



CASE STUDIES¹

ALGERIA

In October 1988, widespread frustration with the political and economic situation in Algeria generated some of the most violent and extensive public demonstrations since independence. These protests prompted then President Chadli Benjedid to begin implementing democratic reforms over the following two years, a number of which were approved in a national referendum. These included the separation of party and state, free representation in local and national elections, and some redefinition of the powers of the executive.

A new constitution, approved by national referendum in February 1989, brought significant changes to the ideological and political structure. The explicit commitment to socialism disappeared, and the separation between the National Liberation Front (Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) -- the dominant party since independence in 1962 -- and the bureaucracy was formalized. The new constitution also allowed for the existence of opposing political associations, and diminished the role of the military. When it came time to prepare for the first multiparty elections, political parties were officially registered and a system of proportional representation was created. This system of representation in effect benefited the Islamist party Islamic Salvation Front (Front-Islamique du Salut-FIS) instead of the traditional FLN. In the local and regional elections of June 1990 the FIS garnered a majority of the vote, which was interpreted by many as a protest against the FLN.

Despite the defeat, the FLN did not contest the results. However, in March of 1991, and in preparation for the national legislative elections, the government passed further electoral reforms that favored the FLN, increasing the number of parliamentary seats and altering their distribution to obtain over-representation of rural areas. In addition, a two round system of voting was instituted. This also was expected to favor the FLN because of high probability they would make it to the second round, where they would offer a secular option to the Islamic fundamentalist FIS. There were public protests as the campaigns for the June 1991 legislative elections got underway. President

Benjedid declared martial law and postponed the elections indefinitely. Finally, the date for the elections was set for December 1991. However, the competitive conditions were tainted. In October, the government issued a new electoral law that was still biased in favor of the FLN. Moreover, by this point most of the FIS leadership was in prison as a result of the June protests, and all newspapers had been banned.

Nearly fifty political parties participated in the first round of the elections on 26 December 1991. The FIS once again won a majority of the vote and was almost certain of obtaining the necessary seats needed to ensure passage of constitutional reform. The runoff elections were set for 16 January 1992. However, the military, not happy with the possibility of an Islamic party having the legislative majority, called for the President's resignation and the suspension of the second-round of voting. Benjedid resigned on 11 January 1992 and a High Security Council was established. The Council discarded the results of the December elections and effectively suspended all other political institutions. The High Security Council was soon replaced by the High State Council, which was to function as a transitional government, but that was in reality dominated by the military.

Initially there was no challenge to the coup. However, the Islamists responded soon after and the country came to the edge of a civil war. The government imposed a state of emergency, declared the FIS illegal, and dissolved the communal assemblies that had been under the control of the FIS since the June 1990 elections. All political activity in or around mosques was banned and Islamist activists were arrested on diverse charges. The conflict radicalized some factions of the Islamists' supporters.

For almost two years after the coup, the country was dominated by the escalation of the confrontation between the government and the Islamists. In 1994, Lamine Zeroual was appointed Head of State for a three-year term. During this period, armed Islamist groups engaged in terrorist campaigns in protest of the banning of Islamist

¹ The following 16 case studies were used by the Survey Project Team as seminal events which tested the democratic community's willingness to promote and defend democracy abroad.



political parties. Zeroual called for presidential elections in 1995, though some parties objected to holding elections that excluded the FIS. Zeroual was elected president with 75% of the vote.

In 1997, Zeroual announced that presidential elections would be held in early 1999. The elections took place in April 1999 with seven contenders for the presidency. On the eve of the election, all candidates, except Abdelaziz Bouteflika, pulled out amid charges of electoral fraud. Bouteflika, who appeared to have the support of the military, as well as FLN and its more progressive offshoot the Rassemblement National Democratique (RND), officially won 70% of the vote.

Following his inauguration, Bouteflika proposed an official amnesty for those who opposed the government during the 1990s unless they had engaged in "blood crimes." FIS's armed wing, the Islamic Salvation Army, disbanded in January 2000 and many armed militants surrendered but fighting continues.

AUSTRIA

In February 2000 the conservative People's Party, which won third place in the October 1999 national elections, formed a coalition to govern with the far-right Freedom Party, headed by Jörg Haider, which came in second. Haider, a nationalist vehemently opposed to immigration, had sparked controversy after several remarks praising some Nazi policies, though he later recanted them. His gradual rise to power—from 5% in 1983 to 28% in the October 1999 election—was credited to voters weary of decades of stasis under the rule of the Social Democrats.

The European Union condemned Austria's new coalition, froze diplomatic contacts, and imposed sanctions, accusing Haider of being a racist, xenophobe, and Nazi-sympathizer. Austria responded by criticizing the EU for interfering in the affairs of a democratically-elected government. In light of the controversy, however, Haider chose not to join the government and resigned from the party's leadership in May 2000, though he continued to wield influence from the sidelines. Wolfgang Schuessel, of the People's Party, became Chancellor of Austria. By September 2000, the EU lifted the sanctions against Austria after a special panel concluded that the new government was abiding by democratic principles and that minorities' rights were being observed. The popularity of the Freedom Party began to decline markedly in 2001: in Vienna's state

election in March the party pulled in just 20.3% of the vote.

The concern about Haider's rise to power in Austria was largely based on his anti-immigrant, anti-EU discourse, as well as on comments he made praising certain Nazi policies. In 1991, Haider, the son of former Nazi sympathizers, praised the "orderly" Nazi employment policies when discussing the possibilities of applying penalties to people on unemployment who refuse to take jobs they are qualified to perform. He later retracted the remark, but as a result had to resign from his post as the governor of the province of Carinthia (he was re-elected in 1999). In 1995, he referred to the Nazi concentration camps as "punishment" camps, implying that those inside were guilty of some crime. Later that year, he praised members of the Nazi Waffen SS as "decent people of good character who also stick to their convictions" and declared that, as a part of the German army, the Waffen SS deserved honors and respect. After his electoral success in 1999, and faced with the possibility of being a part of the Austrian government, Haider acknowledged that his remarks had been insensitive. He further stated that the Freedom Party stands for democracy and freedom, and expressed the need to ensure that the crimes committed by the Third Reich are never repeated.

