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Grenada: Parliament Suspended

by John Neagle

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On Aug. 24, Prime Minister Herbert Blaize's government suspended the parliament amid opposition threats to bring it down with a no-confidence vote. The suspension means the prime minister can govern without parliamentary opposition until as late as February, or a month before scheduled general elections. Under Grenada's constitution, the governor general can suspend the parliament at any time for up to six months. The suspension was likely a move to preempt a no-confidence vote by the legislature, which was to convene Aug. 25 after a recess. Blaize lost the leadership of his New National Party (NNP) in January to Public Works Minister Keith Mitchell who was subsequently fired by the prime minister. Two other cabinet ministers resigned in protest. Blaize reportedly opposes Mitchell's desire to build a broad coalition that would include members of the ousted leftist government. The NNP currently holds nine of the 15 seats in parliament, and the opposition National Democratic Congress holds the remaining six. In a no-confidence vote, Mitchell and the two other former ministers were expected to side with the opposition, causing the government to fall. Blaize became prime minister on Dec. 3, 1984, 14 months after US troops and a small Caribbean force invaded the island to oust a junta that seized power in a bloody coup. (Basic data from AP, 08/24/89)

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