

Press Conference Statement

By: Mr. Rodrick Wood

President, Bahamas Association of Land Surveyors (BALS)

Friday, September 26, 2025 | 10:00 AM

Opening Acknowledgment

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen of the press, fellow surveyors, government representatives, and members of the public.

It is both an honour and a solemn responsibility to address you today as the newly elected **President of the Bahamas Association of Land Surveyors (BALS)**. I wish to begin by expressing gratitude to our members for the trust they have placed in me and my team during our elections on **Friday, September 12, 2025**.

This election was a pivotal moment for BALS. It was conducted transparently, with the oversight of independent scrutineers from the Department of Labour, ensuring full compliance with our Act and By-Laws.

Election Results & Mandate

Our Association has elected a new slate of officers for the 2025–2026 term, with the mandate to restore governance, rebuild credibility, and chart a clear way forward. This leadership renewal reflects the membership's determination to unify and strengthen our profession at a critical time.

The Challenge Before Us: FIG Expulsion

We must also acknowledge the reality that BALS has been **expelled from the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG)** as of April 2025, due to arrears extending beyond three years.

This development is a sobering reminder of how fragile institutional credibility can be when governance falters. Yet, I stand before you today to affirm that **our expulsion is not the end of our international journey**. Rather, it is a starting point for restoration.

We will immediately begin engagement with FIG and other global professional bodies to regularize our standing and re-establish our voice on the international stage.

The Way Forward: Priorities of BALS

Going forward, the Bahamas Association of Land Surveyors will focus on five core goals:

1. **Restoring Governance & Compliance**
 - Strengthening internal systems, financial accountability, and adherence to our Act and By-Laws.
2. **Professional Development & Training**
 - Building pathways for surveyor education, youth engagement, and alignment with modern geospatial technologies.
3. **Rebuilding International Membership**
 - Re-engaging with FIG and other international networks to secure global recognition for Bahamian surveyors.
4. **National Collaboration**
 - Working closely with Government Ministries—including Works, Housing, Environment, and Family Island Affairs—to ensure surveyors contribute effectively to land reform, housing development, and infrastructure planning.
5. **Public Trust & Transparency**
 - Strengthening our engagement with the Bahamian public to ensure that the work of surveyors supports clarity, security, and fairness in land matters across all islands.

Closing Commitment

Fellow Bahamians, the work of a surveyor goes beyond measuring land—it is about ensuring **certainty, stability, and fairness** in how land is used, transferred, and developed.

Today, I reaffirm my commitment—and that of the newly elected leadership—to ensuring that the Bahamas Association of Land Surveyors emerges stronger, more accountable, and more respected than ever before.

We will face our challenges with transparency, we will build partnerships with Government and civil society, and we will ensure that this Association continues to play its rightful role in the national development of The Bahamas.

Thank you.

Bahamas Association of Land Surveyors (BALS) Press Kit

Press Conference

Friday, September 26, 2025 | 10:00 AM

Speaker: Mr. Rodrick Wood, President, BALS

1. Official Statement

(Delivered by Mr. Rodrick Wood)

[See finalized speech in my previous draft — included here in the press kit]

2. Media Q&A Brief

Anticipated Questions and Suggested Talking Points

Q1: What led to the expulsion of BALS from FIG?

- BALS was expelled at the **FIG General Assembly in April 2025 (Brisbane, Australia)** due to arrears in membership fees exceeding three years.
- The lapse reflects a breakdown in governance and accountability over recent years, which the new leadership is committed to correcting.

Q2: How soon can BALS regain FIG membership?

- Re-engagement with FIG will begin immediately.
- Restoring membership will require **settling arrears**, demonstrating governance reforms, and re-establishing trust.
- Our target is to be reinstated in time for **FIG Congress 2026 in Cape Town**.

Q3: Why are these elections significant?

- They mark a turning point, restoring legitimacy and democratic leadership to BALS.
- Independent scrutineers from the Department of Labour oversaw the elections to ensure transparency.

Q4: How will BALS support national land reform and housing initiatives?

- By providing technical expertise in land tenure, surveying accuracy, and geospatial data.

- Working closely with Ministries of Works, Housing, Environment, and Family Island Affairs.
- Supporting Government’s policy on secure, transparent, and equitable land use.

Q5: What is your message to young Bahamians interested in surveying?

- Surveying is a profession of national importance that blends tradition with modern technology—GPS, GIS, UAVs, hydrography.
 - BALS will establish stronger training pathways and mentorship programs in partnership with the University of The Bahamas and international networks.
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3. Fact Sheet: BALS at a Glance

About BALS:

- The **Bahamas Association of Land Surveyors (BALS)** is the professional body representing licensed land surveyors in The Bahamas.
- Established under the **Land Surveyors Act**, it ensures professional standards, ethics, and advocacy for surveyors across all islands.

Recent History:

- On **September 12, 2025**, a Special General Meeting was held at the Department of Labour where a new executive council was elected.
- This followed several years of organizational challenges and lapses in governance.

