

**AFRICAN UNION**

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**Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Tel: +251-115-513 822 Fax: +251-115-519 321  
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org**

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**AU PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL  
ADDIS ABABA,  
ETHIOPIA  
31 JANUARY 2022**

**REPORT OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION  
CHAIRPERSON TO THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL  
ON ELECTIONS HELD IN AFRICA FOR THE PERIOD:  
JULY - DECEMBER 2021**

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**I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. This is the second of the bi-annual report on elections in Africa in 2021. It reviews national-level (presidential and parliamentary) elections held in eight African Union Member States between July and December 2021. The report covers key emerging trends about Africa's electoral and political governance and the assistance provided by the African Union Commission to the Member States and provides a preview of upcoming elections on the continent in the first half of 2022. The Report concludes with a summary of key observations and policy recommendations to the Peace and Security Council aimed at enhancing efforts to promote peaceful, transparent, inclusive, and credible elections and deepening democratic governance on the continent.
2. During this reporting period, eight (8) Member States held presidential and parliamentary elections. These were the Central Africa Republic (C.A.R.), the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome & Principe, the Republic of Zambia, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Kingdom of Morocco, the Republic of Cabo Verde, Republic of The Gambia and the Federal Republic of Somalia. The State of Libya was expected to hold a presidential election on 24 December 2021 but was finally postponed sine die.
3. As is customary, the AU Commission deployed election observers to all Member States which held elections in the second half of the year except two - Morocco and Ethiopia. The elections were all conducted in an orderly and technically sound manner within a generally peaceful atmosphere. It is worthy of note that opposition candidates and parties won the presidential elections in Zambia, Cabo Verde, and Sao Tome and Principe and secured most of the parliamentary seats in the Kingdom of Morocco, which enabled them to form new government in these countries.
4. The Commission, through its Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit (DEAU), also provided technical and financial support to the election management bodies (EMBs) and civil society organisations in the Federal Republic of Somalia and Republic of The Gambia. This is within the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) framework of programmatic intervention to countries undergoing political transitions and/or emerging from conflict to strengthen the capacity of key governance institutions to deliver transparent, peaceful, inclusive, and credible elections.

5. The Commission also undertook Multidimensional Needs Assessment Missions to Mali, Chad, and The Gambia. The purpose was to better understand the political context of these countries. The Missions covered the legal and institutional frameworks and capacity needs of various stakeholders to inform the scope and type of technical assistance that can be provided in the areas of elections, constitution building, transitional justice, rule of law, security sector reform, decentralisation and local governance and, more broadly, post-conflict reconstruction and development. Needs assessment missions are now to be conducted as a matter of standard practice in every country in which the Commission is requested or intended to provide substantive technical assistance.
6. Concerning the emerging trends in the continent's electoral and political governance landscape, the AU Commission observed the following key developments: (1) an adherence to the principle of regular conduct of elections by the Member States, which provides an opportunity to citizens to participate in electoral and public affairs of their countries and ensures that the will of the people serves as the basis for democratic governance. (2) overall improvement in the professional (technical) management of elections (though there is still a greater degree of mistrust of election management bodies by especially opposition leaders and civil society organisations); (3) increase in self-funding of elections by the Member States, which is helping to prevent or minimise undue outside influence; (4) varying degrees of voter turnout - high in some and moderate in others; (5) varying degrees of political tensions around elections, with a general reduction in outright election-related violence; (6) increased efforts by EMBs to make elections more inclusive through the implementation of measures that facilitate diaspora voting; (7) increase in hate speech, misinformation, and cyberbullying, amplified through various media outlets during elections; (8) resurgence of unconstitutional change of government; (9) fragile political transitions; (10) growing demands for democratic dividends; and (11) weak public service delivery and corruption; amongst others.
7. To overcome some of the challenges noted in the management of electoral processes and Africa's political governance landscape, there is an urgent need for continuous strengthening of the independence and capacity of democratic governance institutions such as election management bodies, the judiciary, civil society, and others; and continuous appeal and support to Member States to improve the quality of their elections; among others.

## II. INTRODUCTION

8. The conduct of democratic elections as enshrined in the AU policy instruments on shared values, in particular, the 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, is a requisite condition for good governance and ensuring a peaceful, secure, and politically stable African continent. It resonates well with the overall objectives of the AU as defined by several of its normative frameworks, including the 2000 Constitutive Act and Agenda 2063 - 'The Africa We Want'. The latter, particularly Aspirations numbers 3 and 4, envisages an Africa that is peaceful, secure, well-governed and where there is respect for democracy, human rights, justice, and the rule of law.
9. Given the centrality of democratic elections to Africa's political stability, good governance, peace and security, the AU Commission continues to encourage and support Member States' adherence to the shared values, principles and practices governing elections and good political governance. In that regard, during this reporting period, the Commission has undertaken the following activities: deployed observers to five (5) of the eight (8) Member States that held presidential and parliamentary elections; deployed preventive diplomacy missions to the Republics of Zambia and The Gambia to prevent election-related violence and ensure a smooth and peaceful electoral outcome; deployed a follow up mission to the Republic of Zambia to share the key findings and conclusions of the AU Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) and engage in discussion with stakeholders on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Mission's Final Report; provided technical and financial support to the election management bodies, civil society and media in The Gambia and Somalia; and undertook multidimensional needs assessment missions to Chad, Mali and The Gambia. All these activities contributed to the overall peaceful conduct and improved technical management of elections in the Member States concerned.
10. Thus, this briefing focuses attention on three (3) main issues, namely, (1) reviews the elections held in Africa between July and December 2021, and the key emerging issues from the elections, (2) analysis of the key emerging trends in Africa's political governance for 2021; and (3) previews the upcoming elections in 2022. Each of these issues is examined in detail in the subsequent sections. The brief concludes by proffering recommendations for consideration by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) to address the key emerging issues noted in this reporting period.

### **III. REVIEW OF ELECTIONS CONDUCTED BETWEEN JULY - DECEMBER 2021**

11. Presidential and parliamentary elections were held in eight (8) Member States, namely, Central Africa Republic (C.A.R.), the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome & Principe, the Federal Republic of Somalia, the Republic of Zambia, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Kingdom of Morocco, the Republic of Cabo Verde, and the Republic of The Gambia. In this section, the management and outcomes of these elections are highlighted, as well as the key findings of the AU observation missions deployed to assess their conduct.

#### **a) Central African Republic**

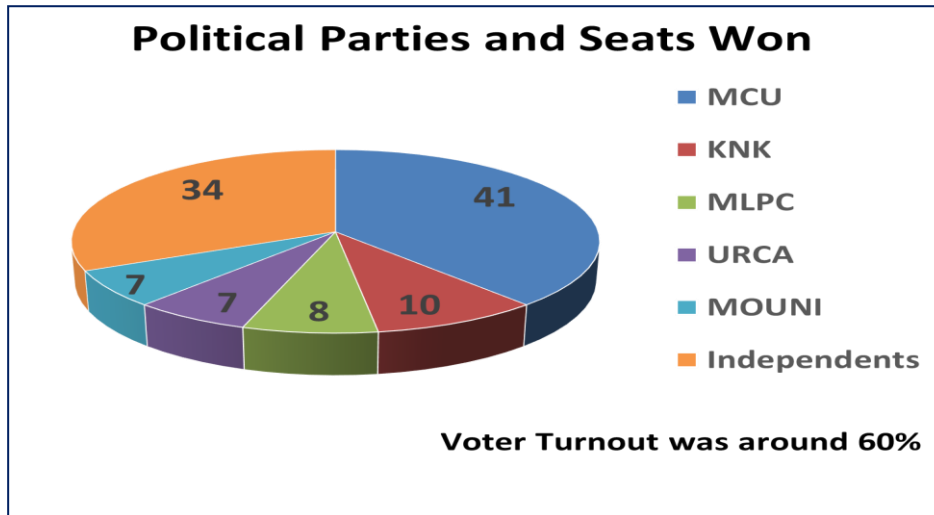
12. In the previous report, it was indicated that the electoral process in the Central African Republic (C.A.R.) was still ongoing and that a detailed report will be provided to the PSC. The present report provides an update on the conduct of the elections and overall political situation since the previous report to the PSC.

