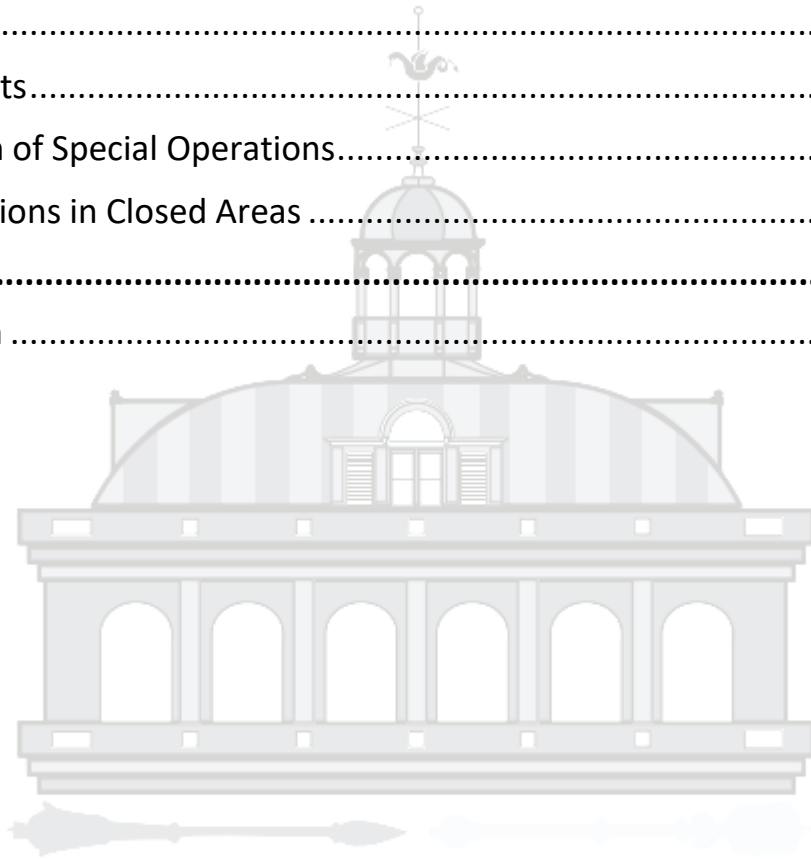
House: **House of Representatives**

HOR Bill No. 15 of 2026



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PARLIAMENT
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

1. The **Special Operations Bill, 2026**, (hereinafter referred to as the “**Bill**”) was introduced in the House of Representatives by Senator the Honourable John Jeremie, SC, Attorney General, on September 16, 2026.
2. The Bill seeks to introduce a revised legislative framework to establish policing districts within Trinidad and Tobago and to provide for the conduct of special operations to combat criminality in those districts.
3. The Bill, once passed, will come into effect on such date as fixed by the President by Proclamation.
4. The Bill is similar to the **Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Bill, 2026** which was introduced in the House of Representatives on January 16, 2026. The Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Bill, 2026 proposed to provide for special measures for upholding and preserving the rule of law, public order, citizen security and public safety within certain geographically defined areas of Trinidad and Tobago, and for other related matters. Though it was passed in the House of Representatives on January 17, 2026, it was defeated in the Senate on January 27, 2026, and therefore never came into operation.

BILL SUMMARY

The Bill seeks to introduce the following:

-  Policing districts within Trinidad and Tobago and provision for the conduct of special operations to combat criminality.
-  The declaration of closed areas within districts where the presence of violent crime, gang activity or illegal weapons threatens public safety and where ordinary law enforcement measures are insufficient to maintain or restore public safety and peace.
-  The imposition of certain restrictions and controls within a closed area, inclusive of cordons and curfews.
-  A permit system to enter or leave closed areas.

Interpretation

5. The following terms and words are defined in **Clause 3**:

-  **“Chief of Defence Staff”** means the person holding or acting in the office of Chief of Defence Staff of the Defence Force;
-  **“closed area”** means an area declared as a closed area under section 11 and includes an area within a cordon;
-  **“Commissioner”** means the person holding or acting in the office of Commissioner of Police;
-  **“cordon”** means a cordon established in a closed area under section 13;
-  **“Defence Force”** means the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force established under the Defence Act;
-  **“district”** means a policing district specified in the Schedule;
-  **“gang”** has the meaning assigned to it in the **Anti-Gang Act, 2021**¹;
-  **“gang-related activity”** has the meaning assigned to it in the **Anti-Gang Act, 2021**²;
-  **“Minister”** means the Minister with responsibility for the Police Service;
-  **“Police Service”** means the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service established under the **Police Service Act**, the Municipal Police Service within the meaning of Part III of the **Municipal Corporations Act** and the Special Reserve Police established under the **Special Reserve Police Act**;
-  **“weapon”** has the meaning assigned to it in section 2 of the **Anti-Terrorism Act**.³

Policing Districts

6. **Clause 4** of the Bill proposes to divide Trinidad and Tobago into policing districts for the purposes of the operation of the Act, as specified in the Schedule. The Minister is empowered to amend the Schedule, by Order. The Table below illustrates the policing districts.

