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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1165TH MEETING

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REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION
TO THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL ON ELECTIONS IN AFRICA
FOR THE PERIOD: JANUARY - JUNE 2023

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ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS

AAEA	Association of African Electoral Authorities
ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
AIGE	Autorité Indépendante de Gestion des Élections
AJD/MR	Alliance pour la Justice et la Démocratie/Mouvement pour la Rénovation
AMAD	Alliance des Mouvements pour l’Alternance Démocratique
ANC	Alliance Nationale pour le Changement
ANP	Assembleia Nacional Popular
APC	All People’s Congress
APC	All Progressive Congress
APU-PDGB	Assembleia do Povo Unido - Partido Democrático da Guiné-Bissau
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUEOM	AU Election Observation Mission
BR	Bloc Républicain
BRTC	Bureau de Réception et Traitement des Candidatures
BVAs	Bimodal Voter Accreditation System
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
CAR	Comité d’Action pour le Renouveau
CC	Constitutional Council
CC	Constitutional Court
CDU	Centre des Démocrates Unifiés
CENA	Commission Électorale Nationale Autonome
CENI	Commission Électorale Nationale Indépendante
CGE	Centre Gabonais des Elections
CLC	Comités de Listes et Cartes
CNE	Comissão Nacional de Eleições
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CPAPS	Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security
CPC	Cadre Permanent de Concertation
CRV	Centre de Recensement et Vote
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DEC	Democracy, Elections and Constitutionalism Division
DEU	Democracy and Elections Unit
DoP	Declaration of Principles
DPAPS	Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security
EAC	East African Community
EBC	Election Boundaries Commission’s
ECOSOCC	Economic, Social & Cultural Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECSL	Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone
EL	Electoral Law
EMBs	Electoral Management Bodies
FCBE	Forces Cauris pour un Benin Emergent
FPTP	First – Past – The – Post
FRUD	Front Républicain pour l’Unité et la Démocratie
FTYIP	First Ten-Year Implementation Plan
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission

IReV	INEC Results Viewing Portal
LD	Les Démocrates
MADDEM G-15	Movimento para Alternância Democrática, Grupo dos 15
MATD	Ministère de l'Administration du Territoire et Décentralisation
MOELE-BENIN	Mouvement des Élités Engagées pour l'Émancipation
MPL	Mouvement Populaire de Libération
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NEF	National Electoral File
PAP	Pan African Parliament
PAIGC	Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde
PAM	Pre-election Assessment Mission
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PM	Prime Minister
PMM	Parti des Masses Mauritanienes
PR	President of the Republic
PR	Proportional Representation
PRC	Permanent Representative Committee
PRS	Partido da Renovação Social
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PTG	Partido dos Trabalhadores Guineenses
PVC	Permanent Voter Card
RAVEL	Recensement Administratif à Vocation Électorale
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RMs	Regional Mechanisms
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
STOs	Short-Term Observers
TA	Technical Assistance
TFPs	Technical and Financial Partners
UCGs	Unconstitutional Changes of Governments
UDBN	Union Démocratique pour un Benin Nouveau
UDJ	Union pour la Démocratie et la Justice
UDP	Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès
UMP	Union pour la Majorité Présidentielle
UN	United Nations
UPC	Union pour la Planification et la Construction
UPR	Union Progressiste pour le Renouveau
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This 2023 first briefing report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) on Elections in Africa, captures the outcomes of elections organised in African Union (AU) Member States between January and June 2023¹ and is presented to the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU. It specifically describes the fundamental involvement of the continental Institution to promote a better consolidation of the "democratic peace", security and stability of Member States within the continent.

2. The report covers AU's election observation and technical assistance interventions during the period under review, and reflects a snapshot of elections scheduled for the second half of 2023 (July – December). The report further traces emerging or continuing political dynamics and trends from the reviewed elections and charts concrete policy trajectory for enhancing electoral integrity and democratic stability on the continent. Against this backdrop, the report provides recommendations for the PSC's consideration within its three-core mandate to: (a) promote and encourage democratic practices; (b) anticipate and prevent conflicts; and (c) promote peace, security and stability in Africa as enshrined in article 3 of the Protocol establishing the PSC.

3. During the first semester of 2023, presidential and parliamentary elections were held in six (6) Member States notably in the Republics of: Benin, Djibouti, Nigeria, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, and Sierra Leone. In keeping with its mission to enhance the conduct of credible electoral processes on the continent, the AUC deployed pre-electoral assessment and/or AU Election Observation Missions (AUEOMs), to the above-mentioned Member States, with exception of Benin. As reported during the last half of 2022, the production of a documentary film on AUEOMs is at its final stages. The documentary film would provide a rare glimpse and insight perspective of the scope and indispensability of AUEOMs. It would also foster reporting and accountability to the PSC and the AU policy organs.

4. The initiative, "**Annual Report on Elections in Africa - Democracy at Work**", is also at an advanced stage since we first informed the Council of it in January this year. The report will start with the year 2022 and help advance consolidated pluralist democracy in AU Member States, beyond rhetoric, through the compilation of an eponymous annual report summarizing the major findings on the actors, commendable practices, challenges, issues and prospects identified by the AU Missions in the election field to consolidating democratic gains and the rule of law in Africa

5. The elections conducted in the countries reviewed continue to demonstrate an unflinching determination of Member States to safeguard democratic principles against all odds. Election Management Bodies (EMBs) also demonstrated greater professionalism in election management, while candidates embraced dialogue and prioritized the legal mechanisms for conflict resolution. As such, elections conducted in the continent were generally peaceful and orderly. In spite of the positive indicators of democratic progress, elections held during the period were characterized, in some cases, by political tensions and violence that are inimical to our desire to instil democratic values in the current and future generation of African.

6. During second half of the year elections will take place in: Zimbabwe, Gabon, Eswatini, Liberia, Madagascar, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Togo. In view of the responsibility entrusted to it by Member States, the AUC has planned several electoral support engagements to help promote transparent and peaceful elections in these countries which include: deployment of pre-electoral assessment, short term observation, electoral assistance to EMBs and any other stakeholder or high-level preventive diplomacy measures based on the context. As has been repeated in most of our

¹ The last report covering July – December 2022 was previously presented to the PSC on 20 January, 2023.

reports, this comes with significant budgetary implications, which require the PSC and all Member States backing for the mobilisation of adequate funding to provide the much-needed electoral support thereby contributing to the consolidation of democracy in Africa.

7. Finally, it is worth noting, quite commendably, that all seven (7) countries with upcoming elections in the first half of 2023, have ratified the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG). The PSC is urged to encourage other Member States to emulate those that have signed/ratified the ACDEG. Considering the high-stakes nature of most upcoming elections, the PSC is also urged to appeal to the countries concerned to spare no effort in promoting peace, inclusivity, transparency, and credibility throughout the electoral cycle.

III. INTRODUCTION

8. In accordance with the relevant AU provisions, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E Mr. Moussa Faki MAHAMAT deployed, on the proposal of H.E Ambassador Bankole ADEOYE, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (CPAPS), during the first half of 2023, five (05) Election Observation Missions in the following Member States: Federal Republic of Nigeria, Republic of Djibouti, Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Republic of Guinea-Bissau and Republic of Sierra Leone. However, due to logistic issues, the AU could not deploy in the Republic of Benin. In that regard, a remotely technical watch has been done by our Democracy and Elections Unit to follow the overall outcomes of the electoral process in Benin.

9. In addition, the AU has deployed various Electoral Assistance Missions during this first half of 2023, in particular: Support in Development of Guidelines and Principles for Digital and Social Media and Elections in Africa, Technical Consultations with Organs and RECs for Strategic Engagement on Elections, Preparatory Meeting for the Declaration of Principles for International Elections Observation and Second Specialized Training for AU Election Observers.

10. These various Missions of the Continental Institution find their legal basis in the relevant provisions, among others: the OAU/AU Constitutive Act, more specifically the provisions of its Article 3 (g)²; the Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa (2002); the Guidelines for African Union Electoral Observation and Monitoring Missions (2002); the Maputo Protocol (2003); the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007); the AU Vision 2030 and Aspirations 3 and 4 of Agenda 2063³ and the Accra and Malabo Declarations (2022).

11. The aforementioned play a significant role in bolstering democratic consolidation and fostering the cultivation of a pluralistic rule of law across the continent. They also contribute to the systematic, legal, and political modernization of the socio-political governance of Member States. These efforts underscore that the actions undertaken by the Missions possess not only a substantial normative dimension but also contribute to upholding international standards that aim to promote fairness in electoral processes. Moreover, they emphasize the importance of inclusivity, encompassing various social groups such as youths, girls, women, elderly individuals, persons with disabilities or reduced mobility, and socio-professional categories. All these endeavours aim to enhance the effectiveness of participatory democracy.

12. This prioritization of the Continental Institution contributes to the progressive political reinvention of Africa in close collaboration with the Member States, strictly complying with the National Legal Framework governing elections and related observation procedures; the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the Technical and Financial Partners (TFPs) involved.

13. Approximately, thirteen (13) national-level elections are scheduled to hold in 2023 on the continent. This bi-annual report is the first one to be presented to the PSC. It provides an analytical examination of the six (6) parliamentary/presidential elections conducted in AU Member States between January and June 2023: Benin, Djibouti, Nigeria, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, and Sierra Leone.

14. The report further describes emerging trends in electoral and political governance while making recommendations to improve future processes and foster “democratic peace”. It also gives a

² Article 3 (g) of the AU Constitutive Act, which tasks the Union to “promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance.”