13. The authorities and people of CAR managed to conclude the residual legislative elections on 25 July 2021 after several months of sequential voting that started in December 2020. The elections held in seven (7) constituencies concluded the legislative electoral cycle, which saw all 140 seats of the National Assembly filled. The voter turnout was around 60%.

14. The AU deployed election observers two (2) times consecutively in CAR, while combining a remote monitoring approach to the process. Overall, the AU Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) noted with satisfaction that the polls had gone well technically as they complied with the national legal framework and relevant international standards governing democratic elections, particularly in the polling stations observed. The Mission also noted that the Constitutional Court, which has the authority to validate election results, has demonstrated competence in the legal argumentation of its decisions. In previous times, it has invalidated candidatures for presidential and legislative elections on a politically suspicious basis, which contributed to deepening the political crisis in the country.

15. The AUEOM noted that out of the 24 political parties and independents which contested the legislative elections, the ruling Mouvement des Coeurs Unis (MCU) party obtained a relative majority of 41 seats, followed by independents with 34 seats (many of whom were allied with the MCU), the Kwa Na Kwa (KNK) with 10 seats, the MLPC with 8 seats, and finally the URCA and MOUNI with 7 seats each. The other parties ended up with 4 to 1 MP. Following the elections, the National Assembly commenced its second ordinary session of the seventh legislature on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021.

16. Regarding political developments in the CAR, the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) on 16 September 2021, including President Touadéra, in Luanda adopted a joint road map to revitalize the peace process. The Summit notably called for the declaration of a ceasefire by the Government and reaffirmed the continued consultations with leaders of the armed groups for a total renunciation of violence. On 15 October, the unilateral declaration of ceasefire was announced by the President of CAR. But progress on the implementation of the Political Agreement remains limited.

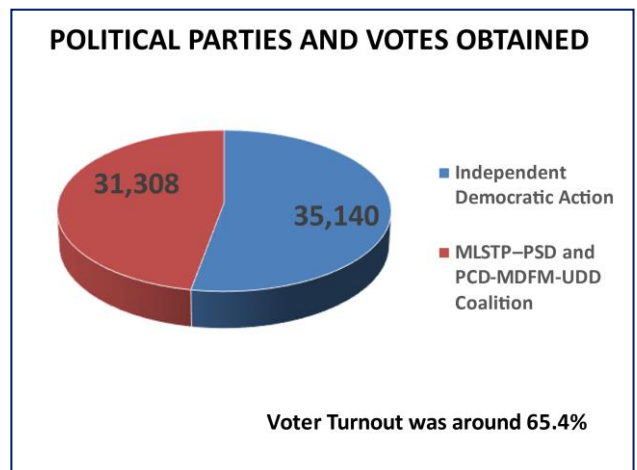
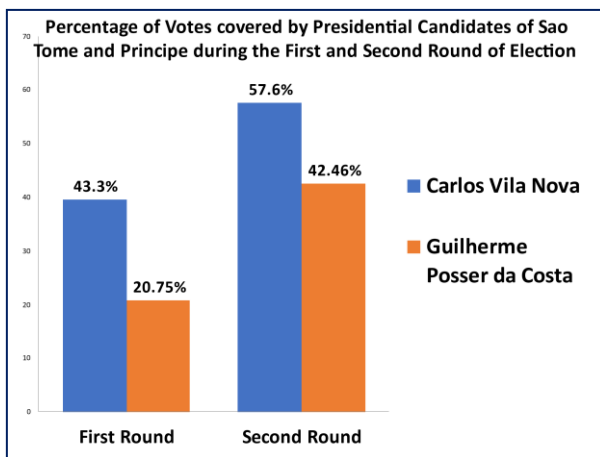


#### b) Democratic Republic of Sao Tome & Principe

17. The Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe held a first-round presidential election on 18 July 2021. There were 19 candidates in the first round of voting, but none obtained an absolute majority (i.e., 50% plus 1 vote). As no presidential candidate received a majority of the vote, a second round between the top two candidates - Carlos Vila Nova of the Independent Democratic Action (ADI) and Guilherme Posser Da Costa of the Movement for the Liberation of Sao Tome and Principe - Social Democratic Party (MLSTP-PSD), who obtained 43.3% and 20.75% of the votes, respectively - was originally scheduled on 8 August 2021. However, following an objection to the first-round results by the third-place candidate Delfim Neves, who was also the president of the National Assembly, over allegations of fraud, the second round was postponed to 29 August 2021 and later postponed again to 5 September 2021. In the end, Carlos Vila Nova emerged the winner with 57.6% or 35,140 votes cast in his favour. His opponent Guilherme Posser da Costa, of the MLSTP and the PCD-MDFM-UDD Coalition, obtained 42.4% or 31,308 votes. The turnout was 65.4%.

18. Although the challenge to the results and validity of the first round of voting was ultimately rejected, it created an unprecedented political and judicial situation in the country's electoral history as the Supreme Court of Justice was unable to resolve the dispute within the legal timeframe, which made it impossible for the National Electoral Commission to hold the second round on time, thus blocking the electoral process. The second round was made possible by the involvement of the outgoing President of the Republic, who did not run in the first round, and by a vote of the National Assembly, which set the date of the second round for 5 September 2021, while extending the term of the outgoing President to 3 September 2021.

19. The AU deployed a short-term election observation mission to both rounds of the presidential election. The Mission noted that the election was held in a peaceful and calm environment within an almost completely revised legal framework that largely meets regional and international standards for inclusive and democratic elections. For instance, the legal framework provides for diaspora voting. However, the African Union observers deplored the inadequacy of certain provisions in the electoral laws. These include the implementation of advance and absentee voting, the prohibition on civil society observing elections, even though the Constitution guarantees the full participation of citizens in public life; and the involvement of the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ) in the tabulation of results, while also acting as the judge of the dispute over those results.



### c) Republic of Zambia

20. On 12 August 2021, the Republic of Zambia held presidential, parliamentary, and local government elections, the 7th since the reintroduction of multiparty politics in 1991. Zambia has continued to enjoy an enviable track record of regularly conducting democratic elections in keeping with its national and international obligations.

21. The African Union Commission deployed a short-term African Union Election Observation Mission on 4 August 2021 to observe the Zambian elections, headed by H.E. Ernest Bai Koroma, former President of the Republic of Sierra Leone. It also deployed a preventive diplomacy mission to help prevent election-related violence and ensure a smooth and peaceful political transition. The Mission assessed the compliance of the Elections against national and international commitments and obligations of the Republic of Zambia for the conduct of democratic elections. Accordingly, it found that:

- Though there were 16 presidential candidates, the political landscape was dominated by the Patriotic Front (PF) party led by the incumbent President Mr. Edgar Lungu and the United Party for National Development (UPND) led by Mr. Hakainde Hichilema. It was the third time in a row that the two candidates contested against each other, with two previous elections in 2015 and 2016. The 2015 election was a presidential by-election that followed the death of President Michael Sata and the subsequent one was the 2016 general elections which was a fresh mandate. Both elections were won by former President Edgar Lungu by narrow margins.
- The elections took place against a backdrop of heightened political tension that can be traced back to the aftermath of the 2016 disputed elections, where post-election violence resulted in the arrest and detention of several opposition members. There were increased spates of violence and hate speech throughout the campaigns, as well as reported restrictions placed on the activities of opposition political parties by state agencies. This, and the widespread misuse of state resources in favour of the incumbent president and PF, created an unlevelled playing field during the pre-electoral period.
- The tense political situation was compounded by a shrinking economy caused by declining export earnings in the mining industry – the country’s main revenue base – and low internal revenue collection, which caused the country to default on its sovereign debt. The declining economy resulted in huge socio-economic inequalities and increased social disenchantment by citizens who have borne the brunt of the recession. These developments increased the stakes in the 2021 elections as political parties intensely competed to provide viable solutions to the economic problems facing the country.
- The legal framework provides a reasonable basis for democratic elections that protect and advance human rights. Several legal reforms undertaken before the 2021 elections extended the right to vote to prisoners and strengthened the security of the tenure of electoral



commissioners. However, concerns were raised by stakeholders over the selective application of aspects of the Public Order Act (POA) and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on Covid-19, as well as the threat posed by the Cyber Security Law on fundamental rights and freedoms.