¹ **“gang”** means a combination of two or more persons, whether formally or informally organised, who engage in gang-related activity.

² **“gang-related activity”** means any of the offences listed in the First Schedule which a gang leader or gang member plans, directs, orders, authorizes, or requests including: (a) an attempt to commit the offence; (b) the aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring of the offence; or (c) conspiracy to commit the offence.

³ **“weapon”** includes—

- (a) a firearm under section 2 of the Firearms Act; (b) a prohibited weapon under section 2 of the Firearms Act;
- (c) any article made or adapted for use for causing injury to a person or property or intended by a person for use by him or another person for that purpose; (d) an explosive weapon; (e) a chemical weapon; (f) a biological weapon; or (g) a nuclear weapon.

District	Municipality
District 1	City of Port of Spain, Borough of Diego Martin and the Regional Municipality of San Juan/ Laventille
District 2	Borough of Arima and the Regional Municipality of Tunapuna-Piarco
District 3	Regional Municipality of Sangre Grande and the Regional Municipality of Mayaro-Rio Claro
District 4	Borough of Chaguanas and the Regional Municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo
District 5	City of San Fernando and the Regional Municipality of Princes Town
District 6	Borough of Point Fortin, Borough of Siparia and Regional Municipality of Penal-Debe
District 7	The Island of Tobago

Administration of Special Operations

7. **Clause 5** mandates the Commissioner, after consultation with the Prime Minister, to designate a police officer, not below the rank of Superintendent, as the Head of Special Operations for each district. The Head of Special Operations is charged with overseeing the conduct of special operations within the district. If the Prime Minister objects, after consultation with the Minister, the Minister with responsibility for defence and the Chief of Defence Staff, then the police officer cannot be designated as Head of Special Operations.
8. Moreover, **Clause 5** stipulates that the Heads of Special Operations, as well as the police officers assigned to them by the Commissioner, must be trained in Human Rights, use of force, community engagement and conflict de-escalation.
9. **Clause 7** provides for military assistance to support special operations in each District where such assistance is deemed necessary and is requested by the Commissioner. The Chief of Defence Staff shall assign, in respect of each District, a member of the Defence Force, not below the rank of Major, to be the Head of Military Assistance, as well as members of the Defence Force under each Head of Military Assistance. The Heads of Military Assistance, as well as the members of the Defence Force under them, must be trained in Human Rights, use of force, community engagement and conflict de-escalation.
10. Similar to the Head of Special Operations, the Chief of the Defence Staff appoints the Head of Military Assistance after consultation with the Prime Minister. If the Prime Minister

objects, after consultation with the Minister, the Minister with responsibility for defence and the Commissioner, then the member of the Defence Force cannot be designated as Head of Military Assistance.

11. **Clause 8** requires the Head of Special Operations and the Head of Military Assistance to submit monthly reports to the Commissioner of Police and to the Chief of Defence Staff, respectively, regarding the special operations conducted within the District. The Commissioner and the Chief are required to furnish the Prime Minister, the Minister with responsibility for the Police Service and the Minister with responsibility for defence, with copies of the reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements results in disciplinary action.
12. The Prime Minister, in consultation with the Minister, the Minister with responsibility for defence and the Commissioner, shall determine the matters to be addressed and the information contained in the reports.
13. Additionally, **Clause 8** places a reporting obligation on the Prime Minister, requiring her to cause an annual report on the conduct of special operations and the provision of military assistance to be laid in Parliament, within three months after the end of each calendar year.
14. According to **Clause 9**, the Commissioner and the Chief of Defence Staff are required to establish joint protocols for the collaboration and cooperation between police officers and members of the Defence Force. The Commissioner and the Chief of Defence Staff must also consult each other on the standard operating procedures and protocols which are intended to govern special operations and military assistance, respectively. **Clause 9** also mandates disciplinary action for a police officer or a member of the Defence Force who fails to comply with any protocol or procedure established thereunder.
15. **Clause 10** empowers the Head of Special Operations of a district to carry out special operations in his designated district, with or without the assistance of the Defence Force. Further, police officers who are executing duties pursuant to a special operation maintain all rights, powers, authority, privileges and immunities and are subject to the duties and responsibilities of constables pursuant to the **Police Service Act, Chap. 15:01**.