³ Aspirations 3 and 4 respectively envisage an “Africa of good governance, democracy and respect for human rights and rule of law”; and “a peaceful and secure Africa.”

brief overview of the elections scheduled for the second half of 2023 to facilitate good preparation in terms of deployment by the AU.

15. Drawing on the executive summary (I) and introduction (II), this report unfolds as follows:
- i. Review of the elections conducted between January and June 2023;
 - ii. AU electoral assistance interventions ;
 - iii. Overview of governance trends;
 - iv. Snapshot of upcoming elections (July-December 2023);
 - v. Policy Recommendations; and
 - vi. Conclusion.

IV. REVIEW OF ELECTIONS CONDUCTED BETWEEN JANUARY AND JUNE 2023

16. During the first semester of 2023 under review, Presidential and National Assembly elections were followed and observed by the AU in the six (6) Member States as stated below. The observers were drawn from African Ambassadors (PRC) accredited to the African Union (AU), the Pan African Parliament (PAP), Election Management Bodies (EMBs), Independent Electoral, Academic and Governance Experts, and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from AU Member States.

a. Republic of Benin

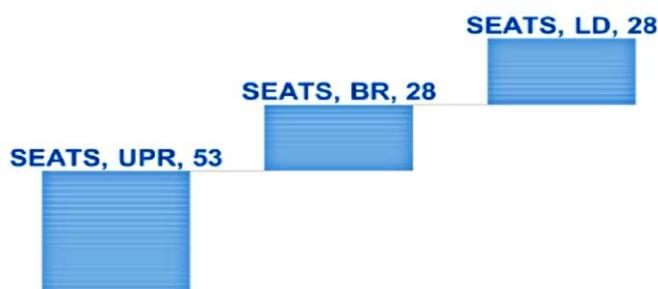
17. The Republic of Benin conducted National Assembly Elections on January 8, 2023, with the purpose of electing 109 members of Parliament. These elections were widely regarded as a crucial test of the country's democratic process, particularly since major opposition parties had boycotted the previous elections. Under a new electoral system, seats were allocated only to parties that obtained approximately 10% of the national votes. As indicated below, the results released by the National Autonomous Electoral Commission (CENA) revealed that the ruling coalition, Union Progressiste pour le Renouveau (UPR), and the Bloc Républicain (BR) secured the majority of seats, totaling 81, while the main opposition party, Les Démocrates (LD), attained 28 seats.

Table 1: Results of 2023 National Assembly Elections in Benin

	Party	Votes	%	seat
1	Union Progressiste pour le Renouveau (UPR)	930 714	37,56	53
2	Bloc Républicain (BR)	724 240	29,23	28
3	Les Démocrates (LD)	598 560	24,16	28
4	Forces Cauris pour un Bénin Émergent (FCBE)	109 598	4,42	0
5	Mouvement des Élités Engagées pour L'Émancipation du Bénin (MOELE-BÉNIN)	56 728	2,29	0
6	Mouvement Populaire de Libération (MPL)	31 638	1,28	0
7	Union Démocratique pour un Bénin Nouveau (UDBN)	26 430	1,07	0
Total Seats				109
Voter Statistics				
Valid Votes		2 477 908	96,85	
Blank and Invalid Votes		80 538	3,15	
Total		2 558 446	100	
Abstentions		4 211 371	62,21	
Voter Turnout		6 769 817	37,79	

Source: CENA

Graph 1: Histogram of Results



Source: AU DPAPS - DEU

18. Regrettably, the African Union's observation mission was unable to be deployed during the elections due to logistical constraints.

b. Federal Republic of Nigeria

19. On 25 February 2023, the Federal Republic of Nigeria held Presidential and National Assembly, followed by Gubernatorial and State Assembly elections⁴ on 18 March 2023. To observe the Presidential and National Assembly elections held on February 25, 2023, the African Union deployed a ninety (90)-member African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM). The AUEOM was led by His Excellency Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta, former President of the Republic of Kenya. Supporting the Head of the AUEOM was Hon Justice (Rtd) Effie Owuor, a member of the AU Panel of the Wise, particularly in the post-electoral preventive diplomacy engagements to promote a peaceful atmosphere before and after the announcement of results by INEC.

20. The presidential election was closely contested with a total of 18 candidates, including one female candidate. 1,101 candidates contested for the 109 Senate seats, while 3,122 contested for the 360 seats in the House of Representatives. The Mission noted concerns by some stakeholders on the limitations on the right to political participation with specific reference to the right to run for political office as an independent candidate.

21. The electoral environment, in general, remained peaceful, despite incidents of insecurity reported in the Northwest, Northeast, Southeast, and South-south geopolitical zones. The elections also took place amidst challenges such as fuel scarcity and the liquidity crisis of the Naira caused by the ongoing process of redesigning the currency. While various stakeholders acknowledged the positive intent behind the Naira redesign policy, the Mission observed that its implementation had significant implications for the economy, logistical operations of INEC, the campaign process, and the conduct of election observation, among other aspects.

22. Nigeria adopted significant reforms to its Electoral Act, 2022. Among these were: the conduct of early primaries by political parties, technological innovations such as using the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), the INEC Results Viewing Portal (IREV), timely disbursement of funds to INEC and the power by INEC to review results. Among other reforms was enhanced inclusion of special categories of the electorate which encouraged political competition and accountability in the electoral process. The reforms further aligned Nigeria's electoral framework with international and regional obligations.

⁴ Initially scheduled to take place on 11 March 2023.

23. INEC registered 93,469,008 voters, of which 47.5% were women. This marked an 11.3% increase from the 84,004,084 voters recorded during the 2019 elections. The Mission applauds INEC's decentralisation strategy for Permanent Voter Card (PVC) collection to the 8,809 Registration Areas/Wards. This special measure increased the PVC collection rate compared to the previous (2019) electoral cycle.

24. On the day of the elections, AU Mission observed that 84% of polling units experienced delayed opening, primarily due to logistical reasons. The AUEOM applauded the utilization of BVAS technology for voter accreditation, which significantly enhanced the credibility of the electoral process. In 94% of the visited polling units, the BVAS operated successfully. However, the AUEOM noted that the voting period from 8.30am to 2.30pm was insufficient considering the large number of voters and recommended a legal reform to extend the voting duration. Furthermore, the AUEOM highlighted that the IReV system faced technological challenges, leading to delays in the timely transmission of results, which raised concerns among certain stakeholders regarding the accuracy of the results.

25. The Chairperson of the INEC announced the official results on 1 March 2023, three days after the close of the poll declaring Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the All Progressive Congress (APC) as the winner of the 2023 presidential election. Tinubu polled a total of 8,794,726 votes (36.6%), defeating his closest rivals, Atiku Abubakar of the opposition PDP, who scored 6,984,520 (29.07%) to emerge second and Peter Obi of the Labour Party with 6,101,533 (25.4%) in the third place. Only 27% of the registered 93,469,008 voters turned out to vote, representing the lowest voter turnout since Nigeria returned to multiparty democracy in 1999.

Table 2: Presidential Election results

Political Party	Presidential candidate	Votes	% Votes
ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS	Bola Tinubu	8,794,726	36.6%
PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY	Atiku Abubakar	6,984,520	29.07%
LABOUR PARTY	Peter Obi	6,101,533	25.40%
NEW NIGERIA PEOPLE'S PARTY	Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso	1,496,687	6.23%
ACCORD	Christopher Imumolen	61,014	0.25%
ACTION ALLIANCE	Hamza al-Mustapha	14,542	0.06%
ACTION DEMOCRATIC PARTY	Sani Yusuf	43,924	0.18%
ACTION PEOPLES PARTY	Nnadi Osita	12,839	0.05%
AFRICAN ACTION CONGRESS	Omoyele Sowore	14,608	0.06%
AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS	Dumebi Kachikwu	81,919	0.34%
ALL PROGRESSIVE GRAND ALLIANCE	Peter Umeadi	61,966	0.26%
ALLIED PEOPLES MOVEMENT	Ojie Chichi	25,961	0.11%
BOOT PARTY	Adenuga Oluwafemi	16,156	0.07%
NATIONAL RESCUE MOVEMENT	Okwudili Anyajike	24,869	0.10%
PEOPLE'S REDEMPTION PARTY	Kola Abiola	72,144	0.30%
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY	Adebayo Adewole	80,267	0.33%
YOUNG PROGRESSIVE PARTY	Malik Ado-Ibrahim	60,600	0.25%
ZENITH LABOUR PARTY	Daniel Nwanyanwu	77,665	0.32%

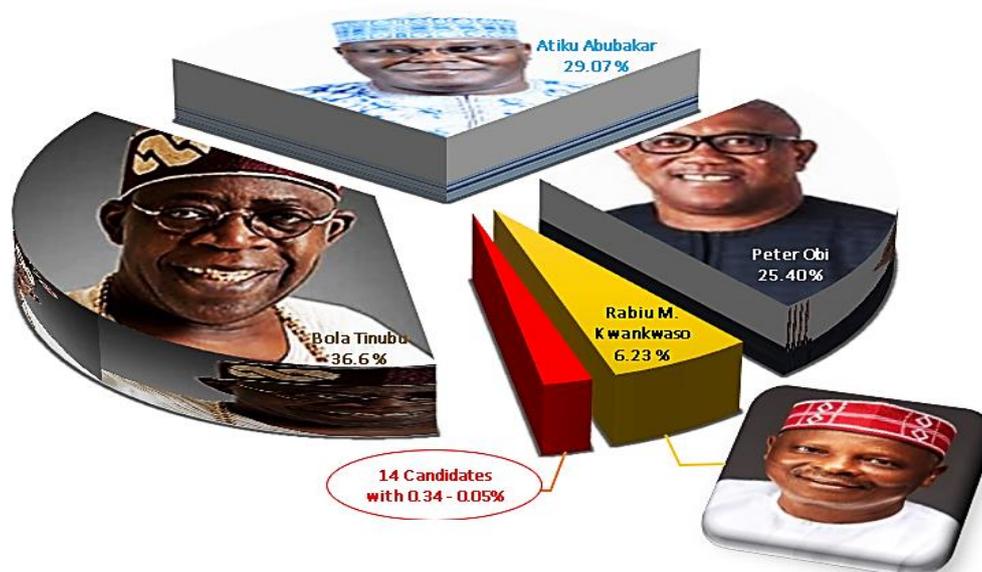
Source: INEC

Table 3 Voting statistics

Registered voters	93,649,008
Ballots cast	24,965,218
Turn out	27%
Valid ballots	24,025,940
Spoilt ballots	939,278
% Spoilt votes	2.64%