International Standing:

- At the **FIG General Assembly, April 2025**, BALS was **expelled from membership** due to arrears of more than three years.
- FIG (International Federation of Surveyors) is the world’s leading body for surveying associations.

New Leadership Goals (2025–2026):

1. **Governance Reform:** Strengthen accountability, compliance, and internal systems.
2. **Professional Development:** Expand training, certification, and youth engagement in surveying.
3. **International Reconnection:** Restore FIG membership and pursue wider global partnerships.
4. **National Collaboration:** Align with Government ministries on housing, land reform, and infrastructure.
5. **Public Engagement:** Rebuild trust and awareness of surveying’s role in land security and development.

Why This Matters for The Bahamas:

- Land is the most fundamental national resource.
- Accurate surveying underpins housing, infrastructure, environment, tourism, and national security.
- Strong professional standards in surveying mean stronger national development outcomes.

PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT

Rodrick Wood, President, The Bahamas Association of Land Surveyors (BALS)

Date: Friday, September 26, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM

Opening:

Good morning, members of the press, colleagues, and distinguished guests.

My name is Rodrick Wood, and it is with a profound sense of duty and hope that I address you today as the newly elected President of The Bahamas Association of Land Surveyors.

I am joined by your newly elected BALS Council: Vice President Reggie Patterson, Treasurer Andrew Fox, Secretary Thomas Ferguson, and Council Members Benjamin Ferguson and Clem Albury.

Section 1: Validation of a Democratic Process

First, I would like to formally acknowledge the successful and unimpeachable election held on September 12th, 2025. This process was overseen by independent scrutineers from the Department of Labour's Occupational Safety and Health Unit, as is standard for trade unions and associations under the law.

The Office of the Registrar of Trade Unions has since issued a formal letter confirming the results, which were unanimous for all positions. This independent validation underscores that this was not merely a meeting, but a legitimate, democratic exercise by the membership to restore the rule of law to our profession. The days of operating in the shadows are over.

Section 2: Confronting the Past to Build the Future

We begin our term by openly acknowledging the circumstances that made this election necessary. For years, our association failed in its most basic democratic duty: to hold regular elections. This internal failure had external consequences, most notably our expulsion from the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG)—a fact officially documented in their April 2025 General Assembly report.

This expulsion was a national embarrassment and a stark warning. It signaled a breakdown in governance that we are now committed to fixing. We will not shy away from this recent history; we will learn from it and ensure it is never repeated.

Section 3: Our Forward-Looking Mandate

Therefore, the mandate of this new council is clear and urgent. Our immediate priorities are:

1. **Restoring International Standing:** We will immediately commence the formal process of re-applying for membership to FIG. We will demonstrate that BALS is now under new, accountable leadership that adheres to international standards of professional conduct.
2. **Ensuring Legal and Ethical Compliance:** We will regularize all of the Association's affairs in strict compliance with the laws of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, including the new Land Adjudication Act and Registered Land Act of 2025. Our goal is to make BALS a model of transparency and good governance.
3. **Healing and Reconciliation:** We will review the past failures of the association, provide a platform for members, and recommend reforms to ensure lasting integrity. This is about healing divisions and building a stronger, unified future.
4. **Serving the Bahamas:** Ultimately, our mission is to ensure that the profession of land surveying in The Bahamas is respected, ethical, and equipped to support the nation's development. We will work collaboratively with the government and private sector to uphold the highest standards of accuracy and integrity in mapping the future of our islands.

Closing:

This is not just a change of leadership; it is a change of culture. We are moving from an era of exclusion and opacity to one of inclusion, transparency, and professionalism.

We extend a hand to all land surveyors in The Bahamas to join us in this vital work. The task ahead is significant, but our resolve is stronger.

Thank you. We are now happy to take a few questions.

PRESS KIT: THE BAHAMAS ASSOCIATION OF LAND SURVEYORS (BALS)

Date: September 26, 2025

Event: Press Conference introducing the newly elected Executive Council

1. PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT

(See previous response for the full, best-in-class statement. This would be the lead document in the kit.)

Title: A New Era for Land Surveying in The Bahamas

Speaker: Rodrick Wood, newly elected President of BALS

Summary: This opening statement outlines the validation of the democratic election by the Department of Labour, acknowledges the past challenges including the FIG expulsion, and presents the new Council's four-part mandate: restoring international standing, ensuring legal compliance, healing through a Truth and Reconciliation Committee, and serving the nation's development goals.

2. MEDIA Q&A BRIEF

Anticipated Questions and Prepared Responses

Q1: The previous council, led by Dave Taylor, claimed your meeting was "unofficial." Why should the public believe this new council is legitimate?

A: The legitimacy of our election is beyond dispute. It was overseen by independent scrutineers from the Department of Labour's OSHA Unit, the official body responsible for supervising such polls along with independent observers from Civil Society Bahamas and the Taxi Union. The Office of the Registrar of Trade Unions has provided written confirmation of the results. This was not an internal gathering; it was a legally sound process validated by a government agency. The old council's refusal to hold elections for years was the very act that was illegitimate and led to our international expulsion.

