



DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

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The Gambia Parliamentary Election

Gambians vote in parliamentary polls

The Gambia 29th of March 2012- Over 700,000 Gambians began voting today 29th of March to elect their representatives to the National Assembly for the next five years. The election is contested by the ruling Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) and the opposition National Reconciliation Party (NRP) and 18 independent candidates. The National Assembly election is being boycotted by 6 opposition parties.

The African Union (AU) Election Observer Mission is headed by Dr. Samuel Azu'u Fonkom, Chairman of the Electoral Commission of Cameroon. Members of the Mission who have been on ground in The Gambia since the 22nd of March 2012 to observe the fourth Parliamentary election were seen at polling stations across the country. The Mission is in The Gambia to present an independent and impartial assessment of the organization and conduct of the election.

The AU Mission is composed of 22 members drawn from Elections Management Bodies (EMBs), National Parliaments, the Pan African Parliament, African Ambassadors Accredited to the African Union in Addis Ababa, eminent personalities and members of civil society organizations from various African countries.

Observers were drawn from Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda, Saharawi Republic, Somalia, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe

This is the fourth National Assembly election since President Jammeh's ascent to power in 1994. Previous elections were held in 1997, 2002, and 2007. During the 2007 National Assembly election, the APRC won 42 of the 48 seats in the National Assembly.

Voting will take place in 510 polling stations across 23 of the 48 constituencies as the remaining 25 seats have been returned unopposed to the ruling Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC).

The poll opened at 7am and will close at 6pm. There is a significant drop in the turnout of voters when compared with the Presidential elections that held on the 24th of November 2011.

It is important to recall that the African Union deployed an observer mission to The Gambia from 19 to 29 November 2011 to observe the Presidential election which the Mission assessed as an expression of the will of Gambians.

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