



# ELECTION VIEWS



A SUPPLEMENT OF THE DAILY HERALD | ISSUE 2 OF 7 | JULY 15, 2024



# ELECTORAL REFORM



## Electoral Reform

*St. Maarten is returning to the polls on August 19, so voters want to hear from their political parties and candidates. The Daily Herald is offering an ideal opportunity to reach them with a series of seven special publications every Monday until then.*

Each issue of "Election Views" will cover a specific question to be answered in a statement. The content may not mention other parties and should focus on own positions regarding the subject at hand. The newspaper reserves the right to omit such references and correct spelling

or grammatical errors in the text.

This second "Question of the Week" is regarding the democratic process itself, namely: **"How would you propose that the issue of political instability and**

**frequent snap elections since 10-10-10 be addressed?"**

Enjoy the read!

Paul De Windt  
Publisher

# Oualichi Movement for Change (OMC)

*The Kingdom of the Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy with a complex structure that includes the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao, and St. Maarten. The relationship between these constituent countries is governed by the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands – commonly referred to as the "Kingdom Charter". This Charter has created an unfair balance, with a high level of corruption and poverty on the island of Soualiga, legally known today as St. Maarten.*

The greatest destruction of St. Maarten, as of October 10, 2010, has been a result of the agreement Sarah A. Wescot-Williams, Richard Gibson Sr. and William Marlin signed off in the Netherlands, which did not adjust the Kingdom Char-

ter and thus brought the country of St. Maarten to its destruction. OMC is going to conduct a total reset of the electoral system by first screening the Kingdom Charter and establishing freedom and equality for Soualigans.

### The New Single-Member Constituencies/District Voting System

*Voting for the Members of Parliament, which is called Members of the House*

The OMC's new electoral system of St. Maarten is going to be a constituency-based voting system, also known as the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system, and will set democracy on the correct path in Soualiga, legally known as St. Maarten. The FPTP system is a plurality voting system, wherein voters cast a vote for a single candidate which is registered in and

is from that constituency, which today we call *district* in St. Maarten.

We have 15 districts today; these districts are going to become constituencies under the OMC's complete electoral reset. The candidate from a specific political party with the most votes wins the seat for that district and is elected as a representative and a member of house for that district, for example, Cole Bay or Great Bay. Elections for the Member of Parliament, which we shall call the House of Representatives, are going to be held every five years, although early elections can take place if the Parliament is dissolved by the Prime Minister in the new system. However, it will not affect the operations of the government or the fear of government FALLING!

Here's how it will work:

### Constituencies

- The country will be divided into 15 single-member constituencies.
- Each constituency elects one Member of Parliament (MP) to the House of Representatives (Parliament). Example: DP member vs OMC member for the constituency of Cole Bay or St. Peters.
- Plurality voting: In each constituency, the candidate who receives the most votes wins the seat. There is no requirement for a candidate to receive an absolute majority (more than 50% of the votes); they simply need to have more votes than any other candidate.

### Election Process

- 1: Nomination of candidates: Political parties nominate candidates to contest in each constituency. Independent candidates can also run for election.
- 2: Campaigning: Candidates campaign within and only in their constituencies, presenting their platforms and seeking voter support.
- 3: Casting the vote: Voters mark an "X" next to the name or on the photo of their preferred candidate on the ballot paper and place it in the ballot box.

The advantage of this system lies in its simplicity. The system is straightforward, easy to understand and represents transparency. The OMC democracy establishes stable governments and direct accountability.

### Electing the Prime Minister

Soualiga legally known today as St. Maarten will have an "elect your Prime Minister" system in similarity to a Presidential election system, characterized by a democratic framework where the Prime Minister is elected by direct vote. Here's an overview of how the Prime Minister election system will work in St. Maarten:

### Government Structure:

- Deputy Head of States: Prime Minister
- Head of Government: Prime Minister
- Legislature: The House of Representative

### Prime Minister Elections:

- Term: The Prime Minister serves a five-year term and can be re-elected for a con-

secutive term. Prime Minister can only serve 4 terms in total.

