

GUYANA

Polity5 regime codes:

fac	scode	polity	pers	bmon	bday	byear	emon	eday	eyear	exrec	exconst	polcomp
1X	GUY	2	3	5	26	1966	12	16	1968	3	7	6
1Xa	GUY	1	9	12	17	1968	4	10	1978	3	6	6
1Xb	GUY	0	3	4	11	1978	10	5	1980	3	5	6
1O	GUY	-7	12	10	6	1980	10	5	1992	3	1	3
2X	GUY	6	23	10	6	1992	5	15	2015	8	5	7
2O	GUY	7	4	5	16	2015	99	99	9999	8	6	8

PITF Problem Events:

- 1) 04/78-10/80 (ARC 04/78-10/80)

1X) Date of Change to Factional-Democratic: May 26, 1966 (independence)

Brief Explanation of Change To:

Guyana achieved independence on May 26, 1966. The new regime was dominated by the largely Afro-Guyanese People's National Congress (PNC) and its leader Forbes Burnham. The PNC regime used its control of the country's administration to restrict the participation of the Indo-Guyanese.

Identify Main Factions:

- *People's National Congress (PNC)* — Party created in 1957 through a merger of United Democratic Party and the Afro-Guyanese faction of the PPP led by Forbes Burnham. From 1964 to 1992, the PNC dominated Guyana's politics and was controlled by the Afro-Guyanese. The Afro-Guyanese are a largely urban community. Resentment of Indo-Guyanese dates back to the denial of land to African descendants by the British planters while land had been made available to the Indo-Guyanese.
- *Opposition to the Ruling PNC* — Opposition to the dominant PNC was highly fragmented and only began to coalesce with the PNC's promulgation of a new constitution in 1978-1980. The main opposition party, the People's Progressive Party (PPP), was originally established in 1950 with leaders Forbes Burnham, an Afro-Guyanese, Dr. Cheddi Jagan, an Indo-Guyanese, and his American wife, Janet Jagan. Following the 1957 split along racial lines, support for the PPP came mainly from Indo-Guyanese community who are descendants of East Indian indentured workers brought to British Guiana in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and constitute a majority of the Guyana population.

1Xa) December 16, 1968 (general election) – Guyana held its second parliamentary elections under a new proportional representation system on December 16, 1968. The ruling PNC, led by Prime Minister Forbes Burnham, increased its hold over the fifty-three seat Parliament by eight seats, for a total of thirty. This granted Mr. Burnham an absolute majority in the Parliament, eliminating the need for coalition governance that had limited his abilities in his previous term.

1Xb) April 10, 1978 (coup by executive)

Adverse Regime Change: April 1978 – October 1980

On April 10, 1978 Prime Minister Burnham introduced a bill altering the Constitutional amendment procedures to allow his ruling party to rewrite the Constitution in order to eliminate many executive constraints. Although development of the new Constitution proceeded until

October 1980, April marked the beginning of the consolidation of political domination by the PNC (People's National Congress), which resulted in the abrogation of the democratic constitution and the appointment of Burnham to a new presidential post with unlimited powers in a new one-party hegemonic state.

1O) Date of Change from Factional-Democratic: October 6, 1980 (new constitution)

Brief Explanation of Change From:

Political domination of the legislature by the Afro-Guyanese PNC allowed them to consolidate power through both manipulation and selective abrogation of the democratic constitution and the use of electoral fraud and harassment of opposition parties. PNC leader Burnham was named executive president in a PNC-authored constitution that came into effect on October 6, 1980. General elections were held on December 15, 1980, but were marred by widespread fraud and a boycott by some opposition parties. The President was granted unlimited powers in new one-party hegemonic state.

2X) Date of Change to Factional-Democratic: October 6, 1992 (general election)

Brief Explanation of Change To:

Following President Burnham's death in August 1985, the Guyana government came under increasing international pressure to reform its electoral system. In August 1988, an internal "Integrity Commission" issued a recommendation that the government initiate "urgent and constructive" talks with all parties with a view of enacting electoral reforms. Agreement on electoral reform was reached in April 1991 with the mediation and assistance of the US-based Carter Center. The October 5, 1992, general elections resulted in a narrow victory for the People's Progressive Party (PPP), with Cheddi Jagan of the PPP as the new President, over the People's National Congress (PNC).

Identify Main Factions:

- *People's Progressive Party (PPP)* — Ruling Indo-Guyanese party led Cheddi Jagan, January 1992-March 1997; Sam Hinds, March 1997-December 1997; Janet Jagan, December 1997-August 1999; Bharrat Jagdeo, August 1999-December 2011; and Donald Ramotar, December 2011-May 2015.
- *Opposition to the Ruling PPP* — Opposition to the ruling PPP was led mainly by the Afro-Guyanese People's National Congress (PNC) which had ruled Guyana from its date of independence in 1966 until its electoral defeat by the PPP in October 1992.

2O) Date of Change from Factional-Democratic: May 16, 2015 (military coup and government)

Brief Explanation of Change From:

In a dispute over spending cuts and a threat to hold a confidence vote by the National Assembly, President Donald Ramotar (PPP) invoked constitutional provisions allowing him to prorogue parliament on November 10, 2014; the National Assembly was dissolved on February 28, 2015, and new elections were held on May 11, 2015. The Indo-Guyanese Peoples Progressive Party, which had ruled Guyana since 1992, was narrowly defeated by a coalition of opposition groups and the coalition candidate, ret-Gen. David Arthur Granger was inaugurated on May 16, 2015. Gigantic offshore oil fields were discovered and confirmed on May 20, 2015, dramatically altering political dynamics in Guyana. Questions over the awarding of oil leases led to President Granger's losing a vote of confidence by one vote on December 21, 2018; new elections were scheduled to be held in March 2020.