

The Bahamas

Background	Name of EMB:	Parliamentary Registration Department (PRD) – The Bahamas
	Status:	Permanent government agency (established in 1959)
	Number of commissioners:	Five members of the Constituencies Commission under Article 69
	Number of full-time EMB staff:	Eighteen permanent staff members (12 in New Providence and six in Grand Bahama)
Establishment of the EMB	Constitutional and/or legislative provisions for establishment of the EMB:	The PRD was established in 1959 under the House of Assembly Act. The Parliamentary Commissioner manages the Department, and derives his/her electoral authority from the Parliamentary Elections Act (PEA). The Department is responsible for conducting parliamentary elections every five years, local government elections every three years and school board elections every three years.
	EMB's mandate:	Statutory functions include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of Electoral Quinquennial Register, and the continuous registration of voters; 2. Creation of jury lists and regular revision of electoral register; 3. Delimitation of constituency and polling division boundaries, and legal descriptions; 4. Processing of nominated political candidates; 5. Archiving and retention of all electoral materials; 6. Conduct of general elections, referenda, local government elections, school board elections and by-elections, as need arises. 7. Appointment of all electoral staff and poll workers.
	EMB model:	Government-controlled agency
	What standards are established in the constitution or other legislation for democratic legitimacy?	Parliamentary Elections Act; Articles 68, 69 and 70 of the Constitution

Appointment, tenure and removals	Provisions for the appointment of commissioners:	The Governor-General appoints the Speaker; one Supreme Court judge; two members of governing party; one member of opposition party, via Article 69 of the Constitution.
	Political status of commissioners:	Four members via political appointments; one member, judge of Supreme Court.
	Chair qualifications:	Election as Speaker of the House of Assembly (first, an elected politician of majority party).
	Commissioner qualifications:	Four elected politicians (three majority party, one minority party; one High Court judge).
	Tenure of chair and commissioners:	Constituencies Commission – Every five years (life of parliament) – Article 69
	Provisions for the removal of commissioners:	Egregious unethical conduct; retirement; demise (only prime minister or Governor-General).
	Provisions for the appointment of EMB senior staff:	Through the Governor-General on the advice of the Public Service Commission
	Tenure of EMB senior staff:	Permanent staff are permanent and pensionable; via Public Service Regulations
	Provisions for the removal of EMB senior staff:	Egregious unethical conduct; retirement; demise (or through the Governor-General via Public Service Commission Rules and Regulations).
	Setting and control of EMB's budget:	Set by the Parliamentary Commissioner in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance
Funding arrangements	Financial autonomy:	Parliamentary commissioner: within approved budget allocations, via approval from the financial secretary, Ministry of Finance.
	Legal provisions for financial autonomy:	Financial Administration and Audit Act – Budgetary allocations to government agencies
	Number of chambers/houses within the legislature:	Bicameral: The House of Assembly – Lower House; The Senate – Upper House
Electoral system	Voting system:	First-past-the-post (FPTP) – Electoral system in place for Lower House; appointed members for Upper House
	Amendments to electoral laws:	Proposed by the Attorney-General or majority party in parliament; members' bill etc. Approval verified in both House of Assembly and the Senate; assented to by Governor-General.
	Drafting of electoral regulations:	EMB may advance recommendations of regulations to the Attorney-General for approval and for consideration and approval by the government.

Electoral disputes	Electoral dispute resolution mechanisms:	Section 80 of the Parliamentary Elections Act allows for the appointment of an Election Court to solve electoral disputes.
Other issues:		
Secretariat	Administrative autonomy:	The Public Service Commission is responsible for promotions, discipline and dismissal of persons in the public service.
	Women in senior positions:	Six of 18 staff or 33.3 per cent of permanent employees are females – not including redeployed persons to PRD.
	Administrative structure:	<p>This agency/department is headed by a Parliamentary Commissioner who serves as chief advisor to the government and the Constituencies Commission. The Bahamas is an archipelagic nation with some 700 islands and cays. Thirty of the islands are inhabited (26,000 population), each with a mini-administrative/electoral structure headed by a district administrator. Each administrator is assigned electoral functions as a representative of the parliamentary commissioner. The department has its:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Main headquarters in New Providence (approx.: 126,000 population). 2. A sub-office in Grand Bahamas (27,000 population), five constituencies. 3. General administration, voter registration and co-ordination of all electoral matters; financial administration, computer data management; archive of counterfoils; records research and development; election supplies; human resources; voter education and overseas co-ordination unit. <p>Family island co-ordination, voter registration; voter education and training.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Parliamentary Commission and the Constituencies Commission have apportioned 38 constituencies, comprising 500 polling stations in the country. Each constituency is administered by a returning officer.