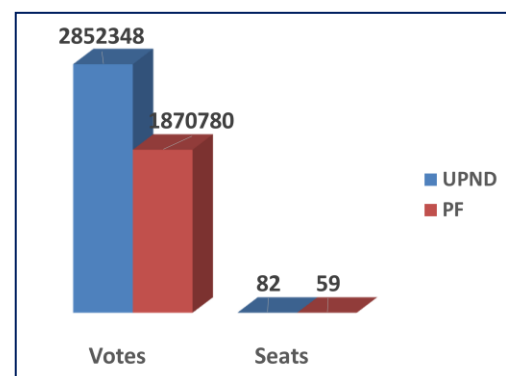
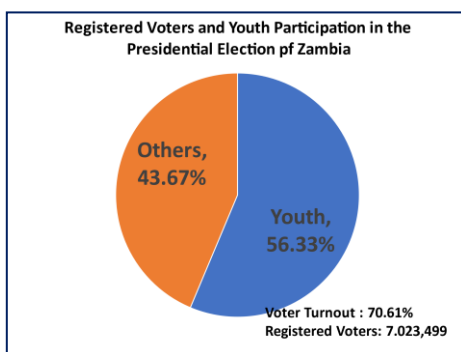
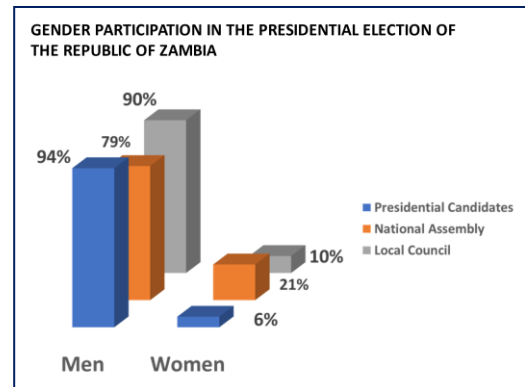
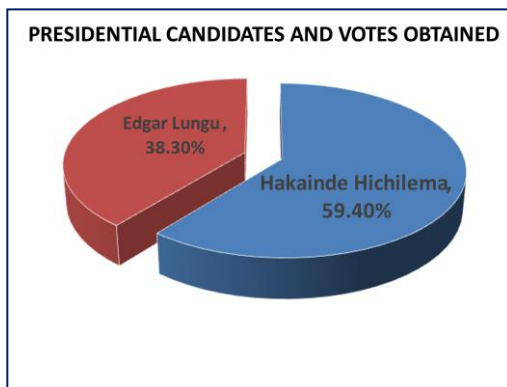
- The AUEOM noted low stakeholder confidence in the ability of the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) to conduct impartial and credible elections, partly due to inadequate consultations and communication with stakeholders in the implementation of key electoral processes. The ECZ's decision to restrict the number of domestic observer groups to five (5) monitors per organisation in a constituency was generally unpopular and also undermined trust in the process. Notwithstanding its trust deficit with some stakeholders, the ECZ conducted the 2021 general elections in a largely transparent and professional manner.
- Ahead of the Elections, the ECZ compiled a new biometric Voter Register. At the end of the registration exercise, a total of 7,023,499 voters were registered, representing 83.5% of the projected eligible persons. The AUEOM was informed that the previous Voter Register was outdated and contained an estimated 1.4 million deceased persons. While this seems justifiable, opposition parties and CSOs raised concerns over the accuracy and credibility of the new register. This was partly due to the refusal of the ECZ to allow for an independent audit of the Voter Register, and partly because the registration figures were found to be higher in the stronghold of the incumbent and lower in opposition strongholds.
- The campaigns were competitive but marred by some incidents of politically motivated violence, that sometimes compelled the ECZ to suspend or bar some candidates from campaigning, including those from the ruling Patriotic Front and the main opposition United Party for National Development parties, in line with the existent Electoral Code of Conduct for political parties. The campaign environment was dominated by both parties whose campaign activities were the most visible. The lack of regulations on campaign financing accountability was particularly disadvantageous to smaller parties with limited resources to vigorously canvass voters. Overall, the misuse of state resources and restrictions placed on the activities of opposition parties and candidates by state agencies tilted the campaign environment in favour of the incumbent President Edgar Lungu and his PF party.

- Though the Republic of Zambia has a diverse and pluralistic media profile, including an active social media landscape, which helped in the dissemination of election-related information, the media environment was polarised along political party lines. Hate speech, misinformation, and cyberbullying messages were amplified through various media channels.
- Women in the Republic of Zambia constitute more than half of the population. This was also reflected in the high number of women registered voters for the 2021 elections (about 53.4%). The Mission noted that despite being in the majority as registered voters and the fact that Zambia's legal framework allows for political and social inclusion of women, political parties nominated few women as candidates. Out of 16 presidential candidates, only one (1) was a woman. Of the more than 800 candidates who took part in the National Assembly elections, women constituted about 21%. The Local Council election had the lowest number of women, with only 10% of the 6,130 candidates. However, there were more women running mates (4 in total) in the 2021 elections than in 2016 (which was 3). Thus, the number of women elected to public offices remains worryingly low.
- The Republic of Zambia is considered a youthful country, with about 82% of the population below the age of 35 years. Despite this youth bulge, there is no enabling legal framework that expressly speaks to their participation in electoral and political processes, save for the Constitution, which demands the equitable representation of the youth. However, the AUEOM noted that some organisations made efforts to ensure youth participation and engagement in the 2021 electoral process, which resulted in 56.33% of youth registering as voters. Youth organisations also informed the AUEOM that they lobbied political parties for the nomination of youth as candidates and funded the campaign activities of youth candidates. Overall, the AUEOM observed a moderate level of youth participation in the 2021 electoral process.
- The Zambian Police Service (ZPS) and other state agencies were consistently accused of selectively applying aspects of the Public Order Act and Covid-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in favour of the ruling party and against opposition candidates and supporters.
- Despite the tense political environment in the pre-electoral period, overall, the AUEOM observed that Election Day operations and the immediate post-election activities were carried out in a generally peaceful environment. Most polling stations observed opened on time.

However, most did not close on time due to the long queues observed throughout the day.

- The ECZ announced the results of the 2021 general elections promptly on 16 August 2021, in line with the timeline that is set. The results showed the presidential election was won by Hakainde Hichilema of the UPND who secured a landslide victory of 2,852,348 (59.4%) votes over his long-time rival and incumbent president Edgar Lungu who garnered 1,870,780 (38.3%) votes. The UPND also won the majority of parliamentary seats with 82 against 59 for the PF. The final turnout was 70.61% out of 7,023,499 registered voters.

22. Based on its findings and overall assessment, the AUEOM concludes that the 2021 General Elections were peaceful and transparent, and their outcome reflected the genuine will of voters.