- Election Cycle: Prime Minister elections are held every 5 years.

### Electoral System:

- Voting Method: The Prime Minister is elected by popular vote.
- Majority Requirement: A candidate must receive more than 50% of the votes island-wide to win in the first round, meaning that constituency does not count. Prime Minister election is island-wide.
- Second Round: If no candidate receives more than 50% of the votes, a runoff election is held between the top two candidates of the first round.

The Prime Minister of Soualiga, legally known as St. Maarten, is sworn in by the Constitutional Court Chief Judge of St. Maarten or the President of the Parliament/the House. The swearing-in ceremony will be known as the Prime Minister Inauguration and will take place at the Parliament of St. Maarten.

### Selection of the Government

In the new system, the Prime Minister selects the government, including key executive positions, which is an important aspect of the Prime Ministerial system by OMC.

Here's a detailed overview of how the Prime Minister forms and selects the government:

### 1: Cabinet (Council of Ministers)

- Appointment: The Prime Minister appoints Members of the Cabinet, which will include various ministers responsible for different governmental departments such as Finance, Health, Education, Defence, Foreign Affairs (which will be new) and more.
- Confirmation: Unlike some other countries, ministerial appointments in St. Maarten will not require confirmation by the legislature.

### 2: Executive Branch Positions

- Deputy Prime Minister: The Deputy Prime Minister is selected by the Prime Minister.
- Other key officials: The Prime Minister also ap-

points other high-ranking officials, such as Secretary General (SG), ambassadors, consuls, and directors of various governmental agencies.

### Roles and Responsibilities

- Formulation of policies: The Cabinet, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, formulates and implements national policies and programs.
- Advisory role: Cabinet members advise the Prime Minister on various issues within their respective areas of responsibility.
- Administrative functions: Ministers and Secretaries of State oversee the administration of their departments, ensuring the effective implementation of government policies and programs.

### Eligibility Criteria to be (Deputy) Prime Minister, Minister(s), and Chairperson of Parliament/the house.

- Prime Minister: To be Prime Minister or Deputy Prime Minister, a person must be a Soualigan. A Soualigan is a Natural-Born Soualigan, meaning that the person was born on Soualiga, legally known today as St. Maarten. To be Prime Minister or Deputy Prime Minister, a person must be at least 35 years old.
- Minister and Ministers: To be a Minister, a person can be a foreign Soualigan. To know what is a foreign Soualigan, please visit [www.oualichi.org](http://www.oualichi.org) and download the philosophy of the OMC and read pages 15 and 16. If a foreign Soualigan has any other nationality besides the one of Soualiga, then the foreign Soualigan must denounce their other nationality to be able to be a Minister. Only a natural-born Soualigan can have dual nationality and be a Minister, Prime Minister or Chairperson of the House.
- Chairperson of Parliament/the House: To be Chairperson of Parliament/the House, you must be a natural-born Soualigan and 18 years of age. To work in Government in any other key appointed position that has nothing to do with national security, a person can be both a natural-born Soualigan or a foreign Soualigan.

**#1 OLIVIER ARRINDELL**

**Just Vote for the Man**



# THE GOLD SLATE

SINT MAARTEN DESERVES THE BEST, YOU DESERVE GOLD STANDARD REPRESENTATION



1

GUMBS, M.D.

2

PETERSON, R.A. DE WEEVER, L.N.L.

3

4

GUMBS Jr., P.T.

5

NICHOLLS, L.L.

6

COOKS, M.A.



7

BLAISE, J.O.

8

MARTINA, R.F.

9

HODGE, M.M.

10

SALOMON, D.J.

11

DUNCAN, S.L.

12

GITERSON, M.M.C.

