

2026 The Bahamas General Elections

Arrival Statement by Hon Bruce Golding
former Prime Minister of Jamaica,
Chairperson of the Commonwealth Observer Group

05 May 2026, Nassau

It is an honour to be in The Bahamas as Chairperson of the Commonwealth Observer Group for the 2026 General Elections. I also had the honour of chairing a similar mission during the 2021 General Elections, and I am pleased to return in that capacity. Our presence here again reflects the Commonwealth's steady and long-standing commitment to supporting democratic institutions and electoral processes across its member countries.

Having previously led a team here in 2021, it is particularly important to observe what has changed since the last election, whether in electoral administration, voter engagement or procedural reform. This enables us to assess not only the integrity of the current process but also the progress made within The Bahamas's democratic journey.

The Commonwealth Observer Group is here following an appointment by the Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Hon. Shirley Botchway.

I am joined by three distinguished experts from across the region, who bring expertise and experience in electoral administration, politics, law and the media.

We are supported in our work by a team from the Commonwealth Secretariat led by Professor Michelle Scobie, Head and Adviser for Good Offices and the Caribbean and Americas Section.

We arrived in Nassau on 4 May and will remain in the country until 18 May. Our presence here reflects the Commonwealth's solidarity with the people of The Bahamas and its support for credible, inclusive and transparent elections.

Our mandate is to observe the electoral process independently and impartially. We do not interfere. Instead, we assess and report on the conduct of the process as a whole. At the conclusion of our mission, we will submit a report to the Commonwealth Secretary-General. This report is the Group's own and does not

represent the views of the Commonwealth Secretariat nor of any member government.

During our stay, we will meet a wide range of stakeholders including the election management body, political parties, civil society organisations, security agencies, members of the diplomatic community, religious leaders and others engaged in the democratic process.

Our assessment will cover the entire electoral cycle, not only election day activities, and will consider whether the process meets the standards and commitments to democracy, inclusion, transparency and credibility to which The Bahamas has committed itself nationally and internationally.

On 10 May, our teams will be deployed across the islands to observe key stages of the process including the opening of polls, voting, closing procedures, the counting of ballots and the transmission of results.

Following election day, we will issue an interim statement with our preliminary findings. Our final report will subsequently be submitted to the Commonwealth Secretary-General and thereafter to the Government of The Bahamas, the Election Commission, political parties, and Commonwealth member governments, and will also be made available to the public.

Finally, I extend our sincere appreciation to the people of The Bahamas for their warm hospitality. We wish you well as you participate in this important democratic exercise.

Thank you.