Source: INEC

Graph 2: Histogram of Results



Source: AU DPAPS - DEU

26. Following the announcement of INEC's final results, opposition parties, including PDP and Labour Party, rejected the outcomes, alleging irregularities in the electoral process. Consequently, both parties filed petitions in court and were granted permission to access and investigate whether malpractices occurred through the BVAS system. INEC, however, maintained that it had conducted the election process in full compliance with the law. The leader of the AUEOM, with the support of a Member of the AU Panel of the Wise, worked closely with the leadership of the ECOWAS observation mission and the ECOWAS Commission, playing a crucial role in encouraging the aggrieved candidates to seek a peaceful resolution for electoral disputes.

c. Republic of Djibouti

27. The AU Experts' Technical Mission, tasked with observing the legislative elections held on February 24 in the Republic of Djibouti, took note of the contextual factors shaping the electoral process. These factors include the historical, security, and political realities within which the 2023 elections were conducted. Notably, the Republic of Djibouti stands out as a beacon of peace in the Horn of Africa.

28. The revision process for the electoral register was conducted from April 28 to September 30, 2022. During this period, the National Electoral Register underwent a comprehensive cleanup, which involved removing deceased individuals from the register and updating the constituencies of voters

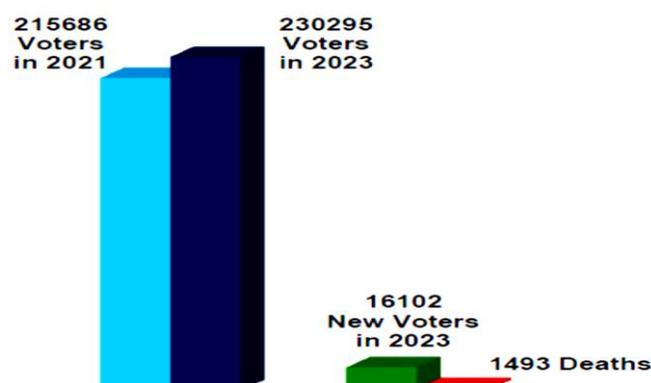
to reflect their new places of residence. Additionally, first-time voters were enrolled, contributing to a notable increase in the number of registered voters at the national level. The electorate expanded from 215,686 to 230,295 voters, representing a net increase of 14,609 registered voters. In comparison to the data from 2021, the Electoral Body's situation in 2023, as shown in the table illustrating the number of registered voters, new voters, and deaths, demonstrates the impact of this registration operation.

Table 4: Number of voters 2021 and 2023 - New registrations - Deaths

Regions	Voters in 2021	New Voters	Deaths	Voters in 2023
DJIBOUTI - VILLE	134 896	9 964	1200	143 660
ARTA	10 861	851	00	11 712
ALI-SABIEH	17 192	895	00	18 087
DIKHIL	22 823	756	177	23 402
TADJOURAH	18 453	2509	32	20 930
OBOCK	11 453	1 127	84	12 504
TOTAL	215 686	16 102	1 493	230 295

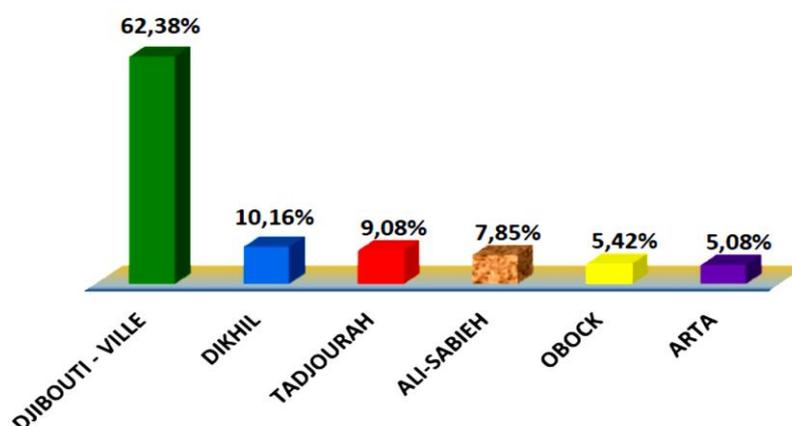
Source: Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Djibouti.

Graph 3: Histogram of the evolution of the electorate from 2021 to 2023



Source : AU DPAPS - DEU

Graph 4: Histogram of percentages of electoral polarization by region in 2023



Source: AU DPAPS - DEU based on data above from the Minister of the Interior.

29. The Republic of Djibouti operates approximately fifteen (15) political parties, among which half a dozen is actively engaged in electoral coalitions. Legislative elections in Djibouti are conducted through party or coalition lists, as independent candidacy is not permitted by law. According to Article 36 of the Organic Law governing elections, only officially recognized political parties or political groups stemming from these parties are eligible to present candidates and their substitutes. The designated period for submitting applications spanned from December 8, 2022, to January 26, 2023, at midnight.

30. Initially, four (4) political entities had shown interest in participating in the election. These entities, in alphabetical order, were the Alliance of Movements for Democratic Alternation (Alliance des Mouvements pour l'Alternance Démocratique: AMAD), the Center of Unified Democrats (Centre des Démocrates Unifiés: CDU), the Union for Democracy and Justice (UDJ), and the Union for the Presidential Majority (UMP). However, due to reasons such as dual nationality and non-payment of the deposit, the applications of AMAD and CDU could not proceed. The Presidential Decree No. 2022-327/PR/MI, issued on December 19, 2022, defined the Electoral Campaign period from February 10 to February 22, 2023, at midnight.

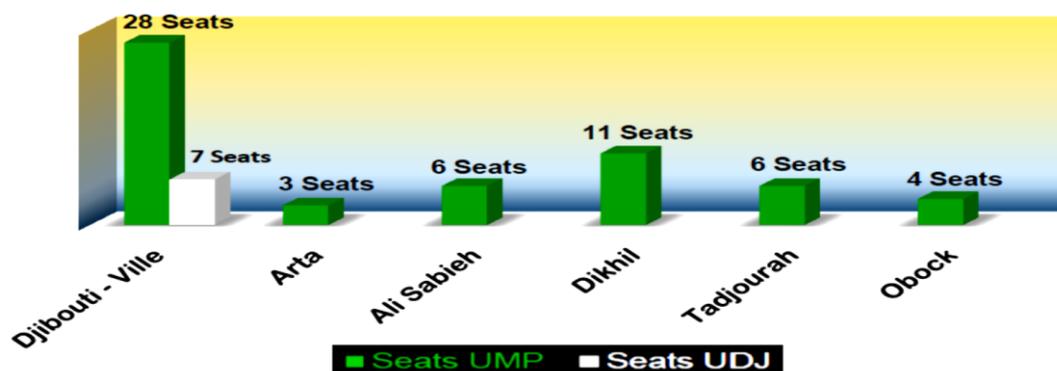
31. As per the provisions outlined in the Electoral Law (EL), specifically Article 73, all disputes related to elections fall under the jurisdiction of the Constitutional Council (CC). Article 74 of the same law allows any candidate to appeal against the regularity of electoral proceedings within ten (10) days following the announcement of the ballot results. In the absence of any disputes raised by the candidates, the Constitutional Council, during its plenary session held on March 02, 2023, proceeded with the proclamation of the final results of the legislative elections, as depicted in the following table:

Table 5: Final Results of 2023 Djiboutian Legislative Elections

Constituencies	Votes Cast	Political Coalition and Party	Votes	% of Votes	Seats
Djibouti - Ville	91717	UMP	81628	89%	28
		UDJ	10089	11%	7
Arta	9366	UMP	8683	93%	3
		UDJ	683	7%	0
Ali Sabieh	14551	UMP	14551	100%	6
Dikhil	22496	UMP	22496	100%	11
Tadjourah	19858	UMP	19858	100%	6
Obock	12442	UMP	12442	100%	4
Total	170 430	Turnout		74%	65

Source: Constitutional Council of Djibouti.

Graph 5: Histogram of Final Results in each Electoral Constituency



Source: AU DPAPS - DEU, based on the Constitutional Council results above.

32. Overall, the AU Experts' Technical Mission deployed in Djibouti, under the leadership of Ms. Karine KAKASI SIABA, the Acting Coordinator of the Democracy and Elections Unit within the AU Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (DPAPS), observed that the 2023 legislative elections were conducted peacefully, devoid of conflicts, hate speech, or violence. These outcomes align with the legal framework established in the Republic of Djibouti.

d. Islamic Republic of Mauritania

33. The Mauritanian electoral college as a whole, including Mauritians in the diaspora, was called to the polls on May 13, 2023 for the first round of legislative, regional and municipal elections. For the first time since the 2006-2007 elections, 2023 elections were held in a general context characterized by an absence of boycott attempts and/or active boycotts by part of the Mauritanian political class. The framework of the triple ballot has undergone modifications resulting from a political agreement between the government and the actors of the Mauritanian political opposition.

