

DECOLONIZATION & SELF-DETERMINATION

Decolonization is the undoing of Guam's colonial relationship by evolving from our status as an unincorporated Territory of the United States to one of three political status options: Statehood, Free Association, or Independence. To be decolonized, Guam's people will have achieved Self-determination, freedom, and political sovereignty.

Self-determination is the process by which the people of a colonial territory express their desire for a Self-governing status. Their preference for a particular decolonized status will form the basis of Guam's actions/negotiations to implement the Self-governing status.

WHAT IS FREE ASSOCIATION?

Free Association is a relationship between two sovereign nations. As a sovereign nation, Guam would have the ability to enter into a **Compact of Free Association** (COFA) with the United States. This would give us the opportunity to establish our own form of government and create laws that would address our needs while also making Guam an equal partner with the United States.

Like Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam could negotiate for defense and financial assistance in its Compact that would aid in the development of the island community.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Free Association Task Force

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Independence Task Force

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Statehood Task Force

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RESOURCES

Please scan the QR code below to access various educational resources on the Commission on Decolonization's website.

COD Website



The Commission on Decolonization is tasked with educating our island community on the drawbacks of our current unincorporated territory status and the potential benefits and challenges of the three (3) political status options available to Guam: Statehood, Free Association, and Independence.

POLITICAL STATUS OPTIONS: FREE ASSOCIATION



COMMISSION ON
DECOLONIZATION
GOVERNMENT OF GUAM

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FREE ASSOCIATION: POLITICAL STATUS POSSIBILITIES

IMMIGRATION

Guam would need to implement visa programs in the areas of tourism, education, work and visitor stays in order to control how long individuals are allotted to stay. Travel agreements with other countries will have to be negotiated.

LAND

Guam's constitution can define land tenure for foreign nationals and commercial interests. Guam will have negotiated a COFA control that may allow the U.S. access to their current federal properties in exchange for economic development and defense aid. Lands owned by private landowners can remain.

DEFENSE

Maintaining U.S. strategic dominance in this region is the primary objective. The island's geopolitical location will play a major role in its COFA negotiations. The U.S. may negotiate for limits to foreign access to Guam in case of a military emergency in exchange for economic aid over the long term.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Free Association gives Guam the ability to engage in treaty negotiations with other independent countries in exchange for security, defense, and/ or economic benefit. Participation in regional/ international organizations such as the United Nations is possible. Treaties and relations with other nations are contingent on what is negotiated with Guam's main alliance.

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

Individual rights will be determined by the people and outlined in a constitution. Individual rights can align with international human rights and those of similar democratic states.

CULTURE

Cultural preservation may be subject to what is negotiated with the U.S. in a COFA agreement. This relationship also has the potential to create and/ or fund cultural programs. The English language may remain the common means of communication for the public and other external affairs.

TRAVEL

Travel agreements with the U.S. can be negotiated into the Compact for citizens of Guam. U.S. citizens living in Guam will maintain unrestricted travel to the United States. Citizens of Guam will need to obtain proper visas to travel to foreign countries. Travel agreements can be negotiated with other countries but may be limited by the terms of the Compact.

EDUCATION

The Government of Guam will have some flexibility to adapt the curriculum and standards for an educational system. Outside funding will be based on the COFA agreement negotiations. The opportunities for scholarship and grant funding from the U.S. or other countries may limit control over the education system. The parameters of control including the granting of education visas will need to be negotiated.

HEALTH

Access to the U.S. healthcare system will be subject to the terms of the COFA negotiation. Guam will have access to international aid to assist in establishing our own health programs that may be limited under the parameters of the Compact.



LEGAL & JUDICIAL FRAMEWORK

A constitution would outline the powers and policies for a legal and judicial system. Guam could enact policies that mirror existing laws or create an entirely new code. COFA negotiations may limit some domestic jurisdiction.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Similar to independence, a COFA relationship with the U.S. will make financial support highly likely. United States' influence, guidance, and/ or control over certain aspects of external affairs is likely under the terms of the Compact. This may include trade with foreign nations if it impacts defense agreements. A period of initial instability is likely.

CITIZENSHIP

Guam will establish guidelines for citizenship, including rights and responsibilities. Based on the negotiations with the United States, current U.S. citizens may be allowed to establish dual citizenship. U.S. citizenship for future generations could be negotiated by a Compact. However, U.S. citizenship for non-U.S. citizens of Guam at the time of political status change is unlikely.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Control over natural resources, including land and waters within its Exclusive Economic Zone, will be subject to Compact negotiations. A continued relationship with the U.S. government for environmental programs is possible. The ability to control immigration can help reduce the strain on its resources but will be subject to negotiations between Guam and the U.S.

