

HISTORY OF THE COMMISSION

Before 1968, the Minister of Local Government was responsible for the conduct of elections in the country. There were a lot of complaints of lack of transparency and fairness in the conduct of electoral process, which resulted in the setting up of a Committee of Enquiry into Local Government and Electoral Reforms after the 1966 military take over. It was in 1968 that the Interim Electoral Commission was set up as an independent body responsible for registration of Voters and the conduct and supervision of elections. This was a result of recommendations made by the Siriboe Committee of inquiry into Local Government and Electoral Reforms in 1968.

Mr Justice V.C.R.A.C. Crabbe was appointed the Interim Commissioner in 1968 and under his supervision; the Commission conducted the 1969 elections. Then after, the Commission was made a permanent institution in 1971. Mr Justice Crabbe went back to the Bench and Mr G.A.K. Bonsu, who was then the Secretary to the Commission, was made the Electoral Commissioner in 1971.

Following the 1972 takeover of government by the National Redemption (NRC), Mr Bonsu was removed from office in 1974 and the Commission was turned into a Department under the Ministry of Local Government. Mr. Seth Owusu, who took over as the secretary to the Commission from Mr. Bonsu, was made the Director of Civil Registration and Electoral Department (CRED).

This department was given an additional responsibility of issuing citizens I.D.Cards. Citizen's I.D Cards were issued to citizens in the Volta, Brong Ahafo, Upper, Northern and parts of Western regions from 1972-1976. The exercise was stopped to enable the Commission to undertake a Voters Registration exercise in preparation for the Union Government referendum. In 1977, the Supreme Military Council (S.M.C) Degree.144 re-established the Electoral Commission with Justice I.K.Abban, the then Chief Justice, as the Electoral Commissioner. The S.M.C government amended the Electoral Commission Degree to provide for a Deputy Electoral Commissioner.

When the S.M.C could not influence the sole Commissioner after various attempts. Justice Abban was removed and Mr M.A.Quaye was appointed to the position. All the changes were done when the Commissioner was on a trip outside the country. The referendum on the Union Government was held in March 1978. Counting of votes at polling stations instead of constituency centres was practised for the first time in Ghana on the directives of Justice Abban, the Electoral Commissioner.

After the 1978 referendum, Mr Justice Abban was removed from office and Mr M.A. Quaye, who had been the Deputy Electoral Commissioner, was confirmed as the Electoral Commissioner. Mr Quaye however, stayed in office for only five months and was succeeded by Mr Justice Kingsley Nyinah who was later appointed in August 1978 as the Commissioner. The Commission conducted and supervised the 1979 Presidential and Parliamentary elections, which were held on the same day in July 1979.

In 1982, the Electoral Commission became known as the National Commission for Democracy (N.C.D) following the overthrow of the Liman's government on 31st December 1981 by the Provisional National Defence Council (P.N D.C). Justice Kingsley Nyinah was asked to go on an indefinite leave following demonstrations by staff of the Commission in May 1982. Justice D.F. Annan, a member of the P.N.D.C, was subsequently assigned responsibility for the N.C.D. The National Commission for Democracy constituted by 21 members with Mr Justice D.F Annan as Chairman. Apart from the Commission's functions on electoral matters, it was also mandated

- (i) To carry out educational programmes for disseminating within society an awareness of the objectives of the revolutionary transformation.
- (ii) To identify and assess the needs of the people and to find out what structural limitations to the achievement of true democracy.

- (iii) To formulate for the consideration of government, a programme for a more effective realization of a true democracy in Ghana.

The N.C.D, through its interaction with the public, published a report "Search for True Democracy" in 1991 in which it recommended the institutionalisation of constitutional governance.

In 1992, an Interim National Electoral Commission was set up to replace the N.C.D, with Mr Justice Ofori-Boateng as Chairman, Dr K. Afari-Djan and Nana Oduro Numapau II; as Deputy Chairman (OPS) and Deputy Chairman (F&A) respectively and eight other members. It is interesting to note that the Commissioners were appointed one per region. The Commission was charged with handling;

- Voter registration
- Conduct and supervision of elections and referenda.
- Approval of the 1992 constitution by referendum.
- The Commission was also tasked with the conduct and supervision of the 1992 presidential and parliamentary elections which ushered in the Fourth Republic.

The Constitution of the Fourth Republic of Ghana provides for an independent Electoral Commission of seven (7) members. The Commission then had Dr K Afari-Djan as its Chairman to be assisted by two Deputies, Mr D.A. Kangah (F&A) and Mr Sarfo-Kantanka (OPS) who replaced Mr Justice Afreh, then appointed as an Appeal Court judge. The Commission members at that period, comprised of Prof. Ernest Dumor, Mrs Theresa Cole and Madam Elizabeth Solomon all on retirement. The fourth Commission member Dr Puni passed away in 1994.