Haider also strongly opposed immigration. In his stated views, immigrants take jobs that would otherwise go to Austrians, and bring crime and insecurity. He has been quoted as saying: "The Africans who come here are drug dealers and they seduce our youth;" and "We've got the Poles who concentrate on car theft... We've got the people from the former Yugoslavia who are burglary experts. We've got the Turks who are superbly organized in the heroin trade. And we've got the Russians who are experts in blackmail and mugging." In February 1993, Haider and the Freedom Party launched a twelve-point petition campaign for ending foreign immigration and keeping the proportion of non-German speaking children in schools at fewer than 30%. In what was viewed as a major defeat, only 417,000 people, or 7.5% of the population, signed the petition.

Although Haider did not become a part of the Austrian government in early 2000, and later resigned the presidency of the Freedom Party, he continues to be a very active force in Austrian politics. After two years of coalition government, Chancellor Schuessel announced on 9 September



2002 that his party would not continue in the coalition, forcing resignation of the cabinet and dissolution of Parliament. New elections were called for mid to late November. Divisions within the Freedom Party between its members in the government and Haider, who was constantly critical of government policies, had caused fractures in the coalition. The most recent confrontation was over proposed tax cuts, which Haider wanted to implement as planned and Freedom Party members in the government wanted to postpone in the wake of recent flooding.

BELARUS

In 1994, Belarus held its first elections in the post-Soviet era. Aleksandr Lukashenko, a former collective farm manager, won by a landslide with a man-of-the-people approach. Soon after he was elected, Lukashenko began to concentrate power in the executive. There were constant attacks on freedom of expression and repeated arrests and disappearances of opposition figures. A police state in the tradition of the Soviet era was established. In 1996, Lukashenko called a referendum to reform the constitution and expand his powers. In anticipation of the vote, Lukashenko severely reduced public access to opposition views, and used propaganda to encourage people to vote early, even though they had not yet seen the proposed text for the new constitution. The referendum took place on 24 November 1996 among repeated allegations that it had not been conducted fairly.

The constitution that emerged from the referendum further weakened the independence of the judiciary by allowing Lukashenko to appoint six out of the twelve members of the constitutional court. In addition, Lukashenko's term, which was supposed to end in 1999, was extended by two years. The parliament was disbanded and replaced by a new loyalist legislature. Moreover, Lukashenko ordered that the results of the referendum be binding, despite the fact that earlier that month the constitutional court had ruled that the constitution could not be amended or changed through a referendum.

The legitimacy of this exercise was widely questioned both by the international community and by Belarusian opposition forces. The relations between Belarus and the international community were further damaged when, in 1998, Lukashenko forced ambassadors from Western nations to leave their residences. Since 1999, the year in which Lukashenko's term was supposed to expire, many

countries have refused to recognize him as the legitimate president of Belarus.

Parliamentary elections took place in October of 2000. Opposition forces had agreed to participate in the elections on the condition that Lukashenko took action to ensure fair competition. However, Lukashenko failed to comply with these demands and the environment became even more repressive, with continued raids on opposition headquarters, detention of journalists and suppression of opposition views in the media. The elections were held, even though seven opposition parties boycotted them. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, having monitored the campaign process, decided not to send an observation mission and concluded that there had been repeated violations of the electoral code.

Finally, and again among repeated allegations of irregularities, repression and intimidation, presidential elections took place in September 2001. Lukashenko was declared winner with 75.6 percent of the vote, while his closest competitor received only 15.4 percent.

BURMA

Burma achieved independence from British colonial rule in 1948 and the state that emerged survived as a parliamentary democracy until a military coup in 1962. Following the coup, General Ne Win led a military regime under the guise of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) through 1998. During this period there were no free elections, and freedom of expression and association were almost entirely denied. Torture, political imprisonment, and other human rights abuses were common.

The BSPP's isolationist economic policy devastated the Burmese economy, and by mid-1988, rice shortages and popular discontent reached crisis levels. The slaying of a student by police sparked student demonstrations that were soon joined by monks, civil servants, workers, and even policemen and soldiers in cities and towns all over Burma. On 8 August 1988 hundreds of thousands of people nationwide marched to demand that an elected civilian government replace the BSPP regime. Soldiers fired on crowds of unarmed protesters, killing thousands.

On 18 September 1988, the army finally responded to demands for democratic change by announcing a coup by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) (renamed the State



Peace and Development Council in November 1997). The junta then opened fire with machine guns on demonstrators in Rangoon and other cities. It is estimated that as many as 10,000 people were killed. Thousands more were arrested. Many were - and continue to be - tortured. The SLORC pledged that elections would be held after "peace and tranquility" were restored in Burma.

The run-up to the elections inspired little confidence in the process. Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the most popular opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), was placed under house arrest in July 1989 making her ineligible to run for office. Many other senior NLD officials were jailed. The NLD had little access to media and few resources compared to the SLORC-backed National Unity Party (NUP).

To the surprise of most observers, free and fair elections took place on 27 May 1990. Of 485 contested parliamentary seats, the NLD won 392 (over 80%). Ethnic minority parties opposed to the SLORC won 65 more seats. The army-front NUP won only ten seats. In response to this defeat, the junta changed the rules and nullified the election results. Repression intensified. Many NLD and other elected pro-democracy representatives were arrested, some of whom died in prison, while others fled into exile. Throughout 1999 and 2000, the junta widened its campaign of intimidation against grassroots organizers of the NLD, as well as its leadership. After six years of house arrest, during which she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, Suu Kyi was released in July 1995. In October of 2000, she was again placed under house arrest after repeatedly being blocked from visiting NLD supporters outside Rangoon. The junta released Suu Kyi from house arrest on 6 May 2002 -- a move credited to the SPDC-Suu Kyi dialogue catalyzed by UN Special Envoy to Burma Tan Sri Razali Ismail, a Malaysian diplomat. Though some regional observers hailed this as a sign that the junta was prepared to move towards democratic transition, after nearly five months, the talks remain stalled. While political prisoners are sporadically released - usually preceding diplomatic visits from powerful nations - it is estimated that more than 1,500 prisoners of conscience still languish in Burma's prisons. Democratic norms such as freedom of religion and expression also remain non-existent, and even fax machines or an internet connection are considered illegal.

CAMBODIA

The 1991 Paris Peace Accords ended more than twenty years of civil war in Cambodia and laid the foundation for free and fair elections under the oversight of the United Nations in 1993. A coalition government was formed, albeit with some difficulty, between Hun Sen, of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), and his fierce rival, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, of the royalist party Cooperative Cambodia, better known as FUNCINPEC. Though the following years were filled with disputes and impasses between the coalition partners, overall peace was restored to the country and democratization proceeded.

