



CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM) SECRETARIAT



REPORT OF THE CARICOM ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

**GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS OF THE
COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA**

1 SEPTEMBER 2025



REPORT

OF THE CARICOM ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION TO THE GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS OF THE
COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

1 SEPTEMBER 2025

Prepared by:

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Chief of Mission
10 October 2025

CARICOM Election Observation Missions are comprised of experts nominated from CARICOM Member States and provide independent expert analysis. The CARICOM Secretariat provides administrative and logistical support. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the Chief of Mission and the team of observers.

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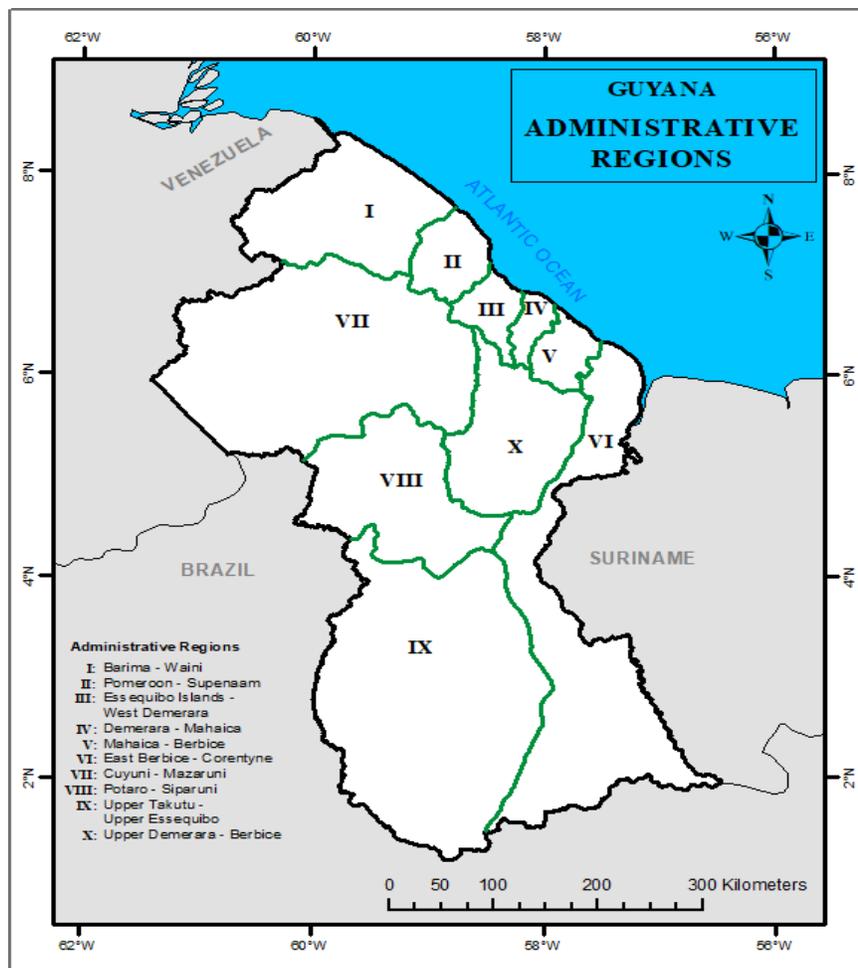
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Map of Guyana

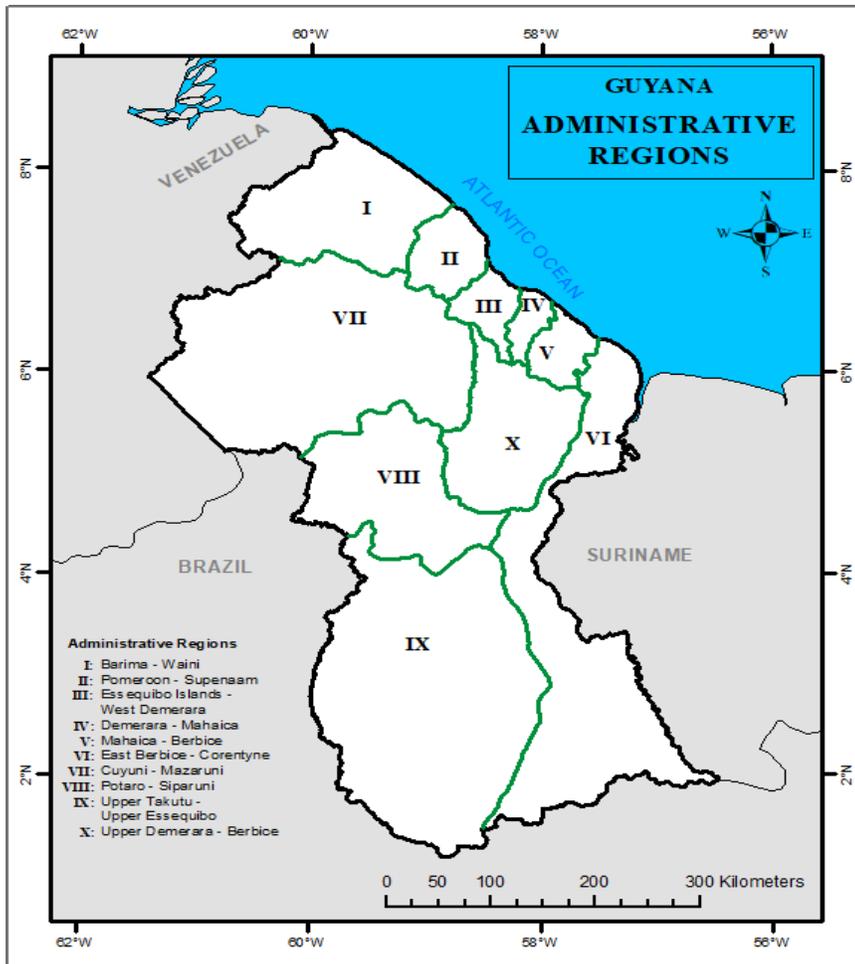
The Cooperative Republic of Guyana is located on the north-east coast of South America and shares its borders with Venezuela to the west, Brazil to the south, and Suriname to the east. Guyana is divided into 10 Administrative Regions, which also serve as electoral districts. Each Administrative Region is controlled by a Regional Executive Office (REO) and falls under the authority of the Ministry of Local Government. A map of Guyana with the 10 Administrative Regions is shown below.

Figure 1: Map of Guyana's Ten Administrative Regions. Source: Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission



INTRODUCTION

By way of communication dated 9 April 2024, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and



International Cooperation of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana advised Member States that Guyana’s General and Regional Elections would be held in 2025. An invitation was extended to the CARICOM Secretariat to mount an Election Observation Mission (CEOM) to Guyana. Subsequently, on 25 May 2025, His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, announced that the General and Regional Elections would be held on 1 September 2025.

In response to the invitation, the Caribbean Community mounted a ten-member CARICOM Election Observation Mission (CEOM) to observe the electoral processes for the General and Regional Elections, from 26 August to 3 September 2025. The Mission comprised Electoral Officials drawn from eight CARICOM Member States.

The CEOM was headed by the **Chief of Mission**, Ms. Josephine Tamai, Chief Elections Officer of the Elections and Boundaries Department of **Belize**. The other Members of the Observation Mission were as follows:

- **Antigua and Barbuda** – Mr. Ian Hughes, Supervisor of Elections (**Deputy Chief of Mission**);
- **The Bahamas** – Mr. Harrison L. Thompson, Parliamentary Commissioner;
- **Belize** – Ms. Fatima Gordon, Supervisor of Registering Officers, Elections and Boundaries Department;
- **Dominica** – Ambassador Felix Gregoire, Chairman, Public Service Commission;
- **Grenada** – Mr. Michael Paul Millette, Information Systems Administrator, Grenada Parliamentary Elections Office;
- **Saint Lucia** – Mr. Herman St. Helen, Chief Election Officer;
- **Suriname** – Ms. Reita Joemratie, Member, Independent Electoral Council;
- **Suriname** – Ms. Sonja Galimo, Member, Independent Electoral Council; and

- **Trinidad and Tobago** – Ms. Lena Champa Sahadeo, Deputy Chief Elections Officer.