Special Operations in Closed Areas

16. By virtue of **Clause 11**, the President may, by Order, declare, any area within a district as a closed area, once satisfied on reasonable grounds that public safety and peace is threatened by the inability of ordinary law enforcement measures to maintain public safety and order,

as well as, escalating rates of violent crime; the prevalence of illegal firearms or ammunition, or the unlawful presence of other weapons or explosives; or the control or intimidation, or the attempted control or intimidation of a local community by a gang in that area.

17. The Order, along with a statement setting out the grounds for the Order must be delivered to the Speaker within seven (7) days for presentation to the House of Representatives.
18. According to **Clause 11**, following an Order to declare an area as a closed area, a Head of Special Operations may utilise barriers, roadblocks or other means as may be determined to block off said closed area.
19. **Clause 12** creates a permit system which prohibits persons from entering or leaving a closed area without a permit. The Commissioner is empowered to issue, suspend or cancel permits by notice published in the *Gazette*.
20. **Clause 12** further also grants the Chief of Defence Staff, a Head of Special Operations or a Head of Military Assistance the authority to issue permits.
21. The following office holders do not require a permit to enter or to leave a closed area:
 -  the President, the Prime Minister, a Member of Cabinet, a Member of Parliament, a Member of the Tobago House of Assembly or a Member of a Municipal Council;
 -  the Chief Justice or a Judge of the Supreme Court;
 -  the Commissioner or the Chief of Defence Staff;
 -  the Head of Special Operations, or the Head of Military Assistance, responsible for the closed area; or
 -  a police officer, or a member of the Defence Force, when on duty or proceeding to or from duty.
22. Contravention of **Clause 12** or failure to comply, without reasonable excuse with any condition of the permit, constitutes an offence punishable on summary conviction to a **fine of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000)** and to **imprisonment for one (1) year**.
23. **Clause 13** empowers a Head of Special Operations to establish a cordon in a closed area by way of barriers, roadblocks or by other means. A Head of Special Operations must publish a notice of the cordon, including its boundaries and requirements, and display such notice in manner which makes it easily visible to persons within the cordon and to persons seeking entry into the cordon.

24. Pursuant to **Clause 14**, the President is authorised to impose a curfew in a closed area, requiring persons to remain in their premises during specified hours. The conditions of the curfew shall not be applicable to persons who have been issued the relevant permit or to certain office holders as previously defined. The President may revoke the Order imposing a curfew in a closed area at any time.
25. **Clause 14** also empowers the Commissioner to issue, suspend or cancel a permit granting permission to be outside of their premises during a curfew period. Notices of issuance, cancellation or suspension of permits must be published in the Gazette.
26. Contravention of **Clause 14** or failure to comply, without reasonable excuse with any condition of the permit, constitutes an offence punishable on summary conviction to a **fine of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000)** and to **imprisonment for one (1) year**.
27. **Clause 15** vest police officers conducting a special operation with the power to search any place, vehicle or person within a closed area, without a warrant. To exercise such power, the police officer must have a reasonable suspicion that an offence is in the course of being committed, has been committed or is about to be committed.
28. When conducting a search without warrant, the police officer in charge of the search has a duty to ensure the following:
-  the presence of the owner, occupier or person in possession, of the place or vehicle being searched or their agent;
 -  the owner, occupier or person in possession of the place or vehicle being searched be permitted the opportunity to observe the search and everything in relation to the search; and
 -  a female shall only be searched by a female police officer.
29. **Clause 15** empowers a police officer, in connection with a search, to seize any vehicle, article or document that may aid in preserving public order or in an investigation. However, a police officer may not seize tools of a lawful business or documents or articles which are subject to legal professional privilege. Subsequent to a lawful seizure of items, the police officer has a duty to create a list of items seized and to provide a receipt to the owner, occupier or person in possession.
30. **Clause 16** of the Bill requires that any vehicle, article or document seized during a search be secured in a place determined by Commissioner, pending any examination, investigation, trial or enquiry. However, if the article is perishable, it may be disposed of in a manner approved

by the Commissioner. The Commissioner must return items immediately where he has reasonable grounds to believe that the item will no longer assist in preventing or controlling public disorder; or is no longer of evidential value.

