

NAI NEWSLETTER

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WITH FOCUS ON BOTSWANA AND TOGO

BOTSWANA: TOWARDS A MORE AUTHORITARIAN REGIME?

Botswana's international reputation as "a model for democracy in Africa" has suffered a significant blow with the threat to expel critical political scientist Kenneth Good. Furthermore President Festus Mogae is seen to be preparing Botswana for a more authoritarian regime under his likely successor Lieutenant General Ian Khama by also including army officers as new government ministers.

On 18 February 2005, political science professor at the University of Botswana, Kenneth Good, was confronted with a presidential decree declaring him a prohibited immigrant in Botswana. President Festus Mogae ordered Australian-born professor Good to leave the country within 48 hours. Good is a well-known critic of the lack of political reform in Gaborone, and what angered the president was allegedly a report entitled "Presidential Succession in Botswana, No Model for Africa". Good immediately appealed to the High Court, and a final verdict has still not been reached in the court case.

Botswana is usually described as Africa's best-established democracy, relatively free of corruption and with a good human rights record. Apart from continuous disputes between the San (Bushmen) and diamond companies about territory, Botswana is one of the less conflict-ridden countries on the continent.

The ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has governed the country since independence in 1966. President Festus Mogae secured his second term in office in the elections of October 2004. BDP got 52 percent of the vote, and even though this is its lowest percentage ever, the elections once again reinforced Botswana's international reputation as one of the "most stable, liberal and effective democracies" in Africa.

However, election analysts, like the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA), claim that Botswana should begin to opt for a proportional representation voting system, to ensure the opposition has more influence over national politics. In today's system, BDP's 52 percent of the poll secured the party a little less than 80 percent of the seats in Parliament, or 44 of 57 parliamentary seats. The biggest opposition parties, Botswana National Front (BNF) and Botswana Congress Party (BCP), obtained 12 seats and 1 seat, respectively.

The controversy surrounding Botswana's democratic system is not only "the winner takes it all"-system, but also a tradition of not-so-democratic presidential transitions. Kenneth Good, and his colleague Ian Taylor, have pointed out that the *de facto* presidential election is made by the sitting president himself. The president has the power to appoint a Vice President who will take over when the sitting president steps down. This was the case when Festus Mogae succeeded Ketumile Masire in 1998.

Mogae is expected to end his second term in power in March 2008 and it is widely believed that he will automatically hand over to Vice President Ian Khama, a military general with little political experience. He is the son of Botswana's first president Seretse Khama, one of the founders of Botswana's relatively open democracy, but Khama junior is known to have authoritarian tendencies and to value allegiance over merit. His appointment has raised fears about creating a political dynasty in Botswana.

Lieutenant General Ian Khama is the first in a group of several army officers who have recently been appointed government ministers, the others being Lieutenant General Mompoti Meraphe, minister of foreign affairs and international co-operation, major General Moeng Pheto, minister of labour and home affairs and Captain Kitso Mokalia, minister of environment, wildlife and tourism.

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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE:

Kenneth Good, "What use is a silent witness?", *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, London, 27 May 2005. http://www.thes.co.uk/current_edition/

USEFUL WEBSITES:

EISA: The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa

<http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/botswana.htm>

Government of Botswana

<http://www.gov.bw>

Botswana Daily News

<http://www.gov.bw/home.html>

The Botswana Gazette

Updated every Wednesday.

<http://www.gazette.bw>

Mmegi Monitor, Mmegi/The Reporter, Botswana largest circulating daily private paper
<http://www.mmegi.bw>

USEFUL NAI PUBLICATIONS:

<http://www.nai.uu.se/publ/publeng.html>

Sidsel Saugestad, *The Inconvenient Indigenous. Remote Area Development in Botswana, Donor Assistance and the First People of the Kalahari*, 2001.

The book deals with the relationship between the government of Botswana and its indigenous minority, known as Bushmen/San. It tries to understand why the San people remain a marginalised minority in a country that since independence in 1966 has committed itself to a democratic and non-racial agenda.

Kenneth Good, *Bushmen and Diamonds. (Un) Civil Society in Botswana*, 2003.

