

## GAMBIA

**Dates of Elections:** 4 and 5 May 1982

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the elective seats in Parliament on the normal expiry of its term of office. General elections had previously been held in April 1977.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The unicameral Parliament of Gambia, the House of Representatives, consists of:

- 35 "elected members";
- 5 "Chiefs' representative members";
- 8 "nominated members" appointed by the President of the Republic;

The Speaker, elected by the House, who may either have been a member of it or not, but may not be a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary;

- The Attorney-General, who sits *ex-officio*.

Only the elected members, Chiefs' representative members, and the Attorney-General have the right to vote.

All members of the House have a 5-year term of office.

### **Electoral System**

Requirements applicable to electors:

- Of elected members: to qualify, any citizen of Gambia must be registered on the electoral rolls, must be at least 21 years of age, and must be a resident for at least six months of the constituency in which he is registered. No person under allegiance to a foreign State, insane, or serving a sentence of imprisonment is qualified, nor are Head Chiefs.

- Of Chiefs' representative members: there are elected exclusively by the Head Chiefs.

The electoral registers of each constituency are revised in each "general registration year", i.e. every fifth year after 1968; a supplemental registration is carried out in each of the intervening years. Voting is not compulsory.

Requirements applicable to candidates:

- As elected members: any citizen who is at least 21 years of age, who can speak English well enough to take an active part in the proceedings of the House and who is qualified as an elector may be a candidate for election as an elected member. Undischarged bankrupts, persons under a sentence of death, those serving, or having in the preceding five years served, a sentence of imprisonment of at least six months and those party to certain government contracts are ineligible.

As Chiefs' representative members: the same qualifications and disqualifications apply as for elected members, except that candidates for election as Chiefs' representative members need not qualify as electors.

Every candidate for election must be nominated by at least three voters of the same constituency and make a monetary deposit, which is reimbursed if he is successful or obtains at least one-fifth of the votes cast for the elected candidate.

Gambia is divided into 35 electoral constituencies, the boundaries of which are fixed by a presidential commission. In each of these, a single Deputy is elected by simple majority vote. Votes are cast by ballot tokens dropped through a hole next to the candidate's picture.

Chiefs' representative members must be approved unanimously by the Head Chiefs from a list proposed by them; if they are not so approved, they are selected on the basis of simple majority.

A by-election is held to fill any seat of an elected member or a Chiefs' representative member which becomes vacant between general elections.

### General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The legislative elections were combined with those for President of the Republic, a constitutional amendment adopted in March 1982 having stipulated that the President would henceforth be elected by universal direct suffrage. The polling date was announced on 20 March.

Opposing incumbent President Sir Dawda Jawara and his ruling People's Progressive Party (PPP) were Sheriff Mustapha Dibba and his National Convention Party (NCP). President Jawara's large victory on polling day (137,020 votes (72.4%) to Mr. Dibba's 52,136 (27.6%)) was interpreted as an endorsement of his Government's decision to enter into a confederation with neighbouring Senegal (the Senegambian confederation entered into effect on 1 February 1982). In the House race, the PPP won 27 of the 35 popularly-elected seats.

President Jawara, who has been in power since independence in 1965, reshuffled his Government on 12 May.

### Statistics

#### 1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the House of Representatives

Valid votes. . . . . 166,102

Political Group	Votes obtained		Number of Seats of Popularly-Elected Members
People's Progressive Party (PPP) .	102,545	61.7	27 (-1)
National Convention Party (NCP)	32,634	19.7	3 (-2)
United Party. . . . .	4,782	2.9	- (-2)
Independents. . . . .	26,141	15.7	5 (+5)

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