



## Saint Lucia — Va-PoReg Country Report

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05/30/1814 Start Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom]: From 1782 to 1803, St. Lucia changed hands multiple times between Britain and France. During this period, the British had to quell a strong revolutionary movement supported by rebellious slaves before finally gaining control in 1803. On 05/30/1814 Saint Lucia was officially transferred to Britain through the Treaty of Paris<sup>1</sup>, subsequently becoming a crown colony.<sup>2</sup> St. Lucia was part of the Windward Islands from 1838 - 01/01/1960 (see under Grenada), along with Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent (Lansford 2021: 1404). Throughout the 20th century, St. Lucia experienced a significant increase in self-government. In 1924, a constitution was established, granting the island its initial system of representative government. This introduced a limited number of elected members to the legislative council, which was previously composed entirely of appointed individuals. The right to vote was, however, tied to the possession of property and literacy tests. Thereby, the electorate made up a very small portion of the actual inhabitants of Saint Lucia, excluding the largely native and former slave populations (Midgett 1983). LIED does not treat Saint Lucia for this regime time.

10/12/1951 End Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom]/Start Indirect Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom]: On this day, universal adult suffrage was implemented, resulting in elected members becoming the majority in the council.<sup>3</sup> The introduction of ministerial government took place in 1956. St. Lucia briefly became a part of the West Indies Federation in 1958, a semi-autonomous dependency of the United Kingdom. However, the federation collapsed in 1962 when Jamaica withdrew, leading to an unsuccessful attempt at creating a smaller federation. Subsequently, the United Kingdom and the islands of Grenada, St. Vincent, Dominica, Antigua, St. Kitts and Nevis, Anguilla, and St. Lucia established. LIED confirms that multiparty and legislative elections were held ever since 1951. Universal suffrage was given since 1951 per LIED. For that period, LIED identifies political liberties as absent.

03/01/1967 End Indirect Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom, Liberal Democracy]/Start (Monarchical) Liberal Democracy [semi-sovereign, external affairs under United Kingdom, Liberal Democracy]: On this date associated statehood for St. Lucia was brought by with the West Indies Act, according to which, each state possessed complete authority over its constitution, granting them internal self-government. However, the United Kingdom maintained responsibility for external affairs and defense.<sup>4</sup>

02/22/1979 Continuation (Monarchical) Liberal Democracy [as independent country]: After initially calling for a referendum, the opposition St. Lucia Labour Party (SLP), led by Allan Louisy, participated in a constitutional conference held in London in July 1978. Following approval of the proposed constitution by the St. Lucia House of Assembly on 10/24 and a draft termination order by both houses of Parliament in December, independence within the Commonwealth was proclaimed on 02/22/1979, with Premier Compton assuming the office of prime minister and the British Crown remaining ceremonial head of state.<sup>5</sup> FH classifies Saint Lucia as free since 1979. V-Dem does not list the country. Following a sweeping triumph by the leftist-oriented SLP on 07/02/1979, Compton was succeeded by Louisy (Lansford 2021: 1404). His party secured twelve out of the seventeen seats.<sup>6</sup> The last general elections in St. Lucia were held on 07/26/2021. During the elections, voters chose all 17 members of the House of Assembly. The outcome marked a victory for the opposition Saint Lucia Labour Party, which secured 13 out of the 17 seats in the House. In contrast, the

ruling United Workers Party experienced a significant setback, losing nine out of its eleven seats.<sup>7</sup> Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Since its independence Saint Lucia held constantly competitive elections according to LIED. According to FH, in 1979, the country is rated as free with a score of 5, which we interpret as rather free in our framework. As per FH's classification from 1980 onward, the country is considered free with a score ranging from 2 to 4, which we also interpret as free in our framework. Moreover, constant political liberties are achieved since 1980 (LIED). Issues such as corruption remain an issue, the Corruption Perceptions Index giving it a 55/100.<sup>8</sup> St. Lucia operates as a parliamentary democracy with competitive elections and a history of peaceful transitions of power between opposing parties. However, ongoing issues include instances of government corruption and a lack of transparency, reports of police brutality with a perception of impunity, and instances of discrimination against the LGBT+ community.<sup>9</sup> V-Dem does not provide data for St. Lucia.

Liberal Democracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Additional sources (Hillebrands/Nohlen 2005)

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/event/Treaties-of-Paris-1814-1815>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/place/Saint-Lucia/History>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.govt.lc/news/saint-lucia-observes-universal-adult-suffrage>

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West\\_Indies\\_Associated\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Indies_Associated_States)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/St\\_Lucia\\_1978?lang=en](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/St_Lucia_1978?lang=en)

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1979\\_Saint\\_Lucian\\_general\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1979_Saint_Lucian_general_election)

<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2021\\_Saint\\_Lucian\\_general\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2021_Saint_Lucian_general_election)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023/index/lca>

<sup>9</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/st-lucia/freedom-world/2023>

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## References

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Midgett, Douglas (1983): Saint Lucia's Electoral Process 1951-1982. Iowa City: Department of Anthropology.