

# **Chamber: Caracas flight suspensions won't disrupt business**



Chaguanas Chamber of Industry and Commerce president Baldath Maharaj

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While the recent suspension of Caribbean Airlines flights to Caracas, Venezuela, is a noticeable development, it is not expected to significantly disrupt T&T's wider economy.

This is the view of Chaguanas Chamber of Industry and Commerce (CCIC) Baldath Maharaj, who says the impact on business would be minimal due to the limited trade that exists directly between the two countries.

Maharaj told Guardian Media yesterday that alternative routes are still available via Panama, adding that the decision must be seen within the wider context of geopolitical tensions between the United States and Venezuela and the risks such conditions pose to businesses.

"With the ongoing strain in relations between Venezuela and the United States, there is no certainty how circumstances may unfold.

Passengers face the very real risk of being stranded in Caracas should situations change overnight.

Added to this is the reality that the government of Venezuela has already signalled positions that are not particularly favourable toward Trinidad and Tobago, which further increases uncertainty," he explained.

Maharaj noted that in these circumstances, the suspension of flights is a responsible and necessary precaution.

He advised, however, that the airline must continue to closely monitor the situation before giving any consideration to the resumption of services.

He said protecting passengers and avoiding unnecessary exposure to risk must remain the priority, as he emphasised exposure to risk must remain the top priority, given the ongoing geopolitical uncertainty in the region.

In this vein, he urged both the business community and the public to remain vigilant and cautious in their engagements involving Venezuela at this time.

Last week, Caribbean Airlines announced the temporary suspension of all flights between Trinidad and Caracas for the month of September.

The affected services include flights BW 300 and BW 301 on September 6, 13, 20 and 27.

CAL explained the decision came against the backdrop of heightened tensions between T&T and Venezuela, following a US military strike on September 1 in the southern Caribbean.

Caribbean Airlines resumed flying to Caracas on May 13, 2023, several years after the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered airline routes across the world.