

Niue — Va-PoReg Country Report

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06/30/1898 Start Autocratic Monarchy: The last King of Niue to be appointed by the populace, before the island was colonized, was Togia-Pulu-Toaki, who was anointed on 06/30/1898. His reign ended with the arrival of the British colonizers (Smith 1903).

10/19/1900 End Autocratic Monarchy/Start Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom, Electoral Oligarchy]: In a document dated 10/19/1900, the people of Niue, apparently, consented to „Queen Victoria taking possession of this island”, marking the official end of the self-government of the people of Niue.¹ LIED does not treat Niue’s short colonial time.

06/11/1901 End Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom, Electoral Oligarchy]/Start Part of Other Country [of United Kingdom, Electoral Oligarchy, as Part of Colony of New Zealand]: In 1901, through an Order in Council under the United Kingdom’s Colonial Boundaries Act of 1895, the islands were incorporated into the Colony of New Zealand. This boundary adjustment took effect on 06/11/1901.²

09/26/1907 Continuation Part of Other Country [of New Zealand, Liberal Democracy]: On this date, New Zealand was granted nominal independence shifting into a dominion status (Yates 2014). After Autonomy had been proposed to Niue in 1965 (a proposal accepted by the Cook Islands), Niue had requested a postponement of its autonomy for an additional decade.³

10/19/1974 End Part of Other Country [of New Zealand, (Monarchical) Liberal Democracy]/Start Liberal Democracy [semi-sovereign, external affairs under New Zealand, (Monarchical) Liberal Democracy]: The 1974 Niue Constitution Act, enacted by the New Zealand Parliament, reinstated self-government in Niue. This followed the 1974 Niuean constitutional referendum, where Niueans could choose among three options: independence, self-government, or remaining a New Zealand territory. The majority opted for self-government, and Niue’s written constitution was established as the supreme law.⁴ The executive authority under the Niue Constitution Act of 1974 is entrusted to His Majesty the King in Right of New Zealand and the Governor-General of New Zealand. The constitution outlines that the day-to-day exercise of sovereignty is carried out by the cabinet, consisting of the Premier and three other ministers. These officials, including the Premier, are members of the parliament.⁵ The judiciary works independently from legislature and executive.⁶ Niue traditionally does not have political parties, instead the election pool consists of independents. In the most recent of its three-year-term cycle in March 2023, voter turnout was high with 74% and all 20 Assembly seats were elected along with the premier. Dalton Tagelagi, the incumbent premier, was re-elected for another three terms.⁷ Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period. FH, LIED and V-Dem do not register Niue in their data. Based on the limited data on observations it is hard to decide if Niue fulfills all criteria for a liberal democracy. However, we found no facts contradicting this classification.

Liberal Democracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niue#History>

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Cook_Islands#British_protectorate

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Niue#Autonomy

⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niue#History>

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niue#Government_and_politics

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Niue#Executive_branch

⁷ <https://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/4124/>

References

Smith, Stephenson Percy (1903): Niuē-fekai (or Savage) Island and its People. Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs Limited.

Yates, Lawrence A. (2014): Operation Power Pack, in: Roorda, Eric P., Derby, Lauren H. & Gonzalez, Raymundo (Hrsg.), The Dominican Republic Reader: History, Culture, Politics. New York: Duke University Press, 355-361.