



18th May, 2023

The Guyana Press Association (GPA) held its General Meeting and elections for officer bearers on Sunday, 14th May, 2023 at the Theatre Guild, Kingston, Georgetown where eight persons were elected by their peers to serve for the next two years.

Ms Nazima Raghubir was elected to return as President. Mr Rawle Toney was uncontested for the role of Vice President as well as Mrs Svetlana Marshall-Abrams as Treasurer, Ms Ariana Gordon as Assistant Treasurer and Floor Members Mr Denis Chabrol, Mr Nyjel Fraser, Mr Alva Solomon and Ms Iva Wharton. Ms Wharton will be serving as the Association's Secretary while Ms Marcelle Thomas was co-opted to the executive at the said meeting.

The meeting, as well as elections, was observed by members of the diplomatic community from the Embassies of the United States and European Union and the High Commissions of Canada and the United Kingdom. It was also open to coverage from the media and was streamed live.

The meeting saw presentations of reports by the Secretary and President after which there were discussions on those reports. Among the achievements outlined was its press advocacy over the five years, efforts to grow its membership, audits and constitutional reform.

In recent weeks, there have been attempts to steal the narrative of the press association's history. Among the commentary was that the GPA went against "convention" and set a deadline for registration of members and the payment of dues. The peddler/s of that narrative pointed to two previous past elections where that happened but failed to revisit the history of elections in the association where members had deadlines to pay their dues and join the association.

To date, no member of the press came forward with claims that the GPA has denied him or her membership. The GPA also addressed at its meeting previous calls for its membership database to be made public. Again, we addressed this issue by pointing out the need to protect our members from harassment and intimidation as there were fears of this, and legal advice that disclosure of membership status to third parties prior to an election raised privacy concerns.

The GPA's elections got underway and the entire list of members who were eligible to vote was read out to peers in the very room. Not once did anyone object to the names. There was full participation by all those on the list. The GPA finds it unfair that one candidate would now claim that the elections were unfair even after participating in the said elections.

The GPA states unequivocally that there were no irregularities and that the election of office bearers was free, fair and transparent. All claims to the contrary are baseless, malicious and calculated to sow mischief.

The Guyana Press Association and by extension our members have its work cut out to ensure that the Association continues its representation of media workers and its advocacy for press freedom, freedom of expression, access to information and media literacy. We have already started to work for you, our colleagues and among our plans is to continue meeting as our General Meeting was suspended to be able to consider several proposals that will address issues raised and other matters of urgency.

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