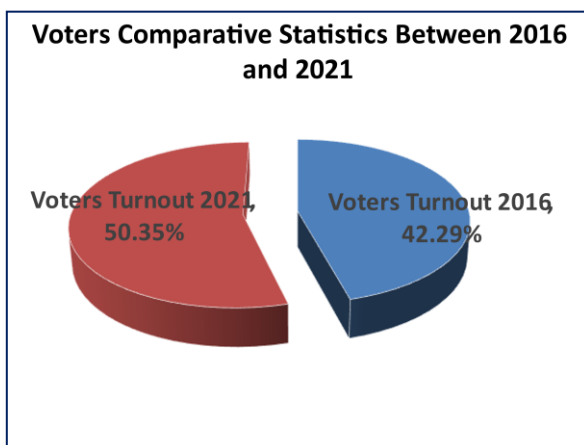
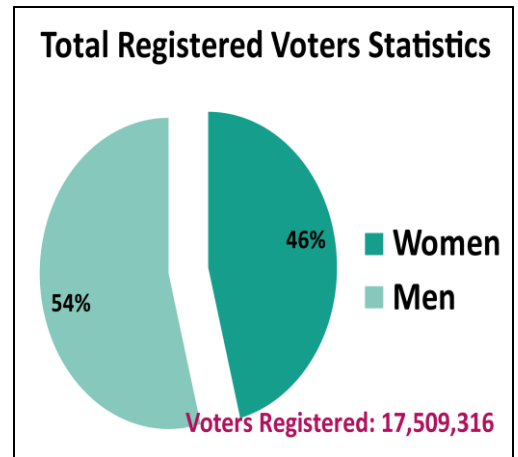
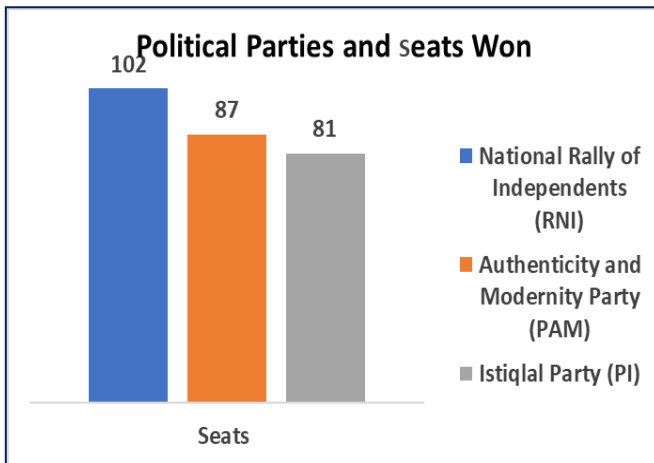


#### d) Kingdom of Morocco

23. The Kingdom of Morocco held General elections on 08 September 2021 to elect the 395 members of the House of Representatives. Communal and regional elections were also held on the same day. The African Union did not deploy observers but closely followed the process remotely.

24. The number of voters registered was 17,509,316, of which 46% were women and 54% were men. The turnout was sharply rose from 42.29% in 2016 to 50.35% in 2021, the highest since the 2002 elections, according to the results announced on 9 September 2021 on the website of the Electoral Commission of Morocco ([www.elections.ma](http://www.elections.ma)).

25. The elections were marked by an astounding defeat of the governing Justice and Development Party (PJD) by the National Rally of Independents (RNI) led by Aziz Akhannouch, which won most seats (102). The Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM) and the Istiqlal Party (PI) came second and third, with 87 and 81 seats, respectively. Due to the victory of his party the leader of the RNI, Aziz Akhannouch was appointed Head of Government by King Mohammed VI to replace Saâdeddine El Othmani, who also resigned from the leadership of the PJD. The new government, which is a coalition of the RNI, PAM and PI parties took office on 7 October 2021.

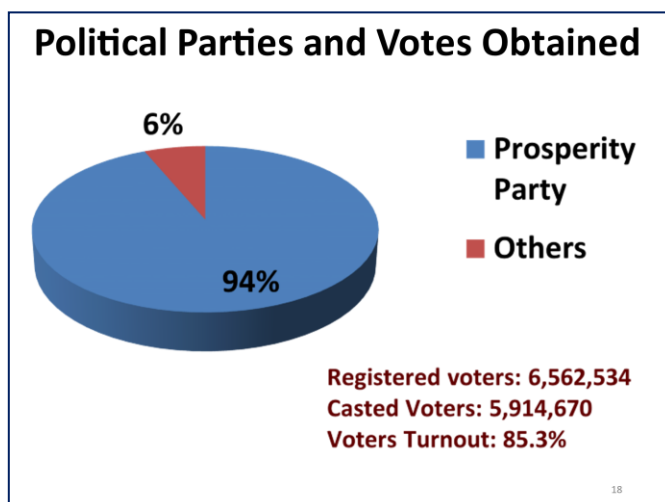


**e) Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**

26. On 30 September 2021, voting took place in 47 constituencies in the Harari, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) regions of the

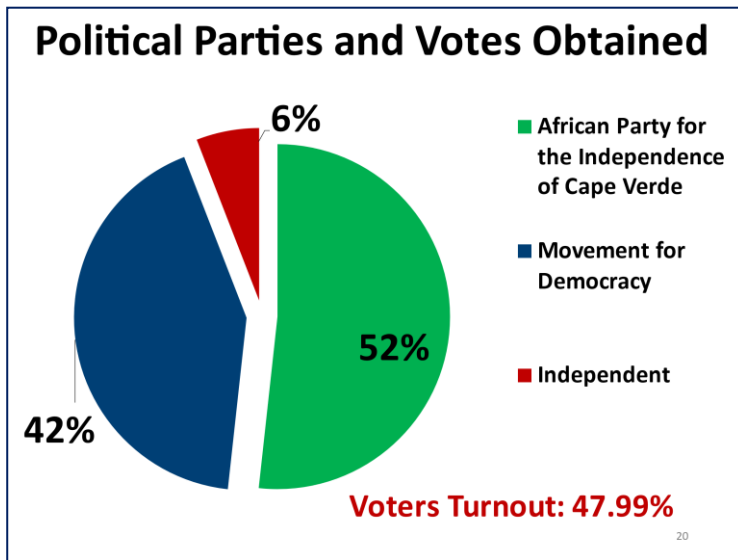
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The polls were for the Federal House of Representatives, Regional council seats (106), and the South-West Referendum. Voting did not take place in these constituencies during the 21 June 2021 General elections due to security, legal and operational reasons.

27. Of the 6,562,534 registered voters, 5,914,670 reportedly cast their ballots, which represents a voter turnout of 85.3 percent. According to the results announced for the House of Peoples Representatives by the National Election Board of Ethiopia, the governing Prosperity Party of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed won 44 of the 47 seats, further increasing its landslide victory in the 21 June 2021 General elections.
28. Following the elections, the House of Peoples' Representatives confirmed incumbent Abiy Ahmed as prime minister for a five-year term on 4 October 2021. Regardless of the outcome of the 30 September 2021 elections, the Prime Minister was sure to be confirmed as his party - the Prosperity Party - had already won 410 of the 436 parliamentary seats that were contested in the June polls.
29. Even with the second round of voting, the Ethiopian National Election Board announced that it did not hold elections in 17 electoral constituencies, mostly for regional councils, in the Benishangul Gumuz Region but also in Oromo and Amhara regions due to security concerns.
30. Overall, despite the challenging security environment, the NEBE was found to have conducted the 30 September 2021 elections technically well. It carried out all its activities in a timely and responsive manner. Political parties and civil society organisations were consulted throughout the process. Although the AU did not deploy election observers to the 30 September 2021 elections but followed their conduct closely, having deployed for the June elections which H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, had served as Head of Mission.



## **f) Republic of Cabo Verde**

31. The Republic of Cabo Verde held a presidential election on 17 October 2021. A total of 7 candidates participated in the elections, most of whom were independent. Despite the high number of independent candidates, the campaigns were dominated by the candidates of the two major parties - Jose Maria Neves of the African Party for the Independence of Cabo Verde (PAICV) and Carlos Veiga of the Movement for Democracy (MpD). Based on the results announced by the National Electoral Commission (CNE) on 22 October, the opposition PAICV candidate, José Maria Neves, was elected in the first round with over 51.75% of the vote, while his main political rival, the governing candidate Carlos Veiga got 42.39%. The other five candidates all won less than 2% each. Voter turnout stood at 47.99%.
32. Following the announcement of results, the incumbent Carlos Veiga, in a show of graciousness and magnanimity, immediately conceded defeat and congratulated his political opponent. This was the first time that the PAICV won a presidential election for almost 15 years, that is, since 2006. The peaceful transfer of power was the fourth between the MpD and PAICV since independence from Portugal in 1975, consolidating Cabo Verde's status as one of Africa's most stable democracies in Africa.
33. The AU Commission deployed a short-term Election Observation Mission to monitor the polls in the nine (9) inhabited Islands of the country. The Mission found the technical preparations for the election were efficiently done. Overall, the performance of the CNE at national and regional levels was assessed to be positive, notably, the timely implementation of operational plans, despite logistical challenges relating to the deployment of electoral materials to the 1,052 polling stations in all the 9 inhabited islands (some of which are remote) and 243 overseas polling stations in 21 countries. The electronic transmission of results via tablets ensured that the results were tabulated and announced in a timely and efficient manner.
34. The AUEOM was informed, on 21 October 2021, by the Constitutional Court, the institution in charge of electoral disputes under the provisions of the Constitution and the Electoral Code, that no complaint or appeal was submitted to following the conduct of the polls.



