



Press Release

Decisions of the Commission has placed Nominations Day earlier than usual - No 'Lengthy Gap' to delay Elections

September 10 2019, GEORGETOWN – The operations of GECOM's Secretariat are guided by the decisions of Commission and therefore any document produced by the technical team must be in conformity with those decisions along with the legal and procedural requirements.

An article published in the Stabroek News on Monday, September 9, 2019 under the caption "Lengthy gap between Nomination, Election days in draft timeline for polls" failed to articulate the reasons why Nominations was placed 55 days before elections day instead of the usual timeline of between 32-34 days prior to elections day.

The law is clear that Nominations Day should be no later than 32 days before elections day. Therefore, any time before that amount of days, even if it's 55 days is acceptable and in conformity with the laws of Guyana.

The shift in the time is justifiable and does not breach any law and definitely not intended to delay the holding of elections as adumbrated in the article. The decision for the gap were derived against the backdrop that:

1. Historically, when all the lists of candidates were submitted and once no errors for corrections, the ballots were sent off to print. As such, some mandatory statutory timelines which took as much as 10 days after Nominations Day were bypassed and the contesting Parties list of candidates were approved and sent off for the production of ballots.

However, the Operations Sub-Committee which is co-chaired by Commissioners Sase Gunraj and Charles Corbin decided at a meeting on 17th July, 2018 that all statutory timelines must be adhered to. This proposal was subsequently presented to and adopted by the full Commission.

2. As customary, the ballots will be printed overseas and the service provider has provided a 21 days duration for the printing only. Shipping is likely to be 5-7 days which will take us to roughly 28 days.
3. Upon arrival of the ballots in Guyana, there will be a process of extracting ballots to ship overseas to all the Non-Resident Ambassadors to allow for them to vote. This will take as much as 14 days to be completed.

Consequent to the foregoing and in the present circumstances, expediting those activities means that Nominations Day must be held at least 55 days prior to elections day. It must however be emphasized that the timelines presented are in draft and the Commission can determine whether they will reverse the decision to remove 9 days for appeals after Nominations Day once all the lists of candidates are error free.

The Guyana Elections Commission is committed to ensuring it delivers credible elections within the shortest possible time and has no motive to delay the conduct of those elections.

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