



Roman Catholic Church of Guyana Calls for Peaceful Election and Democratic Renewal

- releases key findings from regional webinar series and urges citizens to embrace long-term democratic reforms

Georgetown, Guyana – August 30, 2025

"Our faith teaches us that lasting peace requires justice. We will continue to work alongside all people of goodwill – regardless of faith, ethnicity, or political affiliation – to build the just and peaceful democracy that all Guyanese deserve." – Bishop Francis Alleyne, The Roman Catholic Church of Guyana

As Guyana prepares for General and Regional Elections on September 1, 2025, the Roman Catholic Church of Guyana (RCC) today released findings from its recent "Just Electoral Peace" webinar series and called on citizens, political leaders, and civil society to do their part in ensuring peace on election day and to commit to building a more inclusive and peaceful democracy beyond.

The three-part webinar series, conducted from August 7-21, 2025, brought together regional experts from Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago – two nations that have successfully maintained peaceful electoral processes despite facing similar ethnic divisions and colonial legacies. The initiative, inspired by Pope Francis's encouragement for political dialogue in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*," examined critical dimensions of sustainable electoral peace: reconciliation and trust-building, system strengthening, and the promotion of shared constitutional rights and values.

Key Regional Lessons for Guyana

"Our neighbors have shown us that electoral peace is achievable even in societies with deep historical divisions," Bishop Francis Alleyne said, speaking for the Church's Just Electoral Peace working group. "However, their experiences also reveal that peaceful elections alone do not guarantee democratic consolidation. We must address root causes, not just symptoms."

Bishop Alleyne explained that the RCC's Just Electoral Peace working group emphasizes that true electoral peace extends far beyond the absence of violence to encompass social justice, equality, and human rights as foundational elements of sustainable democracy. "We are praying earnestly for peaceful elections on September 1," Bishop Alleyne added. "But our prayers are accompanied by action. We call upon all Guyanese to commit to the hard work of democratic renewal that must continue long after the votes are counted."

The Just Electoral Peace webinars highlighted that both Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago achieved electoral stability through:



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- **Institutional independence:** Electoral bodies that enjoy cross-sectional trust through secure funding and inclusive appointment processes
- **Rule adherence over perfect unity:** Political parties' disciplined observance of agreed-upon electoral procedures, even amid deep divisions
- **Active civil society engagement:** Independent organizations leading voter education and accountability efforts

However, regional experts also warned of persistent challenges including voter apathy (with turnout rates of 30-55% in Trinidad and Tobago), divisive political cultures, and economic inequalities that continue to fuel ethnic tensions.

Recommendations for Peaceful Elections and Democratic Growth

The RCC working group produced a briefing document following the August 7-21 webinars. This captures insights from regional experts who participated in the webinars and outlines concrete actions for different stakeholders:

For Citizens:

- Move beyond ethnic voting patterns to evaluate candidates based on democratic values and service to all communities
- Hold leaders accountable for transparency and campaign promises
- Participate in cross-community dialogue initiatives
- Support meaningful youth political engagement

For Political Leaders:

- Publicly commit to accepting electoral outcomes and following constitutional procedures
- Separate party interests from government functions
- Implement internal democratic processes within parties
- Support comprehensive reconciliation efforts addressing historical grievances

For Civil Society Organizations:

- Strengthen independent civic education programs reaching all communities
- Build sustained cross-ethnic dialogue platforms
- Monitor and advocate for electoral integrity
- Develop youth leadership programs that transcend traditional party politics

For Government Institutions:

- Ensure electoral commissions have secure, independent funding
- Invest in comprehensive civic education integrated into curricula
- Promote economic justice and inclusion through equitable resource management
- Support constitutional reforms dismantling colonial-era structures



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"The concept of Just Electoral Peace challenges us to think beyond managing electoral cycles to building a society where every Guyanese can participate meaningfully in democratic life," said Lawrence Lachmansingh, who moderated one of the webinars. "This requires confronting uncomfortable truths about our past while working together toward a shared vision of our future."

The Church particularly emphasized the critical role of youth engagement, noting that younger generations in both Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago show less attachment to historical ethnic animosities and more fluid political allegiances.

Prayers and Commitment to Ongoing Work

As Guyanese prepare to vote, the RCC commits to continued prayer for peaceful elections and the wisdom of all citizens in exercising their democratic rights. Beyond September 1, the Church pledges to support ongoing dialogue initiatives, civic education programs, and reconciliation efforts essential for democratic consolidation.

"Our faith teaches us that lasting peace requires justice," concluded Bishop Alleyne. "We will continue to work alongside all people of goodwill – regardless of faith, ethnicity, or political affiliation – to build the just and peaceful democracy that all Guyanese deserve."

The Church's full briefing document, "Just Electoral Peace: Lessons for Guyana's Democratic Future," is available to the public and provides detailed analysis and recommendations based on the regional expert consultations.

About the Just Electoral Peace Initiative

The Just Electoral Peace initiative is implemented by a working group comprising Dr. David Singh, Bishop Francis Alleyne, Lawrence Lachmansingh, Sara Bharrat, and Vanessa Williams, with institutional support from the Roman Catholic Church of Guyana. The initiative builds on civil society frameworks developed through UN-facilitated dialogue following the 2020 elections and seeks to address root causes of electoral tensions through sustained engagement and institutional reform.

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