35. The Republic of The Gambia held a presidential election on 4 December 2021. Six candidates participated in the election, including the incumbent H.E. President Adama Barrow. The election was the sixth since the return of democratic rule after the 1994 military coup and the first after the defeat of former President Yahya Jammeh in 2016. It took place against the backdrop of ongoing constitutional, legal, and political reforms aimed at strengthening democratic governance in the country.

36. Because of the importance of the election as a test of democratic transition in the Republic of The Gambia, the AU deployed both long and short-term observers to assess and report on all the three phases of the elections, in addition to supporting the electoral process technically and financially. The preliminary assessment of the African Union Election Observation Mission shows that the election was competitive and well managed, and took place in a peaceful and democratic environment, that allowed all candidates to campaign freely. The Mission further assessed the country's legal framework as being largely adequate and in accordance with AU norms and standards for the conduct of democratic elections. However, some of the gaps noted in the legal framework include the absence of constitutional provision for presidential term limits, the absence of legal procedures for announcing official results, and the absence of measures to promote women and youth inclusion and participation in political processes.

37. Since the 2016 presidential election that witnessed the victory of the opposition candidate (now incumbent) President Adama Barrow, the public standing or reputation of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) has improved significantly. Despite notable capacity challenges, the IEC carried out preparation for the election in a timely and professional manner, and without much difficulty.

38. A total of 962,157 voters were registered to take part in the election. This figure represented approximately 96.2% of the projected 1 million eligible voters. Of

the total registered voters, 545,318 (57%) were females and 416, 839 (43%) were males. There was a consensus among stakeholders that the registration exercise was well done by the IEC.

39. Although women comprise more than half of the population in the Republic of The Gambia (about 50.5%), as could be seen also in the high number of registered women voters, their demographic advantage does not translate into tangible political gains, as women were rarely in leadership positions within political parties. For instance, all the presidential candidates were men. Maria Sock, the first-ever female presidential candidate that attempted to contest the election was, unfortunately, rejected due to improper filing of her nomination papers.

40. Despite the generally peaceful and democratic environment in which the election took place, the AUEOM noted the high prevalence of hate speech and misinformation, particularly on social media platforms. In the absence of effective fact-checking mechanisms for misinformation, this could pose a threat to the country's nascent democracy.

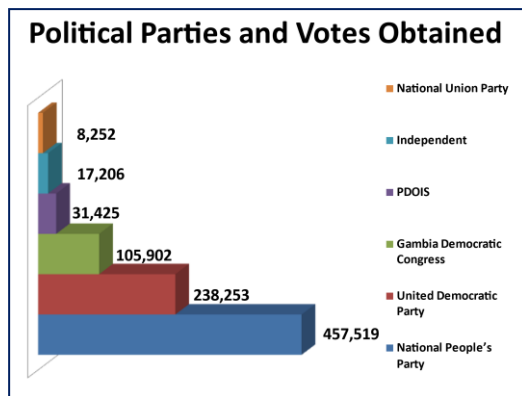
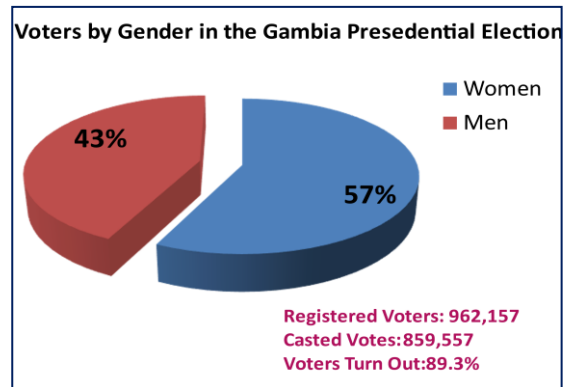
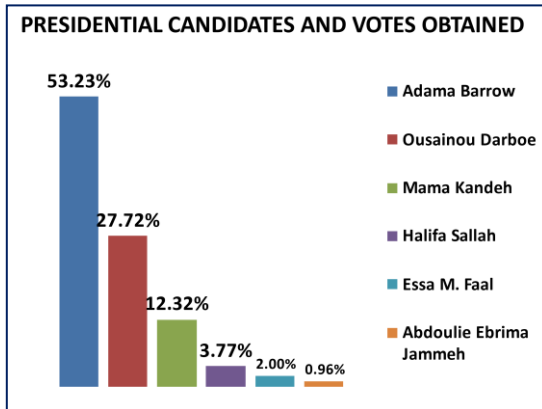
41. The IEC announced the results of the election on 5 December 2021, just one day after the close of the polls. According to the results announced, the incumbent President Adama Barrow of the National People's Party (NPP) was re-elected with 457, 519 votes (representing 53.23% of the valid votes cast) for a second five-term in office, far surpassing his nearest rival, Ousainou Darboe of the United Democratic Party (UDP), who won 238,253 votes (which is about 28%). Mama Kandeh of the Gambia Democratic Congress (GDC) got 105,902 votes (12.32%), followed by Halifa Sallah of the People's Democratic Organisation for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS), who got 32, 425 votes (3.77%). Independent Candidate Essa Faal and the National Union Party (NUP) Leader Abdoulie Jammeh had 17,206 (2%) and 8,252 (0.9%), respectively. The voter turnout stood at 89.3%.

42. The speed at which the results were counted, tabulated, and announced by the IEC was highly commendable, especially that it did not compromise the accuracy and transparency of the process, which are bedrock principles in the election results management.

43. Meanwhile, presidential contenders and opposition figures Ousainou and Mama Kandeh have rejected the results, saying there were inordinate delays in the announcement of results and problems at polling stations, without providing the specifics or evidence of wrongdoing. Darboe's United Democratic Party (UDP) later petitioned the Supreme Court to nullify the results. However, in a recent ruling, the Supreme Court dismissed the petition on procedural technical grounds that the UDP had failed to serve the petition to President Barrow within



five days of filing it, as is required by law. Gambia's Supreme Court's decisions are final and cannot be appealed. So far, there is no indication that Ousainou Darboe has other plans to contest the results.



#### h) Federal Republic of Somalia

44. Through an elections calendar that was revised severally due to political, security and operational challenges, the Federal Republic of Somalia held indirect Upper House elections from 27 July 2021 through to 24 December 2021. The elections which were organised under the aegis of the 17 September 2020 and 27 May 2021 Political Agreements by the National Consultative Council (NCC) comprised 54 seats for the Upper House and 275 for the Lower House. A 30% quota of seats were allocated to women. The 27 May 2021 Agreement enabled Somalia to commence the Upper House elections, while the Lower House elections are still uncompleted but are expected to continue in February 2022, following a recent deal struck by the political leaders. Although progress has been made in Somalia's electoral process, it has been slow. Indeed, the timely completion of the Upper House elections and the election of the President remains more important now than ever, so that the country can proceed on its democratic path.

## Results of Upper House Elections

No.	Federal Member State	Total Number of Seats	Number of Elected Seats	Number of Elected Females	Number of Seats not Occupied
1	Somaliland	11	11	3	Nil
2	Puntland	11	11	3	Nil
3	Hirshabele	8	8	2	Nil
4	Galmudug	8	8 (1 Resigned)	2	1
5	South West	8	8	2	Nil
6	Jubaland	8	8	2	Nil

Source: FEIT

45. A total of 14 women were elected into the Upper House. Although there was a push for 30% women representation in the Upper House, as provided by the 17 September and 27 May Agreements, the AUC electoral assistance mission to Somalia found that this fell short with only 26% women representation achieved. However, there was a notable improvement from the 2016 elections which recorded 24% of women elected to the Upper House.

