



## **2025 Guyana General and Regional Elections**

**Arrival Statement by Mrs Fekitamoeloa Tupoupai Manuula Utoikamanu,  
former Foreign Affairs Minister of Tonga  
Chairperson of the Commonwealth Observer Group**

*26 August 2025 Georgetown, Guyana*

The Commonwealth observed Guyana's 2020 General and Regional Elections and, as part of its mandate, provided recommendations to enhance future electoral process.

One of the recommendations was the implementation of electoral reforms to restore public confidence in future elections. Specifically, the COG then suggested that the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) reform to ensure its independence and ability to command the confidence of Guyanese stakeholders.

The 2020 COG recommended that, to boost public confidence, they may wish to consider, “the timely publication of procedures, decisions and other information of public interest, as well as regular meetings on electoral issues with key stakeholders”. The Commonwealth deployed two of the most respected Commonwealth Electoral Experts to support GECOM in the period immediately preceding the elections. This is aligned with the whole-of-election-cycle approach, as endorsed by Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2018, in London.

Today, my colleagues and I from the Commonwealth are here to observe and assess these elections to be able to report on the nature of the elections, and to offer recommendations that may serve to improve future election processes and institutions.

The Commonwealth has a long-standing commitment to strengthen electoral democracy, and this year marks a notable milestone - 45 years of observing elections across its member countries. Commonwealth electoral support has contributed to promote credible, transparent, and inclusive elections throughout the Commonwealth family.

I consider this an incredible honour, together with these 10 eminent observers from across the Commonwealth, to be here in Guyana to observe these important elections.

Our 11- member Observer Group was constituted by the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Hon Shirley Botchwey following an invitation from the Guyana Elections Commission to observe the poll.

Members have been drawn from across the Commonwealth, representing a wealth of experience, and include experts in law, politics, election administration, human rights, media and civil society.

The Group is supported by a staff team from the Commonwealth Secretariat led by Linford Andrews, Adviser and Head of Electoral Support at the Commonwealth Secretariat.

According to our mandate, the Commonwealth Observer Group has no executive role; its function is not to interfere with, but to observe, the process as a whole and to make recommendations accordingly.

We will observe the pre-election environment, polling day activities and the post-election period, In particular we will consider whether the conditions exist for credible elections, including a fair election environment; whether public media has been impartial; the transparency of the entire process; whether voters are free to express their will; and whether the counting and results process is transparent.

We will then report on whether the elections have been conducted in accordance with the standards to which Guyana has committed itself, including its national law, regional and international commitments.

In conducting our duties, we will be guided by the principles of neutrality, impartiality, objectivity and independence. As we are here in our individual capacities as responsible and experienced Commonwealth citizens, our assessment will be our own, and not that of any member government.

Before election day, we will be meeting stakeholders including the Guyana Elections Commission, government representatives, political parties, security agencies, civil society groups, citizen and international observer groups, diplomats, and the media.

We will deploy our observers in small teams from 30 August across various parts of the country to meet with stakeholders and observe the pre election environment. On Election Day, we will observe the opening, voting, closing, counting and the results management processes.

We will issue an interim statement on our preliminary findings on the 3rd of September, before members of the Group depart Guyana.

A final report will then be prepared and submitted to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, subsequently shared with relevant stakeholders and made publicly available.

As you are aware, this is a crucial period. It is my hope that our presence here affirms the support of the Commonwealth to this country and its democratic processes.

As the people of Guyana express their will at the polls, may peace and national unity prevail above all. We enjoin all political parties and their supporters to ensure a peaceful and credible electoral process.

Thank you!

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