The CEOM was supported by the following CARICOM Secretariat staff:

- Ms. Elizabeth Solomon, Assistant Secretary-General, Foreign and Community Relations;
- Ambassador David Prendergast, Director, Sectoral Programmes;
- Ms. Angella Prendergast, Director, Foreign and Community Relations;
- Mr. Dike Noel, Manager, Communications;
- Ms. Shae-Alicia Lewis, Programme Manager, Community Relations;
- Mr. Jhonson Alexandre, Deputy Programme Manager, Foreign and Community Relations;
- Ms. Anna Lisa Jones-Reis, Senior Project Officer (Ag.), Foreign and Community Relations; and
- Mr. Irvin Brown, Project Officer, Foreign and Community Relations.

1. SCOPE OF SERVICES FOR THE OBSERVATION MISSION

The Secretary-General, in her letter of appointment to members of the Observation Mission, clearly outlined the scope of services of the Mission as follows –

- (i) **Observe** the electoral process including the preparations for the start of the poll, the casting of votes, the closure of polling stations, the counting of the ballots and the preparations of the Statement of Poll;

- (ii) **Collect** information on the results at the voting tables to assist in the quantitative verification of the results;
- (iii) **Collect** qualitative observations regarding the voting process, comportment of the electoral officials and political actors, and on the overall electoral environment;
- (iv) **Observe** and **assess** the outcome of the elections and the initial immediate impact on the social and political environment; and
- (v) **Collaborate** in the preparation of the Report on the Observation Mission to be prepared by the Chief of Mission, through the submission of the observation sheets, oral and written reports on observation and findings on the day of the elections.

2. POLITICAL HISTORY OF GUYANA

Electoral politics in Guyana have been profoundly shaped by the country's history. The first elected government, formed by the People's Progressive Party (PPP) and led by Cheddi Jagan, was deemed strongly pro-communist, prompting the British to suspend the constitution and dispatch troops in October 1953. The PPP subsequently split along ethnic lines, with Jagan leading a predominantly Indo-Guyanese party and Forbes Burnham forming the People's National Congress (PNC), a party primarily of African descendants. Since the mid-1950s, political life in Guyana has been dominated by the PPP and the PNC.

The PNC governed from 1964 to 1992. The PPP came to power in 1992, retaining the government until 2015. Minor political parties generally lacked the organisation and resources necessary to challenge the dominance of these two major parties. Both political parties have historically relied strongly on their respective ethnic bases for the majority of their support.

The twin pressures of outward migration among both ethnic groups and increasing civil society calls for better governance spurred a shift towards political coalitions. Seeking to broaden its support base, the PPP first entered into an alliance with business and civil society groups for the 1992 elections, adopting the name PPP/Civic (PPP/C)¹. Similarly, the PNC built alliances, notably incorporating a civil society ‘reform’ component to become the People’s National Congress Reform (PNCR). This trend toward larger political blocs culminated before the 2011 general and regional elections when the PNCR joined with the Guyana Action Party (GAP), the National Front Alliance (NFA), and the Working People’s Alliance (WPA) to form the joint coalition A Partnership for National Unity (APNU).

3. POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF THE GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS

Following the 2015 General and Regional elections, the winning coalition of APNU and the Alliance for Change (AFC) formed the government under President David Granger. After the President lost a no-confidence motion in 2018, the ruling coalition mounted legal challenges to overturn the vote. After many delays, the General and Regional elections were eventually held in 2020.

The 2020 elections triggered a prolonged electoral crisis marked by a lengthy

recount of votes and subsequent legal battles over the results. On 5 March 2020, the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) declared the APNU/AFC coalition as the winner of the elections, thereby declaring the re-election of President David Granger. This was immediately challenged, with the PPP/C demanding a vote recount, citing widespread irregularities in the tabulation of votes for the most populous electoral district, Region Four, a concern that was also raised by international community observers.

Following a protracted period of political tension and the completion of a national recount – a process which saw high-level intervention and mediation from CARICOM and other International Observer teams - the final results were determined. The People’s Progressive Party/Civic, with Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali as its Presidential Candidate, was officially declared the winner of the elections. On 2 August 2020, five months after the elections, Dr. Ali was sworn in as President, marking a return to power by the PPP/C.

Unlike the 2020 General Elections, which were called amidst domestic and external pressure, the announcement of the upcoming General and Regional Elections was made following the advice of the Chairman of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) to the President of the Republic regarding GECOM’s readiness to conduct the elections, noting that elections are constitutionally due in 2025.

4. PRE-ELECTION OBSERVATION

4.1 Arrival of the CARICOM Election Observation Mission (CEOM)

The Deputy Chief of Mission arrived on 26 August 2025, and the Chief of Mission and one Observer arrived on 27 August 2025. Other Observers arrived on 28 August 2025. The Chief of Mission issued an **Arrival Statement** on 29 August 2025, which is set out at **Appendix I to this Report**.

4.2 Activities of the CEOM

During the period 27-31 August 2025, the Mission monitored the preparations for the Elections and held meetings with the following stakeholders –

- H.E. Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and Leader of the People’s Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C);
- Mr. Sherwin Benjamin, on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition and A Partnership for National Unity (APNU);
- We Invest in Nationhood (WIN);
- Alliance for Change (AFC);
- Assembly for Liberty and Prosperity (ALP);
- Forward Guyana Movement (FGM);
- Chairperson and Chief Election Officer, Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM);
- Commissioner of Police;
- Guyana Integrity Commission;
- Ethnic Relations Commission;
- Women and Gender Equality Commission;
- National Disability Commission;
- Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
- Berbice Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
- Essequibo Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
- Guyana Public Service Union;
- Guyana Labour Union;

- Guyana Trade Union Congress;
- Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana;
- Media Association of Guyana;
- Society against Sexual Orientation Discrimination (SASOD);
- United Nations Development Programme;
- Guyana Bar Association;
- Transparency International Guyana;
- Canje Community Development Council;
- Presidential Youth Advisory Council;
- Guyana National Youth Council; and
- International Observer Groups

4.3 Main Issues Raised by Stakeholders

The Mission noted that the Stakeholders with whom they met expressed mixed confidence in the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) and the overall electoral process.

While a majority of the stakeholders the CEOM met with were satisfied with GECOM's readiness and preparations for the elections, others expressed the view that GECOM was ill-prepared to adequately carry out the elections.

These stakeholder groups raised several concerns. These included:

Voters' List Integrity

Concerns were consistently raised regarding the integrity of the Official List of Electors (OLE). Specific allegations included a bloated list containing the names of deceased persons, potentially allowing for electoral malpractice and undermining public confidence in the accuracy of the voter registry.

GECOM Transparency

Stakeholders expressed dissatisfaction with the structure of GECOM, its lack of timely communication, and the inconsistency in information provided to political parties and the public. These issues were cited as contributing to mistrust in the Commission's ability to manage the electoral process transparently.

Political Conduct and Finance

Several issues pointed to a need for better regulation of political conduct. Concerns included allegations of vote buying, the abuse of state media access and state resources for partisan campaigning, and the persistent lack of campaign financing legislation to ensure a level playing field.

Political Intimidation

A major concern, particularly from smaller and newer parties, focused on alleged political victimization and intimidation. Specific claims included the non-approval of political party agents, threats from the party in power, and alleged intimidation tactics such as the severing of banking relationships for candidates/affiliates, the last-minute revocation of rally permissions, the detaining of candidates' vehicles, and the prohibition from internal flights.

