

Barbados was settled in 1627 and has had uninterrupted parliamentary government since 1639. It has been a sovereign independent state within the Commonwealth since November 30, 1966. The first elections based on universal adult suffrage took place in 1951.

The country's judicial, political and administrative institutions are patterned on the British system but have adapted to suit local circumstances. Barbados' Parliament which has been in existence for over 370 years is one of the oldest Westminster-type Parliaments in the Western hemisphere. Barbados has two houses of Parliament: an elected House of Assembly and an appointed Senate. The Governor General, Sir Clifford Husbands, represents the British Monarchy and is the Head of State with executive authority. This authority is vested in the Prime Minister and Cabinet, who are collectively responsible to Parliament.

Since 1955, Barbados has had two major political parties - the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party. Until 2003, each party had served two terms in office alternately. The DLP administration was returned to power in January, 2008 and were retained in the elections of February 2013. Both parties are fundamentally committed to democracy, the rule of law and a free-market economy as the basis of political stability, social and economic prosperity. Barbados enjoys an enviable international reputation in each of these areas, as well as with respect to administrative competence, economic efficiency and the observance of human rights and democratic freedoms.

The Honourable Freundel J. Stuart is the Prime Minister and leader of the Democratic Labour Party. The leader of the opposition is the Honourable Mia A. Mottley, who is also leader of the Barbados Labour Party.



House of Parliament

**Image Source:**

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