

## BAHAMAS

Date of Elections: 19 June 1987

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the seats in the House of Assembly on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The bicameral Parliament of the Bahamas consists of the House of Assembly and the Senate.

The House of Assembly is composed of 49 members elected for 5 years. This total was raised from 43 prior to the 1987 elections.

The Senate is composed of 16 members appointed by the Governor-General — 9 on the advice of the Prime Minister, 4 on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition, and 3 on the advice of the Prime Minister after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition.

### **Electoral System**

Any citizen of the Bahamas who is at least 18 years old and not subject to any legal incapacity and who has resided in a particular constituency for a minimum of three months is entitled to vote in that same constituency. Disqualified from registration as electors are the insane, persons serving any sentence of imprisonment and persons under sentence of death.

Electoral registers are revised annually. Voting is not compulsory.

Citizens of the Bahamas at least 21 years of age who have ordinarily resided in the Bahamas for a period of not less than one year immediately before the date of their nomination are qualified to be elected as members of the House of Assembly. Candidates for appointment to the Senate must be citizens who are at least 30 years old and who have ordinarily resided in the Bahamas for a period of not less than one year immediately before the date of appointment.

Ineligible, for both the House and the Senate, are undischarged bankrupts, the insane, persons owing allegiance to a foreign State, persons under sentence of death or imprisonment, and those convicted of a felony or of electoral fraud. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with the office of judge, substantive or temporary public officer for a period exceeding three months; with being a member of any of the armed forces of the Crown other than in a time of war or emergency, or a member of the reserve of any such forces; and with employment on the personal staff of the Governor-General or in the Ministry of Tourism.

Candidates for the House must be nominated by a total of four electors and make a deposit of BS400, which is forfeited if the candidate is not elected and does not obtain more than one-sixth of the total votes polled in his constituency.

For election purposes, the Bahamas are divided into 49 constituencies. One member of the House of Assembly is elected in each by simple majority vote.

House of Assembly seats which become vacant between general elections are filled through by-elections. Vacant Senate seats are filled by appointment made according to how the seat was originally filled.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

In view of the 1987 elections, Prime Minister Sir Lynden Pindling dissolved Parliament on 12 May.

The main issue during the somewhat bitter one-month campaign was corruption related to drug trafficking, with the opposition Free National Movement (FNM), headed by Mr. Kendal Isaacs, accusing the Government of impropriety in this field. The FNM also pointed to the country's high unemployment and rising drug use.

On polling day, the ruling Progressive Liberal Party (PLP), in power since independence in 1973, saw its House majority slightly reduced. The opposition alleged election irregularities as it lost a number of seats by narrow margins. Sir Lynden, given another five-year term as head of Government, formed a new Cabinet on 28 June.

Statistics

1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats  
in the House of Assembly*

Number of registered electors . . . . .	100,215	
Voters . . . . .	90,301	(90.1%)
Political Group	Votes ob(ajned	Number of Seats
Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) . . . . .	53,508	31 (-1)
Free National Movement (FNM). . . . .	43,244	16 (+ 5)
Independents. . . . .	3,122	2 (+ 2)
		49*

\* Six seats added since last elections.

*2. Distribution of Members of the House of Assembly  
according to Sex*

Men	47
Women	<u>2</u>
	49