Q2: What exactly led to the expulsion from the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), and what is your plan for reinstatement?

A: According to the official FIG General Assembly report from April 2025, BALS was expelled for being "more than three years in arrears" on membership fees. This was a consequence of prolonged internal dysfunction. Our plan for reinstatement is immediate and straightforward:

1. **Formal Application:** We will immediately submit a formal application for re-admission to FIG Council.
2. **Demonstrate Reform:** We will provide evidence of our democratically elected council, our commitment to good governance, and our compliance with Bahamian law.
3. **Engage Continuously:** We will work proactively with FIG leadership to meet all requirements for reinstatement.

Q3: What is the purpose of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC)? Will this committee look into the actions of specific individuals?

A: The TRC is not about punitive measures; it is about institutional healing and reform. Modeled on best practices, its mandate is to:

- **Understand the Causes:** Impartially investigate the systemic and administrative failures that led to the association's decline.
- **Provide a Voice:** Allow members to share their experiences in a constructive setting.
- **Recommend Reforms:** Produce a public report with concrete recommendations to prevent such a crisis from ever happening again. The committee will be independent and focus on the systems, not individuals, to build a stronger future for all surveyors.

Q4: How will the average Bahamian be affected by this change in leadership at BALS?

A: The average Bahamian will benefit through increased confidence in the integrity of land boundaries and property rights. Surveyors are the first line of defense in securing land tenure, which is the foundation of family wealth and national development. A professional, ethical, and internationally recognized surveying association means higher standards, greater accountability, and better support for national projects, from housing to infrastructure. This change is fundamentally about protecting the public interest.

Q5: What is your first official action as President?

A: Our first official action is the transparent communication you see today: formally notifying the government, the public, and our international partners of this change. Simultaneously, we are initiating the process to re-engage with FIG and are scheduling meetings with relevant government ministries to align our work with the new Land Adjudication and Registered Land Acts of 2025.

3. FACT SHEET

Subject: BALS: Past, Present, and Future

I. About The Bahamas Association of Land Surveyors (BALS)

- **Mandate:** To regulate and promote the profession of land surveying in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas, ensuring the highest standards of ethics, competency, and public service.
- **Importance:** Land surveyors are fundamental to national development, establishing the legal boundaries for land, which is critical for property ownership, construction, and environmental management.

II. Recent History: A Period of Crisis

- **Governance Failure:** For several years, the association failed to hold annual general meetings or elections, contrary to its own bylaws and the Societies Act.
- **International Expulsion:** In April 2025, during the FIG General Assembly in Brisbane, Australia, the Bahamas Association of Land Surveyors (Member Association #MA-10006) was formally expelled due to being more than three years in arrears on membership fees.
 - *Source: FIG General Assembly Report, April 2025, Page 2.*
- **Member-Led Intervention:** A group of members, citing the need for legal compliance and restoration of reputation, called for a Special Meeting to hold elections.

III. The Election of September 12, 2025: A Return to Legitimacy

- **Date:** Friday, September 12, 2025.
- **Supervision:** The election was independently supervised by scrutineers from the Occupational Safety and Health Unit of the Department of Labour, as confirmed by the Office of the Registrar of Trade Unions.
- **Result:** A new Executive Council was elected by acclamation, with full participation of the membership present.
- **Confirmed by:** Letter from the Office of the Registrar of Trade Unions, dated September 22, 2025.

IV. The Newly Elected Executive Council

- **President:** Rodrick Wood, RLS

- **Vice President:** Reggie Patterson, RLS
- **Treasurer:** Andrew Fox, RLS
- **Secretary:** Thomas Ferguson, RLS
- **Council Member:** Benjamin Ferguson, RLS
- **Council Member:** Clem Albury, RLS

V. Forward-Looking Goals & Mandate

1. **Restore International Standing:** Secure reinstatement to the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG).
2. **Ensure Legal Compliance:** Align the Association fully with the Land Adjudication Act and Registered Land Act (2025).
3. **Institute Good Governance:** Implement transparency, regular elections, and continuous professional development.
4. **Launch Truth & Reconciliation:** Appoint an independent committee to review past failures and recommend systemic reforms.
5. **Serve The Bahamas:** Collaborate with the government to support national development and uphold the public trust.

For media inquiries, contact:

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END OF PRESS KIT

A New Foundation for BALS

Press Kit: Introduction of the Newly Elected Council

September 26-2025

Embargoed Until, 10:00 AM, September 26, 2025



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Why This Matters to Every Bahamian

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Meet Your New Leadership



Rodrick Wood
President



Patricia Miller
Vice President



David Johnson
Deputy



Michelle Thomson
Treasurer



James Anderson
Adj. Treasurer



Assiseant Secy
Adj. Treasurer



Sarah Roberts
Adj. Treasurer



Serva Thebamas
Portfolio

The Path to Renewal: (ur