Dr K. Afari-Djan with his deputies has successfully managed three presidential and parliamentary and District Assembly elections. The year 2005 saw new Commission members in the persons of Mr

Aggrey Finn, Mrs Eunice Akweley Roberts, Nana Eyiaba 11 and Mrs Pauline Dzadzawa.

After the retirement of Dr. K. Afari-Djan in the early 2015, Mrs. Charlotte Osei was appointed by the government. She happened to be the first female Chairperson of the Electoral Commission to be appointed. Two deputies who were appointed earlier worked with Mrs. Charlotte Osei while in office, they were Mr. Sulley Amadu and Ms. Georgina Opoku Amankwaa. Mrs. Charlotte Osei successfully supervised the conduct of the 2015 District Level Elections and the 2016 General Elections. The Executive Commissioners; Charlotte Osei, Sulley Amadu and Georgina Opoku Amankwaa were all relieved of their positions after they were indicted in May 2018, by a Committee set up by the Chief Justice to investigate a petition filed by some workers of the Electoral Commission against the Chairman of the Commission.

In July, 2018, the President appointed the Executive Director of the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA); Mrs. Jean Adukwei Mensa as the new Chair of the Electoral Commission.

The government further appointed other persons to the Commission; they were Mr. Samuel Tettey the then Director of Electoral Services; as a Deputy Chairman, Dr. Eric Asare Bossman also as a Deputy Chairman and Ms. Adwoa Asuama Abrefa as a Member of Commission.

HISTORY OF THE COMMISSION NARRATIVE IN SUMMARY

PERIOD	ORGANIZATION	ELECTIONS CONDUCTED	HEAD/CHAIRMAN OF EC
1. 1950-1968	Department under the control and supervision of the Ministry of Local Government	1. First General Elections in 1951 under the 1950 Coussey Constitution. 2. 1954 General Elections 3. 1956 Plebiscite in British Togoland 4. 1956 General Elections 5. 1960 Plebiscite on Republic constitution 6. 1964 Referendum on One Party State	Secretaries of Local Government
2. 1968	Interim Electoral Commission	1969 General Elections, which ushered in the Progress Party to government.	Justice V.C.R.A.C Crabbe
3. 1969-1974	Electoral Commission (1971)	Dissolution of the Progress Party with the advent of the military in 1972 and a new body set up.	Mr G.A.K Bonsu
4. 1974-1977	Civil Registration and Electoral Department under the control and supervision of Ministry of Local Government.		Mr Seth Owusu
5. 1977	SMCD. 144 re-established the Electoral Commission		Justice I.K Abban
6. 1978	Electoral Commission	Referendum on Union Government	Mr A.M. Quaye
7. 1978-1982	Electoral Commission	1979 Presidential/Parliamentary Elections	Justice Kingsley Nyinah
8. 1982- 1992	National Commission for Democracy	1998/1999 District level Elections	Justice D.F Annan
9. 1992	Interim National Electoral Commission (11) Members	Referendum on 1992 Constitution and 1992 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections	Justice Ofori Boateng
10. 1993-2015	Electoral Commission (7 Members)	1994 District Level Elections	Dr Kwadwo Afari Gyan
	Electoral Commission	1996 presidential/Parliamentary Elections	Dr Kwadwo Afari Gyan
	Electoral Commission	1998 District Level Elections	Dr Kwadwo Afari Gyan
	Electoral Commission	2000 Presidential/Parliamentary Elections	Dr Kwadwo Afari Gyan
	Electoral Commission	2002 District Level Elections	Dr kwadwo Afari Gyan
	Electoral Commission	2004 Presidential/Parliamentary Elections	Dr Kwadwo Afari Gyan
	Electoral Commission	2006 District Level Elections	Dr kwadwo Afari Gyan
	Electoral Commission	2008 Presidential/Parliamentary Elections	Dr Kwadwo Afari Gyan
	Electoral Commission	2010 District Level Elections	Dr kwadwo Afari Gyan
	Electoral Commission	2012 Presidential/Parliamentary Elections	Dr Kwadwo Afari Gyan
11. 2015-2018	Electoral Commission	2015 District Level Elections	Dr kwadwo Afari Gyan
		2016 Presidential/Parliamentary Elections	Mrs Charlotte Osei
12. 2018- To date	Electoral Commission	2018 Referendum for the Creation of 6 New Regions	Mrs. Jean A. Mensa
		2019 District Level Elections	

SOURCE: R & M DEPT. EC.