



The Commonwealth

Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Guyana Emergency Meeting, 11 December 2023 Concluding Statement

11 December 2023

1. The Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Guyana (CMGG) convened an emergency meeting on 11 December 2023 called by the Commonwealth Secretary-General, The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC, at the request of the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, and in accordance with the mandate given by the Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1999 to monitor, *“further developments in respect of the existing controversy between Guyana and Venezuela.”*
2. The meeting was chaired by the Honourable State Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, Md. Shahriar Alam, MP.
3. The Ministerial Group received an update from the Honourable Hugh Hilton Todd, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, presented by His Excellency Rajendra Singh, High Commissioner of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, on the heightened tensions between the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Co-operative Republic of Guyana over the Essequibo region since the last CMGG meeting in September 2023.
4. The Group urged full and proper respect for the binding 1 December 2023 Order of Provisional Measures of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that states that *“Pending a final decision in the case, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela shall refrain from taking any action which would modify the situation that currently prevails in the territory in dispute, whereby the Co-operative Republic of Guyana administers and exercises control over that area”* and that, *“Both Parties shall refrain from any action which might aggravate or extend the dispute before the Court or make it more difficult to resolve.”*
5. The Group called for a de-escalation of the tensions between Venezuela and Guyana, respect for international law, the maintenance of peace, and the rejection of the use or threats of the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Guyana.
6. The Group rejected the recent actions of Venezuela that constitute a threat to Guyana’s sovereignty and a disregard of the 1 December 2023, Order of the ICJ.

7. The Group reiterated its firm and steadfast support for the ICJ process underway as the appropriate and lawful means to address the matter under international law, the maintenance and preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Guyana, its right to self-defence and the unobstructed exercise of its rights to develop the entirety of its territory for the benefit of its people.
8. The Group reaffirms that the position of the Commonwealth since the Group was formed in 1999 has remained unchanged, and is as expressed in 2016, *“The Group reiterated the unequivocal and collective support of Commonwealth member governments for the maintenance and preservation of Guyana’s sovereignty and territorial borders, in accordance with the 1899 Arbitral Award, which definitively settled the land boundary between the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and Venezuela.”*
9. The Group endorses without reservation the statements made by the Secretary-General in support of Guyana on 1 November 2023, and 1 December 2023.
10. The Group commended the Good Offices of the Secretary-General on behalf of the Commonwealth to engage its partners to support peace and stability in the Caribbean region and encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to use her Good Offices to support Guyana in upholding its territorial sovereignty and integrity.
11. The Group also agreed to draw the conclusions of this meeting to the attention of all Commonwealth member governments.

11 December 2023

Members of the Group, as constituted following the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Durban in 1999, are Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Canada, Guyana, Jamaica, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.