However, by 1997 it had become clear that the top two political leaders were not content to continue sharing power, and as tensions mounted, intense political maneuvering was mounting. This struggle for power culminated in what effectively turned out to be a coup led by Hun Sen. On 5-6 July 1997, Hun Sen ordered his troops to remove his political rival by force. The royalist army was subsequently defeated, and Prince Ranariddh, along with several other FUNCINPEC and other opposition party leaders, fled the country, while a number of those who remained in Cambodia were either arrested or executed. In an effort to prevent Ranariddh from returning to power, Hun Sen sought to prosecute him for treason for having conducted secret negotiations with the Khmer Rouge, and warned him that he would be arrested if he tried to return to Cambodia.

Despite what was effectively the ousting of a democratically-elected leader, the CPP reiterated that it was committed to free and fair elections, and strongly supported two new laws regarding the formation of political parties and the governing of elections. The National Assembly passed these laws in December 1997, and soon afterwards the government announced that parliamentary elections would be held in July 1998.

The period leading up to the July elections was marked by political turmoil. Opposition party leaders began returning to Phnom Penh early in the year to prepare for the elections. There they faced numerous challenges, including the destruction of almost all provincial party offices and organizations, election supervisory organizations made up primarily of CPP supporters, and the virtual denial of access to the media (particularly the radio, which was largely controlled by Hun Sen) until thirty days before the election. Throughout the six months leading up to the



election there was widespread intimidation of voters. Yet even as election-related violence increased, the government failed to intervene. Though frustrated by the 1997 coup, and by the malfeasance that characterized the pre-election period, the international community viewed the July elections as an opportunity to recommit the country and its political leaders to reconciliation and the strengthening of democracy. Therefore, extensive foreign resources were provided for a wide range of activities, including voter education, national and international monitoring efforts, and various forms of election-related technical support.

The elections appeared to take place without any serious incidents. Cambodians and the international community alike described the elections as professional and transparent, and the Joint International Observer Group, which was coordinated by the United Nations, declared that they were a genuine expression of the people's choice. However, controversies began to emerge with the collecting and counting of ballots, and suspicions of electoral fraud led opposition parties to file complaints with the National Elections Commission (NEC). When the NEC and the Constitutional Council failed to review these complaints in accordance with dispute procedures, opposition parties called for Hun Sen's resignation and declared that they would work with the CPP only if he was replaced as leader. Widespread demonstrations broke out, led by students, Buddhist monks, and opposition activists, and ended with a violent, government-supported crackdown, during which dozens of demonstrators were killed.

The post-election political stalemate was finally resolved in November 1998, when King Sihanouk and the international community intervened to broker a political compromise. A coalition government was formed between CPP and FUNCINPEC that placed Hun Sen in charge of the government as prime minister, and named Prince Ranariddh chairman of the National Assembly.

ECUADOR

In January 2000, massive demonstrations by indigenous groups filled the streets of Ecuador's capital city, Quito. The demonstrators were protesting President Jamil Mahuad's decision to adopt the U.S. dollar, instead of the sucre, as Ecuador's official currency. However, this was just one of a series of macroeconomic decisions that had sparked protests during Mahuad's presidency.

Mahuad was sworn in as president in August 1998, one year after the previous democratically-elected president, Abdalá Bucaram, had been forced out of office by the Congress. Early in his administration, under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Mahuad adopted a strict liberal approach to economic policy and devaluated the sucre, liberalized oil prices, eliminated subsidies to electricity consumption and introduced several austerity measures that directly impacted the life of the average person. Mahuad's popularity kept falling, and in March 1999 the country was paralyzed by a general strike. On 5 July of that same year, more protests erupted and another general strike paralyzed the country, just as Mahuad was negotiating an \$800 million loan from the IMF. The crisis continued for nearly two weeks, when Mahuad agreed to postpone an increase to the price of gasoline.

Social unrest had been a constant of Mahuad's administration, and finally in January 2000, he faced the definitive test of his administration. On 9 January he announced the decision to adopt the dollar as the official currency of Ecuador. Protests erupted in Guayaquil, Quito and in other cities throughout the country. A state of emergency was declared once again. On 12 January the self-denominated "Parliament of the Peoples of Ecuador" called for civil disobedience and for the taking of the executive power.

Mahuad resisted the attempted ouster, but on 21 January indigenous organizations together with army officers took over the Congress. A junta was formed under the leadership of Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez Borbúa, the indigenous leader Antonio Vargas Huatatoaca and Carlos Solórzano Constantine, the former president of the Supreme Court. That evening, Mahuad fled the presidential palace and sought refuge at an air force base. The junta was short-lived and dissolved under pressure from the international community, including threats by the United States to cut foreign aid and discourage investment. The Organization of American States, with the exception of Venezuela, gave full backing to Mahuad as the constitutionally-elected president.

On 22 January, Vice President Gustavo Noboa, who had run against Mahuad in the 1998 elections and who was supposedly Bucaram's protégé, was sworn in as president after Congress determined that Mahuad had abandoned his position. Ironically, Noboa upheld Mahuad's decision to dollarize the Ecuadorian economy and is, at present,



still the president of Ecuador. Mahuad finally went into exile on February 26.

FIJI

On May 19 2000 George Speight, a failed businessman and Fijian supremacist, stormed the Parliament building in Suva, together with his armed men, and took Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry and most of his government hostage. This coup attempt was a result of the ethnic tension that had dominated the political culture of the country.

Fiji was under British control between 1874, when the culturally and politically important Fijian Great Council of Chiefs ceded their sovereignty to the Crown, and 1970, when the country became independent. In the 1880s the British administration started large-scale cultivation of sugarcane, and brought Indians to Fiji to work on the sugar plantations. This immigrant population became a significant part of the Fijian population, making up 44% of the country's population of approximately 830,000. The indigenous Fijians adamantly resented the Indian influence in the country.

