



Grenada — Va-PoReg Country Report

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11/25/1783 Start Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom]: Discovered by Columbus during his third expedition in 1498, Grenada experienced a succession of French and British rule until 11/25/1783, when the Treaty of Versailles, commonly referred to as the “Peace of Paris,” formally acknowledged British authority.¹ It continued as a British colony until 1958 when it became part of the abortive Federation of the West Indies. From 1833 to 01/01/1960, Grenada was part of the Windward Islands (Barbados [to 1885], Dominica [from 1940], Grenada, St. Lucia [from 1838], St. Vincent, Tobago [to 1889]). LIED only treats Grenada since 1951.

10/10/1951 End Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom, Liberal Democracy]/Start Indirect Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom, Liberal Democracy]: On this date, general elections were held in Grenada. They were the first held with universal suffrage.² According to LIED only multiparty legislative elections were held. In this period political liberties were absent according to LIED.

03/03/1967 End Indirect Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom, Liberal Democracy]/Start (Monarchical) Electoral Democracy [as associated state of the United Kingdom]: On this date, the West Indies Act was adopted, granting Grenada full autonomy over its internal affairs. On 02/07/1974, Grenada gained full independence from the United Kingdom but remained a realm of the commonwealth, with the British crown as its head of state.³ According to FH, the judiciary was independent, elections were ostensibly competitive and civil liberties were mostly upheld (Gastil 1978). As classified by FH for the period until 1976, the country is partly free with a score ranging from 6 to 7, which we place in the rather free category. For the remaining period the country receives a score of 5 as free, which we categorize as rather free. However, according to LIED political liberties were absent for this period. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED categorizes elections during this time as competitive. V-Dem does not list the country.

03/13/1979 End (Monarchical) Electoral Democracy/Start (Monarchical) Communist Ideocracy: The Marxist-Leninist New Jewel Movement (NJM), under the leadership of Maurice Bishop, disputed the results of the recent election, which were said to grant Eric Gairy the prime minister’s office and as a result, he launched a violent revolt to oust the regime (Lansford 2021: 647). The NJM suspended the constitution and proclaimed the formation of the People’s Revolutionary Government (PRG) on 03/13/1979 with Maurice Bishop as prime minister.⁴ The PRG implemented a number of socialist policies, including nationalizing businesses, expanding social welfare programs, and promoting education and healthcare. The PRG also established close ties with Cuba and the Soviet Union. According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period. As classified by FH for 1979, the country scores between 9 and 10 as not free, which we interpret as rather not free. For the remaining period a score between 11 and 14 makes the country not free, which we also place in the not free category. Moreover, political liberties were still absent per LIED.

10/19/1983 End (Monarchical) Communist Ideocracy/Start (Monarchical) Military Autocracy: Hudson Austin and the military wing of the party launched a coup against Bishop because of the recent infighting. Austin had him executed and then became chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council.⁵

10/25/1983 End (Monarchical) Military Autocracy/Start (Monarchical) Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: On 10/25/1983, United States forces, along with a coalition of six Caribbean nations, invaded Grenada, ousted the leaders of the ruling party, and installed an interim government led by Nicholas Braithwaite. The interim government reinstated the pre-1979 revolution constitution, and on 03/12/1984, it conducted democratic elections, marking the first such elections since 1976 (Baukhage/Hillebrands 2005, Haggard/Kaufman/Teo 2016: 29). As per FH, for this regime period, the country receives a score of 8, which we interpret as falling into the rather not free category. In this short period political liberties were still absent according to LIED. Further no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held.

12/03/1984 End (Monarchical) Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start (Monarchical) Liberal Democracy: On this date, a general election took place (Baukhage/Hillebrands 2005).⁶ The result was a victory for the New National Party (NNP), which won 14 of the 15 seats.⁷ Since democracy was restored, power has rotated several times, but the NNP won most of the elections. Grenada is a bicameral parliamentary democracy with competitive elections. Civil liberties such as freedom of speech, expression, religion etc. are safeguarded by the constitution.⁸ As per FH's classification for 1985, the country receives a score of 5 as free, which we categorize as rather free. From 1986 onward the country is categorized as free with a score between 2 and 4, which corresponds to our interpretation of free. In addition to that political liberties were constantly present ever since 1986 per LIED. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Since 1984, LIED again categorizes all elections as competitive. Democratic institutions such as the judiciary are independent and generally strong. However, challenges to the democratic quality of Grenada are posed by corruption and unequal treatment of and frequent violence against LGBT+ people and women. In 2022 the New National Party was accused of misusing funds for diplomatic passports while in government. While the media is generally free, seditious libel remains criminalized and several lawsuits against media by politicians contribute to self-censorship.

(Monarchical) Liberal Democracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Notes

¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_of_Paris_\(1783\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_of_Paris_(1783))

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1951_Grenadian_general_election

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Grenada#Last_colonial_years:_1900%E2%80%931974;https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Grenada_1992?lang=en

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Jewel_Movement

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Jewel_Movement

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1984_Grenadian_general_election

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1984_Grenadian_general_election

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Grenada

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