

SURINAME

Date of Elections: 25 November 1987

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats of the Parliament provided for in the new Constitution of September 1987*.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Suriname, the National Assembly, is composed of 51 members elected for 5 years.

Electoral System

All citizens of Suriname residing in the country who are at least 18 years of age are entitled to vote. Disqualified are persons deprived of this right by court decision, those lawfully deprived of their freedom, as well as the insane and mentally weak.

Electoral registers are revised annually. Voting is not compulsory.

Qualified electors at least 21 years old, who reside and have resided for two years in the district where running for election, may be candidates for the National Assembly if not otherwise excluded therefrom. All candidates must be political party members and be supported by a given number of electors.

National Assembly members are elected from 10 constituencies on the basis of a party-list proportional representation system that involves preferential voting. Substitutes elected at the same time as titular members fill parliamentary vacancies which arise between general elections, according to the order of names on the party list.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The 1987 general elections were the first since those of October 1977. Parliament was subsequently dissolved in the wake of the 1980 military coup d'Etat.

The National Assembly polling was combined with that for municipal and provincial councils. For the Assembly seats, candidates were nominated by six political parties. Three

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 16.

of these - traditional ethnic groups - united to form the Front for Democracy and Development (FDD) coalition. They opposed the military-backed National Democratic Party (NDP).

The main issue addressed during the electoral campaign was the revival of the country's economy. The FDD also pledged to restore Suriname's friendly ties with the Netherlands. Voting results gave the coalition a landslide victory, thereby confirming the lack of popular support for military rule. Despite this outcome, as announced prior to the poll, the armed forces, led by Lt. Col. Desire Bourterse, continued to have a strong voice in the "revolutionary process" of governing.

The composition of the Council of State was announced on 4 December. On 12 January 1988, the National Assembly elected Mr. Ramsewak Shankar as President of the Republic.

Statistics

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

Number of registered electors.195.000 (approx.)
Voters.	93% (approx.)

Political Group	Number of Seats
Front for Democracy and Development (FDD)*.	40
<i>Pendawa Lima</i>	4
Progressive Labourers' and Peasants' Union (PALU).	4
National Democratic Party (NDP).	3
	51

* Alliance comprising the Creole Suriname National Party (NPS), the East Indian Progressive Reform Party (VHP) and the Indonesian Javanese Farmers Party (KTPI). Breakdown of seats obtained was as follows: 16 for VHP, 14 for NPS and 10 for KTPI.

2. *Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Profession*

Government officials.	25
Teachers.	9
Doctors.	3
Businessmen.	3
Lawyers.	1
Others.	10
	51

3. *Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex*

Men.	47
Women.	4
	51