<http://130.238.24.99/webbshop/epubl/dp/dp023.pdf>

Botswana's democracy is often considered to be a comparatively advanced and positive example of an African state in terms of political culture and the notion of "good governance". This paper challenges the assumption that the country's current political and socio-economic system is, in fact, exemplary. It highlights some of the limitations by focussing on the particular situation of the Bushmen/San as a marginalized minority denied citizens' rights and losing out against the material interests accompanying the exploration and exploitation of diamonds, the most lucrative natural resource contributing to Botswana's "success story".

TOGO: AFTER THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

As a follow up to *NAI Newsletter 20 April 2005* with focus on Togo

<http://www.nai.uu.se/media/newslettersve.html> we have asked Richard Cornwell, head of Africa Security Analysis Programme at the Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria, South Africa, to write a short comment on the presidential elections in Togo.

Togo's presidential elections were duly held on Sunday 24 April, in conditions far more peaceful than many had foreseen. There were a few isolated reports of violence, and many more accusations of electoral fraud. On the following day, long before the results were known, Nigeria's President Obasanjo made an attempt to calm matters by summoning Faure Gnassingbé and Gilchrist Olympio to a meeting in Abuja. Olympio's attendance at the five-hour meeting was an overt recognition that he, and not his surrogate Emmanuel Akitani-Bob, was the real leader of the opposition.

After the meeting Obasanjo announced that "Faure" and "Gil" had agreed that, whatever the outcome of the polls, they would form a government of national unity. On his return to Togo, however, Olympio said there had been

no formal agreement, and that he would first have to consult his colleagues. Thus, on 27 April when the electoral commission announced that Gnassingbé was the winner with 60 percent of the vote to Akitani-Bob's 38 percent, a result that flew in the face of most of the expectations of observers on the ground, the situation was ripe for trouble. Akitani-Bob's immediate declaration that he had won the poll with 70 percent of the vote and his call for his supporters to resist with their lives if necessary set in train a tragedy in which perhaps as many as 800 lives were lost, and thousands put to flight across the borders into Benin and Ghana.

There was never any chance that the security forces would stand by and allow northerners in the Lome suburbs to be massacred, and after a day's respite they reacted predictably. The opposition had not learned the lessons of 1992. The violence was quickly over and at the time of writing (15 May) refugees have begun to drift back home.

The opposition is now hinting that it may indeed consider joining the cabinet, and awaits further developments. President Obasanjo has again called a meeting of the two leaders for 19 May, at which he will make another attempt to achieve a compromise that will satisfy honour on both sides. (editors note: The meeting failed to achieve a compromise.)

In the meantime, the European Parliament has rejected the outcome of the elections and refused to recognise Gnassingbé as president. This is a definite blow to French pride, for President Chirac had been swift to congratulate the son of his old friend on succeeding to his late father's office.

Now we have to wait to see what may be rescued from what was bound to be a flawed election. If Gilchrist Olympio plays a skilful game, he may emerge as the publicly recognised leader of an opposition that may wring significant concessions from a government under continued siege by the donors. Unfortunately, Akitani-Bob's headstrong reaction and its inevitable consequences have made life that much more difficult for the compromisers on both sides. And, given the balance of forces and the vested interests at stake, compromise there will have to be, if Togo is to move towards parliamentary elections that may lend legitimacy to the political leadership.

EVENTS CALENDAR

ELECTIONS:

In Burundi:

3 June; Communal elections, 4 July; National elections and 19 August; Presidential elections (to be carried out by Parliament). Elections were originally scheduled to take place before the end of October 2004, but have been postponed several times.

In Guinea Bissau:

19 June: Presidential elections in Guinea Bissau. Two controversial former heads of state have joined the contest and the international community is

increasingly worried that new unrest will follow the elections. Guinea Bissau lapsed into civil war from 1998 to 1999.

NEW BOOKS FROM THE NORDIC AFRICA INSTITUTE

<http://www.nai.uu.se/publ/publeng.html>

Lars Buur and Helene Maria Kyed, *State Recognition of Traditional Authority in Mozambique. The Nexus of Community Representation and State Assistance.*

<http://130.238.24.99/webbshop/epubl/dp/dp023.pdf>

The key question in this study is how the Mozambican traditional leaders' double role as community representatives and state assistants should be captured.

Hans Eriksson and Björn Hagströmer, *Chad – Towards Democratisation or Petro-Dictatorship?*

This study provides a background to the socio-political situation in Chad and the oil project, and analyses how the two will develop and interact in the future.

**If you would like to review any of the new books please contact
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COMMENTS ON THE NEWSLETTER ARE WELCOME

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