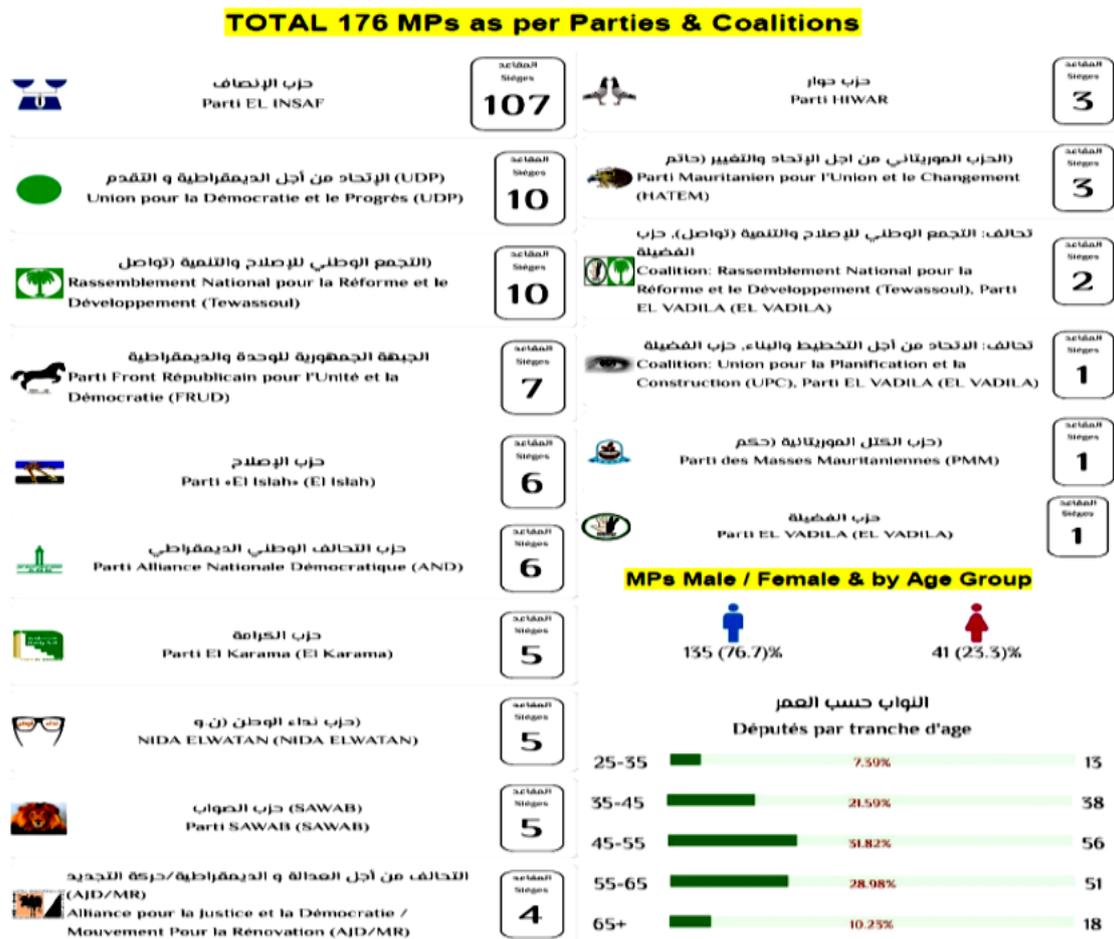
34. The AU Experts' Technical Mission led by the Head of Democracy, Elections and Constitutionalism (DEC) Division of the DPAPS, Amb Calixte Aristide MBARI, noted that the legal framework was supplemented by consensus, particularly during the establishment of the electoral management body, the adoption of a national youth list ballot aimed at the alternation of candidates of both sexes and the representation of people living with disabilities, and the introduction of public financing of the electoral campaign.

35. For the first time in the country's electoral history, Mauritians residing abroad were also called upon to elect their representatives to the National Assembly. The distribution of seats for these representatives was as follows: Africa (1 seat), Asia (1 seat), Europe (1 seat), and America (1 seat). This was accomplished through a two-round uninominal majority ballot.

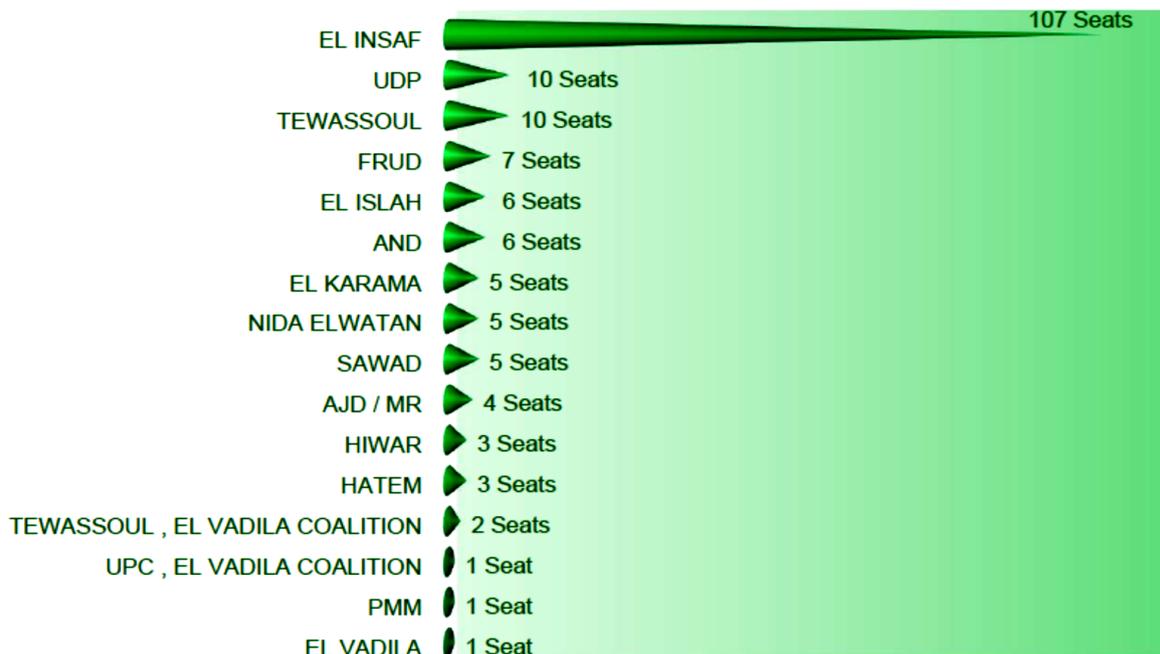
36. The electoral administrative census (Recensement Administratif à Vocation Électorale: RAVEL) was conducted throughout the territory, including specific foreign countries. The operation started on January 27, 2023 and ended on March 13, 2023 following a 15-day extension. In 2019, 1.5 million Mauritania citizens were registered to vote. The number of voters in 2023 was 1,786,448 including 22,288 Mauritians living abroad in Africa, Asia, Europe and America. Voter registration was possible online for any citizen to access the electoral list through the link: <https://myceni.org/> The electoral campaign proceeded smoothly and peacefully from April 30 to May 13, 2023. Candidates organized various meetings within their campaign tents.

37. As per Regulation No. 001 of March 10, 1994, which pertains to the procedure followed before the Constitutional Council, it is this esteemed institution that handles disputes related to the election of deputies following the proclamation of provisional results by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI). The administrative chamber of the Supreme Court, on the other hand, possesses jurisdiction over disputes concerning regional and municipal elections. The CENI announces the final results following verification and compilation, provided there are no disputes.

Table 6: Final Results – Source: CENI website: <https://res-myceni.org/#/>



Graph 6: Histogram of Final Results



Source: AU DPAPS -DEU, based on the results above.

38. It should be noted that the AU Mission was not deployed for the second round of the triple ballot that took place on May 27, 2023. But it managed to remotely follow the process in regularly interacting with the EMBs and key stakeholders. A total of sixteen (16) political parties and coalitions contested during the two (2) rounds of 2023 legislative elections.

39. The holding of these elections constitutes an additional step in the process of building democracy in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. Despite its specificity (6 coupled ballots) and the fragility of the security context in the Sahel region, the first and second rounds of the triple ballot took place in a peaceful atmosphere favoured by a series of incentive measures which made it possible to reach a political consensus and lead to the mobilization of voters.

e. Republic of Guinea Bissau

40. The election of national assembly members of the People's National Assembly (Assembleia Nacional Popular: ANP) in Guinea Bissau took place on June 4, 2023, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution as well as the Electoral Legislation of the Republic of Guinea Bissau of April 2014. The election aimed to elect one hundred and two (102) deputies to the ANP, of which one hundred (100) at the national level and the remaining two (02) reserved for the Diaspora are distributed as follows: one (01) for Africa and the same for Europe.

41. The AUEOM was led by H.E Joaquim Alberto Chissano, former President of the Republic of Mozambique. It was also supported by H.E Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the African Union (CPAPS/AU) and H.E Ovidio Manuel Barbosa Pequeno, Special Representative and Head of the AU Office in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. This AUEOM follows the Pre-electoral Assessment Mission (PAM) which was deployed in the country from December 11 to 19, 2022 in order to assess the socio-political situation with a view to its deployment during these elections.