Procedural and Technical

Other procedural and technical matters included the absence of biometric voter identification at polling stations, concerns regarding the resignation of Presiding Officers close to election day, anticipation of challenges for voters with disabilities, and a general lack of confidence in the accuracy of the eventual election results, given the historical context.

5. THE ELECTORAL LANDSCAPE

Election Management Body

General and Regional Elections in Guyana are administered and conducted by the GECOM, which is headed by a Chairperson and six Commissioners. The six Commissioners are appointed as follows:

- (a) Three (3) members appointed by the President, acting in his own deliberate judgement; and
- (b) Three (3) members appointed by the President acting on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition after he has meaningfully consulted with non-governmental opposition parties represented in the National Assembly.

Election to the National Assembly

The current electoral system, that of proportional representation, is the product of cross-party agreement on constitutional reform, as catered for by the Herdmanston Accord (1998). This witnessed the relevant parties agreeing to a reformed system,

which includes an element of geographic and gender representation. Previously, only 53 of the 65 members of the National Assembly were elected directly, while the remaining twelve were indirectly elected. Under the current system, which was adopted in November 2000, all members of the National Assembly are to be directly elected. Twenty-five (25) are to be elected from the ten (10) geographic constituencies and the remaining forty (40) from a national “top-up” list to guarantee a very high degree of proportionality. Any party contesting seats for the National Assembly must validly nominate candidates in six (6) of the geographic constituencies or for 13 of the 25 constituency seats. Furthermore, one-third of the candidates validly nominated must be women.

On 13 February 2001, conscious of the need to ensure the constitutional requirement for proportionality, the National Assembly further amended the Representation of the People Act, Constitution (Amendment) Act No. 1, 2001, and Representation of the People (Amendment) Act 2001 to allow the National Assembly to have at least 65 members and allow GECOM to allocate "overhang seats", if required. Overhang seats would be required if a Party wins a disproportional number of constituency seats, thereby giving it an inordinate advantage over other parties. Under these circumstances, GECOM would award overhanging seats to the national top-up to ensure that such an advantage is removed.

Legislative Framework

The key pieces of electoral legislation are outlined in the following table.

Legislation/Regulations	Chapter/Act
Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana	Cap. 1:01
Representation of People Act	Cap. 1:03
National Registration Act	Capt. 19:08
Local Authorities (Elections) Act	Cap. 28:03
Local Democratic Organs Act	Cap. 28:09
Election Laws (Amendment) Act	Act 15 of 2000
Local Authorities (Elections) (Amendment) Act	Act 9 of 2015
Local Authorities (Elections) (Amendment) Act	Act 10 of 2018
National Registration (Amendment) Act	Act 26 of 2022
Representation of the People (Amendment) Act	Act 25 of 2022
National Registration (Amendment) Act 2022	Act No. 26 of 2022
Representation of the People (Amendment) Act 2022	Act No. 25 of 2022

Since the 2020 General and Regional Elections, significant changes have been made to the legal and electoral framework of Guyana. These amendments were mainly made in the areas of tabulation and voter registration, including subdistrict tabulation in select districts, new requirements for simultaneous electronic public posting and transmission of polling station results, obligations of presiding officers to ensure openness during the closing and counting procedures, continuous registration, the end of “house-to-house” registration, and updated requirements for removal of the deceased from the voter list. Other changes made included the provision of election manuals to parties and the public within 30 days of the

proclamation of the election date, additional provisions for recount requests, and a mandate for the Chief Elections Officer to prepare a report within twelve (12) hours of the calculation of results. These changes are commendable and the CEOM encourages the Government of the Republic of Guyana to continue to implement changes which contribute to transparency and building trust in the electoral process.

The 2025 General and Regional Elections

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali officially signed proclamations dissolving Guyana's 12th Parliament and all ten Regional Democratic Councils (RDCs) on 3 July 2025, setting the stage for the country's General and Regional Elections on September 1, 2025.

The Disciplined Services, including military, police, and correctional officers voted on 22 August 2025, while the General and Regional elections were held on 1 September 2025.

Electors also voted for their Regional Democratic Councils. A Regional Democratic Council is a local government body that serves a specific administrative region and is responsible for the overall management and administration of the Region and the coordination of the activities of Local Democratic Organs within its boundaries.

5.1 The Voters' List

The 2025 official list of electors had a total of 757,690 persons registered to vote,

including 6,909 ranks from the Guyana Police Force, 3,106 from the Guyana Defence Force, and 466 from the Guyana Prison Service. Stakeholders with whom the Mission met had major concerns regarding the official list of electors, as they stated that the last population and housing census published in 2012 counted a population of 746,955. They also indicated that while there is no official publication of the 2022 Census, preliminary data suggests that the population is approximately 820,000. As a result, stakeholders strongly believe that the OLE is inaccurate, as it is not possible to have over 92% of the population registered to vote. GECOM informed the Mission that the present law does not allow for the removal of persons from the OLE, even if they have migrated, as those electors are eligible to vote.

Stakeholders also indicated that, in their opinion, little to no effort was being made to remove deceased names from the OLE. The mission was informed that the mechanism to report deaths to GECOM has been improved, as the Registrar of Deaths, the Ministry of Health and the Commissioner of Police now have a responsibility to send information on deceased persons to the Chief Election Officer. While this effort is highly commended, GECOM must ensure that they place more effort and advocate for more resources to ensure the timely removal of deceased persons from the OLE. This sanitization process will allow citizens to have confidence in the integrity of the OLE.

5.2 Nomination of Candidates

Nomination day was 14 July 2025. At the close of nomination day, a total of 7 political

parties submitted their lists of candidates to contest the elections. In keeping with Guyana’s legal requirements, six (6) political parties were approved by GECOM to contest the elections. While six parties contested the elections, only the APNU, AFC, PPP/Civic, and WIN contested in all ten (10) electoral districts. The FGM and ALP contested in 7 and 6 electoral districts, respectively.

The following chart indicates the political parties and the regions contested.

**GUYANA ELECTIONS COMMISSION
PARTIES CONTESTING
GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS 2025**

SER	PARTY NAME	PARTY INITIALS	SYMBOL	TYPE OF ELECTION	GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCIES / REGIONS										
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
1	A PARTNERSHIP FOR NATIONAL UNITY	APNU		GENERAL ELECTION	✓										
				GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCIES	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
				REGIONAL ELECTIONS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2	ALLIANCE FOR CHANGE	AFC		GENERAL ELECTION	✓										
				GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCIES	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
				REGIONAL ELECTIONS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
3	ASSEMBLY FOR LIBERTY AND PROSPERITY	ALP		GENERAL ELECTION	✓										
				GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCIES			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
				REGIONAL ELECTIONS			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
4	FORWARD GUYANA MOVEMENT	FGM		GENERAL ELECTION	✓										
				GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCIES	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
				REGIONAL ELECTIONS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
5	PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY / CIVIC	PPP/C		GENERAL ELECTION	✓										
				GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCIES	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
				REGIONAL ELECTIONS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
6	WE INVEST IN NATIONHOOD	WIN		GENERAL ELECTION	✓										
				GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCIES	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
				REGIONAL ELECTIONS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Chart indicating regions being contested by each political party. Source: GECOM

5.3 Security

The police developed a strategic plan with several pillars in place. Joint Operations Centres were set up for the coordination of surveillance and command across the country. The CEOM was informed that a total of 8,500 police officers were involved

in the public security electoral plan. A special tactical services unit was established from 28 August 2025 to deal with public order and enforcement. Additionally, a robust cybersecurity plan was in place, which was monitored 24/7. The police force collaborated with the Defence Force and air forces and also with the Fire Service to ensure plans were in place to address any possible developments that would arise at all polling stations, including those in the hinterland.