A constitution passed in 1997 provided equal access to political participation by all Fijians, regardless of their ethnic background. In 1999, Mahendra Chaudry, an ethnic Indian and the leader of the Indo-Fijian *Fijian Labour Party*, was elected Prime Minister of the country. He formed a cabinet composed mostly of ethnic Indians. On 19 May 2000 – the first anniversary of the election – Speight staged his coup and took Chaudry and most of his cabinet hostage for 56 days. Speight's main goal was to get rid of Fiji's multiracial constitution and to replace it with one that would permit only indigenous Fijians to hold the posts of prime minister and president. The crisis created by the coup was further complicated when, on 29 May, military commander Commodore Frank Bainimarama deposed President Ratu Mara, apparently to lend support to Speight. The Great Council of Chiefs became an important center of political power during this period of political confusion, and the plotters of the coup negotiated with the Council to normalize the political climate in the country. While Speight continued to hold the hostages, his supporters destroyed villages and businesses that belonged to ethnic Indians. On 13 July, Speight released the remaining hostages in return for an amnesty agreement and influence in the new government. However, two weeks later, he was arrested on grounds of violating the amnesty agreement by not

surrendering his arms and charged with treason. At a highly political court hearing, Speight pleaded guilty to treason and was sentenced to death. Later the same day, the President of Fiji reduced Speight's sentence to life imprisonment.

When the hostage crisis ended, the deposed Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudry, and his democratically-elected government were not restored to power. Instead, the military and the Great Council of Chiefs appointed an interim government dominated by ethnic Fijians. Elections were held in August – September 2001, and Laisenia Quarase's *Fijian United Party* narrowly defeated Chaudry's party. Quarase became Prime Minister, leading a cabinet that consists entirely of ethnic Fijians.

The strongest reactions to the coup attempt in Fiji came from Australia and, to a lesser extent, from New Zealand. Australia condemned the coup and recalled its High Commissioner. It also terminated most non-humanitarian aid and imposed bilateral sanctions and travel bans on coup participants. Fiji was suspended from the British Commonwealth, and the UN Human Rights Commission and the UN General Assembly passed resolutions condemning the coup. The European Union postponed the signing of the Suva Convention, due to be held in the Fijian capital, which would have continued preferential prices for Fijian sugar exports. The United States temporarily closed its embassy and issued a travel warning, which crippled the island's heavily tourism-based economy. The United Kingdom recalled its High Commissioner, and suspended, along with the U.S., all naval visits and joint military exercises. In addition to the condemnation and sanctions, Australia was directly involved in diplomatic efforts to return constitutional rule and democracy to Fiji. The 2001 elections were financed by Australia and New Zealand, and were monitored by members from the Commonwealth, the United Nations and the European Union.

HAITI

After living under dictatorial regimes during most of its independent life, the government of Haiti, in response to international pressure, held its first presidential elections in 1990. Haiti's first democratically-elected president was Jean Bertrand Aristide, a left-wing Catholic priest who had achieved great popularity opposing the Duvalier regime and the subsequent military dictatorships.



Aristide won by a landslide obtaining 67.5 percent of the votes. However, even before his inauguration on 7 January 1991, the elite and the military establishment were conspiring to overthrow him. Aristide was finally ousted on 30 September 1991, and Haiti came under the control of a military junta composed of Generals Raoul Cédras, Philippe Biamby and Colonel Michel François.

Aristide was forced into exile, first in Venezuela and then in the United States. Both the United States and the United Nations imposed trade and oil embargoes. In July 1993, an agreement was reached that would have allowed Aristide to return to Haiti as the Constitutional president, but at the last minute the military junta backed down on its commitments. These events led ultimately to a total embargo in May 1994 and in July of that same year, the United Nations Security Council authorized military intervention to restore democratic order. A contingent of 20,000 troops, mostly American, entered the country on 19 September. Aristide returned triumphant to Haiti on 15 October 1994 and the members of the military junta fled to Panama.

The next round of elections took place in 1995. Under some pressure from the United States, Aristide resisted the temptation to “discount” the years he had spent in exile, and did not run for president again. Nevertheless, Aristide’s political party, Fanmi Lavalas, obtained a clear victory in the legislative elections in June and July of 1995. The Lavalas presidential candidate, René Preval, won the December election by an astonishing 87.9 percent (though the turnout was less than one third of eligible voters). However, by 1997, Aristide and Preval no longer saw eye to eye. In June 1997, the Prime Minister, Rony Smarth, resigned amidst intense criticism of Preval’s economic reform plans, and due to internal strife. Parliament did not approve a substitute for the position. In January 1999, President Preval decided not to extend the mandate of parliament, thus leaving Haiti without a functioning body for more than a year.

Senatorial elections carried out on 21 May 2000 were widely contested within Haiti and criticized by the international community. The elections resulted in a landslide victory for senators from the Lavalas party; however, the process was considered to be flawed. León Manus, the president of the Provisional Electoral Council, contested the results and ultimately fled the country in the face of death threats for failing to certify the results. The OAS withdrew its electoral observation mission from

the second round of elections, arguing that the first round was “fundamentally flawed.”

The irregularities were not limited to the day of the election. The campaign period was plagued with violent incidents. The OAS recorded some seventy violent incidents between January and May. Electoral candidates were assassinated, as was Jean Dominique, a prominent radio journalist and defender of human rights and the rule of law. In early April, the headquarters of the opposition coalition, Space for Dialogue (*Espace de Concertacion*) was burned down. Much of the violence was attributed to Lavalas militants with collusion on the part of the police.

Finally, on 26 November, Haiti held presidential elections in which Jean-Bertrand Aristide was declared the winner, obtaining a significant 60 to 70 percent of the vote. Aristide was practically unopposed, however, as the opposition boycotted the electoral process. Once again these elections were considered flawed, and the OAS denounced irregularities in the counting of the vote. Nonetheless, Aristide was inaugurated in February 2001. The opposition coalition Democratic Convergence, meanwhile, conducted the inauguration of an alternate provisional president, human rights activist Gérard Gourge and called for new legislative elections. The negotiations between democratic Convergence and the Fanmi Lavalas party to resolve Haiti’s political crisis have been slow and complicated.

CÔTE D’IVOIRE

Côte d’Ivoire’s reputation as one of the most politically stable countries in Africa was shaken by the military coup of 1999. After independence from France in 1960, Côte d’Ivoire was governed by the one-party rule of *Parti Democratique de la Côte d’Ivoire* (PDCI) under the leadership of Félix Houphouët-Boigny. Upon his death in 1993, the then-speaker of the National Assembly, Henri Konan Bédié, took over.

