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Dominica Opposition Party Decides Not to Participate in Snap Election, Saying Move by Skerit is an 'Outrage to all Dominicans'

Politics / **Published On November 09, 2022 02:10 AM /**

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Dominica Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerit.

In an unprecedented move, the United Workers Party (UWP) in Dominica have said that they will not contest in the upcoming general elections, stating that it is “an affront to our democracy and an insult.”

On Sunday, Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerit stunned residents when he announced that the date for the country’s next general elections would be held within a month on December 6th, 2022.

The date for elections came as a shock to many, particularly as the next general elections is not constitutionally due until April 2025. Equally worrying is that the main opposition had not selected a leader following the departure of Lennox Linton.

Furthermore, the December 6th election is likely to be held without electoral reform – a process which began in September 2020, headed by Sir Dennis Byron the former President of the Caribbean Court of Justice and Former Chief Justice of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court.

The Dominica government was expecting to receive a final report by the end of December 2020 on Sir Dennis' suggestions, which it previously indicated was "important for the country". However no official document for reform has been presented to the public.

Many thought that Mr. Skerrit had convened the special address on Sunday to discuss the impacts of devastating floods in the East of the island. However, instead he announced that a fresh writ to hold general elections be issued on Monday 7th November, 2022 and that parliament be dissolved with immediate effect.

It is those series of events that has caused the opposition to declare the elections "fraudulent" and one in which they will not participate.

"This call for national elections is seen as an outrage to all Dominicans, especially the residents of the East of the country who were reeling under the impact of a natural disaster. On the night when the country was expected to hear the Prime Minister lead the call to support those affected, Mr. Skerrit decided to place his personal interest ahead of the country," UWP said in a press statement.

According to the UWP, Dominicans cannot be asked at this time to participate in another national election without meeting at least two basic election standards: A clean Voters List reflecting the persons who can legally vote; and National ID Cards available to all the legitimate voters.

The Dominica Labour Party (DLP) was expected to reveal its "new-look slate of candidates" in the community of Mahaut this past Tuesday. Nomination Day in Dominica has been set for Friday the 18th November.