For Election Day, the security forces were deployed to polling locations from as early as 2:00 am. It was evident that the police had a well-organized contingency plan in place, and the police officers were adequately trained and prepared. Their level of professionalism and the change of guard in the leadership of the police force are highly commendable. The CEOM observed that there was adequate security at all stations.

5.4 Political Campaign

The Mission observed a competitive and robust political atmosphere during the pre-electoral period. This was observed to be mainly between the PPP/C, WIN, and APNU, which are 3 of the 4 political parties that contested in all 10 regions.

5.4.1 Media Coverage

State and private media provided substantial coverage during the campaign period. Stakeholders raised concerns about perceived advantages in state media access and the use of state resources by those in government-linked positions. Private media outlets provided broad coverage, including debates and analysis, but stakeholders noted that online platforms and social media amplified rapid messaging,

misinformation, and partisan narratives. The Mission notes the absence of measures that encourage equitable access to airtime for parties.

6. STRUCTURE OF GECOM

GECOM is composed of 6 commissioners (3 government-nominated, 3 opposition-nominated) and a Chairperson who is appointed by the President. This model has led to voting stalemates, controversial decisions such as declarations, approval of agents, and recounts, etc. The existing structure of GECOM is often viewed as politically polarized, leading to delays, internal deadlock, and erosion of public trust. Smaller opposition parties raised concerns that they are not represented and that this has implications for having their issues reflected in discussions.

7. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

The CEOM notes that women participated actively as candidates, campaign operatives, polling day workers, and observers. The legal requirement that one-third of validly nominated candidates be women was observed in party submissions and is a commendable step to ensure women's participation. The Mission observed strong female representation among presiding officers, polling clerks, and political agents. Women were visible in leadership roles within civil society organizations. Encouragement and targeted measures that promote competitive female candidacies continue to strengthen inclusive representation.

8. CAMPAIGN FINANCING

The CEOM was advised that no campaign financing legislation exists. The CEOM

encourages the prompt enactment of campaign financing legislation to ensure transparency in the financing of political parties and candidates. Enactment will allow for a more level playing field among candidates for future elections.

9. THE VOTING PROCESS

9.1 Disciplined Services Voting

Members of the Disciplined Services are assigned a special day to vote in advance of election day to allow these officers to cast their vote without hindering their duties on election day. Disciplined Services Voting was held on 22 August 2025 between the hours of 6:00 am and 6:00 pm. In all 10 districts, several locations were identified, such as: police stations, camps, fire stations, and other convenient locations that were easily accessible to members of the disciplined services. GECOM reported 83% of voter turnout among registered disciplined service members. The CEOM was not present to observe the disciplined services voting.

The Mission was made aware of an unfortunate accident while transporting election materials, including ballot boxes containing ballots cast, which were under police escort from District 6. The Mission was informed that all election materials were safely retrieved and placed in secure custody. The CEOM did not receive any reports of incidents that could affect the outcome of the elections.

9.2 Appointment of Party Agents

The Representation of the People Act (ROPA) allows for the appointment of party agents. This information is to be submitted to the Returning Officer for the district to which the agent is appointed, no later than 7 days before election day. The CEOM was made aware that only 2 of the 6 political parties submitted their agents' list within the legal timeframe. While the CEOM applauds the late approval of polling agents for the 4 political parties that submitted their lists late, to allow for transparency and accountability in the process, the CEOM encourages all political parties to adhere to the deadlines as stipulated in the ROPA.

9.3 Deployment of Observers

The CEOM deployed five teams of observers into 5 of the 10 regions to observe the process on Election Day. Each team consisted of two members and was assigned specific areas to observe to ensure coverage in as many regions as possible. Additionally, a security officer was assigned to accompany each team on their visit to the polling locations.

Each team visited their polling locations within their assigned region the day before the scheduled taking of the polls. Teams assessed travel time from the hotel to the assigned regions to ensure that their time on Election Day was maximized. Activities at the polling locations prior to Election Day were also observed during these visits.

The team visited the police, returning and/or supernumerary returning officers in their respective regions. Teams reported observing that in most polling locations, the OLE were already displayed, and setting up of the polling stations was either in progress, completed, or in some instances, polling day workers were present awaiting the arrival of materials. The List of regions monitored by each team is set out at **Appendix II to this Report.**

9.4 Polling Day

In accordance with the Representation of the People Act, polls were conducted between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. The CEOM noted that all materials arrived on time at the polling stations observed. A Presiding Officer from Region 4 reported to the CEOM that her assigned polling station opened at 6:40 a.m. due to the late arrival of the polling compartment. This in no way disfranchised any voter, as all eligible voters were able to cast their vote. During polling, the Mission observed that voters, in general, were able to cast their votes in a peaceful and orderly manner without any harassment or intimidation. Voting was conducted in accordance with the laws governing the process.

9.4.1 Opening of the Polls

The CEOM observed the opening of the polls in ten polling stations at five polling locations. Reports from the team suggested that:

- (i) All stations observed were adequately staffed with all polling day workers in place, despite the allegations of a shortage of polling staff due to resignations.
- (ii) There were political agents present in the polling stations.
- (iii) Adequate quantities of election materials were present at polling stations.
- (iv) Polls generally opened at the stipulated time of 6:00 am.
- (v) Security officers were present at all polling stations.

In all stations observed, the opening of the polls procedures were adhered to, including the checking of all election supplies and examining the ballot box to ensure it was emptied, locked, and placed on the table in front of the Ballot Clerk in full view of all present.

The CEOM observed that poll day workers were familiar with the opening of the poll procedures and carried out their duties in accordance with these procedures. It was also noted that there was an adequate police presence at all polling locations.

9.4.2 Polling Activities

In most polling locations visited, there were short lines at the opening of polls. Very few had clusters of electors eagerly waiting to cast their vote. Throughout the day, in most polling stations visited voters trickled in at a very slow pace. Prior to being

issued a ballot paper, the Presiding Officers gave clear and consistent instructions to the voters on how to mark the ballot to vote for the party of their choice.

9.4.3 Identification of Voters

In the polling stations observed, the CEOM reported that the majority of the voters presented their voter identification cards. The information on the card and the identity of the voter were cross-checked with the image on the voter identification card. The name and particulars of each voter were announced by the Assistant Presiding Officer in a loud and audible voice. The voter's identification card was then shown to the political agents in the polling station for verification. For the first time, the folio provided to polling day staff and the political agents included a colour photograph of the voter to facilitate verification at the polling station. This assists in preventing impersonation and is a positive step towards the reduction of voter fraud.

In all polling stations observed, the identities of voters were checked to establish their identity and voters were identified in the required manner.

The CEOM also reported that in all polling stations observed, at least 2 or 3 political agents were present to witness the activities in the polling stations and were able to satisfy themselves of the eligibility of each voter and to observe the entire process.