46. The House of the People (Lower House) elections commenced on 1 November 2021 and were not concluded by 31 December 2021 due to operational and political challenges which confronted the electoral process, thus resulting into constant slippage of the elections calendar.

## IV. OVERVIEW OF GOVERNANCE TRENDS IN AFRICA

47. Four main governance trends which either emerged or continued during this reporting period are noteworthy:

48. **Resurgence of unconstitutional change of government:** In the past six months, Africa has seen an unfortunate spate of attempted and successful coup d'états/ military coups in including in Chad, Mali, Guinea, and Sudan. This vivid evidence of major deficits in democratic governance and consolidation, warrants immediate bold reflections on their systemic root causes. Additionally, the differential response measures, undertaken by the AU and the RECs, and their chequered outcomes, raise multiple questions around the effectiveness of AU norms in forestalling or sanctioning unconstitutional changes of governments. Concerted measures must be taken to prevent further backsliding into the pre-democratic era and explore lasting solutions to this resurging phenomenon.

49. **Fragile Political Transitions:** The signing of historic Peace Agreements in South Sudan, CAR, more recently, Sudan, embodied longstanding aspirations for peace and stability after prolonged armed conflicts and political instability. However, slow implementation in CAR, recurrent military interventions in politics in Sudan and Mali, and persistent conflicts in South Sudan continue to weaken and endanger peace, reconciliation, and governance safety nets in these

countries. The delicate political transition in Somalia in which the electoral process has had incidences of violence and significantly prolonged elections calendar has heightened the existing political and security fragility of the country.

**50. Growing demands for democratic dividends:** The 2021 global state of democracy report, along with the 2020 Freedom in the World report documented the 14th year of an alarming global decline in democratic governance and respect for human rights. This global backsliding trend, which also draws significant evidence from Africa, has inspired growing calls for democratic dividends especially the instrumental socio-economic benefits of democratic development. These growing demands are accentuated by the continued youth bulge and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic which has had significant impact on African economies.

**51. Weak public service delivery and Corruption:** Government responses to the COVID-19 on the continent have spotlighted and exacerbated pre-existing governance fault-lines in African Union member states. Corruption continues to spike in the context of COVID-19, fuelling widescale social tensions, public mistrust, and disgruntlement. Reports of embezzlement and mismanagement of COVID-19 relief funds abound across the continent, and while governments are upscaling accountability measures, the scope of the evil is yet to be fully perceived, yet alone addressed.

## **V. KEY EMERGING TRENDS IN AFRICA'S POLITICAL GOVERNANCE - COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS FOR 2021:**

52. Compared to the previous reporting period (January – June 2021), the following new trends were noted:

**53. Postponement of elections:** Holding of periodic and regular elections is a longstanding hallmark of democracy, constitutionalism, and rule of law. This principle has been institutionalized in the fundamental law of African Union member states. In the second half of 2021, most Member States defied, with rare exceptions, the projected impact of COVID-19 of election timetables and made commendable efforts to respect the constitutional provisions for periodic elections. In the second half of 2021, however, a mixed trend was noted, instances of commitment to election calendar on one hand, and the phenomenon of postponement or continuity of postponement on the other.

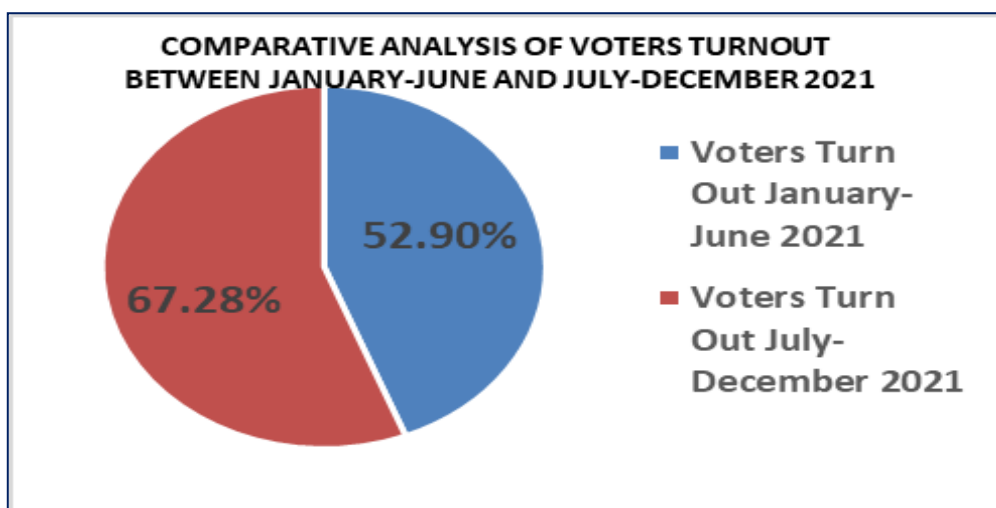
54. While elections were held as scheduled in Zambia, Cape Verde, Morocco and The Gambia, a slight deviation from election calendars, largely attendant to insecurity and political tensions, was noted in five countries: Chad, Sao Tome and Principe, CAR, Ethiopia, and Libya. In Chad, Legislative elections, (originally scheduled for 13 December 2020 and later 24 October 2021) were postponed indefinitely. The second round of Presidential election in Sao Tome and Principe (scheduled for 8 August 2021) was moved to 5 September 2021. In 47 constituencies in Ethiopia, voting did not take place 21 June 2021 as scheduled due to security, legal and operational reasons. They were therefore postponed

to 30 September 2021. The 25 July 2021 Legislative elections in the Central African Republic (CAR), were also held after several months of sequential voting that started in December 2020; while the July 27 elections in Somalia were postponed from February 2021 due to political, security and operational challenges.

55. The Libyan elections, scheduled for December 24, 2021, was postponed to 2022 amidst growing litigations over the final list of candidatures and inconsistencies in the legal procedures. Somalia elections which were supposed to have been initially completed by October 2021 have only been partially held, while the remaining indirect polls rescheduled to 2022 in a prolonged elections calendar. Thus, more than the COVID-19 pandemic, insecurity and political tensions continue affect political processes and democratic consolidation. This conveys the need to reinforce electoral security and inclusive dialogue among political stakeholders on matters of electoral regime and procedures.

56. **Voter turnout:** Citizen participation in political governance, through voting, is both demonstrative of a combination of variables including political consciousness, enthusiasm, human rights guarantees and improved election management. Despite COVID-19 constrains which impacted campaigns, voter education and other election-related logistics, elections witnessed a good turnout. Voter turnout in all the countries was above 50%. Indeed, apart from Morocco (50.35%) and Cape Verde (51%), all the countries under review registered a turnout of 60% and above – ranging from 60% in CAR to 89.3% in The Gambia. This range represents an increase compared to the first half of 2021 which registered a voter turnout range between 89.4% in Ethiopia to as low of 22.99% in Algeria.

57. More importantly, it is worth noting that, compared to the previous elections conducted in the countries under review, the overall voter turnout witnessed a commendable increase in notably: in Morocco (from 42.29% in 2016 to 50.35% in 2021); The Gambia (from 59.34% in 2016 to 89.3% in 2021); Zambia (from 56.45% in 2016 to 70.61 in 2021); Sao Tome (from 46.06% in 2016 to 65% in 2021); Cape Verde (from 35.47% in 2016 to 51% in 2021). These are success stories that must be showcased, continuously encouraged and multiplied across the continent.



**58. Participation of women and youth:** In the light of their demographic strength, but much more, legally guaranteed rights, women and youth constitute a critical stratum in the African electoral landscape. Their rights to political participation are enshrined various regional instruments such as the Banjul Charter, Maputo Protocol, African Charter on Democracy Elections and Governance and the African Youth Charter; and reinforced by the relevant national frameworks of the countries under review, with few exceptions. In practice, however, women and youth participation as candidates remains disparately low. Despite their high participation as polling staff, party agents and voters have witnessed a slight increase, the participation of women and youth as candidates remains timid. The same trend was noted in the previous reporting period.

