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Guyana: Delays In Preparation Of Voter Registration List

by Erika Harding

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On May 6 in Port of Spain (Trinidad), Cheddi Jagan, opposition People's Progressive Party (PPP) leader, told reporters that the government's inability to produce a credible list of registered voters for general elections was making Guyana the "laughing stock of the world." He added, "Imagine a small country like Guyana with less than three-quarters (of a) million people can't produce a voter list in nearly two years." General elections were postponed for the second time on Dec. 16, 1991, because of the flawed list. Jagan said the ruling People's National Congress (PNC), led by President Desmond Hoyte, lacked the will to produce a corrected list, "because they know if there is a clean voter list and all the other reforms which they have agreed to were implemented, like counting the ballots at the polling place, they would lose the elections." According to Jagan, the names of 40,000 registered voters cannot be located at the registration center in order to issue identification numbers and cards, 40,000 names have yet to be placed into correct polling districts, and 4.7% of those on the list cannot be found. Jagan emphasized the need for international pressure on the Guyanese government, especially from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), to ensure preparation of an authentic voter list before the elections, tentatively scheduled for August or September this year. (Source: Caribbean News Agency, 05/06/92)

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