42. The elections occurred in a predominantly peaceful environment, although political divisions among stakeholders involved in the electoral process were evident. Notably, the obstruction of the People's National Assembly (ANP) in appointing new members to the National Electoral Commission (Comissão Nacional de Eleições: CNE) within the required timeframe, coupled with its subsequent dissolution by the President of the Republic, had significant implications for the political system.

43. The essential involvement of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), supported by the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN), made it possible to go to the elections of June 4, 2023. This beneficial regional and international involvement enabled national political actors and EMBs to agree on the need to hold the ballot based on a global consensus on the rules of the game. This denotes a political commitment to ensure that all political actors follow the path of democratic peace.

44. This year witnessed a complete innovation in the National Electoral File (NEF), as a new registration system was implemented following a comprehensive overhaul. The NEF now comprises a total of 434,009 registered male voters, accounting for 48.56% of the total, and 459,609 registered female voters, constituting 51.44% of the total. This results in a net total of 893,618 registered voters. Within the country, there were 844,087 registered voters, with 411,828 men and 445,974 women, indicating a higher female representation among the registered voters in the NEF. The electoral campaign was conducted peacefully throughout almost the entire country, taking place from May 13 to June 2, 2023, within a positive overall climate.

45. The AUEOM also noted that between the last legislative elections of 2019 and those of this year, there has been a clear increase in the number of voters registered inside the country, with a net increase of ten percent (10%) or 82,411 additional voters counted on the new NEF compared to the 761,676 registered five (05) years ago. In addition, the total number of polling stations experienced a consecutive net increase from 3,134 in 2019 to 3,529 in 2023, an increase of twelve percent (12%).

46. Alongside the national voters, the registration of voters in the diaspora played a significant role this year. This category pertained to Bissau-Guinean citizens residing abroad, specifically in Africa and Europe. In Africa, a total of 17,922 individuals were registered, consisting of 11,420 men and 6,502 women. These individuals were spread across the Republics of Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania, and Senegal. Senegal had the highest number of registered voters within Africa, with 9,681 individuals, including 5,566 men and 4,115 women. In Europe, the diaspora registration recorded a total of 17,894 individuals, comprising 10,761 men and 7,133 women. Among these individuals, the majority were located in Portugal, with 7,789 registered voters, consisting of 4,605 men and 3,184 women.

47. The Supreme Court of Justice receives and publishes the final list of candidates in accordance with the provisions of Article 19 of the aforementioned Law. The Mission noted that there were twenty (20) political parties and two (2) coalitions in competition during these legislative elections. This year, 36% women candidates were on the electoral lists.

48. On June 8, 2023, the CNE announced the provisional results of the elections. The same day, the President of the Republic recognised the victory of the opposition and assured to nominate the new Prime Minister who should be from the winner Coalition. "One day we lose, one day we win, it's the game of democracy," said the President of the Republic, H.E Umaro Sissoco Embaló. Saying so, this is a good lesson in democracy.

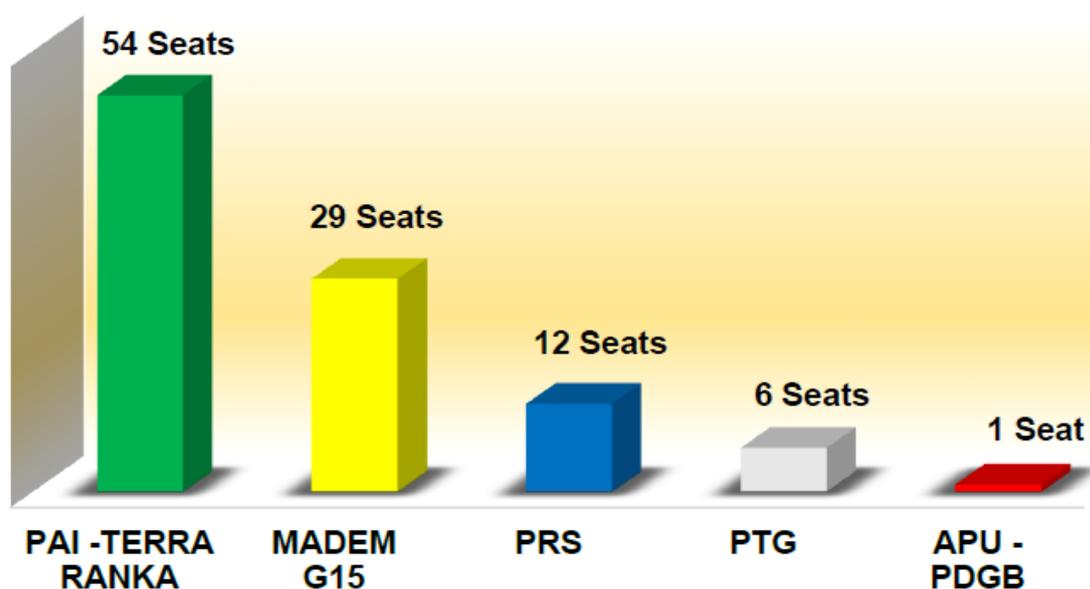
49. On June 15, 2023 with respect to the related national legal provisions and in the absence of any appeals and/or electoral disputes, the following provisional results have been confirmed as final by the CNE: PAI-Terra Ranka, an opposition coalition led by the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde: PAIGC), came out on top with 54 MPs seats out of the 102 in the running. Pai-Terra Ranka is respectively followed by the Movement for Democratic Alternation (Movimento para Alternância Democrática, Grupo dos 15: MADEM G-15): 29 seats; Party for Social Renewal (Partido da Renovação Social: PRS): 12 seats; Guinea Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores Guineenses: PTG): 6 seats and of the United People's Assembly – Democratic Party of Guinea-Bissau (Assembleia do Povo Unido - Partido Democrático da Guiné-Bissau: APU-PDGB): 1 seat.

50. The Official Journal No 24 published these final results on June 24, 2023.

Table 7: Final Results – Source: CNE

Candidatos	Total Votos Válidos	Porcentagem
Assembleia do Povo Unido – Partido Democrático da Guiné-Bissau	29 787	4,44%
Coligação PDD-MP, “Guiné Nobu”	2 600	0,39%
Aliança Para República	757	0,11%
Partido Unido Social-Democrata	1 070	0,16%
Resistência da Guiné-Bissau	10 989	1,64%
Coligação Plataforma Aliança Inclusiva - Terra Ranka	264 240	39,38%
Movimento Para Alternância Democrática	163 509	24,37%
Partido da Unidade Nacional	2 368	0,35%
Partido dos Trabalhadores Guineenses	54 784	8,16%
Partido Republicano da Independência para o Desenvolvimento	2 363	0,35%
Partido da Nova Democracia	7 111	1,06%
Frente Patriótica de Salvação Nacional	6 379	0,95%
Partido Africano para Liberdade e Desenvolvimento da Guiné	1 657	0,25%
Convergência Nacional para a Liberdade e o Desenvolvimento	5 200	0,77%
Partido Manifesto do Povo	717	0,11%
Centro Democrático	303	0,05%
Partido Nossa Pátria	1 155	0,17%
Partido Africano para Paz e Estabilidade Social	4 272	0,64%
Movimento Social Democrático	3 020	0,45%
Partido da Renovação Social	100 429	14,97%
Congresso Nacional Africano	4 526	0,67%
Partido Luz da Guiné-Bissau	3 021	0,45%
Votos Válidos	670 971	94,36%
Em Branco	21 761	3,06%
Nulos	18 326	2,58%
Protestos	-	0,00%
Votantes	711 058	79,57%
Inscritos	893 618	100,00%
Taxa de participação em (%)	711 058	79,57%
Abstenção em (%)	182 560	20,43%

Graph 7: Histogram of Final Results



Source: AU DPAPS -DEU, based on the results above.

f. Republic of Sierra Leone

51. The Republic of Sierra Leone held General Elections on 24 June 2023 to elect a President, Members of Parliament, Mayors and Local Councilors for the next 5 years.⁵ The elections were the fifth one since Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war ended in 2002. Since 2002, Sierra Leone has made efforts in improving its electoral governance and demonstrated its commitment to consolidation of democratic governance. Although 13 candidates contested the presidential elections, it was a two-horse race between the incumbent presidential Julius Maada Bio of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and the Samura Kamara of the All People's Congress (APC).

52. Sierra Leone has made significant improvement in its election management in preparation for the 2023 elections. Some of the reforms carried out originate from recommendations made by a previous AU Election Observation Mission following the 2018 general elections. The Public Elections Act of 2022, the Political Parties Act (2022) and the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act 2022 (GEWE 2022) constitute the main legal frameworks for the elections. The Public Electoral Act 2022, also introduced the district proportional representation (PR) system. The GEWE Act 2022⁶ stipulates that: (a) 30% constituency seat in each district, specified in the First Schedule, shall be reserved exclusively for female candidates contesting parliamentary election; (b) 30% ward seat reserved in each locality, specified in the Second Schedule, shall be reserved exclusively for female candidates contesting local council election. This provides opportunity for the Sierra Leone to achieve 30% representation of women at all levels and therefore commendable.

53. In terms of participation, the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone (ECSL) registered 3,374,258 Sierra Leonean voters for the 2023 elections. There was a total of 3,360 polling centers, 11,832 polling stations and 16 electoral districts. Thirteen (13) out of the seventeen 17 political parties have slotted Presidential candidates of which only one is female. There were also 132 parliamentary, 493 local council seats and 14 paramount chieftdom seats representing rural districts for contest.⁷

54. The AUEOM led by H.E Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe, former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia observed key processes including the final phases of the electoral campaigns, Election Day and limited post-election activities and adjudged the elections to have been peaceful in spite of tensions that had characterized the pre-election/campaign period.