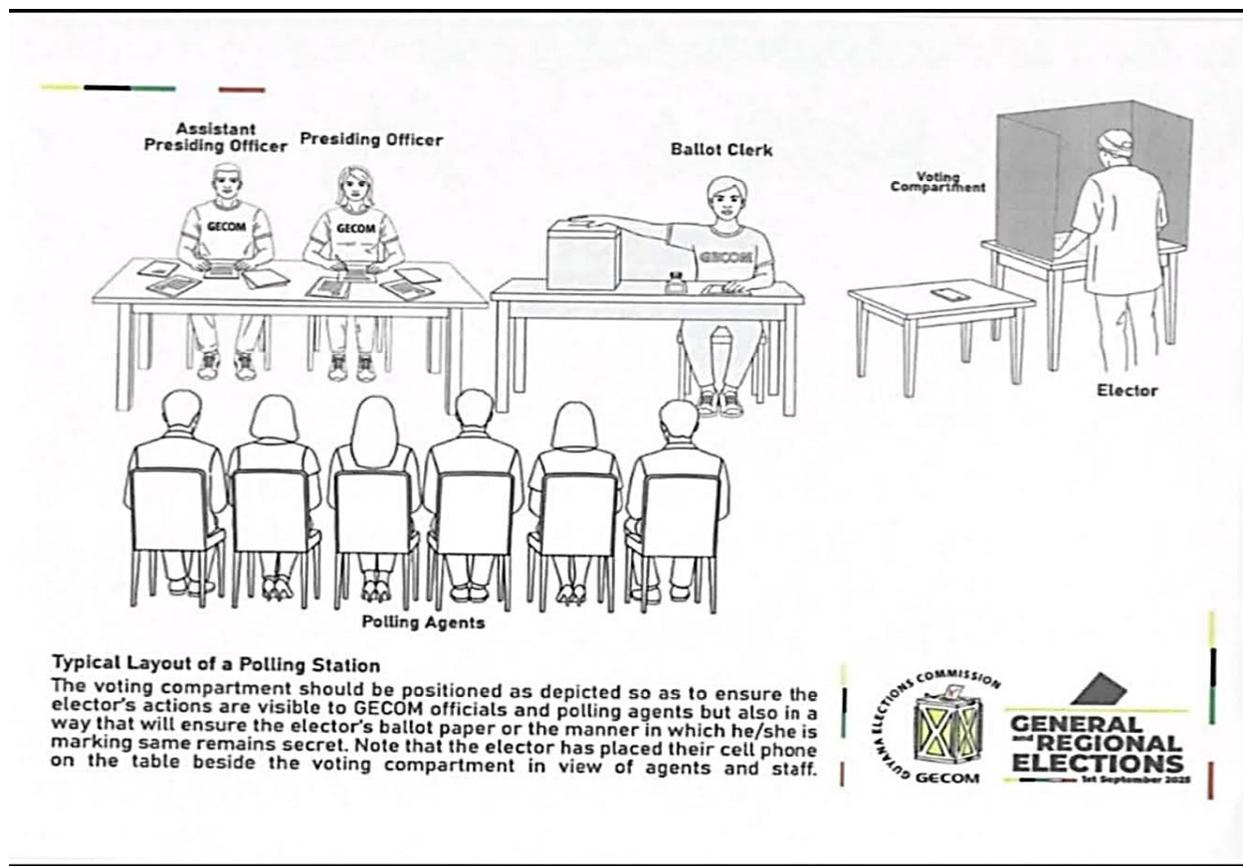
9.4.4 Checking of Fingers for Ink

The checking of fingers for ink was observed in most polling stations. In a few polling stations, the CEOM observed that the fingers of the voter were checked by the Presiding Officer before a ballot paper was issued and the finger was rechecked by the Ballot Clerk prior to requesting the voter to dip his/her finger in the indelible ink, while simultaneously instructing him/her to deposit his/her ballot paper in the ballot box. In other polling stations observed, checking was done only by the Presiding Officer as is required.

9.4.5 Secrecy of the Ballot

The CEOM commends the efforts made by GECOM to prevent the photographing of ballots. Voters were not allowed to take cellular phones into the voting compartments, and, therefore, a table designated for voters to place their cellular phones was placed a short distance away from the voting compartment. Voters were required to place their cell phones on the table prior to going behind the voting compartment to mark their ballot.

The following is the polling station layout approved by GECOM, which clearly states that the voting compartment should be positioned to ensure that the elector's actions are visible to GECOM's officials and polling agents, but it must be ensured that the marking of the ballot remains secret.



The CEOM observed that there was inconsistency in the way the voting compartment was placed, as in some polling stations, the elector's actions were not visible, while in others their actions were visible to GECOM officials and polling agents. Although the new layout of the voting compartment is a positive step, GECOM must conduct more training in this area, especially since it is a newly implemented approach. In several instances where the elector's action was visible, the voting compartments were placed in positions where the secrecy of the ballot could be compromised, as the positioning of the voting compartment was not strictly adhered to. This was especially noticeable for persons in wheelchairs, who marked their ballot and had to lift the ballot paper to a certain height to fold it. In a few cases observed, while folding the ballot, the Presiding Officer had to inform the voters in wheelchairs not to lift their ballot paper to a

certain height. GECOM should ensure strict adherence, as even a slight deviation from the proper placement of the voting compartment may compromise the secrecy of the vote. Maintaining the secrecy of the vote cannot be overemphasized.

9.4.6 Assistance to Voters with Disabilities

Voters with disabilities were given priority by not having to join the line. Rather, they were immediately taken to the front of the line and allowed to cast their vote rather quickly. The Presiding Officers were extremely helpful in ensuring that such persons were able to access the voting compartment to cast their vote. Those who are unable to vote in person due to specific physical incapacity, such as blindness, were allowed to vote by proxy. Voters with disabilities voted in accordance with the stipulated procedures.

9.4.7 Location of Polling Stations

Several polling locations observed were located on the ground level to accommodate the elderly and those with disabilities; however, there were still a large number that were located in elevated buildings. This posed great challenges and inconvenience for those persons with mobility impairments. Extreme care must be taken in identifying polling stations to ensure equal access for all. In most instances, the CEOM observed that the school compounds and other polling locations had additional rooms on the ground level, which could have been used in place of the elevated rooms.

9.4.8 Gathering and Campaigning at Polling Stations

The CEOM did not observe anyone campaigning or seeking to influence the voters at any of the polling locations observed. There was no gathering observed within the 200-yard limit; therefore, there was no intimidation observed at the polling stations.

10. CLOSE OF POLLS AND COUNTING OF BALLOTS

10.1 Close of Polls

The teams returned to the polling stations where they had observed the opening of the polls in order to observe the close of polls and counting procedures. The CEOM observed that polls closed promptly at 6:00 pm. In those very few stations where electors were still waiting in line to vote at 6:00 pm, those electors were allowed to cast their vote. The police were on hand to ensure no unauthorized persons could access the polling stations after 6:00 p.m.

The CEOM observed that the close of poll procedures were carried out in accordance with the stipulated regulations.

10.2 Counting of Votes

The counting procedure was done in accordance with the laws. After the ballot papers were separated and placed into 2 separate piles, one for the General Election

and the other for the Regional Election, the counting immediately started for the General Election, all ballot papers were accounted for and placed in their appropriate packages. The CEOM did not observe any issues at the counting stations, as polling staff and party agents all agreed on the number of votes for each party for both the General and Regional Elections. Statements of Poll were then immediately prepared and signed off by the Presiding Officer and party agents, certifying the results in each box. Thereafter, each Presiding Officer publicly declared the results of the elections for his/her respective polling station and gave a signed copy of the Statement of Poll to each party agent. Thereafter, the Statement of Poll was posted on a wall outside the polling station for public view. The Presiding Officer then transported the original SOPs to the Returning or Supernumerary Returning Officer in his/her respective district.

10.3 Collation of Votes and Tabulation of Results

Each district has a Returning Officer who has the overall responsibility for the conduct of the elections in his/her district. Returning Officers in districts 1,2,5,7,8, 9, and 10 collated the results using the Statement of Polls from their respective polling stations in their district to populate the District Tabulation Form. The Supernumerary Returning Officers in districts 3,4, and 6 collated the results using the Statement of Polls for their respective sub-district and prepared a Sub-District Tabulation Form. The Returning Officers in these districts then used the Sub-District Tabulation Forms to prepare the District Tabulation Form. The Returning Officer for each district then publicly declared the results for their assigned district. At the Office of the Returning/Supernumerary Returning Officers, there was a tabulation centre where

the Statements of Poll were uploaded on GECOM's website. The SoPs could also be accessed by scanning the QR code. GECOM must be commended for this added layer of transparency, which allowed the public to track all Statements of Poll. This bodes well for building trust in the electoral process.