#CHOOSEPROGRESS ON AUGUST 19TH

## Party for Progress (PFP)

**The Party for Progress believes that progressive electoral reform happens at three levels: The community, the party and the legislative. The voting population and the community must first decide that they want to see quality representation in Parliament and in Government.**

Why do we say *Government* when this is a *Parliamentary* election? Because the people elected to Parliament that form a majority will select the people that represent you in Govern-

ment. What do we mean by quality representation? We mean people of good character, solid integrity, progressive views and a commitment to ethical decision-making. Because it is poor character and a lack of integrity that have driven political instability and caused frequent snap elections since 10-10-10.

At a party level, the commitment to selecting persons who follow a set of positive values and who are competent and integral becomes even more important. We give the population their options for repre-

sentation; why would we give them bad options? While parties do not have to screen their candidates before putting them on the list like other countries do, they should. PFP has consistently worked to pre-screen our candidates in the best way we can, to make sure they align with PFP's principles and values and that their focus is on the best interests of all the people of St. Maarten. It's why we're running with our original ten candidates, plus two new, great candidates.

At the legislative level, PFP always says we cannot legislate

character; but we can take steps to improve our democracy and our electoral process, and protect it from bad characters. PFP taking down the curtain from the voting booth was one step; regulation of independent members is another. Nowadays, Members of Parliament (MPs), who declare themselves independent, become a whole faction: They get staff, attendance at IPKO and maintain all the perks of being an MP, at great cost to the taxpayer. Another avenue is the introduction of a screening law for minister candidates, to be certain that our demo-

cratic process is completely in our hands.

We must decide what works for us, but ultimately, PFP is committed to developing more proposals to improve our electoral system, and why we remain committed to educating and informing the population – starting as young as five years old – about our political history, our political reality and global political realities, to be sure that when they cast their vote, they do so while knowing the truth and not comforting lies.

# National Alliance (NA)

*The National Alliance (NA) advocates for electoral reforms to better align with the needs of St. Maarten and, during its time in government, initiated a 2023 survey highlighting public concerns about frequent party allegiance changes.*

Key suggestions from the survey include electing a Prime Minister (PM) during Parliamentary elections, allowing the PM to appoint the cabinet, implementing a run-off system if no party secures over 50% of the vote, as well as possibly revoking the Lynch law. Mr. Julio Romney has repeatedly called for better interpretation of the proportionality in seat and proposed amendments. Internationally, the call is also to ensure 50% representation of women as candidates on a slate, and when appointing cabinets in fulfilment of

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 – Gender Equality.

The current constitution and electoral ordinance support a party system; but once elected, Members of Parliament (MPs) enjoy a free mandate, leading to a prevalent culture of “jumping ship” and party fragmentation, which destabilises the Parliament and by extension, government, stagnating progress.

To address this, NA has proposed and supports changes to Parliament’s Rules of Order to discourage unexplained party resignations and limit benefits for independent members. These changes would prevent independent members from having the same advantages as party factions. This would only allow for party factions to deliberate in Faction leaders’

meetings, represent at IPKO and other Parliamentary conferences in the region or internationally. Independent MPs will still maintain their right of initiative, vote and deliberate in Parliament.

NA also supports raising the threshold for party registration, including requiring a minimum number of candidates which is equivalent to the number of seats in Parliament. We propose amending Article 59 of the electoral ordinance to prevent its misuse, suggesting Parliament should only be dissolved if a loss of majority support leads to no new, clear majority, making the country ungovernable.

As one of the longest-standing parties with its own constitution, NA emphasises the need for stronger party structures, and function democratically with clear guidelines, rules, and thorough candidate screening. We recognise the necessity to upgrade the electoral ordinance and Parliamentary policies to ensure stability and democratic representation proportional to the electorate’s wishes.

We will champion the participation of the electorate in the process using the 2023 survey’s suggestions as a starting point to be discussed through community dialogues, town hall meetings, and debates, weighing the pros and cons before implementing any legislative changes. This approach is crucial for the political maturity of St. Maarten as a Constituent State within the Kingdom and should be prioritised for the island to consider steps towards full self-governance.