55. The result was announced on 27 June 2023. A total of 11,712 polling stations results were entered into the ECSL result database representing 98.98% of all polling stations across the country. The national turnout is 2,800,691 representing 83% of all registered voters, with a total valid vote cast is 2,789,808 and a total of 10,883 invalidate vote cast representing 0.39%.

⁵ The president is elected for a tenure of five years and is limited to two terms in office in a first-past-the-post (FPTP) system.

⁶ See https://www.parliament.gov.sl/uploads/bill_files/THE%20GENDER%20EMPOWERMENT%20ACT,%202021.pdf

⁷ <https://ec.gov.sl/>

Table 8: Final Presidential Election Results

SN	Name of Candidate	Political Party	Total Number valid Votes Obtained	Percentage of valid votes
1	BAH MOHAMED CHERNOH	National Democratic Alliance (NDA)	21,620	0.77
2	BIO JULIUS MAADA	Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP)	1,566,932	56.17
3	COKER PRINCE	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	5,981	0.21
4	JONJO MOHAMED	Citizen Democratic Party (CDP)	2,367	0.08
5	KABUTA SAA TURAY	United National People's Party (UNPP)	4,059	0.15
6	KAKAY IYE	Alliance Democratic Party (ADP)	4,336	0.16
7	KAMARA NABIEU HENRY	Peace and Liberation Party (PLP)	7,717	0.28
8	KAMARA SAMURA MATHEW WILSON	All Peoples Congress	1,148,262	41.16
9	MARGAI CHARLES FRANCIS	Peoples Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC)	16,012	0.57
10	SACCOH ABDULAI DOUGAKORO	Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFPP)	6,796	0.24
11	SANDY JONATHAN PATRICK	National Unity and Reconciliation Party (NURP)	1,369	0.05
12	SOWA-TURAY MOHAMED	United Democratic Movement (UDP)	1,665	0.06
13	WILLIAMS BERESFORD VICTOR	Republic National Independent Party (ReNIP)	2,692	0.10
TOTAL VALID VOTES CAST			2,789,808	100

Source: ECSL

Graph 8: Histogram of Final Presidential Election Results



Source: AU DPAPS - DEU, based on the results above.

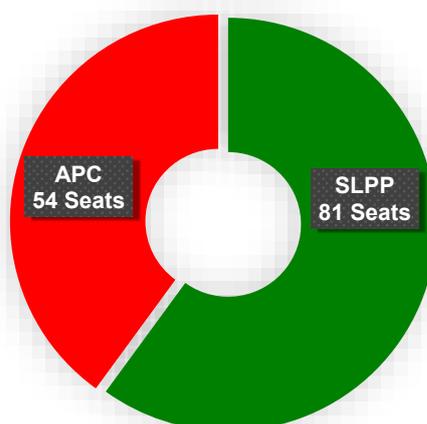
56. For the parliamentary elections, the ruling SLPP gained 81 seats against 54 by the APC. With the result it shows GEWE was achieved with 30.4% seats going to women.

Table 9: Final Parliamentary Elections Results

Districts	SLPP	APC	Others	Total Seats	Region
Kailahun	10	0	0	10	East
Kenema	12	0	0	12	
Kono	7	3	0	10	
Bombali	0	8	0	8	North
Falaba	2	2	0	4	
Koinadugu	1	3	0	4	
Tonkolili	1	9	0	10	
Kambia	2	4	0	6	North-West
Kerene	1	4	0	5	
Port Loko	4	6	0	10	
Bo	12	0	0	12	South
Bonthe	5	0	0	5	
Moyamba	5	1	0	6	
Pujehun	7	0	0	7	
Western Rural	5	5	0	10	West
Western Urban	7	9		16	
Total	81	54	0	135	

Source: ECSL

Graph 9: Histogram of Final Parliamentary Elections Results



Source: AU DPAPS - DEU, based on the results above.

Note: The tables of results set above for each of the six (6) Member States, globally confirm the tendencies of the political balance of power resulting from the ballot, and in most cases, they are reflecting the results as initially published as provisional by the competent EMs. In a similar vein, the graphs or histograms provide a comprehensive visual representation of the significant presence and influence of political parties, coalitions, and candidates in the national political landscape. These graphical representations serve as tangible illustrations of the overall representativeness and prominence of various political entities within the national political sphere.

V. ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE INTERVENTIONS

57. Several initiatives have been undertaken between January and June 2023 as summarised below.

a. Support in Development of Guidelines and Principles for Digital and Social Media and Elections in Africa

58. The Department of PAPS is supporting a continental initiative championed by the Electoral Commission of South Africa, under the aegis of the Association of African Electoral Authorities (AAEA) in developing Guidelines and Principles for Digital and social media in Elections. During the period under review, the Department of PAPS participated in the inaugural Technical Working Group held on 22-24 March 2023 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The expert group gathered African experts, Election Management Bodies (EMBs) and representatives of the Regional Economic Communities networks of EMBs. The aim of the Guidelines is to assist EMBs and other Electoral stakeholders in combatting disinformation and misinformation in elections while at the same time exploring ways in which institutions can harness the benefits of digital and social media. This EMB-led continental initiative has potential impact in fostering peaceful and democratic elections on the continent, within the existing normative continental and regional normative frameworks. The validation process is scheduled to take place in September 2023 before the adoption of the Guidelines during the General Assembly of the AAEA in November 2023. The AUC is the principal partner of the AAEA according to the AAEA Charter.

b. Technical Consultations with Organs and RECs for Strategic Engagement on Elections

59. The DPAPS undertook consultative meetings with the Pan African Parliament (PAP) from 12 – 16 March 2023 in Johannesburg – Republic of South Africa, and with Economic, Social & Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) from 2 – 4 April 2023 in Lusaka, Republic of Zambia.

60. The main objective of these initiatives was to explore strategies for strengthening the collaboration and making it more effective in promoting peaceful, democratic and credible elections across our beloved African continent. The past efforts of collaboration were reviewed and appreciated between the aforementioned counterparts, in lauding clear commitment towards closer collaboration and agreeing to enhance it.

61. In the same period, the DPAPS participated in the Pre-Summit for Democracy Dialogue in Defense of Democracy – Citizens Summit on Democracy held on 27 – 28 March 2023 in Lusaka, Zambia, organised by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Among the emerging points raised during this reflection session was the importance to strengthen the pro-democracy diplomatic achievements in Africa while respecting the sovereignty of States and African priorities.

c. Preparatory Meeting for the Declaration of Principles for International Elections Observation

62. The Governance and Conflict Prevention Directorate of AU DPAPS attended the preparatory meetings of the upcoming Declaration of Principles (DoP) for International Election Observation Implementation held on 25 – 26 May 2023 in Brussels, Belgium. The Annual Declaration of Principles for International Elections Observation Implementation Meeting will be hosted by the African Union in November 2023 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

63. As a background, the DoP establish the basis for credible international election observation. Adopted in 2005, it has so far been endorsed by over 50 organizations, including the African Union. Since its adoption, annual meetings have been held, bringing together endorsing organizations to deliberate on the implementation of the DoP. These gatherings enable members of the observation community to address key challenges and explore optimal approaches for advancing the field. The collective effort also facilitates continuous enhancement and standardization of methodologies employed in international election observation.

d. Second Specialized Training for AU Election Observers

64. The Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department (DPAPS) of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates of the Kingdom of Morocco jointly organized the Second Specialized Training for African Union Election Observers from 23 to 26 May 2023, in line with the African Union Election Observation Methodology to enhance the continental institution's capacity to observe and monitor democratic elections in Africa. The 50 participants in the training are drawn from all the five regions of the African continent.

65. The four-day training, which kicked off at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, in Rabat, Morocco, was held with the main objective to strengthen observers' capacities by equipping them with the necessary innovative technical, efficient mechanisms and tools on elections in order to further contribute to the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law in Africa, in accordance with national, regional and international standards. This 2023 training sessions emphasized on the best approaches that democracy offers in the path of promoting the Peace, Security and Development Nexus. Insights and examples of good practice in relation to the topic of the training were shared between trainees and trainers.

e. Annual Report on Elections in Africa – “Democracy at Work” & Documentary on AUEOM

66. The two (2) initiatives on the Annual Report on Elections in Africa and the Documentary on AUEOM were briefly introduced to the PSC in the previous report. At the time, they are under review within DPAPS before to be presented to the PSC and then, published and disseminated through required platforms during this third quarter of 2023. This will also contribute to further illustrate the robust work of the AU for the consolidation of pluralist democracy and the rule of law in Africa.

VI. OVERVIEW OF GOVERNANCE TRENDS

67. AU Electoral Observation (AUEOM) and Technical Assistance (TA) Missions contribute to further strengthen the transparency of electoral processes and good political governance in Member States. Governance suggests respect for the will of the Sovereign People as a primary source of democratic legitimation. The election therefore becomes one of the landmarks of democratic governance. This advises to consider the following governance emerging trends as reflected below for this period under review.

- a. Repercussions of coups and unfinished transitions** noted in the Member States concerned call more than ever on the PSC to become more involved for a peaceful and orderly outcome, within the consensual time limits, for a rapid return to Constitutional Order. In light of this perspective, the significance of promoting the 2022 Accra and Malabo Declarations has become increasingly crucial. It is imperative to address various global issues and challenges faced by our Member States, such as preventing unconstitutional changes of governments (UCGs), combating terrorism and cross-border crime, and fostering a culture of respecting

term limitations for presidential office. These endeavors hold greater importance than ever before and require concerted efforts to achieve their objectives.

