



New PNCR Leader promises "protest in all fashion" over appointment of Chief Elections Officer

By **Editor** - December 20, 2021

Newly elected People's National Congress Reform (PNCR) Leader, Aubrey Norton has put the nation on notice that the party intends to "vigorously" oppose the recent appointment of Vishnu Persaud as Chief Elections Officer (CEO). He made this statement during today's declaration of results at PNCR's Headquarters, Congress Place, Sophia Georgetown.

Norton is accusing the Chairperson of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM), Justice (retired) Claudette Singh of siding with government-appointed commissioners to select Persaud. However, GECOM said that Singh voted in Persaud's favour following recommendations from former GECOM boss, Dr Steve Surujbally, and Persaud's knowledge of the country's topography.

"We cannot sit idly by and allow the PPP and Claudette Singh to install Vishnu Persaud as Chief Elections Officer. We need to restore in this country, the situation where people are appointed based

on merit and in keeping with the specifications of the job. In this regard, we're satisfied that Vishnu Persaud was not the best candidate. It is a collusion between the PPP Commissioners and Claudette Singh, and therefore, automatically, it will face protest in every fashion, because the basis for free and fair elections has to be independent elections officials and they are not!"

Norton said that he is committed to transforming the party into "grassroots" one, and one that is driven by inclusive governance.

"I want to promise you that I will make this party a grassroots party, a party for all Guyanese of all ethnic groups. It is the kind of party we desire. I want to work with this executive to transform this party into a permanent election campaign machinery...I believe that the party has put trust in me, and I hope to deliver on it," an emotional Norton said.

He added, "I promise inclusive governance. We will govern this party together. We work together. I don't not want to hear in our party, that somebody was against Norton and so that person is excluded. This is our party. The elections are over [and] we must move forward."

Norton noted also that the party will ensure that a new voters' list is formulated, and that "gerrymandering" of Electoral District Four (Demerara/Mahaica) does not occur.

"We have to carry the political struggle. Our first struggle would be for a new voters' list. We cannot go to an election without a new voters' list. It has been the basis on which a government was installed, and we have to uninstall them, and that process must begin with a new list...We will oppose vigorously, the gerrymandering of the electoral boundaries. We will not allow them to change the boundaries in Region Four," he said.

The splitting of Region Four forms part of the government's move to reform the country's electoral laws. Results that emanated from Region Four during the March 2020 General and Regional Elections were branded controversial. The alleged irregularities contained within form the backbone of the Opposition's election petitions.

Norton succeeded David Granger, who served as Guyana's President between May 2015 and August 2020.