10.4 Election Officials

It was evident that Election Day workers were adequately trained as they carried out their functions efficiently and effectively. The CEOM was not able to ascertain the number of Presiding Officers who reportedly resigned; however, their resignation did not negatively impact the conduct of the elections. It is commendable that even first-time polling day workers were able to carry out their duties in accordance with the laws. GECOM staff conducted themselves in a professional and non-partisan manner, which allowed for a generally smooth electoral process.

10.5 Request for Recount

The law allows for counting agents for a district or sub-district, or a duly appointed candidate, to request a limited or full recount. Such a request must be made to the respective Returning Officer by 12:00 pm the next day following the declaration of the results. Subsequent to the declaration of results, APNU requested GECOM to recount the ballots cast in Sub-District 4 of District 4 and the 77 ballot boxes in District 5. GECOM approved the requests and on 4 September 2025, the recount commenced with poll day staff, party agents, domestic and international observers

present. The recount process was conducted in a transparent manner and ended on 5 September 2025 with no significant change in the election results.

10.6 Announcement and Publication of Results

Section 99 of the Representation of the People Act states that as soon as practicable but not later than fifteen days, GECOM shall publicly declare the results of the election. A public announcement of the result of the General and Regional Elections was made on 6th September 2025. After the publication of the results, minor errors were published by GECOM; however, due to the access given to the public, the error was identified and GECOM was able to quickly make the correction via an amended notice in the Extraordinary Gazette. This error did not alter the result of the election. This added layer of transparency in the process allowed the public to view that the error did not change the result, therefore, allowing them to more readily accept the changes.

11. POLLING DAY CONCLUSIONS

The CEOM observed that the polling day procedures were conducted efficiently and impartially in a peaceful and orderly atmosphere. No significant breaches of the laws and procedures were observed. The tabulation process, particularly the provision for electronic transmission of Statements of Poll, contributed to transparency and accountability and may have led to greater public confidence in the process. The CEOM concluded that electors were able to vote for the candidate of their choice in an atmosphere that was free from fear and intimidation. The General and Regional

Elections held on 1 September 2025 reflected the will of the people of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and were conducted in a free, fair, transparent, and credible manner.

12. ELECTION RESULTS

The results of the 1 September 2025 election declared H.E. Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali of the People’s Progressive Party/Civic as President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for a second term. The 65 seats were distributed as follows:

NAME OF PARTY	NO. OF SEATS WON
People’s Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C)	36
We Invest in Nationhood (WIN)	16
A Partnership for National Unity (APNU)	12
Forward Guyana Movement (FGM)	1
Alliance for Change (AFC)	0
Assembly for Liberty and Prosperity (ALP)	0

13. VOTER TURNOUT

Voter turnout for the 2025 General and Regional Elections was 58.4% of the registered electors, a notable decrease from the previous election. This represents a

decrease of 11.9% when compared to the 70.3% turnout recorded in the 2020 General and Regional Elections.

14. POST-ELECTION OBSERVATIONS

Following the official declaration of results, the CEOM received no reports of civil disorder or public disobedience. The Guyanese populace is to be commended for the peaceful and orderly manner in which they conducted themselves throughout the post-election period. While there were initial concerns that the results might be disputed by political parties, the improved transparency of the electoral process appears to have facilitated greater acceptance. The CEOM congratulates the people of Guyana for their mature and peaceful acceptance of the Final Results of the General and Regional Elections held on 1 September 2025.

The Preliminary Statement of 2 September 2025, issued by the Chief of Mission of the CEOM to the Cooperative of the Republic of Guyana, is set out at **Appendix III to this Report**.

15. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 Conclusions

The conclusions of the CEOM regarding the General and Regional Elections in the Cooperative Republic of Guyana are as follows:

- (i) Polls were conducted in keeping with the laws and regulations of Guyana.
- (ii) Polling day staff, security officers, and other electoral stakeholders displayed a high level of professionalism and diligence throughout the voting process.
- (iii) Security forces maintained law and order effectively by adopting a proactive approach, which ensured a peaceful electoral environment.
- (iv) Voters were able to exercise their franchise free from intimidation, harassment, or hindrance, with full freedom to access and depart from polling stations.
- (vi) The results of the 1 September 2025 polls reflected the democratic will of the people of the Cooperative of the Republic of Guyana and reinforced their commitment to the democratic process.

15.2 Recommendations

Based on the observations of the CEOM and concerns articulated by various stakeholders, the following recommendations are presented. The acceptance and timely implementation of these measures are intended to further strengthen the democratic system of governance in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. These recommendations are below.

(i) Official List of Electors Reform and Verification

The CEOM **recommends** the official publication of the updated Population and Housing Census to provide GECOM and the public with accurate and verifiable demographic data. While recognizing that the law prohibits the removal of registered electors who have migrated, GECOM should be empowered to pursue avenues to obtain verified data on the number of non-resident registrants. Making this data public will enhance the credibility of the OLE.

Additionally, mechanisms must be put in place to ensure the timely and systematic removal of deceased persons from the OLE. The CEOM further suggests that citizens, as key stakeholders, be encouraged to formally submit proof of death to GECOM to assist this essential maintenance process. The CEOM notes that despite stakeholders' concerns about the OLE being bloated, no evidence of such was provided.

(ii) Structural and Institutional Reform of GECOM

The CEOM **recommends** amending the Representation of the People Act to reform the mechanism for appointing Commissioners, with the goal of institutional depoliticization.

Consideration should be given to structural changes that move GECOM toward greater independence, possibly including non-partisan representation from civil society, legal, and academic communities. Appointment of a non-executive Chairperson is recommended to minimize perceptions of political bias and increase public trust in the Commission's impartiality.

(iii) Implementation of Biometric Technology

To build public confidence and safeguard the integrity of the vote, the CEOM **recommends** the implementation of biometric voter verification. This technology is unique to each individual, eliminating the possibility of impersonation and preventing the possibility of double voting.

(iv) Accessibility to Polling Stations

The CEOM **recommends** that all polling stations be located on the ground floor of polling locations to ensure easy and equitable accessibility for all voters, particularly the elderly and persons with disabilities.

(v) Ensuring Secrecy of the Ballot

The CEOM **recommends** that special attention be paid to the placement and standardized setup of voting compartments to ensure the absolute secrecy of the ballot is maintained at all times. Poll day workers must receive rigorous training on this requirement, as strict compliance is critical.

(vi) Improvement in Information Dissemination

While the efforts of GECOM in disseminating information via its website are commended, the CEOM notes recurrent stakeholder complaints regarding the timeliness of information release. The CEOM therefore **recommends** that GECOM make every effort to improve the speed of information dissemination to eliminate uncertainty, speculation, and distrust. Improved timeliness is essential for

immediately countering any false information, thereby aiding the combat against misinformation and disinformation.

(vii) Appointment of Party Agents

While commending GECOM on its decision to allow the late accreditation of party agents from 4 of the 6 political parties, the CEOM **recommends** that all political parties strictly adhere to the 7-day submission deadline stipulated in the Representation of the People Act for future elections.

Alternatively, GECOM may consider amending the Representation of the People Act to review or reduce the 7-day period, as adherence to the law is critical to avoid legal challenges in future elections.

(viii) Combating Abuse of State Resources

Legal reform, institutional strengthening, and greater public accountability are imperative to safeguard electoral fairness. In this context, the CEOM **recommends** the creation of an independent monitoring unit vested with the necessary legal power to investigate and address the abuse of state resources during the campaign period.

(ix) Campaign Finance Regulation

The CEOM observes the current absence of campaign financing regulations. It is **recommended** that legislation be urgently enacted by Parliament to establish a level playing field. This legislation must establish clear limits on contributions from individuals, organizations, and businesses, and mandate that all political parties and

candidates disclose their sources of funding and expenditure, leading to greater transparency and public trust.