- b. **Professionalism of electoral agents, as well as the survival of intermittent sporadic violence** in certain Member States are also part of concerns for our organization and its components to further consolidate good political governance and "democratic peace". **AU's strategic turning point commitment** in this area constitutes a real continental determination to work tirelessly to condemn and reject outright the use of violence and hate speech in the political arena as well as the systemic prioritization by all internal and external stakeholders of the recourse to free, sincere, transparent and regular elections as the sole source of access to power or to maintain it.
- c. **Half-tone inclusion in electoral participation.** The challenge of democratic governance also raises the question of the place of girls and women, pregnant and breastfeeding women, people living with disabilities and the elderly in the electoral process. In particular, this is regarding their position in the electoral lists, involvement as delegates of candidates or parties and coalitions in the running, EMBs members, equitable access to public media between competing actors, existence or not of a code of good conduct or consensus resulting from national inter- and intra-party-political dialogue. Incentive and decisive measures remain to be taken to integrate them into the heart of decision-making spaces, as true and real partners.
- d. **No boycott and acceptance of the results of the elections** has been observed during this first half of the year 2023. We can refer to the regular organisation of elections in accordance with the respective national electoral cycles; and with the participation of ruling and opposition parties in a peaceful manner in all the six (6) Member States that held elections between January to June 2023. In the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, since 2006-2007, elections were held in 2023 in a general context characterized by an absence of boycott by political class. All Mauritanian political parties participated in the May 2023 elections, following the political agreement between the Government, the political parties and the CENI. There is also the case of the Republic of Guinea Bissau where the opposition coalition (Pai-Terra Ranka) won elections and the ruling party (MADEM G-15) through the President of the Republic and all other parties represented in the 2023 legislative elections accepted the results without any conditions. In the Republic of Djibouti, the elections were peacefully held in a convivial atmosphere. **This is evidence that democracy is at work in Africa.**

VII. OUTLOOK OF UPCOMING ELECTIONS: JULY – DECEMBER 2023

68. In the latter half of 2023, presidential and national assembly elections are anticipated to take place in nine (9) Member States. The readiness status of each of these elections is outlined in the following paragraphs.

a. Republic of Zimbabwe

69. The Republic of Zimbabwe is expected to hold Harmonised Elections (presidential and national assembly) on 23 August 2023, as announced by the President of the Republic, in accordance with the Statutory Instrument 85 of 2023 Proclamation 4 of 2023. The current President, Emmerson Mnangagwa, will be seeking re-election in an election expected to be keenly contested. In line with the electoral laws and the Constitution, a president is elected on a two-round system. If no candidate gains outright majority during the first-round presidential votes, second round elections is held at a later date.

70. Between June and December 2022, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) undertook a delimitation exercise to set the boundaries of the wards and constituencies according to secs 160 and 161 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. A Preliminary Delimitation Report for this process has been produced and was delivered by ZEC to His Excellency, President Mnangagwa on 26th December 2022 and the Parliament of Zimbabwe on Friday, January 6, 2023. The delimitation exercise produced 1970 wards, up from 1958 wards for local authorities.

71. The Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) exercise was conducted in 68 district and 10 provincial offices of the ZEC. The exercise officially run from March 21 - 26, 2023. On May 29, 2023 - the ZEC announced that they had registered over 6.5 voters; out of which: 3,073,190 are female and 2,622,516 are male.

72. An assessment team of AU-COMESA deployed in Zimbabwe from 3 – 7 July 2023 indicates that the country and its institutions are ready to conduct the elections. It is worth noting that the assessment mission noted a decrease in pre-election violence ahead of the elections in comparative to previous years.

b. Gabonese Republic

73. The Gabonese Elections Center (Centre Gabonais des Élections: CGE) unveiled on June 25, 2023, at the end of a plenary meeting held at its headquarters in Libreville, the draft electoral calendar which sets the date of the presidential, legislative and local elections on August 26, 2023. This draft calendar, made public by the President of the CGE, Michel Stéphane Bonda, respectively provides for the deadline for candidacies: July 11, 2023; the opening of the campaign for the presidential election: August 11, 2023; the opening of the campaign for the legislative and local elections: August 16, 2023; and the closing date of the campaign for all these elections on August 25, 2023.

74. This plenary meeting was held the day after the hearing of all the parties concerned by the organization of the general elections to the Constitutional Court. The hearing was on the question of approaching the level of preparation of the organization of elections, in the concern of the respect of the constitutional deadlines. This draft timetable was then adopted by the Government on June 26, 2023 during the Council of Ministers.

75. It should be noted that as part of the preparations for the general elections of 2023, the President of the Republic has invited the entire political class to a national consultation; a decision that responds to the call of certain political actors wishing to organize meetings for electoral reform. The national consultation, which lasted 10 consecutive days (February 13-23, 2023), led to reform on the following issues:

- reintroduction of single-round voting for all political elections, thus replacing the two-round system. A reform that some political and civil society actors consider to be a democratic step backwards;
- introduction of 5-year terms for all elective terms (President of the Republic, senators, deputies and local elected officials) instead of terms of seven (7) and six (6) years;
- lifting of the limits imposed on the number of re-elections for all political offices (the elected were previously limited to two terms);
- decrease in deposits to participate in the elections;

- raising the age to be a presidential candidate (from 18 to 30).

76. A bill amending the Gabonese Constitution was submitted on March 17 and 30 2023 respectively to the National Assembly and the Senate, which adopted it. Then meeting in congress on April 6, 2023, the parliamentarians endorsed the adoption of the said project by 86% of the votes. It should be noted that this project contains all the consensual reforms of political consultation resulting in the modification of certain provisions of the Gabonese Constitution, in particular those relating to the reform of the electoral system. Thus, the amendments concerned six (6) articles of the Constitution (4, 9, 10, 11, 35 and 111).

77. Regarding the current political landscape, five (5) platforms stand out:

- the grouping of political parties of the Presidential Majority;
- the Alternance 2023 platform, which brings together 42 opposition political parties;
- the PG 41 platform, which brings together opposition political parties;
- the LIPPADES platform which brings together 14 opposition political parties;
- the Bloc of centrists.

c. Kingdom of Eswatini

78. According to the five-year electoral cycle, the Kingdom of Eswatini is expected to hold elections for the House of Assembly on 29 September of 2023. The Kingdom of Eswatini operates a two-round electoral system in the election of 59 members of the House of Assembly. A primary election is held in each of the country's chiefdoms to choose a candidate for the secondary election. The winner of the primary election then contests in the secondary elections held in the constituency that covers the chiefdom. Both rounds – primary and secondary – operate on a first-past-the-post basis, with all candidates running as independents. It should be recalled that the 2023 elections will take place at a crucial political stage in the history of Eswatini following the public protests of 2021/2022.

79. The attached table is reflecting the preparations for the 2023 Elections, as received from the Election and Boundaries Commission's (EBC) that is driving this process and quest to continuously improve the quality and credibility of the country's elections by considering recommendations from both local and international observers, including the African Union. The key lessons from the previous observer missions are: legislative amendments, to accommodate continuous voter registration, counting at the polling stations, representation of all groups, particularly marginalised groups.

ELECTION STAGE	DATE	STATUS
Voter registration	10 th May-14 th June, 2023	Ongoing
Validation of Voters' Roll and Transfers	22 nd June- 12 th July, 2023	Preparations ongoing
Nomination	22 nd July and 23 July	Preparations ongoing
Special Voting (primary)	22 nd August, 2023	Preparations ongoing
Primary Election	26 th August, 2023	Preparations ongoing
Campaign	27 th August to 27 th September, 2023	Preparations ongoing
Special Voting (secondary)	26 th September, 2023	Preparations ongoing
Secondary Election	29 th September, 2023	Preparations ongoing

d. Republic of Liberia

80. In accordance with the country's constitution, the Republic of Liberia is scheduled to conduct General Elections (for president, parliament, and senate) on October 10, 2023. The presidential election follows a two-round system, whereby if no candidate secures over 50% of the valid votes cast in the first round, a second-round ballot will be held between the two leading candidates. The incumbent president, George Weah, will be vying for a second five-year term in an election anticipated to be highly competitive.

81. In order to improve the level of transparency, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) has introduced biometric technology in the voter registration, it is weary of introducing same for voting. The electoral commission has insisted that for the 2023 elections, the manual voter system will be maintained and has assured stakeholders that the introduction of biometric voter registration system will help prevent multiple registration and voting.

e. Republic of Rwanda

82. The Government of the Republic of Rwanda has decided to synchronize Legislatives and Presidential elections as indicated by the office of the Prime Minister in a public release⁸. The immediate effect of that decision was to reschedule for 2024 Legislative elections initially planned in September 2023. The reform to organize coupled elections was suggested on 18th February 2023 by the Chairperson of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) Madam Oda GASINZIGWA, after being sworn in as the new President of the NEC.

83. During the Cabinet meeting chaired by the President Paul KAGAME on 24th March 2023, Ministers approved his proposal for the amendment of the Constitution, enabling the synchronization of election's calendar for legislatives and presidential elections. The major reasons for the synchronization of the two elections was the expressed need to optimize the time dedicated to the organization of both elections and the need to reduce the cost of elections that was mentioned as an

⁸ Republic of Rwanda, Office of the Prime Minister, Statement of Cabinet Resolutions of 24 March 2023, Resolution no 2, see also Africa 24, News Express, 26 mars 2023.

issue for all East African Community (EAC) Countries⁹ according to the Chairperson of the Rwanda's NEC. Thereafter, a draft revision of the Constitution was presented by the Rwanda Law Reform Commission to the Parliament for scrutiny and adoption.

