

# PRESS RELEASE



## GECOM is Not Responsible for the Creation of New Neighbourhood Democratic Councils

**July 9 2018, GEORGETOWN** - The Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) has noted in some sections of the media that there are accusations that the Commission has demonstrated a “lack of concern at the creation of new Neighbourhood Democratic Councils.”

That creative function does not fall within the remit of GECOM. That call falls within the mandate of the Minister of Communities, Hon. Ronald Bulkan and the statutory duty so to do is his and his alone.

Chapter 28:03, section 38a of the Local Authorities Act states that “each Local Authority area shall be divided into constituencies for the purpose of electing members of the Municipalities and Neighbourhood Democratic Councils.”

In accordance with the Local Authorities Act, the Minister shall by order; identify the Local Authority area where the election shall be held and state for each Local Authority Area:

- i. the number of members for each local authority is provided and that such number is an even number;
- ii. the number of members to be elected by the proportional representation component shall be 50 percent of the number so named;
- iii. The number of members to be elected by the constituency component shall be 50 percent of the number so named.

The role of GECOM is clear as prescribed by section 38a (5) of the Act. It states that “the Elections Commission may by order combine or subdivide one or more electoral divisions to form a constituency (***a group of voters in a specified area who elect a representative to a legislative body***) for the purpose of electing members of that Local Authority.”

It is against this backdrop that GECOM would like to caution that it is not responsible for the creation of new Neighbourhood Democratic Councils and its mandate is primarily the conduct of elections once it has been announced and the date has been set.

The Local Authorities Act is clear in the distinction of the role of the Minister and the role of GECOM. Identification of Local Authorities falls within the ambit of the Minister and GECOM determines the constituencies and conducts the elections.

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