(x) Media Monitoring and Accountability

The CEOM **recommends** the establishment of an independent media monitoring unit to hold media houses accountable and ensure fair, balanced coverage for all political parties. This unit will also play a crucial role in assisting GECOM to quickly respond to and counter misinformation, disinformation, and fake news.

(xi) Addressing Low Voter Turnout

Given the low voter turnout of 58.4%, the CEOM **recommends** that an in-depth analysis of the phenomena, including voter age population and demographic trends, be done and changes implemented to increase public trust in the electoral process.

Additionally, a concerted effort must be made to intensify voter education campaigns to combat voter apathy, address misinformation, and underscore the importance of exercising the franchise.

(xii) Political Paraphernalia

The CEOM **recommends** that guidelines that limit the use of political paraphernalia (such as flags, banners, signs, and posters, etc.) be established. Set timelines for removal post-election (e.g., 2 to 3 days) after the declaration of results. Enforcement of these timelines is critical to reducing any tension that may lead to unrest. Removal will contribute to ensuring peace, respect, and a smooth return to normalcy.

(xiii) Legislative, Institutional and Administrative Developments

The CEOM **recommends** that the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana advise the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on any legislative, institutional, and administrative developments related to the implementation of the recommendations contained in this Report.

Acknowledgements

The CEOM thanks the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, the Guyana Elections Commission, and all stakeholders who willingly gave of their time to provide valuable information to the CEOM, which contributed to the success of the Mission.





ARRIVAL STATEMENT

CARICOM ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION TO THE GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS OF THE COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

By way of communication dated 9 April 2024, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana advised Member States that Guyana's General and Regional Elections would be held in 2025. An invitation was extended to the CARICOM Secretariat to mount an Election Observation Mission (CEOM) to Guyana. Subsequently, on 25 May 2025, His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, announced that the General and Regional Elections will be held on 1 September 2025.

In response to the invitation, the Caribbean Community mounted a ten-member CARICOM Election Observation Mission (CEOM) to observe the electoral processes for the General and Regional Elections, from 26th August to 3 September 2025. The Mission comprises Electoral Officials from eight CARICOM Member States.

The CEOM is headed by the **Chief of Mission**, Ms. Josephine Tamai, Chief Elections Officer of the Elections and Boundaries Department of **Belize**. The other Members of the Observation Mission are as follows:

- (i) **Antigua and Barbuda** – Mr. Ian Hughes, Supervisor of Elections (**Deputy Chief of Mission**);
- (ii) **The Bahamas** – Mr. Harrison L. Thompson, Parliamentary Commissioner;

- (iii) **Belize** – Ms. Fatima Gordon, Supervisor of Registering Officers, Elections and Boundaries Department;
- (iv) **Dominica** – Ambassador Felix Gregoire, Chairman, Public Service Commission;
- (v) **Grenada** – Mr. Michael Paul Millette, Information Systems Administrator, Grenada Parliamentary Elections Office;
- (vi) **Saint Lucia** – Mr. Herman St. Helen, Chief Election Officer;
- (vii) **Suriname** – Ms. Reita Joemratie, Member, Independent Electoral Council;
- (viii) **Suriname** – Ms. Sonja Galimo, Member, Independent Electoral Council; and
- (ix) **Trinidad and Tobago** – Ms. Lena Champa Sahadeo, Deputy Chief Elections Officer.

The CEOM is supported by the following CARICOM Secretariat staff:

- Ms. Elizabeth Solomon, Assistant Secretary-General, Foreign and Community Relations;
- Ambassador David Prendergast, Director, Sectoral Programmes;
- Ms. Angella Prendergast, Director, Foreign and Community Relations;
- Mr. Dike Noel, Manager, Communications;
- Ms. Shae-Alicia Lewis, Programme Manager, Community Relations;
- Mr. Jhonson Alexandre, Deputy Programme Manager, Foreign and Community Relations;
- Ms. Anna Lisa Jones-Reis, Senior Project Officer (Ag.), Foreign and Community Relations; and
- Mr. Irvin Brown, Project Officer, Foreign and Community Relations.

The Deputy Chief of Mission arrived on 26 August 2025, and the Chief of Mission and one Observer arrived on 27 August 2025. Other Observers arrived on 28 August 2025. Since arrival, meetings have been held with the Chairman and Chief Elections Officer of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM), the Guyana Integrity Commission, the Commissioner of Police, the Ethnic Relations Commission, the Women and Gender Equality Commission, the media, and various civil society groups.

Over the next days, the Mission will meet with H.E. Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and Leader of the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C), Representatives of the Leader of the Opposition – A Partnership for National Unity (APNU), We Invest in Nationhood (WIN), Alliance for Change (AFC), Assembly of Liberty and Prosperity (ALP) and Forward Guyana Movement (FGM). The team will also engage with additional civil society institutions and stakeholders, including local and international observers. These meetings are expected to provide the CEOM with a general idea of the atmosphere and level of preparedness for the elections. The CEOM will continue to observe the pre-election period, elections day and post-election activities.

The role of the CEOM Observers on election day is to observe the electoral process, including preparations for the start of the poll, the casting of votes, the closure of the polling stations, the counting of the ballots, the preparation of the statement of polls and the tabulation of results. Qualitative and quantitative information regarding the voting process and the results will be collected to facilitate the preparation of an Independent Final Report on the General and Regional Elections to the Cooperative Republic of Guyana.

Following the conclusion of the Election Day activities on 1 September 2025, and prior to the Mission's departure on 3 September 2025, a Preliminary Statement will be issued, outlining the Mission's initial assessment of the electoral process. The Mission will, thereafter, prepare a detailed Independent Final Report on the elections for submission to Dr. Carla Barnett, Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community.

The CEOM is pleased to accept the invitation and appreciates the warm welcome given to the team by the people of Guyana. The CEOM looks forward to supporting the democratic processes of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and extends best wishes to the Guyanese people as they prepare to go to the polls with pride and unity on Monday, 1 September 2025.

JOSEPHINE TAMAI
CHIEF OF MISSION
29 AUGUST 2025

**CEOM Deployment Matrix
Guyana General and Regional Elections
1 September 2025**

OBSERVATION TEAM	REGIONS VISITED	NUMBER OF POLLING STATIONS VISITED IN REGIONS
Ian Hughes and Sonja Galimo	3	63
Josephine Tamai and Herman St. Helen	4	105
Michael Paul Millette and Reita Joemratie	5	60
Lena Champa Sahadeo and Harrison L. Thompson	6	52
Felix Gregoire and Fatima Gordon	10	44
TOTAL		324



PRELIMINARY STATEMENT
CARICOM ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION TO THE GENERAL AND REGIONAL
ELECTIONS OF THE COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

In response to an invitation from the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) mounted a ten (10) member CARICOM Election Observer Mission (CEOM) to observe the General and Regional Elections on 1 September 2025.

Members of the Mission comprised electoral experts from the following eight (8) Member States:

Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago.

The CEOM is responsible for observing preparations for and the conduct of the elections.

Its mandate is to provide an independent, impartial, and honest assessment of the entire electoral process, considering all factors that may impact the overall credibility and transparency of the elections.

The Chief and Deputy Chief of Mission along with the remaining team members arrived in Guyana during the period 26 to 28 August 2025. The CEOM consulted with a wide cross section of the Guyanese society. This included H.E. Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President and Leader of the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C); representatives of the Hon. Aubrey Norton, M.P., Leader of the Opposition, A Partnership for National Unity (APNU); We Invest in Nationhood (WIN); Alliance for

Change (AFC); Assembly of Liberty and Prosperity (ALP) and Forward Guyana Movement (FGM).

