

**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

## **MONTSERRAT GENERAL ELECTION DEEMED A REAL PROCEDURAL SUCCESS BY INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS**

The Mission of seven observers, led by Hon. Julian Robinson, MP from Jamaica, called the 18 November Montserrat General Election a real procedural success.

The Election Observation Mission run by the British Islands and Mediterranean region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA BIMR) visited all 12 polling stations across six divisions on polling day. In the run up to 18 November, the Mission met with key stakeholders including electoral officials, candidates, members of the public and attended main political rallies to gain a better understanding of the electoral process and political context of the election.

About the Election, Hon Julian Robinson says: 'We have been impressed by the way the elections were administered and by the diligent efforts of all polling staff across the six divisions. Whether people are in agreement with the results of the elections or not, they can be confident that the results does represent the will of the people of Montserrat'.

The closing press conference held on 20 November 2019 presented the key preliminary findings:

- Voting was administered in an orderly, well-organised and transparent manner
- The counting process was highly professional and conducted with rigour and the highest level of transparency far beyond legal requirements
- It is apparent that the Electoral Commission enjoys the trust of both the public and the political parties, with confidence expressed both in its impartiality and its ability to conduct the elections correctly.

The preliminary report also mentions areas where further improvements would be needed to make the process more inclusive and efficient for future elections. These relate to:

- Secrecy of the vote - potential breaches to the secrecy of the vote remain in the inclusion of a serial number on the ballot paper
- Right to stand - The protection of the right to stand for election is not in full compliance with international law. A distinction is made between Montserratians by birth and those who have acquired nationality by naturalisation. This amounts to discrimination, which appears unreasonable
- Review of the electoral system – a consideration should be given on whether single-member constituencies could enable more direct representation of communities
- Regrettably, just one woman has been elected, representing just eleven per cent of those elected.

Observers will be producing their final report within two months. The final report will provide further information on the areas considered by the Mission and will include practical recommendations to improve compliance to international standards and improve the overall process for future elections. The report will be made available on <https://www.uk-cpa.org/what-we-do/elections/> and on the Montserrat Electoral Commission's website.

For further information and to get in touch with the Mission, please contact us at [montserratelectionobservers@gmail.com](mailto:montserratelectionobservers@gmail.com) or tweet @CPA\_BIMR and #MontserratEOM.

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### **Notes to Editors:**

Seven international observers took part in the Mission; Hon Julian Robinson MP, Jamaica, Harald Jepsen, Denmark, Anne Marlborough, Ireland, Aurjul Wilson, Anguilla, Martyn Perkins MHK, Isle of Man, Mariam El-Azm, France and Felicity Newall, UK.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association British Islands and Mediterranean Region conducted the Mission in accordance with the Declaration of Principles of International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observers.

For more information, please email [montserratelectionobservers@gmail.com](mailto:montserratelectionobservers@gmail.com).

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