

Press Release



Organization of
American States

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OAS and the Bahamas sign Agreement of Privileges and Immunities for Electoral Mission in May

The Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), José Miguel Insulza, and the Alternate Representative of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas to the OAS, Freddie Tucker, today signed the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities for the Electoral Observation Mission that the OAS will deploy for the general elections on Monday, May 7, in a ceremony called "historic" by both sides, held in the main building of the hemispheric organization in Washington DC.

“We are very happy to share this opportunity and to share this historic moment in which for the first time there will be an international electoral observation in the Bahamas,” said Secretary General Insulza. The chief representative of the OAS added, “We value very much that those countries that have a tradition of transparent and normal elections receive OAS Election Observation Mission, because that encourages other countries to see that this is not a watchdog exercise, but rather a way to share and improve the benefits of democracy throughout the region.”

On Monday, May 7, the people of the Bahamas will elect the 38 members of the National Assembly of the Bahamas. Three parties, the Free National Movement, the Progressive Liberal Party and the Democratic National Alliance have fielded candidates to fill the 38 seats in the National Assembly. Secretary General Insulza reported that the Chief of Mission will be OAS Secretary of External Relations Alfonso Quiñonez, and that the mission will arrive May 1st.

For his part Representative Tucker, who also holds office in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Foreign Ministry of his country, said “it is an historic moment for us, because this is the first time that we will be allowing observers to come to our country and observe an electoral process.” “The Bahamas have a strong tradition of democracy and transparency,” he added, pointing out that the people of the Bahamas “wait every five years to exercise the vote.”

Present at the signing ceremony were the Chair of the Permanent Council and Representative of Honduras to the OAS, Leónidas Rosa Bautista, the Assistant Secretary General of the OAS, Ambassador Albert Ramdin, the Chief of Staff of the Secretary General Hugo de Zela, and Ambassador Quiñonez, among others.