

TONGA

Date of Elections: 19 February 1987

Purpose of Elections

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

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Tonga, the Legislative Assembly, comprises 29 members: the King, the Privy Council (eight Ministers and two Governors), 9 hereditary nobles elected by their peers and 9 representatives who are popularly elected. Elected members hold office for 3 years.

Electoral System

All literate citizens of Tonga who are at least 21 years of age are entitled to vote for popularly-chosen members. Male electors must in addition not be nobles. Disqualified from voting are the insane and persons under summons for debt.

Qualified electors who are not in debt for a larger amount than is allowed by law may be chosen as representatives of the people. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with all offices of emolument under the Crown except those of Minister and Governor.

As mentioned above, parliamentarians include nine nobles chosen by the nobles of the Kingdom and nine representatives of the people who are elected in five electoral districts by universal suffrage. Each candidate for the latter seat must be supported by 50 qualified electors of the district concerned and deposit a sum of \$T 100, which is forfeited unless he obtains 6[^]3% or 10% of the total votes polled, depending on the constituency.

Upon the death or resignation of any representative of the nobles or the people, the Speaker orders the nobles or electors of the district which he represented to elect a representative in his place.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Polling results for the nine people's representatives in the 1987 elections spelled defeat for six incumbents, and the new members reportedly included some critics of the Government.

There are no political parties in the country. A unique feature of the legislative system is that the Privy Council, or Cabinet, members sit *ex-officio* in Parliament. The Prime Minister is Prince Fatafehi Tu'ipelehake, the brother of King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections

Number of registered electors.	42,496	
Voters.	25,253	(59.4%)

2. Distribution of Members of the Legislative Assembly according to Sex

Men	29
Women.	29