**59. Pre-electoral violence and tensions:** Elections are competitive but must be peaceful in nature. A severe compromise of the pacific requirement for democratic elections marked the pre-electoral phases of the elections under review. This growing trend of varying degrees of pre-electoral violence and heightened political tension was observed during the previous first half of 2021 in Ethiopia, CAR, Uganda and Niger, continued in Zambia, Sao Tome and Principe, and Somalia. However, on Election Day, polling procedures unfolded in a generally peaceful atmosphere. This is largely attributable to the timely preventive diplomacy efforts undertaken by the AU (as seen in Zambia) and the REC's (as witnessed in Sao Tome and Principe). These experiences lend credence to the importance of incorporating high-level preventive diplomacy dimensions to election observer missions, especially in high stake electoral contexts where pre-electoral assessments reveal growing tensions and violence. This was experimented, with great success in Zambia.

**60. Election Management:** Based on the AUEOMs observation findings, African EMBs stood up to the test of conducting critical elections under unprecedented public health emergency circumstances and other constraining factors. They promptly adopted and implemented the necessary adjustments and COVID-19 protocols to balance the indispensable demands of inclusive electoral processes and public safety. Overall, a significant improvement in the technical management of elections and professional conduct of EMBs staff was noted - thanks to lessons learned and experience sharing with EMBs that organised elections during the first half of the year. However, there remains a non-negligible degree of mistrust of election management bodies especially by opposition leaders and civil society organisations. This suggests that issue of EMBs mistrust may not necessarily be hinged on performance only. There is need to bolder commitment to democratic rules, and continued dialogue/information among all electoral stakeholders.

**61. Electoral Campaign:** As indicated earlier in 2021, electoral campaigns were largely constricted by COVID-19 control measures. This revamped and sharpened pre-existing polemics over questions of equitable access to state media which was the main campaign channel in the context of COVID-19. The situation was further exacerbated by unreliable internet connectivity or frequent restrictions. An increase in hate speech, misinformation, and cyberbullying, amplified through various media outlets during elections, was also noted. This rendered the challenge of managing the use of information and communication technology (ITC) and social media platforms during elections more complex. Additional applied research and adaptable campaign frameworks are needed to retool ICT and leverage its potential for meaningful access to voter information and peaceful electoral campaigns. The need to deliver on the promises of equitable access to state media for campaign purposes has never been more crucial for levelling the electoral playing ground and diffusing political tensions.

## **VI. AFRICAN UNION INTERVENTION IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES OF MEMBER STATES**

### **a) Republic of The Gambia**

62. Within the broad programmatic priorities of the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) on supporting Member States undergoing political transitions, the AUC provided electoral assistance to the Republics of The Gambia and Somalia in the second half of 2021. The multi-pronged interventions described below were in response to requests received from the EMBs of the respective countries.

63. In a bid to contribute to democratic consolidation through organising peaceful, democratic, and credible presidential elections, the AUC provided a dual-pronged assistance to the Republic of The Gambia. In partnership with The Gambia National Youth Council, the first type of assistance entailed capacity building of 40 youth and civil society organisations in citizen election observation through training of trainers. It was expected that these newly trained trainers in citizen observation would transfer the skills and knowledge acquired in their respective organisations, an important aspect of promoting sustainability of intervention. In order to assist the participants in gaining future comparative experience and lesson-learning in election observation, the trainers would be incrementally involved in the AU election observation missions in order to gain new continental field experience that would be useful to their own work in strengthening citizen participation in the Republic of The Gambia.

64. The second aspect of electoral assistance entailed financing of certain aspects of electoral operations of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of the Republic of the Gambia. In this regard, the AUC financed the training of 6,076 polling station staff throughout the country; electoral logistics consisting of hiring and fueling of vehicles for deployment of electoral materials to all the 1,554 polling stations; and procurement of COVID-19 protection materials for the polling stations.
65. The total financial contribution for electoral support to the Republic of The Gambia comprising both capacity building in citizen election observation and assistance to the IEC was USD 682,346 for the presidential elections. This support constituted the largest financial assistance to an electoral process in the Member State by the AUC. Across the spectrum of election observations deployed to the Republic of The Gambia, most of them noted that the polls were generally well-managed which points to the value addition of the AUC with a longer-term view of democratic consolidation.

#### **b) Federal Republic of Somalia**

66. Pursuant to the PSC decision in its 994<sup>th</sup> Meeting, in which it directed AMISOM “to continue providing technical support to the political and governance processes of Somalia at federal and regional levels, including technical assistance to the planning and conduct of the elections once an agreement has been reached, with additional efforts also facilitated by the AU Commission” (*Para. 16*), the AUC in collaboration with AMISOM deployed an electoral assistance mission to the Federal Republic of Somalia from 2 September 2021 to 27 December 2021.
67. The electoral assistance comprised technical and financial support to the Federal Electoral Implementation Team (FEIT) in organising Upper and Lower House as well as presidential indirect elections in pursuant to the 27 May 2021 political agreement. In collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development (FMWHRD), the assistance also entailed capacity building of women stakeholders to enhance their participation in the electoral process in achieving the 30% quota for women in elective seats. To this end, the AUC deployed three senior African electoral experts in electoral security, electoral operations and training, and in election dispute resolution to provide continuous advisory support, working closely with AMISOM and in collaboration with the United Nations Integrated Electoral Support Group.
68. The AUC assistance also included operational support which entailed supply of computer equipment to FEIT and the FMWHRD to support in their respective roles in the electoral process. Donation to FEIT included 24 laptops, 9 desktop computers and 9 printers whilst the donation to FMWHRD comprised 2 desktop

computers, 1 printer and 1 photocopier. The total electoral assistance financial package to Somalia was USD 513,000 comprising different capacity building interventions undertaken by AUC and AMISOM as well as direct financial support of USD 200,000 to FEIT for its electoral activities.

## **VII. PREVIEW OF UPCOMING ELECTIONS: JANUARY - JUNE 2022**

69. In the first half of 2022, presidential and parliamentary elections are scheduled to hold in the following countries: The Federal Republic of Somalia, State of Libya, the Republic of Mali, and the Republic of The Gambia. This section previews the political context, state of preparedness and stakes of these upcoming elections.

### **a. Federal Republic of Somalia**

70. Following the lack of conclusion of electoral process in 2021 in Somalia due to political, operational and security challenges facing the country, the Prime Minister H.E Mohamed Hussein Roble convened a meeting of the National Consultative Council on 9 January 2022 in which it was agreed that the ongoing elections of the House of the People (Lower House) will be completed between the periods of 15 January and 25 February 2022. It is only upon the completion of these elections that the indirect Presidential elections will be organised on a date to be confirmed by the FEIT.

### **b. State of Libya**

71. With the adoption of the elections roadmap during the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF), the presidential election was scheduled to hold on 24 December 2021 under the aegis of an interim Government of National Unity. The election was postponed to 2022, without a specific date for holding the polls due to legal, security and political challenges facing the electoral process. The House of Representatives elections is tentatively scheduled to take place in February 2022, according to the initial calendar by the High National Elections Commission (HNEC). However, in view of the uncertainties surrounding the conduct of both presidential and House of Representative elections, the national parliament and stakeholders are yet to formally confirm the new date.

72. Noteworthy, the pre-electoral phase of the presidential election has been the subject of contestations. The publication of the final list of candidatures remains pending amid continued legal dissensions. A series of court rulings have overturned the HNEC's decisions to block high-profile figures including, Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, the son of former President Muamar Gaddafi, from standing for the presidency. Within a short span of six (6) days, between 01-06 December alone, six candidates disqualified by the HNEC were reinstated by the Appeal Courts across the country. Against this backdrop, the HNEC delayed the publication of the approved candidates because it was "keen to exhaust all means of litigation to ensure its decisions comply with issued judgments."



73. Regarding parliamentary election, significant preparatory strides have been made, including the registration of nearly three (3) million voters, successful distribution of voter cards, nomination of 5,385 candidates, and publication of a preliminary list of 73 presidential candidates by the HNEC. These are telltale signs of keen popular support and mobilisation for democratic elections.
74. Whereas the elections are crucial towards the restoration of constitutional order, peace, security and stability in the State of Libya, they remain tentative due to the aforementioned challenges, which require strategic approaches to ensure the credible and peaceful conduct of the polls, but most importantly meaningful reconciliation.
75. The AU is closely monitoring the political developments in the country and is on standby, following invitation from the HNEC, to deploy a short-term election observation mission to the country.