NATIONAL ALLIANCE

## CANDIDATE LIST



1 JACOBS SILVERIA E.



2 DORAN



3 IRION



4 MARLIN



5 YORK



6 GUMBS



7 RICHARDSON



8 ROMOU



9 WILLIAMS



10 THOMAS



11 RICHARDSON



12 CONNOR



13 HERNANDEZ



14 REY



15 FAUSTIN




16 HURTAULT



17 GUY




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 HEYLIGER-MARTEN



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**VOTE SARAH**

GIVE LIGHT AND PEOPLE WILL MOVE ON



**ST. MAARTEN, STAND STRONG**

# Democratic Party (DP)

**Electoral reform is also a phrase that has appeared in every political program, especially since 2010. Even the Governors' instructions to "formateurs" usually include a reference to electoral reform as part of the mandate to an incoming government.**

Electoral reform is a very broad reference and usually persons think of the electoral system when they speak or hear of electoral reform. You often get the question on St. Maarten why we, for example, do not have a system similar to St. Martin or other islands in the Caribbean. Fact of the matter is that our electoral system is based on proportional representation.

During my tenure as Prime Minister, I started the process of addressing electoral reform issues and I acted upon a motion from Parliament at the time, calling for several items of electoral reform to be urgently addressed. I defended my position paper on electoral reform several times in Parliament. The Democratic Party has championed electoral reform from the onset – and early upon entering Parliament, I initiated the ad hoc Parliamentary committee for Electoral Reform.

Over the years, depending on this committee's leadership, attention for this topic was sparse. If the chairperson did not believe in electoral reform, the matter would be on the back burner, so

to speak. During my tenures as committee chair, I pushed the topic of electoral reform and that resulted in a Terms of Reference for proposals to draft the necessary legislation that would then be debated in Parliament. I also sought to coordinate the actions of Parliament with what the government initiated for electoral reform.

The Terms of Reference generated very little interest from the outside and just recently it was decided in Parliament to put out the TOR again to a larger audience. In the TOR, we focused on the electoral system and the laws governing this system. We highlighted matters such as proportional representation, expanding the Voters' Registry, election organization, electronic voting, etc.


We also highlighted political parties and seat allocation, the free mandate and ship-jumping and we presented matters that affect Parliament and the articles 33 and 59 of the constitution of St. Maarten respectively. Lastly, it is mentioned in the Terms of Reference and the Request for Proposals, article 50 of the constitution, suspension of members and finally the screening of candidate ministers.

I will continue to push for these matters to be examined and decided upon, so that finally we can really see necessary electoral reform materializing.



# Polling Stations


1. **John Larmonie Center**  
Longwall Rd.  
Philipsburg
2. **Sundial School**  
W. A. Nisbeth Rd.  
Philipsburg
3. **St. Maarten Senior Citizen Recreational Centre**  
Hope Estate  
Philipsburg
4. **Sister Marie Laurence School**  
1 Ellis Rd.  
Middle Region
5. **Dutch Quarter Community Centre**  
Dutch Quarter
6. **Milton Peters College**  
L.B. Scott Rd.  
South Reward
7. **Rupert Maynard Community Centre**  
St. Peters Road  
St. Peters
8. **St. Maarten Academy**  
Copper Drive # 2  
Cul de Sac
9. **Bute Hotel**  
A.T. Illidge Rd.  
Philipsburg
10. **National Institute for Professional Advancement (NIPA)**  
Bobcat Rd.  
Cay Hill
11. **Charles Leopold Bell School**  
Rubber Tree Dr.  
Cole Bay
12. **Leonard Conner School**  
Venus Drive 2  
Cay Bay
13. **Simpson Bay Sports Community Center**  
Sr. Modesta Road  
Simpson Bay
14. **Belvedere Community Center**  
Low Estate Rd  
Belvedere
15. **Melford Hazel Sports & Recreational Center**  
Soualiga Road  
Philipsburg
16. **Methodist Agogic Centre**  
St. Johns Estate  
St. Johns
17. **Dutch Quarter Help desk**  
Zorg en Rust  
Dutch Quarter
18. **Seventh Day Adventist School**  
Royal Palm Dr.  
Cole Bay
19. **House of Detention**  
Mountaindove Rd.  
Pointe Blanche
20. **Sint Maarten Home**  
St. Johns Estate Road 6  
St. Johns


THE MISSING LINK

THROUGHOUT HISTORY CIVILIZATIONS HAVE BEEN GOVERNED BY USING A GROUP OF RESPECTED OLDER MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY TO PROVIDE ADVICE, SETTLE DISPUTES AND MAKE DECISIONS.