During the early 1990s, opposition was legalized in the country, and there was mounting criticism of the government. In the face of a strong challenge from the opposition, Bédié adopted a policy of promoting the notion of “Ivorité” or “Ivorianness.” This policy ran counter to the principles of Félix Houphouët-Boigny who had tried to include different segments of the society in the government.” Bédié’s policy was an attempt to isolate and eliminate his most powerful opponent,



Alassane Ouattara, who drew most of his support from the Muslim northern regions of the country. Ouattara had been prime minister during the rule of Houphouët-Boigny, and during the 1990s he started bidding for the presidency of the country as the leader of the *Rassemblement des Républicains* (RDR). Claiming that Ouattara was not a native Ivorian, but was instead from the neighboring Burkina Faso, Bédié managed to prevent him from participating in the 1995 elections, where Bédié was elected as the president of Côte d'Ivoire.

Bédié's rule was plagued by allegations of corruption and bad governance, as a result of which the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the European Union suspended economic aid in 1998. Widespread corruption, economic problems and low pay created dissatisfaction in the army. On 24 December 1999, the military overthrew Bédié in a bloodless coup under the command of his chief-of-staff, General Robert Guei. General Guei immediately suspended the constitution and dissolved the National Assembly. He formed a broad-based junta called *Comite National de Salut Public* (CNPS) in which he included members of the opposition parties, such as the RDR and Laurent Gbagbo's *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI), and pledged to eliminate corruption and to write a new constitution.

The coup seems to have been generally welcomed by the Ivorians, who wanted to get rid of the corrupt and authoritarian government. The strongest reaction came from African states and the OAU, which called on General Guei to return the country to constitutional rule and barred him from the 2000 Lome Summit. South Africa and Nigeria strongly condemned the coup as an "illegal and unacceptable takeover of government," and called for the restoration of President Bédié. Outside of Africa, the international community was also quick to condemn General Guei's takeover. The Organization of the Francophonie called for the prompt restoration of democratic rule in Côte d'Ivoire. The president of the UN General Assembly called for the speedy restoration of the legitimate government. The European Union, United States, Britain and Canada also condemned the coup, but their action was limited since economic aid to Côte d'Ivoire previously had been suspended.

The interruption of democracy by the coup ultimately led to other problems. Although General Guei had promised to return the country to civilian rule, it soon became evident that he had his own

political ambitions. Adopting Bédié's xenophobic theme, General Guei sought to promote ethnic and religious differences in order to eliminate political rivals. He introduced a new constitution, approved by 86% of the electorate in a referendum, under which any Ivorian who wished to contest a presidential election had to be of parents born in Côte d'Ivoire – a requirement clearly designed to exclude Ouattara. In October 2000, in a controversial decision, the Supreme Court disqualified fourteen of nineteen presidential candidates from running. In the presidential elections held that same month, General Guei, upon learning of early results that showed Gbagbo to be leading the poll, dissolved the National Electoral Commission and proclaimed himself the winner. In the face of violent protests that followed this development, Guei fled the country, and Gbagbo declared himself president of Côte d'Ivoire.

The RDR then demanded fresh elections, claiming that Ouattara and other candidates had been arbitrarily barred from running, but Gbagbo did not respond. Violent and bloody clashes followed, and were characterized by religious and ethnic tensions as security forces and Gbagbo supporters clashed with Muslim northerners. In the meantime, Gbagbo maintained the law on citizenship, and the Supreme Court barred Ouattara from standing at the parliamentary elections.

The country was once again shaken by protests and clashes, and the RDR boycotted the elections (The RDR participated in the national municipal elections in February 2001, where they won the majority of council seats.) The following period was marked by constant unrest, particularly within the army, which carried out a failed coup attempt in January 2001. In June 2002, the Justice Court of Abidjan issued Ouattara a nationality certificate, which many hope will diffuse the tension between Ouattara's activists and Gbagbo's followers.

The international community was critical of the irregularities in the October 2000 presidential elections, which were accompanied by brutal killings. The OAU, the United States, South Africa, and the United Nations called for new elections after Guei fled the country, but Gbagbo maintained his position as the president. France's reaction to the coup and the electoral irregularities was ambiguous due to France's significant economic interests in, and historical closeness to, Côte d'Ivoire. France did cut off some French aid to Côte d'Ivoire in response to the coup (mainly the assistance of technical advisors



attached to the ministries and to the senior military command), but it otherwise maintained bilateral relations. France tried to tone down the level of EU reaction, and gave full support to the resumption of ties between the European Union and Côte d'Ivoire.

Although Ouattara has been granted an Ivorian nationality certificate, this does not automatically make him eligible for presidential candidacy. The constitution holds that such a candidate should never have held any other citizenship but Ivorian. Since Ouattara once held a Burkina Faso passport, his candidacy in the 2005 presidential elections may be problematic, and could in turn cause further ethnic clashes.

NIGERIA

In June 1993, General Babangida unilaterally annulled the results of the presidential election that would have transferred power from his military regime to a civilian administration led by Mashood Abiola. In response, the United States and the United Kingdom scaled back diplomatic and military contact with the regime, curtailed aid, and imposed travel sanctions. Both states also withdrew support for Nigeria's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

In September, amidst labor strikes and protests by democracy activists, Babangida ceded power to an interim administration, appointing Chief Ernest Shonekan president, and naming the leader of the 1985 coup, General Sani Abacha, vice-president. Although Shonekan pledged to hold elections the following spring, he was widely viewed as a puppet of the military leadership and the public outcry continued. Turmoil increased throughout the fall. Violent clashes between protestors and the army resulted in over 100 civilian deaths and ultimately led to Shonekan's November resignation. Abacha assumed control, abolishing political parties and replacing elected governors with military appointees. He also jailed notable political dissidents, including Abiola and a former general turned democracy advocate named Olusegun Obasanjo.

In November 1995, Abacha executed nine members of an opposition group, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, including the well-known playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa. The executions were carried out despite pleas by the Commonwealth Heads of State to pardon the men, and elicited widespread international outrage. The Commonwealth subsequently suspended Nigeria's membership, and threatened expulsion and the

imposition of greater sanctions if democracy was not restored. The EU withdrew diplomatic envoys, imposed travel and visa restrictions, suspended development assistance, and considered an arms embargo. Calls by the U.K. for harsher sanctions, however, met resistance from France, which also issued travel visas in violation of EU policy. The U.S. responded to the executions by withdrawing its ambassador. It also sought to freeze the financial assets of regime leaders, but later abandoned the initiative due to limited international support. Due to Nigeria's role in resolving the conflict in Liberia, the OAU and ECOWAS were conspicuously absent from these international efforts to confront the Abacha regime and did not bow to pressures to exclude Nigeria from their programs of political and military coordination.