### **c. Republic of Mali**

76. General elections were scheduled to be held in the Republic of Mali on 27 February 2022. However, the Transition Government of Mali, through the stakeholders' forum on the refoundation of the State, recently announced a new electoral roadmap, which the ECOWAS Assembly of Heads of State and Government, is currently considering. These elections when held, will be against the backdrop of two military takeovers occurring barely nine months apart. The country is now traversing a six-month transition period which should have culminated in the holding of the elections in February 2022. The upcoming elections are supposed to mark Mali's path towards a democratic future and political stability.
77. As with many other post-coup elections, the stakes are high and the need for a peaceful and credible electoral process cannot be overemphasized. Climate change in the Sahel, growing insecurity and jihadist offensives, and terrorism in Northern regions pose significant security threats to the country and the electoral process.
78. Preparations are slow on many counts, including legal reforms and voter registration. In this vein, the 2022 elections timeline will not be feasible, given the new political dynamics in the country.
79. Many partners, including ECOWAS, believe that the delay in elections may deepen political instability, and delay the restoration of civilian rule. There are ongoing high-level discussions with the country's political leaders in this regard, with ECOWAS and the international community pushing for the respect of the transition timelines.
80. The AU is monitoring the evolving political situation and keen on lending support, when and where necessary, including through the deployment of a high-level political mission.

#### **d. Republic of The Gambia**

81. Elections for the National Assembly are expected to be held on 9 April 2022. The country has made notable progress in key peacebuilding areas, laying the ground for democratic governance and durable peace, including the successful organisation of Presidential election on 4 December 2021, which saw the victory of incumbent, President Adama Barrow. Based on the recommendations of the AUEOM for the December 2021 Presidential Election, legal adjustments in favour of women quotas, an Electoral Bill and a meaningful constitutional review process would enhance future electoral processes in the country. The country is yet to enter the active pre-electoral phase for the April 2022 Parliamentary Elections. The AU would continue to map out and respond to priority technical electoral assistance needs to the EMB. The AUC also hopes to deploy a short-term observation mission during the elections.

### **VIII. 2021 ELECTIONS IN AFRICA IN A NUTSHELL**

82. Overall, 2021 had been quite a busy political year for the African continent, with a total of sixteen (16) Member States<sup>1</sup> who held presidential and parliamentary elections. In view of the important role democratic elections play in the promotion of good political governance, peace, security and stability in the Member States, the AU Commission was engaged in all but one - i.e., Morocco. The Commission's engagements took various forms that included deployment of long- and short-term election observers, provision of technical and financial assistance to election management bodies, CSOs, youth groups and the media, multi-dimensional needs assessment missions, as well as preventive diplomacy.

83. Some of the emerging trends observed in the conduct of the 2021 elections include general improvement in the technical and professional management of the elections, with EMBs demonstrating commendable resilience and adaptability despite the numerous challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic; a comparatively good voter turnout averaging about 50% continent-wide (although individual national data showed an overall downward trend in turnout); a disparately low participation of women and youth as candidates (however, their participation as poll workers, party agents and domestic observers appeared impressive); a general adherence to the principle of periodic or regular conduct of elections, with only a few Member States that postponed their elections;

84. There were also varying degrees of political tensions around elections, with a general reduction in outright election-related violence; a constricted electoral

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<sup>1</sup> Algeria, Benin, Cape Verde, CAR, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, Morocco, Niger, Sao Tome & Principe, Somalia, Uganda, and Zambia

campaign environment due to Covid-19 pandemic control measures; and an increase in the use of social media for electoral campaigns, with a concomitant increase in hate speech, misinformation, and cyberbullying amplified through various media outlets during elections.

## **IX. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

85. To strengthen the quality of elections and deepen democratic governance on the African continent, the following policy recommendations are proffered for consideration by the Peace and Security Council:

- a) Greater advocacy by the PSC and Member States in order to remain firm and consistent in their total rejection of unconstitutional changes of government because the phenomenon not only subverts the democratic will of the citizens as expressed through elections but also has the potential of undermining trust and faith in democratic institutions and processes and negatively impact peace, security, and stability.
- b) To ensure consolidation of democracy, there is need for the AU Member States to bolster independent institutions, particularly electoral management bodies and the judiciary, as well as campaign finance reforms that diversify participation and mitigate patronage. Such efforts are paramount for dissuading citizens in the Member States from either apathetic disengagement or destabilising violence as well as for enhancing confidence in the legitimacy of elections a genuine mechanism to foster democratisation. Thus, the PSC should appeal to all Member States to continue strengthening of the independence and capacity of democratic governance institutions in their counties, especially the independence of the judiciary. This will go a long way in improving the quality of elections and assuring Africa's democratic trajectory.
- c) AU Member States should invest more in strengthening the state as a key driver of democracy, peace, security, and socio-economic development., as well as the defender of human rights and fundamental freedoms especially the political and civil rights in relation to political governance and democracy. At the heart of building capable states in Africa should be the imperative for improving service delivery to African peoples.
- d) In view of both the potential and threat posed by social media and misinformation to electoral and democratic processes, the PSC should call on Member States to adopt progressive policies to dissuade the misuse of social media, especially during elections.

- e) The PSC should entreat Member States to promote the inclusivity of women and youth in electoral and democratic processes, particularly in leadership positions within political parties and public affairs in general.
- f) Given the imperative of closer monitoring and on-the-ground enhanced role of the AUC in support of democracy, the PSC should advocate to the Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC) for the increased allocation of financial resources to the AUC in support of electoral processes on the continent. In this context, the PSC should commend the efforts of the PAPS Department to restructure the AUEO system through the introduction of Experts Advisory Panel, gender-and-youth balanced composition of Observer missions; and greater interface between AU and RECs/RMs in the election cycle.
- g) Encourage Member States that have unduly delayed their elections to live to up to their national and international obligation for conducting periodic elections within a predictable timeframe.

## **X. CONCLUSIONS**

86. It is clear from the foregoing analysis that democratic elections in Africa continue to gain traction with most of the Member States adhering to their international obligation of conducting regular elections<sup>2</sup>, which enabled citizens to exercise their civil and political rights. The obligation to hold periodic elections has been understood to mean that the interval between elections should not be unduly long, such that the authority of the government is no longer representative of the will of the people. In this regard, it is commendable to see that, during the period under review, most of the Member States upheld this fundamental principle.

87. The analysis also shows that the quality of management of electoral processes on the continent is steadily improving as could be seen in the number of elections won by the opposition, and the fact that there was less contention in the outcome of these elections. This is commendable and very important for the deepening of democratic governance in Africa, as citizen participation in genuine periodic elections is essential to ensure the accountability of representatives for the exercise of the legislative or executive powers vested in them.

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<sup>2</sup> International and regional treaties (U.N., ICCPR, art. 25(b); ACHR, art. 23; AU ACDEG, art. 3(4)) require that elections be held at periodic intervals.

88. Also worthy of commendation is the fact that all the elections held during this reporting period took place in a generally peaceful and democratic environment. There was, overall, a reduction in violence around the elections. It could be recalled that, a few years ago, the incidence of election-related violence was one of the major threats to the continent's peace, security and stability, and overall democratic progress.
89. Of importance to note also is the expediency and transparency in the reporting, transmission, and publishing of election results, which contributed to the less contentious outcomes that we saw during this reporting period. When votes are counted and reported honestly and the result published timely, this has a tremendous effect on the credibility of the elections and the legitimacy of governments.
90. Despite these positive strides, a few worrying developments remain such as the abuse or misuse of social media platforms to spread misinformation and hate speech during elections, poor relationship between election management bodies and opposition parties and civil society that sometimes results in low confidence and trust in the EMB and the electoral process, the fragile nature of political transition even in countries that have held successful elections, the weak public service delivery and corruption resulting in rise in social disenchantment, and the resurgence of unconstitutional change of government threatening the consolidation of democratic gains.