



Dominica — Va-PoReg Country Report

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02/10/1763 Start Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom]: Following the ending of the Seven Years' war, sealed by the Treaty of Paris on 02/10/1763, the island became British possession.¹ From 1833 until 1940 Dominica was part of the Leeward Islands, from 01/01/1940 until 01/01/1960 part of the Windward Islands. There was a legislative assembly from 1924 on, but candidates were more and more outmaneuvered by planters which were allied with the colonial administration.² There was no universal male suffrage during this period (see also LIED). LIED codes political liberties as absent. LIED starts to register Dominica in its data only since 1924. According to LIED only multiparty legislative elections were held during this period. There were no executive elections. V-Dem's PCLI doesn't list Dominica.

10/31/1951 End Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom, Liberal Democracy]/Start Indirect Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom, Liberal Democracy]: On this day universal suffrage was introduced. The 1951 elections served to elect the first parliament (House of Assembly). Until 1957, there were no political parties in Dominica, so all candidates stood for election as independents.³ From 01/02/1958 until 05/31/1962 Dominica was part of the Federation of the West Indies. On 01/07/1966 preceding internal self-autonomy general elections were held. The result was a victory for the Dominica Labour Party, which won 10 of the 11 seats. Based on our observations, only multiparty legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Political liberties were absent according to LIED.

03/01/1967 End Indirect Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom, Liberal Democracy]/Start Liberal Democracy [semi-sovereign, external affairs under United Kingdom, Liberal Democracy]: On this date, Dominica reached internal self-autonomy (Young 1976).⁴ General elections were held in Dominica on 01/07/1966, providing democratic legitimacy to both the parliament and the government. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED.

11/03/1978 Continuation Liberal Democracy [as independent country]: On 11/03/1978, this date, independence from the United Kingdom was gained. Dominica is a parliamentary democracy with a unicameral system, the House of Assembly. The Dominica Labor Party (DLP) has governed the country since 2000. While the nation is dedicated to democratic governance, and civil liberties are generally respected, certain concerns endure. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. According to FH, for the assessed regime period, the country is categorized as free with a score between 2 and 4, which corresponds to our interpretation of free. Moreover, LIED codes political liberties as constantly present ever since 1967. V-Dem does not list the country, FH lists it as free since 1972. These include the effective administration of elections, the efficiency of the judiciary, and government corruption, particularly in connection to the country's Citizenship by Investment (CBI) program.⁵ On 12/06/2022 snap general elections took place.⁶ With a voter turnout of just 31.6 percent, the turnout reached a historic low. The boycott by the two leading opposition parties, the United Worker's Party, and the Dominica Freedom Party, along with the Alternative Peoples' Party could have been one reason for the low voter turnout. They boycotted the election in December due to electoral reforms that had not been implemented. The DPL won 19 out of the 21 directly elected seats in the House of Assembly.

Apart from the boycott, election observers deemed the election peaceful and orderly.⁷ Additionally LIED confirms the presence of competitive election since Dominica's independence.

Liberal Democracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Additional sources (Catón 2005)

Notes

¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Paris_\(1763\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Paris_(1763))

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominica>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Dominica

³ <https://pdba.georgetown.edu/Elecdata/Dominica/parl51-75.html>

⁴ <https://www.rulers.org/ruld.html#dominica>

⁵ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/dominica/freedom-world/2022>;
https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Dominica_2014?lang=en

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2022_Dominican_general_election

⁷ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/dominica/freedom-world/2023>

References

Young, Ruth C. (1976): Political Autonomy and Economic Development in the Caribbean Islands, in: Caribbean Studies 16, 86-114.