Abacha announced elections for August of 1998. However, his coercion of the two government-approved political parties cast doubt on the legitimacy of the elections even before they were held. In any event, Abacha suddenly died in June 1998, and his successor General Abdulsalami Abubakar postponed the elections until early 1999. Abubakar used this time to negotiate inclusive election guidelines, resolving that each party would nominate a civilian candidate from the underrepresented southern regions. Abubakar also was planning to release Abiola when the latter unexpectedly died in July 1998 while still in prison. Obasanjo, on the other hand, was successfully released in June of 1998.

Obasanjo won the 1999 elections, ending nearly 16 years of military rule and realizing a successful transition from military to civilian power. Although Obasanjo's opponent contested the election results and independent observers noted widespread irregularities with the vote, flaws were not found to be systematic and Obasanjo's victory was generally agreed to represent the will of the people.

PAKISTAN

The political instability that has dominated much of Pakistan's recent history resulted in yet another interruption of democracy, when Chief of Army Staff Pervez Musharraf orchestrated a coup d'état on October 12, 1999. After its independence in 1947, Pakistan was principally governed by military regimes, and the last transition to democracy prior to this coup had taken place in 1988 after the death of General Zia-ul-Haq. In 1989, Benazir Bhutto was elected prime minister, leading a



coalition of her Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Mohajir National Movement (MQM). During the next decade, ethnic clashes, poverty, and tension with India marked Pakistan's troubled journey towards a democratic state.

Only a year after coming to power, Bhutto was dismissed by then President Ishaq Khan on grounds of corruption. Nawaz Sharif, the leader of the Islamic Democratic Alliance (IDA), was elected the prime minister. Sharif's efforts to introduce reforms were met with resistance and his attempt to limit the power of the executive resulted in a confrontation with the president, as a result of which both resigned. After the elections of 1993, Benazir Bhutto returned as the prime minister. In this period, violence among militant political, ethnic and religious groups escalated. Bhutto's government was again dismissed by the president on charges of corruption and mismanagement. The elections of 1997 brought back Nawaz Sharif, who sought to introduce market-oriented economic reforms and limits on the power of the executive. However, Sharif's rule proved to be autocratic, with frequent accounts of threats to the press, detention of liberal journalists and harassment of local NGOs.

Sharif, as a part of his efforts to subjugate different institutions to his rule, attempted to replace the Chief of Army Staff, Pervez Musharraf. While Musharraf was on a foreign visit, Sharif announced his dismissal and replacement by Lt. Gen. Ziauddin Butt. Sharif's attempt to remove Musharraf in this fashion created a tension between the civilian and military spheres in Pakistan. Military commanders loyal to Musharraf took control of the state run TV and radio stations and surrounded the Prime Minister's residence, eventually arresting him. Upon his return to the country, Musharraf announced his coup.

While Musharraf allowed the president to remain in office, he appointed himself to the newly created position of the chief executive, whose recommendations to the president were binding. Musharraf suspended the 1973 constitution and dismissed the federal and provincial governments. He convened an advisory National Security Council that included both military and civilian members. Musharraf declared the coup, which was welcomed throughout the country, to be "another path to democracy."

In a ruling of 12th May 2000, the Supreme Court of Pakistan accepted the constitutional deviation had taken place in pursuit of noble

objectives, which included economic reforms and control over corrupt politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen. The Court held that there was no other way to remove a corrupt government except through the intervention of the armed forces, and directed Musharraf to hold general elections by the end of 2002. Following this decision, and in the face of international pressure, Musharraf declared 1 October 2002 as the date for provincial and federal elections. In the meantime, on 20th June 2001, Musharraf declared himself president, and confirmed his position with the referendum of April 2002, whereby he extended his term for another five years. According to official sources, there was a turnout of 70% for this referendum, of whom 97.7% voted "yes" for Musharraf. Others, however, strongly criticized the referendum, alleging widespread fraud and abuse and a significantly lower turnout than what was declared.

The strongest reaction to Musharraf's coup came from the European Union and the Commonwealth. The European Union's cooperation pact with Pakistan was shelved, and Pakistan was expelled from the Commonwealth. The U.S. response was cautious, but Washington pressed for the restoration of civilian democratic rule. The IMF also reacted by cutting off funding. Although there was widespread condemnation of the coup, the strength of reactions varied, and the international community, particularly the U.S., seemed reluctant to go back to the Sharif regime, and hoped that Musharraf's coup might give way to democracy in Pakistan. The western reaction to Musharraf's rule assumed a different tone after 11 September 2001, in face of the need for Pakistani support for the campaign in Afghanistan. It was in this context that Musharraf was able to consolidate his power in Pakistan, and it seems that he will be able to postpone a full return to democracy for as long as the present international political conditions prevail.

PARAGUAY

In February 1989, after a 32 year military dictatorship, General Alfredo Stroessner was ousted in a coup organized by General Andrés Rodríguez, who subsequently became president in May 1989, representing the Colorado Party (Paraguay's hegemonic party). The first free municipal and parliamentary elections took place in 1991, and presidential elections were held in May 1993. Juan Carlos Wasmosy, a successful businessman with close ties to Rodríguez, represented the Colorado



Party and won with 40.9 percent of the vote.

The Colorado party and the armed forces had been closely linked since the Stroessner era. Thus, Wasmosy's attempt to depoliticize the army precipitated a crisis in 1996. Paraguay's Army General Lino Oviedo refused to give up his command after being asked to resign by President Wasmosy because of violating a constitutional ban on military participation in politics. His actions sparked a tense confrontation between the military and the government, and gave cause for great concern among a number of Paraguay's neighbors, particularly those with whom they had close trade relations. Strong international pressure (including threats of trade sanctions and severance of diplomatic relations), coupled with intense domestic opposition to any attempts by Wasmosy to negotiate with Oviedo, effectively prevented what would have been South America's first successful military take-over in two decades. Wasmosy remained in power with the support of his own loyal troops and the police, as well as of the Organization of American States and the American, Argentine and Brazilian embassies. Wasmosy promised Oviedo that if he resigned his position, he would be named Minister of Defense -- but he did not keep his word. Instead, in December 1997, just as he was aiming for the candidacy of the Colorado party for the 1998 elections, Oviedo was tried by a special military tribunal for sedition and mutiny and was sentenced to ten years in prison.

