

NAI NEWSLETTER

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WITH FOCUS ON LIBERIA, TANZANIA AND WESTERN SAHARA

LIBERIA'S FORTHCOMING GENERAL ELECTIONS

Expectations run high as Liberia awaits its first Presidential and Legislative elections since the civil war ended in 2003. Elections are to be held on October 11.

Liberia, founded in 1820 as a colony of freed slaves re-settled from the United States of America as a Land of Liberty, became West Africa's earliest independent state in 1847. Between then and 1980, the country was under the True Whig Party (TWP), dominated by the descendants of the returnee-freed slaves (Americo-Liberians), largely to the exclusion of the "indigenous" Liberians. In the 1980 coup Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe was ushered into power, and through elections in 1985 Doe transformed himself into a "democratically elected" President. The invasion of the country by a rebel group led to his capture and violent death in 1989, and sparked off a violent struggle for power between armed rebel groups in Liberia. Peace was fully restored in 1996 after the intervention by West African regional peace keeping troops – the ECOWAS Peace Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), regional leaders and the international community.

The coming elections involve candidates representing the broad spectrum of Liberian society. This is significant in several respects. The elections are the first after the second Liberian civil war (1999–2003) ended, and after former president Charles Taylor went into exile in Nigeria. Taylor was elected in 1997 after leading a rebel group, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), in the first Liberian war (1989–1996).

The current elections are being supervised by the international community including the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the world's largest UN peacekeeping force. They are also a litmus test case in post-conflict elections in West Africa, and expected to close a sad chapter on one of Africa's most brutal wars, and open a new page of democratic peace and development for Liberia's war-weary and traumatized people. Expectations are thus very high in the country and the international community that this time, Liberians will succeed in putting the past behind them. The critical issues before the country are democracy, stability, reconciliation, reconstruction, social justice and development. For the largely youthful population, the issues are those of education, material welfare, employment, dignity and reintegration of ex-fighters into society.

The motley crowd of 22 presidential aspirants represents links with both the past and present, reportedly including former president Taylor, the present

transitional government, and diverse social and generational forces. Among the front-runners are Mrs Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a 66-year-old veteran politician, ex-minister and former World Bank economist, representing the middle class and elite, and 39-year-old George Weah, soccer idol and a former AC Milan football star who became the FIFA World and European footballer of the year in 1995, emerging as the voice of the youth and the masses. Other formidable candidates include Charles Brumskine, Winston Tubman, Varney Sherman, Sekou Conneh and Roland Massaquoi. It appears however that the two front-runners are Johnson-Sirleaf and Weah. While the former presents herself as well-educated, exposed to and experienced in the art of politics, administration and management, the latter acknowledges that he does not have much education, but feels he can truly represent the youth and the masses that bore the brunt of the war, because he can empathise with them given his own background growing up in a Monrovia slum, but rising to become a world class soccer star. His promise to the youth and masses in Liberia is to give them the opportunity to rise and overcome poverty, unemployment and the adverse legacies of many years of misrule. The choice then, that Liberia's 1.3 million registered voters have to make on October 11, will be a historic one, on which the well-being and future of Liberia ultimately rests.

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USEFUL WEBSITES:

<http://www.electionworld.org/liberia.htm>

Elections around the world.

<http://allafrica.com/liberia>

AllAfrica aggregates and indexes the content from over 125 African news organizations, plus more than 200 other sources.

USEFUL PUBLICATIONS IN THE NAI LIBRARY:

Adekeye Adebayo and Ismail Rashid (eds.), *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in a Troubled Region*. Boulder and London; Lynne Rienner, 2004.

Lester S. Hyman, *United States Policy Towards Liberia, 1822 to 2003: unintended consequences*. Cherry Hill, N.J.: Africana Homestead Legacy Publishers, 2003.

Terrence Lyons, *Voting Peace: postcolonial elections in Liberia*. Washington D.C: Brookings Inst. Press, 1999.

Carl Patrick Burrowes, *Power and Press Freedom in Liberia, 1830–1970: the impact of globalization and civil society on media-government relations*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2004.

Charles Ukeje, "State Disintegration and Civil War in Liberia" in Amadu Sesay (ed.), *Civil Wars, Child Soldiers and Post-Conflict Peace-Building in West Africa*, Ibadan: College Press, 2003.

THE TANZANIAN AND ZANZIBAR ELECTIONS, OCTOBER 30, 2005

Political unrest in Zanzibar is growing, as elections in Tanzania and Zanzibar are getting closer.