THIS SYSTEM IS GROUNDED IN THE BELIEF THAT AGE BRINGS WISDOM AND OFFER A RANGE OF BENEFITS AND SOLUTIONS. IT IS OFTEN COMPARED TO MODERN BI-CAMERAL SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT, SUCH AS THE SENATE AND THE FIRST CHAMBER IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL STRUCTURES.

SINT MAARTEN DOES NOT HAVE A BI-CAMERAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT TO GET ELDERS, WHO TYPICALLY POSSESS A WEALTH OF LIFE EXPERIENCE AND ACCUMULATED KNOWLEDGE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF GOVERNMENT, THEY HAVE TO BE ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT.



THIS IS THE MISSING LINK  
IN OUR DECISION-MAKING  
PROCESS!

VOTE

RICHARD GIBSON SR.  
CANDIDATE

#2

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PROVEN RECORD OF  
SERVICE TO OUR  
COMMUNITY. HE GETS  
THE JOB DONE!

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Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/RichardGibsonSr>



Reach the electorate.

Share your take on these pressing issues:

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|-----|------------------|-----------|
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| # 2 | Electoral Reform | July 15   |
| # 3 | Public Finances  | July 22   |
| # 4 | Justice          | July 29   |
| # 5 | VROMI            | August 5  |
| # 6 | Education        | August 12 |
| # 7 | Public Health    | August 19 |

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# The Unified Resilient St. Maarten Movement (URSM)

**Since 10-10-10, St. Maarten has been plagued by political instability and frequent snap elections, which have eroded our democratic foundation and stunted our progress. The Unified Resilient St. Maarten Movement (URSM) is resolute in addressing these issues through sweeping electoral reform to ensure stable governance, accountability, and sustainable development.**

Our vision for electoral reform is anchored on three crucial pillars: Enhancing transparency, fostering political stability, and empowering citizens. First, we propose stringent transparency measures in political financing. By mandating full disclosure of campaign contributions and expenditures, we aim to eliminate undue influence from vested interests, ensuring our elected officials are accountable to the people of St. Maarten.

Second, to combat the instability caused by frequent snap elections, we advocate for fixed-term legislatures. Fixed terms will provide a predictable political environment, enabling coherent long-term planning and the execution of policies requiring continuity. Additionally, we propose establishing a recall election mechanism, allowing citizens to remove underperforming or corrupt officials without destabilizing the entire government structure.

Furthermore, URSM believes in the power of coalition governance. To prevent political fragmentation, we will promote electoral systems that encourage coalition-building and consensus. This approach ensures diverse voices are represented in government, fostering unity and cooperation among various political factions. Implementing a proportional representation system will create a more inclusive and representative government, reflecting the true will of the people.

Empowering, involving, and educating the community is central to our reform agenda. We will launch civic education programs to inform the electorate about their rights and the importance of participation in the democratic process. Additionally, we aim to facilitate greater youth engagement in politics by providing platforms for young voices to be heard. An informed and engaged citizenry is the

cornerstone of a resilient democracy.

Moreover, we are committed to making the electoral process accessible to all citizens, including those residing outside of St. Maarten. This includes students studying off-island, individuals who are temporarily off-island, and those away for medical reasons. We will explore the possibility of allowing these individuals to vote remotely or have someone vote on their behalf, ensuring every voice is heard and represented.