Additionally, the team attended several political meetings to gain an understanding of the political atmosphere on the ground. The team also engaged with the Chairperson of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) and the Chief Election Officer, the Commissioner of Police, Guyana Integrity Commission, Ethnic Relations Commission, Women and Gender Equality Commission, National Disability Commission, trade unions, the private sector, and various civil society institutions including the Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination, Guyana Bar Association, Transparency International Guyana, Canje Community Development Council, and the Presidential Youth Advisory Council. The team also met with the United Nations Technical Team, local and international observers, and CARICOM Ambassadors Resident in Guyana. These meetings provided the CEOM with a general idea of the atmosphere and level of preparedness for the elections.

Campaign Period

Based on information from the various stakeholder consultations and media reports, campaign messaging largely focused on policy and national development. However, the campaign also included instances of personal attacks and accusations. This dynamic likely reflects the high stakes of the election and the evolving political landscape of Guyana as a developing nation. We have not received any reports of major election-related violence during the campaign period.

Deployment of Teams

On Election Day, team members were deployed to observe the elections in Regions 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10. The team visited three hundred and twenty-four (324) polling stations. They also consulted with the Returning Officers and Supernumerary Returning Officers, as well as the various Police Regional Commanders.

Opening of the Poll

The Observer team arrived at the polling stations prior to the opening of the poll to observe the process. It was observed that there was adequate police presence at all these polling locations. Polling staff were present and the necessary election supplies were delivered on time, enabling polling stations to open promptly at 6:00 am. Many voters arrived just before the polls opened, and many appeared enthusiastic to cast their ballots.

The CEOM was made aware of one polling station that experienced a delay, opening at 6:40 a.m. due to the late delivery of the voting compartment. However, this delay did not appear to disfranchise any voters, as all voters who presented themselves were able to cast their ballots. The team noted the presence of at least three (3) political agents in most polling stations. The required notices and instructions for electors were posted, and polling day staff diligently followed the official procedures for the opening of the poll. Overall, the polling stations visited generally opened on time, and voters were able to cast their ballots in a very peaceful and orderly manner.

Voting Process

At the polling locations visited we observed that most polling stations had a list of electors posted for voters to be able to check their names. In a few locations where the list was not displayed, some voters were unsure of their designated polling station. The CEOM noted that this was effectively managed by the availability of Information Clerks, who were equipped with tablets or phones to direct voters, and the option to scan a QR code for guidance. Polling staff were observed to be adequately trained, courteous and helpful, particularly to incapacitated voters. They consistently and impartially guided voters throughout the process. While voter turnout appeared slow for a significant portion of the day, polling staff remained focused on their duties, ensuring all eligible voters who presented themselves were able to cast their ballots.

The CEOM observed some inconsistencies in the positioning of voting compartments. While GECOM had provided an official polling station layout, it

appeared that some polling staff may have had a different interpretation of the guidelines. The CEOM was informed that these adjustments were made in some locations to prevent the photographing of ballots, a GECOM policy, even though voters were not permitted to take their phones inside the voting compartments. Despite these variations, the voting procedures were generally conducted in accordance with the procedures and guidelines outlined by GECOM.

The CEOM also observed that some polling stations were not located on the ground floor. This presented a challenge for elderly and disabled voters, which is an important consideration for future planning.

Close of Poll

The CEOM observed the closing of the poll at several polling stations. Arriving approximately 30 minutes before the scheduled 6:00 p.m. closing time, the team noted that most polling stations had no voters in line. At 6:00 p.m. the Presiding Officers declared the polling stations closed. In the few instances where voters were still in line, they were permitted to cast their ballots. The CEOM concluded that the close of poll procedures were conducted in accordance with the guidelines outlined by GECOM.

Counting of Ballots

Following the conclusion of voting, ballot boxes were opened in the presence of political party agents and observers. The ballots were then carefully counted, beginning with the General Election ballots and immediately followed by the Regional Election ballots.

Once polling staff and agents agreed on the tally, the results were recorded on the Statement of Poll. All parties present signed the document, and copies were provided to political party agents and posted at the polling stations as required. The CEOM is satisfied that the polling day staff followed the counting of ballots procedures and guidelines outlined by GECOM.

Tabulation of Results

After the counting process, Presiding Officers were responsible for transporting the original signed Statement of Poll to the respective District or Supernumerary Returning Officer for tabulation. The CEOM notes that the tabulation process is still ongoing. The CEOM commends GECOM on the legal amendments made to enhance the integrity of the tabulation process, particularly the provision for electronic transmission and the public display of Statements of Poll for verification. These measures are critical for ensuring transparency and accountability.

Stakeholder Observations and Recommendations

Based on consultations, the CEOM noted the following several key observations and recommendations from various stakeholders:

The Voters List: A primary concern raised by most stakeholders was the perceived “bloated” nature of the voters list. GECOM informed that while Guyanese who reside overseas are not included in the national census, the law does not currently authorize the Commission to remove their names from the list of electors, as they retain the legal right to return and vote.

Removal of Deceased Persons: Some stakeholders indicated that names of deceased individuals remain on the list from the last elections. The CEOM was informed that in addition to the General Register Office, the Ministry of Health and the Police are now required to provide GECOM with information on deceased persons to assist in the timely removal of these names from the list of electors.

Biometrics: The introduction of biometrics was highlighted as a pressing need that could assist in mitigating the potential for impersonation and double voting.

GECOM’s Composition: Concerns were also expressed regarding the current composition of GECOM. Many stakeholders suggested that Independent Commissioners should also be appointed and that a time limit should be added to the period of appointment.

Communication: Stakeholders, including media representatives, reported continued difficulties in obtaining timely information from GECOM, which can hinder their ability to provide accurate and prompt information to the public.

Campaign Financing: The lack of a clear framework for campaign financing regulations was also a concern. Stakeholders noted the need for such a framework to be established to ensure a more level playing field.

Overall Impression and Commendations

The CEOM is of the view that on Election Day, electors were able to exercise their franchise in a peaceful and orderly manner and without significant incident. The team observed no signs of intimidation, harassment, or campaigning intended to influence or obstruct the democratic process.

Polling day staff performed their duties in a professional manner and are to be commended. Similarly, the police maintained law and order at the polling stations with extreme professionalism in their interactions with electors and various political stakeholders.

We wish to congratulate the Guyana Elections Commission, the Chief Election Officer and all polling staff. Despite concerns raised prior to Election Day regarding a potential shortage of staff, all polling stations the team visited had a full complement of professional and courteous workers. They efficiently managed the process, even though some, including Presiding Officers, were working for the first time.

Congratulations are also in order for the political parties, their agents, their supporters, and all the voters for the peaceful and orderly way they conducted themselves on Election Day.

We urge all Guyanese to remain calm, peaceful and patient while awaiting the official results of the General and Regional Elections. The relevant authorities must be allowed the space to carry out their duties thoroughly and transparently. Now, more than ever, Guyanese must stand together and put country first. Remember that the strength of the nation lies in its unity, resilience and commitment to the

democratic process. The integrity of your elections is essential to the future of Guyana.

Conclusion

It is our view that the will of the people of Guyana will be accepted and respected.

This interim statement provides an initial assessment based on the observations of our team. A final report will be submitted to the Secretary-General of CARICOM in the coming weeks, outlining our full findings and recommendations.

CARICOM reaffirms its commitment to continue supporting Guyana's democratic journey and its pursuit of a peaceful, unified, and prosperous future for all Guyanese.

The CEOM expresses sincere gratitude to all individuals and organizations who took the time to meet with us. We also extend our appreciation to the Secretary-General and staff of the CARICOM Secretariat for their unwavering support to this Mission.

JOSEPHINE TAMAI
CHIEF OF MISSION
CARICOM ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION (CEOM)
GEORGETOWN, GUYANA
2 SEPTEMBER 2025