The process of political reform, which ended in the first multi-party elections in 1995, was initiated in Tanzania in 1992. In October 2000 elections were held to both local and national assemblies and the presidency. In October this year elections to local government and the presidency will be held again implying the end of the presidency of Benjamin Mkapa who has held the post since 1995. Mkapa was former president Nyerere's choice for the presidency in 1995. Without his blessing it is doubtful whether he would have been chosen as the presidential candidate for the leading political party in Tanzania, Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM).

The CCM candidate for 2005 is Jakaya Kikwete who is younger and charismatic. On mainland Tanzania there are 17 registered political parties with five represented in the Parliament. The dominance of CCM and Mkapa was manifested by a vote of 62 and 72 per cent respectively in the Union Presidential elections in 1995 and 2000. CCM is divided into three major factions and the struggle for power in mainland Tanzanian politics is related to factions inside CCM rather than to threats by the opposition. Kikwete belongs to a different faction than that of Mkapa, implying a shift of political power within CCM.

The situation in Zanzibar is different since the opposition party, Civic United Front (CUF), and CCM are both dominant political parties. Here all competitive elections have been characterised by not conceding defeat which has led to increased hostility, marginalisation of parts of the community and suppression of political opponents. Thus the Zanzibar government which, to a large extent, is autonomous within the Tanzanian Union has enjoyed limited political legitimacy. The multiparty elections in Zanzibar in 1995 and 2000 were seriously flawed and the outcome was accepted neither by the opposition party, CUF, nor by the international community as a whole. Both elections were followed by mediation processes, the first brokered by the Commonwealth in 1999, only one year before the next election and the second was agreed in 2001 in the aftermath of the January 27 killing of CUF demonstrators.

Hence, the stakes are high in the upcoming Zanzibar elections on both sides. Controlling Zanzibar is seen by the CCM as a must to safeguard the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, created by Nyerere and Karume in 1964. Mkapa would not like to be seen as the president who “lost” Zanzibar. CUF, on the other hand, will be drastically harmed by a third defeat and has stated that it will not accept a third mediation process if elections are rigged. Tension is building up around the Zanzibar elections through a controversial voter registration process and indications of preparations for violence. There is also the danger that political unrest on Zanzibar connected with the upcoming election may spill over to mainland Tanzania.

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USEFUL WEBSITES:

<http://www.electionworld.org/tanzania.htm>

Elections around the world.

RELEVANT NAI PUBLICATION

Tim Kelsall, *Contentious Politics, Local Governance and the Self. A Tanzania Case Study*. Research Report no. 129. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet 2004. It can be downloaded at: <http://130.238.24.99/webbshop/epubl/rr/rr129.pdf>

USEFUL PUBLICATIONS IN THE NAI LIBRARY:

T. L. Maliyamkono & F. E. Kanyongolo, (eds.), *When political parties clash*. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania : TEMA Publishers, 2003.

Agrippina Mosha, *Promoting Women's Access to Politics and Decision-making. The role of TGNP and other advocacy groups in the 2000 general elections*. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Gender Networking Programme, 2004.

Nils Gunnar Songstad, *Coexistence and Conflict: political domains in a local community in Tanzania*. Bergen; University of Bergen, 2002.

Zanzibar: a wave of violence: a fact finding report on police brutality and election mismanagement in Zanzibar. Paris: International Federation for Human Rights, 2001.

OTHER RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS:

Samual S. Mushi, Rwekaza S. Mukandala and Mwesiga L. Baregu (eds.), *Tanzania's Political Culture. A baseline survey*. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 2001.

Issa Shivji and Chris Maina Peter, *The Village Democracy Initiative: A review of the legal and institutional framework of governance at sub-district level in the context of Local Government Reform Programme*. Dar es Salaam: Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government and the United Nations Development Programme, 2000.

WESTERN SAHARAN NATURAL RESOURCES: BURDEN OR OPPORTUNITY?

What is the impact of oil and other natural resources on the future of the Western Saharan territory? Is the exploration, currently being carried out by foreign oil companies, a violation against international law? What is the Nordic and the European Union policy? International experts with a background in the UN and in the European Union will discuss these issues in a panel debate on November 24 in Stockholm. The debate is being organised by, among others, the Nordic Africa Institute.

As background to the debate we highlight below the Nordic disagreement over the ethical aspects of this issue.

