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## Diplomatic Community looks forward to new PNC Leader working in interest of all Guyanese

December 22, 2021



*US Ambassador to Guyana Sarah Ann Lynch, Canadian High Commissioner to Guyana Mark Berman and British High Commissioner to Guyana Jane Miller*

Heads of the ABC diplomatic missions in Guyana have issued congratulatory messages to the newly-elected Leader of the Peoples National Congress Reform (PNC/R) Aubrey Norton, expressing hope that he works in the interest of all Guyanese.

In a brief statement, the United States Embassy in Guyana expressed: "the U.S. Embassy congratulates Mr. Aubrey Norton on his election victory as PNC Leader and looks forward to working with him on issues for the benefit of all Guyanese."

The British High Commission in Guyana, in a short statement, also noted that: "The British High Commissioner, Jane Miller congratulates Mr. Aubrey Norton on becoming Leader of the People's National Congress Reform (PNC/R), following the 21st Biennial Delegates Congress elections on 18 December, 2021."

The British High Commission further noted that it sent a letter to Norton, where the High Commissioner expressed hope that the two sides can work together in the interest of the country.

"In a letter sent to Mr. Norton it was noted by the HC that "I look forward to meeting you in the New Year and working together on issues affecting the people of Guyana";" the statement further noted.

Moreover, the Canadian High Commissioner to Guyana Mark Berman issued a statement saying: "On behalf of the Government of Canada, I would like to congratulate the newly elected leader of the People's National Congress Reform, Mr. Aubrey Norton, and the new Central Executive Committee. I look forward to engaging with Mr. Norton in the near future and working together in the interest of Guyana."

The Private Sector Commission (PSC) has already issued a statement congratulating Norton and expressing hope that the teams can work together to further develop Guyana. The PSC – which played an integral role in defending the country's democracy last year – also urged the new PNC Leader to lead an Opposition that is "strong, responsible and vibrant".

"The Commission looks forward to Mr. Norton leading a strong, responsible and vibrant opposition, upholding the Constitution and urging respect for the maintenance of law and order, as the leader of the major party in the APNU/AFC Coalition," the PSC statement detailed.

During his inauguration address, Norton had criticised the PSC, alleging that it is politically biased. Responding to these allegations, the Commission contended that the remarks are unfair and inaccurate.

The Commission said it can only assume that those remarks were: "...driven by the fact that the Commission, in the defense of democracy, vigorously opposed the attempt to rig the last election in favour of the APNU/AFC Coalition."

The diplomatic community also played a significant role in defending democracy in Guyana during those tumultuous five months after Guyanese went to the polls on March 2, 2020.

The ABCE envoys were vocal in their calls for democracy to prevail in Guyana and for the will of the Guyanese people be respected after the APNU/AFC Coalition refused to concede defeat.

In fact, even after a national recount confirmed the People’s Progressive Party/Civic electoral victory, the David Granger-led Coalition continued with its delay tactics by moving to the courts.

The western diplomats had deemed the tabulation process for Region Four (Demerara-Mahaica) – Guyana’s largest voting district – as lacking transparency and credibility. This was after attempts were made by embattled Returning Officer, Clairmont Mingo, along with others to inflate the votes in favour of the then Coalition administration.

As the electoral impasse continued months after the March polls, the ABCE diplomatic community continued mounting pressure on the APNU/AFC to concede defeat, warning of Guyana facing isolation and consequences.

In fact, the United State had gone ahead to impose visa sanctions against several government and electoral officials, and their immediate family members, for their role in undermining democracy in Guyana. The UK, Canada as well as the EU had also indicated that they were also considering following suit.

However, this advocacy by ABCE envoys had resulted in attacks against them by the former government and Coalition supporters.

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A green banner for Premier Insurance. On the left, it says 'PREMIER INSURANCE' with a logo and two phone numbers: '+592.322.3660 Berbice' and '+592.223.0840 Georgetown'. In the center, a rocket icon is next to the text 'FUEL YOUR SUCCESS' in large white letters, with the tagline 'Whether challenges and setbacks, opportunities or discoveries, be ready for the future, with PREMIER Insurance.' below it. On the right, there is a photo of a smiling woman, a 'gya+' logo, and a 'Premier Insurance for Life' logo with a Facebook icon.

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