Raúl Cubas, an Oviedo protégé, stood in his place as presidential candidate for the Colorado Party in the 1998 elections. Cubas won the run-off with 54 percent of the vote and took office in August 1998. Almost immediately he decreed the release of Oviedo, prompting a split in the Colorado Party in which Vice President Luis Argaña sided against the Cubas-Oviedo faction. Argaña was assassinated in March 1999, and shortly thereafter, Cubas resigned in the face of a possible impeachment and fled to Brazil. Oviedo sought refuge in Argentina. At present, Luis Gonzalez Macchi, senate leader at the time of Argaña's assassination, is still the president of the country.

PERU

On 5 April 1992, Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, with the support of the army, orchestrated an *autogolpe*, or self-coup, by dissolving the National Congress, suspending the Constitution, and placing the country under a state of emergency.

Fujimori argued that he was forced to take this measure in response to the economic, social and political chaos that had engulfed Peru when he had taken office in 1990. Terrorist activities of guerrilla groups such as Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) and Tupac Amaru had threatened the Peruvians for years, and had led to emergency measures that included severe restrictions of civil liberties. During this period human rights violations were committed both by the government and by terrorist movements. In the economic arena, inflation soared to 1,700 percent in 1988; 2,800 percent in 1989; and an estimated 8,200 percent in 1990. This soaring inflation was accompanied by recession and increased foreign debt.

Fujimori's *autogolpe* prompted condemnations from the Organization of American States and threats of economic sanctions from the United States. Fujimori was quick to present a plan for reestablishing democratic rule aimed at quelling international concerns and by 1993, his plan had led to a normalization of foreign relations. This "return to democracy" was, however, limited principally to formal electoral mechanisms. Repressive authoritarian practices were still being carried out by the National Intelligence Service (SIN), which was headed by Vladimiro Montesinos. The judiciary also suffered from increasing control by the executive power. Judges and prosecutors were given a "provisional" status, instead of being confirmed, which gave the president increased control over political cases. Fujimori also dismantled the Constitutional Tribunal (the equivalent of a Supreme Court), which could have provided a check on the decisions of a mostly pro-Fujimori Congress. The new Constitution allowed the president to hold two five-year terms, and Fujimori thus ran in the 1995 general elections, winning a comfortable 64.4 percent of the vote.

Although the Constitution limited the president to two terms, in December 1999 Fujimori expressed his interest in running for a third term in the 2000 elections. He countered claims that this was unconstitutional with the argument that he had served only one term since the new Constitution had been in effect. Fujimori's rival was Alejandro Toledo, head of the Peru Posible movement. Toledo, of indigenous origins, capitalized on widespread discontent with Fujimori's excessive repression of the opposition and continuous human rights violations, as well as with Peru's continued economic decline.



Fujimori's re-election campaign was marked by scandals and irregularities. Constant harassment of journalists took the form of false criminal accusations against prestigious newspapers such as *El Comercio* – which had documented irregularities – and even physical attacks against journalists in the provinces who voiced opposition opinions. The Peruvian ombudsman and the non-governmental group Transparencia monitored the campaign, and reported distortions in news coverage, disruption and violent repression of opposition rallies, the inability of opposition candidates to obtain access to open television channels, and the misuse of state resources for supporting Fujimori's campaign.

On 9 April 2000, the first round of elections took place and, after an inexplicable delay in presenting the results, Fujimori was declared to have obtained 49.8 percent of the vote. During the delay, the computing centers remained closed, preventing international observers from validating the process. Because of blatant irregularities, and in the face of firm international pressure, the electoral authorities agreed to carry out some reforms for the second round of elections, which was to begin on 28 May. The international community and Toledo, the opposition candidate, found this date unacceptable, as it did not provide sufficient time to carry out the reforms needed to ensure legitimate elections. However, the electoral authorities would not postpone the elections, and Toledo withdrew from the race leaving Fujimori as the only candidate.

On 28 May, the unopposed Fujimori was declared winner. However, his presidency started to fall apart just a few months later. In September 2000, a video was released to the public showing Fujimori's top advisor and intelligence chief, Montesinos, bribing an opposition congressman. Fujimori tried to distance himself from Montesinos, but finally called for new elections in April 2001 and announced that he would not run. In mid-November 2000, Fujimori resigned the presidency and fled to Japan. One of the most important reactions to the 2000 elections came from the Organization of American States. The chief of the electoral observation mission to Peru stated that the "election process did not assure a fair and equitable contest and they were plagued with repeated inadequacies, irregularities, inconsistencies, and inequities." After the April elections, the OAS tried -- unsuccessfully -- to push for a second round of voting and the elimination of some of the reported irregularities. When Peruvian electoral authorities refused to

postpone the elections, the OAS, along with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Carter Center, and the European Union, withdrew their observers.

VENEZUELA

On April 11, 2002, the elected president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, was overthrown in a military coup d'état. Chavez's control of all key governing institutions, his controversial policies on the management of the state oil monopoly, land reform measures, and his aggressive leadership style had led to strong opposition from important sectors of the business elite, the middle class, labor and the private media. Opposition to Chavez was further provoked by his decision to appoint a new board of directors to the state oil monopoly, *Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA)*. On 9 April 2002 the opposition, mainly composed of the employers organization (*Fedecamaras*), the Venezuelan Confederation of Workers, the Church, the middle classes and elements of the private media, called for a general strike to support the PDVSA dissidents. and started a campaign against Chavez. On 11 April, approximately 150,000 people rallied in support of the striking oil workers. Anti-Chavez demonstrators marched to the presidential palace and exchanged gunfire with Chavez supporters, as a result of which people on both sides were killed. Members of the military then arrested Chavez, on the grounds that Chavez had ordered the military to open fire on an unarmed demonstration. The leaders of the coup circulated the rumor that Chavez had resigned, when in fact he had not, and declared Pedro Carmona, business leader and one of the strike organizers, as the president of the country. Hugo Chavez was imprisoned.

