

CULTURES HISTORY

Barbados becomes a republic and breaks away from the British Crown

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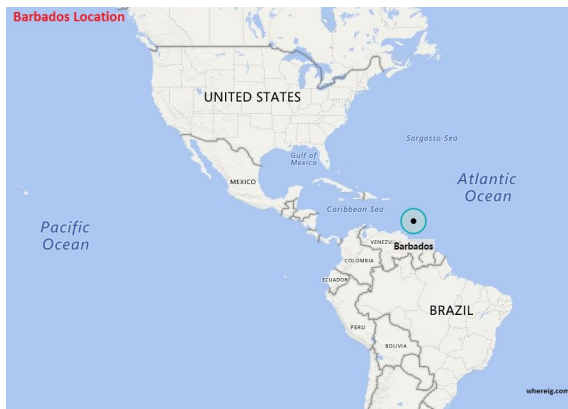
Barbados has been an independent country since 1966. The transition to a republic has taken place after 55 years of independence in the Commonwealth, on the 29 of November 2021.

| Barbados flag (WIKIPÉDIA)

The transition to a republic

Leaving the past behind

In order to begin a transition to a republic, first President Sandra Mason, former political woman of the Barbados state who is president since november 2021, is committed to helping the Caribbean island to distance itself from its colonial past. Besides, Sandra Mason declared that “the time has come to fully leave our colonial past behind us”. It is proof that it is time for them to put forward their desires.



| Barbados location (WHEREIG.COM)



| Island of Barbados
(12MONTHBARBADOSVISA.COM)

A desire for change

The first desires of former colonies to become an independent country and cut ties with the monarchy emerged in the 1970s, when the Black Power era peaked. And yet, in the race towards independence, the debates faded, and successive Barbadian governments were keen to avoid any discussion. Nevertheless, the decision to become a republic was already mentioned in 1998 by Prime Minister Mia Mottley but without success. Now, as Sandra Mason says, "Barbadians



want a Barbadian head of state" because x, for them, x the Queen was not a suitable head of state. Indeed, "The symbolism of having some person as head of state who is not a citizen of your country, who cannot identify with the day-to-day struggles and challenges associated with being a Barbadian" explained the journalist Kareem Smith.

| Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley (REZO NÒDWÈS)

The new political system...

First of all, this change of political system had already been recommended by a constitutional revision in 1998. This shows that the shift to republicanism is seen as the



next step towards full sovereignty. Thus, Barbados achieved full sovereignty when it left Queen Elizabeth II and became a republic, the newest in the world. It's a "seminal moment", according to Prime Minister Mia Mottley.

| Queen Elizabeth II and the new head of state, Sandra Mason (HISTOIRES ROYALES)

...And the new head of state.

This new political system brings with it a new head of state, none other than Sandra Mason, who will be the first president of Barbados and elected by the Barbados Parliament in which she was



sworn in at an event that coincided with the 55th anniversary of the country's independence.

| The President of Barbados, Sandra Mason during the celebration of the new republic (ALJAZEERA)

The relations with the Queen and the Commonwealth

What is the Queen's opinion ?

First and foremost, it is important to know that some countries have already made the same transition before. The first was Guyana in 1970, which is now a South American state. And the latest was Mauritius in 1992. The Queen's opinion is expressed through her son Prince Charles, who gave a speech at the ceremony of the new republic acknowledging the "appalling atrocity of slavery" that the Caribbean island had suffered. Plus, he said in this same speech: "I was so deeply touched that you should have invited me to return to Barbados and to join you on behalf of the Queen at this moment of such significance for your remarkable nation". Last but not least,

he declared that the relationship between the UK and Barbados would continue despite the political change because the country will remain part of the Commonwealth. According to Prince of Wales, "the creation of this republic offers a new beginning".

| Prince Charles was invited at the celebration of the new republic (FOX NEWS)



The celebration and the public opinion

This date is now a date of celebration. Indeed, according to a national newspaper of Barbados, this date is very important : "Tonight's the night" is written in the headline of Barbados' Daily Nation newspaper. During the celebration of the new republic, many speeches celebrating the end of colonialism were given. "Full stop this colonial page" declared the Barbadian poet, Winston Farrell, during his speech. In addition, he said that "Some have grown up stupid under the Union Jack, lost in the castle of their skin". Moreover, according to the supporters of the transition, the removal of the British Queen as the head of state is a powerful power. The editor of



Al Jazeera, Lucia Newman, who was at the celebration said that this decision is more emotional, historic and symbolic than practical. Furthermore, there is some prominent guests like Rihanna who is a barbadian singer and American pop icon. She was named with honour as the National Hero of Barbados for her extraordinary contribution in shaping the future of the island nation. | The Barbadian singer, Rihanna being honoured as a national hero (YAHOO)

Some important symbols of this transition

The Barbadian government has taken the decision to change some important symbols such as the portraits of Queen Elizabeth II which will be removed from government buildings and replaced with portraits of Barbadians painted by Barbadian artists. Besides, the Queen's royal flag was removed from the presidential inauguration ceremony in Heroes Square in Bridgetown and replaced with the new national flag of Barbados.



| The setting up of the new flag of Barbados (ALJAZEERA)

Sources :

- An article published by Aljazeera on the 29th of November 2021 and entitled "Barbados becomes a republic, renouncing British queen".
- Another article published by BBC News on the 21th of October 2021 and entitled "Barbados elects first ever president ahead of becoming republic".
- An episode of a podcast entitled "Newsday" published on BBB Sounds. This episode is entitled "Barbados bids goodbye to the Queen".
- A video published by Wion on the 30th of November 2021 and entitled "Barbados is re-born as a republic after 396 years".