31. A person is empowered under **Clause 16** to apply to a Magistrate to return an item. A Magistrate, may order that an item be returned to the applicant or to another person so entitled to receive the item, if satisfied that the item will no longer assist in preventing or controlling public disorder; or is no longer of evidential value.
32. Pursuant to **Clause 17**, an officer participating in a special operation in a closed area shall not detain or arrest any person, unless the Head of Special Operations believes that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the person has committed, is in the course of committing or is about to commit an offence.
33. Furthermore, a person detained or arrested in a closed area shall be informed within a reasonable timeframe and in a language he understands of the reason of his detention or arrest. Immediately, or as soon as practicable after a detention or arrest, the detainee must be taken before a Magistrate so that it may be determined whether there are reasonable grounds for the detention or arrest.
34. Where a Magistrate determines that the detention or arrest of a person is reasonably required in the interest of justice, he may order that such person be remanded in custody for a period not exceeding forty-eight (48) hours. At the expiration of that period, the person must be taken before a Judge of the High Court. The person may be detained for a further period as determined by a Judge of the High Court if the Judge is satisfied that continued arrest or detention is reasonably required in the interest of justice.
35. **Clause 18** of the Bill provides that it is an offence to threaten, assault, or without lawful justification or excuse obstruct or hinder a police officer, a member of the Defence Force or any other person performing a function under the Act. A person who commits such an offence shall be liable on summary conviction to a **fine of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000)** and to **imprisonment for one (1) year**.
36. **Clause 19** of the Bill outlines the process for treating with persons held in custody for thirty-six (36) hours without an order by a Magistrate. In such a case, the officer in charge of the police station is required to inform an officer not below the rank of Assistant Superintendent of the circumstances, and such information shall be recorded in the station diary. The officer shall cause the necessary investigations to be carried out and shall ensure that the person in custody be immediately brought before a Magistrate.

37. **Clause 20** mandates that all complaints made by persons who have been arrested or detained, be recorded in the station diary. It also permits visits to persons who have been detained or arrested, having regard to matters concerning security and the safety of persons. The categories of persons permitted to visit a person in custody include: a spouse, cohabitant, family member, registered medical practitioner or an Attorney-at-law.
38. Pursuant to **Clause 21** of the Bill, a police officer or a member of the Defence Force shall, as far as possible having regard to the available resources use a body-worn camera when conducting special operations in a closed area.
39. **Clause 21** also places an obligation on the Commissioner of Police and the Chief of Defence Staff to establish and review joint protocols and procedures for the use of body-worn cameras in closed areas. A police officer or a member of the Defence Force who fails to comply with any protocol or standard operating procedure regarding the use of body-worn cameras is liable to disciplinary action. The protocols and procedures shall include, but are not limited to the following:
-  use of data collected;
 -  persons who may access data collected and in what circumstances;
 -  circumstances for the activation and deactivation of body-worn cameras;
 -  informing a member of the public of recording by body-worn cameras; and
 -  documenting the time and reason for deactivating body-worn cameras.
40. Data recorded by body-worn cameras can be accessed by the following agencies:
-  the Police Service Commission;
 -  the Police Complaints Authority;
 -  the Police Complaints Division, the Professional Standards Bureau and other agencies within the Police Service which investigate police officers;
 -  the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; and
 -  the Office of the Ombudsman.
41. **Clause 22** imposes a registration obligation in respect of weapons assigned to police officers and to members of the Defence Force. In this regard, weapons, including the ballistic signature and ammunition must be registered with the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre prior to special operations in a closed area, unless the Chief of Defence Staff or the Commissioner determine otherwise.

42. **Clause 23** creates a duty of disclosure, which requires a person within a closed area to identify himself by disclosing his full and correct name, including an alias, if applicable, and his full and correct address, when asked to do so by a police officer. Such police officer may request disclosure where he reasonably suspects that a person is in the course of committing a crime, has committed a crime, is about to commit a crime or may be able to assist in the investigation of an offence.
43. It is an offence under **Clause 23** for a person to fail or refuse to comply with a request to disclose his identity, without reasonable excuse or to give a name that is false or provide an address other than his full and correct address. This offence carries a penalty, on summary conviction of a **fine of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000)**.
44. **Clause 26** of the Bill constitutes a sunset provision, providing that the Act shall cease to have effect two (2) years after the date of its commencement.

REFERENCES

Key Legislation

-  [Law Reform \(Zones of Special Operations\) \(Special Security and Community Development Measures\) Bill, 2026](#)
-  [Municipal Corporations Act, Chap. 25:04](#)
-  [Anti-Gang Act, Act No. 4 of 2021](#)
-  [Police Service Act, Chap. 15:01](#)
-  [Supplemental Police Act, Chap. 15:02](#)
-  [Special Reserve Police Act, Chap. 15:03](#)
-  [Anti-Terrorism Act, Chap. 12:07](#)
-  [Defence Act, Chap. 14:01](#)



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