**INFORMATION SHEET: BILL NO. 4**

***Constitution Of Grenada (Fixed Date For Elections) (Amendment) Bill, 2016***



**Produced by: Grouping of Civil Society Organisations**

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**Background:**

* **Dissolution of Parliament**: The Constitution of Grenada provides **for the holding of general elections within three months of the dissolution of Parliament** which generally sits for a period of five years. In exceptional circumstances, the period could be shorter or lengthier.
* **Dissolution by Governor–General**: Parliament is dissolved by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister, who will then announce the date on which elections are to be held.
* **Prime Minister and the Date of Elections**: There is a general sentiment that the Prime Minister can manipulate the date of elections for political advantage. The proposed amendment provides for Parliament to fix a date for elections.
* **Predictability of Date**: Citizens want predictability for the date of elections. It is felt that the date of the general elections should be known by all.

**Proposed Changes/Amendments**:

* **Parliament to Set Date**: The proposed amendment authorizes Parliament to set a fixed date for elections.
* **Provision to Shorten the Parliamentary Term:** The provision gives Parliament the authority to prescribe less than a five-year term for itself**.**
* **A New Provision Giving Parliament Authority to Enact a Law for Holding of General Elections:** The provision gives Parliament the authority to enact a law to provide for the holding of general elections. Elections are to be held within a fixed period of time - after a fixed number of years, not exceeding five years, from the date of the first sitting of Parliament - after any dissolution of Parliament.
* **Fixed Date vs. Length of Term**: If Parliament enacts a law to set a fixed date, the other provision re length of term will not apply as long as that law is in operation.

**Issues to Consider in Respect of the Proposed Change/Amendment:**

* **Length of Parliamentary Term**: Parliament can now prescribe a term LESS than five years.
* **Parliament to Fix Date:** What has been proposed is NOT a fixed date but a provision for Parliament to FIX the date.
* **Lack of Clarity:** There will now be TWO sets of provisions in the Constitution re setting the date for elections:-
	+ **Section 52:** amended to permit Parliament to **prescribe the length of the Parliamentary term**, five years or less - “……Parliament, unless sooner dissolved, shall continue for five years *or less such number of years as may be prescribed by Parliament.*
	+ **Section 52(A): a new provision which allows for Parliament to enact a law.**
* **Manipulation of Date by Parliament**: Does the proposed amendments enable Parliament to manipulate the date**?**
* **Predictability not Addressed**: The concern re predictability of the date of elections has not been addressed.

 **NOVEMBER 24TH IS REFERENDUM DAY!**

THE REFERENDUM IS YOUR BUSINESS!

DO NOT LET OTHERS DECIDE FOR YOU!

**YOU** MUST **VOTE**

**MAKE AN INFORMED VOTE!**