

# PPP/C Stalling for Time – AFC

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The Alliance for Change believes that the ruling Peoples Progressive Party/Civic government is stalling for time in its call for a re-opening of voter registration, and said it would not support such a move.

This comment came from AFC's Member of Parliament and Presidential Candidate, Khemraj Ramjattan, recently when he spoke to Kaieteur News following the party's weekly media briefing. Among the other issues on which the AFC commented on at that briefing were statements by PPP/C Presidential Candidate, Donald Ramoutar. At a recent press conference last week Mr Ramoutar called for a reopening of the claims and objections period so that hundreds of potential electors can be given an opportunity to place their names on the voters list by registering. He said that these persons were earlier denied a chance to register because they were at that time without identification documents such birth certificates and passports.

The PPP candidate said that re-opening the registration period would not cause the date for national elections to go past the legally mandated December 28 Deadline. But Mr Ramjattan said, "I do not know how Gecom can register those persons without parliamentary approval and an extension of the time." He sounded an objection similar to that of the main Opposition People's National Congress when he told this newspaper, "We are not going to support any move in Parliament to support an extension of the date for elections ... The AFC is making it quite clear that the deadline for elections must be by 28 December."

He blamed the PPP/C government for some persons being unable to register because the administration did not do what was needed to ensure a speedy processing of their applications of source documents.

Further, Ramjattan charged that the ruling party made the call for an extension because it needed more time to get its house in order and launch special election promotions such as the one laptop per family programme, and to use money obtained from the low carbon development strategy project in various districts among voters.

"It is obvious that Donald Ramoutar wants an extension [of the election deadline] because of conflicts within the party, the rift resulting from his selection as presidential candidate, and poor support among voters," Ramjattan said.



He said that the persons who did not get the opportunity to register number about 700, but they are greatly outnumbered by those who have their names on the voters list. "Can we delay an election for some 700 persons when we already have 400,000 registered?" he asked.

During the media briefing at its Fourth Street Campbellville headquarters, AFC Member of Parliament and Prime Ministerial Candidate, Sheila Holder, expressed her party's amusement at a reported statement by Ramoutar asserting that Guyana's economic status has risen over the years.

"Surely, what Mr Ramoutar meant to say was that the financial status of the PPP's top brass as well as their lackeys and cronies had risen," she said. She accused Mr Ramoutar of insulting the intelligence of Guyanese by claiming that the economy moved from being a 'basket case' in 1992 when his party came to power to now being the most dynamic in the region.

"The Guyanese economy, albeit its recent pattern of tepid growth, is characterized by chronic underperformance and underdevelopment."

She spoke of an analysis by the AFC's economist that showed this nation's economy experiencing an average 3.44 per cent growth in Gross Domestic Product from 1961 to 1966, dropping to a low of 0.31 per cent under the governance of President Desmond Hoyte. But during the time of President Jagan, 1993 to 1997, GDP rose to 7.71 per cent – a growth which she credited to a "... substantial positive economic catalyst from [President] Hoyte reforms".

"However, since 1988, GDP grew at an annual average of 0.86 per cent."  
"It has to be pointed out that it is tangible economic growth and not necessary macro stability that is the foundation of development," she said.

Supporting a challenge by Holder to Ramoutar for a public debate, Ramjattan said his party is especially interested in discussing the PPP/C's management of the national economy, and Ramoutar's record as a member of the Board of Directors of the State owned Guyana Sugar Corporation.