

WESTERN SAMOA

Date of Elections: 26 February 1988

Purpose of Elections

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

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Western Samoa - the Legislative Assembly - consists of 47 members elected for 3 years. Forty-five of these are Samoans elected from 42 territorial constituencies on a franchise confined to *maiais* (elected family leaders - *matai* being the head of an *aiga*, which is the traditional Samoan extended family unit) and two are elected by universal suffrage of those outside the *matai* system (mainly Europeans) and registered on the individual voters' rolls.

Electoral System

Elections are held under the simple majority system. To be a voter, a person must be a citizen of Western Samoa, 21 years of age and a resident. Persons who are insane, undischarged bankrupts or who have been convicted, in Western Samoa or American Samoa, of an offence punishable by death or by imprisonment for a term of two years or more, or convicted, in Western Samoa, of a corrupt practice (unless such offenders have received a free pardon or have undergone their sentence of punishment) are disqualified from voting.

Electors for representatives of *maiais* chosen from constituencies must be holders of a *matai* (chief) title - male or female - and registered on the electoral roll of the constituency concerned. Other citizens of Western Samoa - descendants of non-Samoan races - may have their names entered on the individual voters' rolls. No name can simultaneously appear both on the *matai* and the individual voters' rolls.

Electoral rolls are revised annually. Voting is not compulsory.

Candidates for the Legislative Assembly must be qualified voters. A member is not allowed to hold any office of profit. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with that of a public servant. Public servants who become members must resign.

Candidates must be nominated by two registered electors and make a monetary deposit of an amount equivalent to US\$35, which is forfeited if the candidate obtains less than one-half of the total number of votes polled by the successful candidate.

By-elections are held for Assembly seats which become vacant between general elections.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

Following the previous (February 1985) general elections, Prime Minister Tofilau Eti Alesana of the Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP) resigned in December 1985 and was replaced by Mr. Va'ai Kolone, leader of an independent group in coalition with the Christian Democratic Party (CDP).

Voting results were initially deadlocked, with each of the contending sides gaining the same number of seats. On 8 April, at the Assembly's first meeting, the **HRPP** had a one-seat advantage as a result of a defection, and Mr. Tofilau Eti was elected Prime Minister by 24 votes to 23. He then announced the composition of a nine-member Cabinet.

Statistics

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

<u>Political Party</u>	<u>Number of Seats</u>
Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP) . . .	24
Va'ai Kolone group - Christian Democratic Party (CDP) coalition	23
	47