

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ELECTION OBSERVERS COMMEND WELL-ADMINISTERED BVI GENERAL ELECTION

International election observers have found that the British Virgin Islands 2023 General Election broadly met international standards. Following an invitation by the Governor, H.E. John Rankin CMG, the team of eight international observers, led by Hon. Fatoumatta Njai from The Gambia, observed last Monday's General Election.

The Election Observation Mission, run by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association British Islands and Mediterranean Region (CPA BIMR), was on island from 16 April and spoke to a wide variety of stakeholders as part of the pre-election observation. It observed Advance Polling in 7 polling stations, and on Polling Day the Mission deployed teams to all 18 polling stations across Tortola, Jost van Dyke, Anegada and Virgin Gorda.

The Head of Mission, Hon Fatoumatta Njai from The Gambia, said: *"The British Virgin Islands has delivered a well-administered election, which was carried out in a calm and professional manner. Polling staff were well-trained, diligent and helpful, and efforts to promote voting by elderly voters and persons with disabilities were commendable."*

In their Preliminary Statement, the Mission also highlights areas for improvement, including the lack of campaign finance regulations. Voters are unaware of sources of campaign funding, which is not in line with international best practice.

Following an audit process, there is now further clarity on eligibility for belonging status, which is linked to the right to vote. The Mission welcomes the momentum towards achieving legal certainty and improved implementation of the granting of belonging status, to enfranchise eligible voters.

The election campaign was described as "vibrant", and voters were able to choose from a wide range of candidates. Still, the Mission noted that a considerable number of voters chose to stay away from the polls with a lower turnout compared to previous elections. Also, the participation of women in political life is not actively promoted, with the Mission highlighting that only 3 out of 13 elected Members to the House of Assembly were women.

The Preliminary Statement is now publicly available online. The observers will be producing a Final Report within two months of Election Day. This Report will include greater detail on the Mission's findings, and will include recommendations for the improvement of electoral processes for future elections.

Further Information:

- CPA UK is a signatory to the [Declaration of Principles of International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observers](#)
- The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK (CPA UK) acts as the secretariat to CPA BIMR, one of the nine regions of the CPA network, and is committed to strengthening democracy and good governance.

- The eight-member CPA BIMR Mission was composed of:
 - Head of Mission – Hon. Fatoumatta Njai (National Assembly of The Gambia)
 - Short-Term Observer – Hon. Shellya Rogers-Webster (House of Assembly of Anguilla)
 - Short-Term Observer – Hon. Randy Howell (House of Assembly of Turks and Caicos Islands)
 - Short-Term Observer – Hon. Samantha Sacramento (Gibraltar Parliament)
 - Legal/Political Analyst – Anne Marlborough (Ireland)
 - Electoral/Campaign Analyst – Vasil Vashchanka (Sweden)
 - CPA BIMR Election Observation Lead – Fleur ten Hacken (the Netherlands)
 - CPA BIMR Mission Coordinator – Matthew Hamilton (USA/UK)
- The Preliminary Statement is available on: <https://www.uk-cpa.org/media/5033/preliminary-statement-cpa-bimr-eom-to-bvi-2023-26-april-2023.pdf>
- This was the fourth time CPA BIMR was invited to observe a general election in the British Virgin Islands.
- For further information, please contact CPA BIMR at cpabimr@parliament.uk

ENDS