To further enhance political stability, we propose the establishment of an independent electoral commission. This body would oversee the entire electoral process, ensuring fairness, transparency, and adherence to established rules and regulations. By doing so, we can reduce the likelihood of electoral disputes and increase public confidence in the electoral system.

We also advocate for the modernization of the voting system through the introduction of electronic voting. This would streamline the voting process, reduce errors, and make it more accessible, particularly for those with disabilities or other constraints that prevent traditional voting methods.

Additionally, we propose regular reviews and updates of electoral laws to reflect the evolving political landscape and societal needs. This ensures that our electoral framework remains relevant, robust, and capable of addressing contemporary challenges.

In the long term, the reformed electoral system will become part of the secondary school curriculum, ensuring that future generations are well-versed in the principles of democratic governance.

Ensuring that the Ad Hoc Committee Electoral Reform in the Parliament of St. Maarten is fully operational and active is a key step in this process. This can only be achieved by electing members of Parliament who prioritize electoral reform, as the current system benefits certain individuals. We must avoid the instability of the past by choosing leaders committed to this cause. It starts with the people, and making sure you elect the right leaders for the function as Members of Parliament.

The URSM is committed to transforming St. Maarten's political landscape through thoughtful and inclusive electoral reform. By enhancing transparency, promoting political stability, and empowering our citizens, we can build a resilient and prosperous St. Maarten. Together, we will create a political environment where trust in our institutions is restored, and the aspirations of our people are realized. Join us in this movement towards a unified and resilient St. Maarten.

We recognize that these reforms will not happen overnight and will require the collective effort of all citizens, political leaders, and stakeholders. We invite you to be part of this transformative journey. Engage in dialogue, participate in civic activities, and most importantly, exercise your right to vote for leaders who are committed to making these necessary changes.

The Unified Resilient St. Maarten Movement believes in a future where political instability is a thing of the past, where every citizen's voice is heard, and where our government works tirelessly for the common good. Our commitment to electoral reform is unwavering, and with your support, we can achieve a political system that truly reflects the will and aspirations of the people of St. Maarten.

Let's build a St. Maarten where political stability, transparency, and citizen empowerment are the foundations of our democ-

racy. Together, we can create a unified and resilient nation that stands strong against the challenges of today and tomorrow. Join

us in this mission, and let's make St. Maarten a beacon of democratic integrity and prosperity in the region.

**URSM CANDIDATE LIST**

**#1** MERCELINA, LUC F.E.

**2** WEVER, CHRISTOPHER L.

**3** JANSEN-WEBSTER, VERONICA C.

**4** MARTINA, HERBERT M.J.

**5** ROSEBURG, SJAMIRA D.M.

**6** ARRINDALL, GRACIA R.

**7** BRUO, RICHIEL S. J.

**8** MATTHEW, JASON O.

**9** PETERSON, JOSEPH G.

**10** SOMERSALL, MICHAEL O.

**11** HUTCHINSON, DELANO L.

**12** BROOKS, FELISHA C.M.

**13** STEEMAN (geboren) TALL, SAU Y.

**14** IZENA, PACO J.

**15** EMER, GLENSLEY C.

**HAVE NO FEAR URSM IS HERE**

**1 ENHANCING EQUALITY IN ST. MAARTEN AND THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS THROUGH ELECTORAL REFORM**

**ELECTORIAL REFORM SINT MAARTEN**  
 Improve accessibility in the Sint Maarten voting system, for better representation stronger democracy and greater public trust.  
 "It's time for change, it's time for reform"

**DISPUTE REGULATION**  
 Installation of an independent body to resolve disputes regulation (fairly) to ensure equal political power and fairness within the Kingdom.

**DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT**  
 Ensuring that the Kingdom continues to place a high priority on the democratic deficit challenge for fair representation of Sint Maarten.

**ACCESS TO EUROPEAN FUNDING**  
 Enhance Sint Maarten's accessibility to the European development funds, and advocate for the needs of the country.

**VOTE SJAMIRA ROSEBURG 5**

**URSM Loves You**