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# AFC back pedals Local Govt Election boycott pronouncement; asks for fresh house-to-house registration

Posted by: Denis Chabrol in News, Politics Friday, 21 October 2022, 15:09 0 Comments

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Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan

The Alliance For Change (AFC) on Friday walked back on a pronouncement by its Chairman Catherine Hughes that it would be boycotting the March 13, 2023 local election, instead saying that the executive would decide whether it would contest the polls.

AFC Leader Khemraj Ramjattan said Ms Hughes uttered her "strong" position that the priority should be ensuring that there is a credible voters list rather before local or general elections. "The National Executive position has the final decision on the issue and I rather suspect Cathy was speaking personally. Cathy feels strongly that we must not go into the elections as a result of the state of the voters list and, by the way a large number of our members at the NEC so feel," he

told Demerara Waves Online News during a news conference.

He said the AFC's National Executive would "reveal" its position on the LGE after consultations with partners, members and the wider society are held before 2023.

The People's National Congress Reform-led A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) has not said whether it would contest the elections, but its Chairman Aubrey Norton has vowed that his collective would ensure

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confidentiality as the reason for not talking about the factors that could influence such a move one way or another.

The AFC Leader said the diplomatic community has been told that his party would prefer a postponement of the LGE by as much as six months until "we get the list right" by conducting house-to-house exercise to "purify or verify the list."

That party said the current list is so large that it requires 30 percent more polling stations as well as other logistics and staffing which are reflected in an estimated GY\$5 billion annual budget. The AFC recommended that a sample of the list be taken to see how many persons who are 65 years old are deceased but their names are on the list. "How can we, as a country, with that voters list say that we have free and fair elections?" asked executive member David Patterson. He noted that the governing People's Progressive Party has "shut" down the opposition's proposal for a biometric system to be introduced at polling stations. "Why are we continuing with a process that nobody has any faith in?" he further queried.

Although the High Court has ruled that residency could not be a reason for removing the names of persons from the voters list, the AFC Leader said the voters list could be cleansed by fresh house-to-house registration as had been done in 2008.

He did not rule out the possibility of the opposition filing court action to get new house-to-house registration but he declined to provide details.

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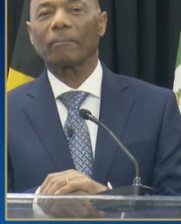
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