Western Sahara is a former Spanish colony, which never gained independence. In 1975, the mineral-rich area was instead occupied by Morocco. While Morocco has moved hundreds of thousands of settlers into the territory, a majority of the indigenous population has left the area, and lives in exile in refugee camps in the Algerian desert.

The UN treats the Western Sahara as an issue of decolonisation and has since 1991 tried to organise a referendum on the future status of the territory. But the parties in the conflict have not been able to agree on the conditions for the referendum and meanwhile the occupation power continues to exploit the natural resources in the area.

Oil in sight

Morocco signed two controversial contracts in 2001 permitting the French company Total and the US company Kerr-McGee (KMG) to explore for oil offshore in the occupied territory. The Western Sahara exile government reacted strongly, and the UN has stated that the exploitation of oil is violating international law. Total later withdrew, but KMG remains as the only oil company in the territory.

Nordic disagreement over ethics

From 2003 the Norwegian investors in KMG reacted to the company's Western Sahara contract. Storebrand Insurance stated that "KMG does not want to discuss the topic with us, but claims that the contract with Moroccan authorities is legal. It is our opinion that the KMG activities contribute to violate international law". A Norwegian public pension manager withdrew its investment due to its assessment of the International Law of the Sea. The most elaborate evaluation was provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Finance who divested from KMG because it saw their activities as "a particularly serious violation of fundamental ethical norms" because "it may strengthen Morocco's sovereignty claims and thus contribute to undermining the UN peace process".

As a direct consequence of the Western Sahara activities, all four Norwegian shareholders have now divested from KMG. The value amounts to approximately 500 million Norwegian kroners. Interestingly enough, the other Nordic investors in KMG view the case differently.

Several Swedish and Danish investors remain shareholders in KMG, such as Första and Sjunde AP-fonden, Handelsbanken, Öhmanfonder, Alecta Pensionsförsäkring, Danske Invest and Nordea.

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USEFUL WEBSITES:

<http://www.allafrica.com/westernsahara>

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<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/minurso/index.html>

MINURSO – The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/africa/>

BBC World Service – Africa. Use the Search box to locate news. Has a history timeline and country profile.

<http://www.factbites.com/topics/Western-Sahara>

A collection of useful links to information about Western Sahara.

USEFUL PUBLICATIONS IN THE NAI LIBRARY:

Erik Jensen, *Western Sahara: Anatomy of a Stalemate*. International Peace Academy Occasional Paper Series, Boulder, CO., Lynne Rienner Publishers 2004.

Claes Olsson, *Västasahara: avkolonisering med förhinder*. Uppsala, 2002.

Toby Shelley, *Endgame in the Western Sahara: What Future for Africa's Last Colony*. Zed Books, London 2004.

Right-sizing the State – the politics of moving borders (eds.) Brendan O'Leary, Ian S. Lustick, Thomas Callaghy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Västasahara – Afrikas sista koloni. (red.) Lena Thunberg. Föreningen Västasahara, 2. omarbetade upplagan, Stockholm 2004.

NEW BOOKS FROM THE NORDIC AFRICA INSTITUTE

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

Ebeku, Kaniye S.A., *The Succession of Faure Gnassingbe to the Togolese Presidency. An International Law Perspective*.

The book examines the recent politico-constitutional crisis in Togo, and the contradictions between the regional-international legal instruments that permit interference in the internal affairs of a Member State of ECOWAS and African Union and the principles of international law that provide for sovereign equality of States and non-interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign State.

Palmberg, Mai and Ranka Primorac, *Skinning the Skunk— Facing Zimbabwean Futures*.

The book is about the new policy of rewriting the history of Zimbabwe, in the name of “patriotic history” and about the large diaspora today.

Jeffrey V. Lazarus, Catrine Christiansen, Lise Rosendal Østergaard and Lisa Ann Richey (eds.), *Models for Life. Advancing antiretroviral therapy in sub-Saharan Africa*. Current African Issues no. 31. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet 2005.

This publication focuses on the following three main topics: 1. Access to antiretroviral therapy; 2. Holistic approaches to providing antiretroviral therapy, prevention and support, and; 3. Antiretroviral therapy and public health services. In addition, the editors have further developed some of the key points made by drawing on current literature in the field. The final section concludes with a list of take-home messages for non-governmental organisations.

If you would like to review any of the new books please contact
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FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES BY NAI

14 November 2005 a half day seminar on the Conflicts in the Great Lakes Region. The seminar is organised in Stockholm in co-operation with Föreningen för Utvecklingsfrågor.

COMMENTS ON THE NEWSLETTER ARE WELCOME

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