Carmona immediately dissolved the national assembly, all the constituent bodies and the Supreme Court, and dismissed the governors and democratically-elected mayors. He then declared the 1999 Constitution null and void, though it had been approved overwhelmingly by 90% of the Venezuelan public. Carmona also nullified 49 laws that Chavez had passed to increase state control in many sectors, and he announced a conservative government. The United States welcomed the change, claiming that Chavez had resigned in response to the will of the people and that there had not been a coup d'état. The IMF also declared that it would assist the Carmona government. Despite the fact that the U.S. deplored Chavez, U.S. officials denied having had



any part in overthrowing the Venezuelan president.

Meanwhile, the governments of Mexico, Argentina, Peru, Paraguay and Cuba refused to recognize the Carmona government, and the Organization of American States issued a statement condemning the coup. Thus when Chavez's wife announced that her husband had not resigned, pro-Chavez groups, encouraged by the reaction of the international community launched large-scale demonstrations. On 13th April, hundreds of thousands of people occupied roads and squares throughout the country. They also occupied a major television station and surrounded the presidential palace. Middle-ranking members of the military still loyal to Chavez, influenced both by the fresh demonstrations and the international response, mobilized to reverse the coup and Carmona was forced to resign. Chavez was flown back to Caracas, and on 14 April 2002 he triumphantly returned to office as president. The tension between the Chavez government and the opposition still continues, as do the international efforts to mediate between the two opposing political camps.

YUGOSLAVIA

On 24 September 2000, Yugoslavia held presidential and parliamentary elections. President Slobodan Milosevic ran against opposition leader Vojislav Kostunica, who had widespread popular support. The international community predicted the sound defeat of Milosevic in these elections. After years of authoritarian-style rule and human rights abuses, Milosevic lacked support both at home and abroad. In fact, while the electoral process unfolded, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia for war crimes was indicting Milosevic.

In the days following the elections and prior to an official result, thousands of people took to the streets celebrating the end of Milosevic. European leaders from countries such as Britain, France and Italy also believed Kostunica would be the new president of Yugoslavia. However, the Electoral Commission announced that neither candidate had achieved an absolute majority and declared that a second round of elections would be necessary. This announcement was vigorously opposed both in Yugoslavia and throughout the international community. Montenegro, an area seeking independence, had called for a boycott of the elections and claimed that there had only been a turnout of 20 to 25 percent of voters. Milosevic claimed he had received 140,000 votes in Kosovo,

when it was documented that no more than 45,000 voters came to the polling stations.

The irregularities sparked protests and civil disobedience campaigns. Three days after the elections, a quarter of a million people demonstrated in Belgrade demanding that Milosevic step down. In spite of this, on 28 September the Electoral Commission claimed that Milosevic and a coalition of allies had obtained an absolute majority. Once again, these results were called into question by the international community as well as inside Yugoslavia.

On 30 September, Russia joined in to the wave of international pressure and offered to serve as a mediator among the parties. In the meantime, the demonstrations against Milosevic brought the country to a halt. On 4 October, the Yugoslav Constitutional Court annulled part of the presidential election, which effectively would have allowed Milosevic to remain in power -- at least until June when new elections would take place. However, on 5 October demonstrators took over the parliament building, the state television station and even some police stations. The response from the police and army was minimal. Milosevic had to flee, and in a televised message the following day he conceded Kostunica's victory. The United States and the European Union pledged to lift sanctions on Yugoslavia once the new democratically-elected president took office.

ZIMBABWE

President Mugabe, a leader of the revolutionary movement against white-controlled Rhodesia, came to power in 1980 after the elections that followed independence. Since then, Mugabe has governed the country as the leader of the *Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front* (ZANU-PF) without serious opposition. During the 1990s, however, serious economic problems and mounting discontent, especially among the Zimbabwean youth and labor unions, led to the strengthening of the opposition *Movement for Democratic Change* (MDC). In February 2000, a referendum was held on a new constitution proposed by Mugabe, which would have further concentrated power in his hands, and provided a legal basis for the government's policy of seizing white-owned commercial lands without compensation. The MDC, led by Morgan Tsvangarai, opposed the proposal, and in a surprise result, 53% of the electorate voted to reject Mugabe's proposal.



Tensions between the ZANU-PF and MDC continued to grow in the aftermath of the parliamentary elections of June 2000, during which many observers reported that the government resorted to violence and intimidation. Nonetheless, ZANU-PF could not repeat its past electoral successes, and received only 51.7% of the votes. This result led to still further tension between the government and the opposition, which was manifested in the presidential elections of March 2002. According to the majority of the electoral observers, these elections were held under the shadow of widespread harassment, intimidation and even torture of opposition supporters. In addition, as a result of outdated electoral polls, young supporters of the MDC, as well as those living outside the country, could not vote. In addition, gross irregularities at the polling stations on the day of the elections prevented thousands more from voting. Despite reports of these gross irregularities, and allegations that the vote was rigged, Zimbabwean officials did not respond, in fact, they prevented the EU mission from monitoring the elections.

The Zimbabwean presidential elections provoked a split reaction from the international community. Many observers concluded that they were 'neither free nor fair, and the International Crisis Group stated in its report that "the strategic use of state violence and extra-legal electoral tinkering authorized by President Mugabe effectively thwarted the will of the people from being heard."

However, leaders of southern African states – particularly long time allies South Africa and Namibia - claimed that the elections had indeed been fair. In its statement on the presidential elections in Zimbabwe, the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) concluded that "the outcome of the elections is a reflection of the will of the people of Zimbabwe who turned out in large numbers to vote and elect leaders of their choice."

Britain, the European Union, and the United States, responded to the elections not merely with condemnation, but also with sanctions. The Commonwealth, already outraged by the seizure of the white-owned farmlands, reacted by suspending Zimbabwe's membership shortly after the elections. The EU and the U.S. imposed travel sanctions on Zimbabwe's ruling elite and, in addition, the EU froze the European assets of Mugabe and all Cabinet ministers, politburo secretaries and deputy ministers. As a response to the electoral malpractices during the parliamentary elections, the EU had already implemented 'smart sanctions' against Mugabe's regime, banning the sale and supply of all arms and equipment that could be used for internal repression.

The Mugabe regime dismissed the sanctions as "organized economic terrorism whose aim (...) is to unseat a legitimately elected government." Mugabe and his officials rejected calls for a new election, and continue their repressive policies against white farmers and the political opposition.