

# Press Release



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## **OAS Reiterates Support for the Results of the National Recount in Guyana**

The decision of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM), on April 3, 2020, to proceed with a national recount, and the eventual initiation of the process on May 6, were welcome developments in the ongoing electoral process in Guyana. Following the very irregular occurrences in the tabulation process for District Four, which undermined the credibility of the results for that electoral District – the largest in Guyana – a national recount of all ballots was deemed the best approach to ensure a result that was acceptable to all stakeholders.

The OAS notes that the decision to proceed with the recount had the full support of all stakeholders in the March 2 General and Regional Elections. The Official Order of the Recount, No. 60/2020, gazetted on May 4, 2020 notably states “... the President and the Leader of the Opposition and all contesting parties agreed to a CARICOM proposal for a total recount of all electoral districts as a means of assuaging the contesting parties and determining a final credible count...” This support was reiterated in public statements by the President of Guyana and other key stakeholders as the recount proceeded.

The Order of the Recount required that “ascertained and verified” matrices of the results for each of the ten electoral districts be submitted to the Chief Elections Officer, who would then tabulate these results and submit them to GECOM, along with a summary of the observation reports prepared for each District. OAS notes that the report submitted by the Chief Elections Officer on June 13, records multiple “allegations” of irregularities by a contesting party in each District, which are then used as a basis for determining that the electoral process in each of the ten Districts was not credible. There is little evidence in the CEO’s report of efforts to investigate or otherwise address any of the alleged irregularities presented. His contention that the entire election be set aside on this basis alone is astonishing.

In its statement of April 15, 2020, prior to the commencement of the recount, the OAS had recommended the exclusion of any official who had displayed partisan behaviour during the electoral process. While the CEO’s approach to his report is therefore disappointing, it is not unexpected.

As noted in our statement of June 4, OAS observers present on each day of the national recount have reported that the process was conducted in a professional, transparent and impartial fashion, which allowed GECOM, political parties and other stakeholders to accurately determine the results for each polling station. OAS reiterates that there is no reason not to support the results of the recount process.

OAS further takes note and wholly supports the findings of the CARICOM team of scrutineers that the results of the recount were transparent and credible, and nothing prevents the Chair of the Guyana Elections Commission from now declaring the election, based on these results.

Elections are held to determine the will of the people and once the people's wishes are clearly stated they must be upheld – not only in instances where they favour the incumbent. In this case, the results published in the report of the Chief Elections Officer himself make it clear that the opposition PPP/C has won the favour of the majority of Guyana's eligible voters. Their will must be respected.

The OAS calls on the current administration of Guyana to begin the process of transition, which will allow the legitimately elected government to take its place.