On the 10th May 2023, the plenary sitting of the Chamber of Deputies adopted the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda after considering the report of the Conference of Chairpersons on the analysis of the draft revision initiated by the President of the Republic.

84. The Chamber of Deputies reviewed and adopted the revision of the Constitution, which was submitted to the Senate for further consideration as provided by the Constitution. In June 2023, the Plenary Sitting of the Senate adopted the revision of the Constitution as submitted to the President of the Republic for promulgation. The amended Constitution will be the basis for coupled Presidential and legislative elections that will take place in 2024.

f. Togolese Republic

85. The Togolese Republic will hold scheduled legislative elections in November 2023 in line with the country's constitutions. The precise date for the election is yet to be announced. Notably, the main opposition parties that boycotted the 2018 elections have expressed their readiness to participate in this upcoming election, raising hopes for increased political inclusivity and broader participation. It is noteworthy that these main opposition parties have encouraged their supporters to register for voting once the voter registration exercise commences, ensuring their active involvement in the legislative elections. It is worth recalling that the main opposition had previously discouraged their supporters from participating in the preceding voter registration process before the 2018 legislative elections as part of their decision to boycott the elections.

86. A CENI Communiqué of June 22, 2023, signed by its President, Dagro Yabre informs that the voter registration for the organization of the forthcoming electoral consultations took place from April 29 to June 14, 2023 throughout the territory, with 6,424 Registration and Voting Centers (Centres de Recensement et de Vote: CRV) and 6,585 operational List and Card Committees (Comités de Listes et Cartes: CLC). The deduplication phase started on June 26, 2023 for a period of 45 days according to the timetable established by the CENI on June 19, 2023, indicating also all the activities planned until the posting of the final electoral lists.

87. During the meeting of the Permanent Consultation Framework (Cadre Permanent de Concertation: CPC) on July 5 and 6, 2023, it was proposed that the regional and legislative elections, initially scheduled for the second half of 2023, be coupled and with a probability to be organized in the 1st quarter of 2024 for a calendar electoral much more flexible. This meeting saw the return of political opposition parties such as the National Alliance for Change (Alliance Nationale pour le Changement: ANC) and the Action Committee for Renewal (Comité d'Action pour le Renouveau: CAR) to the discussion table. The consultations should continue between the political actors and the CENI for a consensual timetable and the confirmation or not of the postponement of the elections.

g. Republic of Mali

88. In the Republic of Mali, the National Refoundation Meetings took place from December 27 to 30, 2021. One of the recommendations of these meetings is the establishment of a single election

⁹ Rwanda Today: "The issue of resources, and the budget, are a big challenge to most of our (EAC) partner states, including Rwanda (...) "Stakeholders came to a common understanding, and we think it is high time that we again look into how we can synchronize the dates of the elections for the President and Members of Parliament." (Statement by Madam Oda GASINZIGWA, the new Chairperson of NEC, Sunday April 09, 2023).

management body. Thus, the Independent Authority for the Management of Elections (Autorité Indépendante de Gestion des Élections: AIGE) was set up in October 2022.

89. The Council of Ministers adopted a bill amending Law No. 2022-019 of June 24, 2022 on the electoral Law. This Law entrusts the organization and management of all electoral and referendum operations to the AIGE, supported in the implementation of its attributions and on the technical and operational, by the Ministry in charge of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (Ministère de l'Administration du Territoire et Décentralisation: MATD).

90. According to the timetable established by the MATD on June 27, 2022, the Referendum was scheduled for March 2023. It was finally held on June 18, 2023. Due to security challenges, this ballot could not be held throughout extent of the territory, like the regions of Kidal, Menaka and some polling stations in Mopti. The announced voter turnout is 39.40%. The votes obtained: 97% for YES and 3% for NO. The Constitutional Court (CC) should soon officially proclaim the results of the Referendum announced by the AIGE. Less than a dozen appeals have therefore been submitted to the Constitutional Court to request the cancellation of this Referendum.

91. The 1st and 2nd rounds of the legislative elections are respectively expected for October 29 and November 19, 2023, according to the same aforementioned timetable. Following analyses from the national stakeholders, these dates are likely to be modified through political consultations and with regard to the activities to be done within the three (3) months remaining to reach the said dates.

h. Republic of Madagascar

92. The Republic of Madagascar is scheduled to hold first round presidential election on 9 November 2023. Five months before the first round of the presidential election, the political context is marked by the start of political dialogue initiated by the CENI with the support of Technical and Financial Partners (TFPs). In line with the electoral laws and the constitution, in candidates gets over 50% of total valid votes cast, a second-round ballot will be held on 20 December 2023 between the two leading candidates. The current president, Andry Rajoelina is expected to contest for his second and last term in office, if re-elected. One innovation in the electoral politics in Madagascar is that an incumbent seeking re-election is expected to resign 60 days before the first-round election is organised to ensure level playing field among the candidates. Efforts are currently ongoing by the CENI to review the voters register before the election.

i. Democratic Republic of Congo

93. The Democratic Republic of Congo will hold general elections on 20 December 2023 to elect the president, members of National Assembly as well as provincial assemblies. These will be the fourth general elections since the end of the civil war in 2002. The previous elections held in 2018, after a two-year delay, marked the first peaceful transfer of power since independence in 1960. President Felix Tshisekedi will be contesting for his second and final term in office as stipulated in the Constitution. The pre-electoral context has been marked with significant insecurity orchestrated by numerous armed groups in the Eastern part of the country, especially the Mouvement 23 (M23) which has impacted on the capacity of the Independent National Electoral Commission to carry out full voter registration in provinces by the affected insecurity, notably, North, South and Ituri.

94. As per the Electoral National Independent Commission (CENI), the period between June 26 and July 15, 2023 is designated for the establishment of the Offices for the reception and processing of applications (Bureau de Réception et Traitement des Candidatures: BRTC) for national deputies, including the submission and handling of application files. On August 2, 2023, the electorate will be officially summoned for the election of provincial deputies and municipal councilors. Subsequently,

from August 3 to 22, 2023, the BRTCs will commence operations for the election of provincial deputies and municipal councilors, encompassing the submission and processing of candidate files. Finally, on September 1, the electorate will be summoned for the Presidential election. A total of 171 BRTCs will be established across the Republic to facilitate these electoral processes.

95. In addition, the CENI specified that these operations are scheduled in accordance with the 2023-2024 electoral calendar made public on November 26, 2022, the major operations of which are, normally, the constitution of the electoral file, the operation of reception and processing of candidacies for the direct elections, the organization of direct and indirect polls, the election of governors as well as that of senators. It has also encouraged political parties and coalitions to promote gender in their lists of candidates.

j. State of Libya

96. In early 2023, Libyan Government announced to be ready to hold general elections this year 2023. Recalling that these elections were previously scheduled to take place in December 2021 and postponed due to disagreements over election Laws among the Libyan parties. It is in this wake that many initiatives likely to prepare the ground have been taken for the organization of presidential and legislative elections and to reduce the differences that divide the political parties and forces and the social groups in place.

97. In this context, the Assembly of Representatives, located in Benghazi, adopted on February 7, 2023 the 13th Constitutional Amendment. Among the most significant changes made to the 2011 Constitutional Declaration are the:

- establishment of a two-headed executive power, composed of a President, a Prime Minister, a Cabinet chosen by the latter, and all appointed by the President;
- choice of a bicameral Assembly, composed of a House of Representatives based in Benghazi and a Senate based in Tripoli;
- attributions as well as the relations between these institutions have been clearly specified.

98. As for the national dialogue on the organization of presidential and legislative elections, a specific mechanism has been put in place to resolve all differences relating to the constitutional and legislative framework governing these elections. This mechanism consists in setting up a joint committee for the preparation of electoral Laws. It is made up of 12 members, 6 representing the Parliament and 6 representing the High Council of State (6 + 6).

99. This committee held intensive meetings during the month of May 2023, in Bouznika, Morocco, and declared to reach a consensus on the Laws governing the election of the President of the State of Libya as well as the legislative elections. The bills were sent to the Assembly of Representatives in early June 2023. Some stakeholders and international community including the United Nations and the African Union expressed hope that elections would be held in Libya in 2023.

Note: For all the nine (9) elections expected to be held during the second half of the year 2023, the DPAPS will deploy election observers in integrating a preventive diplomacy approach, depending on the political prevailing context. Also, where the financial resources of the Commission will allow, some form of technical assistance will be provided to some of the Member States who may so require.

VIII. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

100. After having mentioned all the Member States covered during the first semester of this year 2023 and those which will have to be covered during the second half, and taking due account of the related AU DPAPS activities as well as the actors, issues, challenges and prospects; the following recommendations are proposed for the consideration of the AU PSC:

- Continue further along the path of consolidating democratic gains, the pluralist rule of law and the proper holding of inclusive, regular, transparent and credible elections;
- Provide more resources to EMBs in order to better execute their mandates in accordance with the National Legal Framework and relevant regional, continental and international Standards, which guarantee the successful organization of acceptable electoral processes that contribute to democratic, peaceful and orderly devolution power;
- Perpetuate and always strengthen consensual democracy, in particular the permanent dialogue between actors, the adoption of a code of conduct and the strict rejection of violence and hate speech in all circumstances on the political spectrum;
- Stimulate the representation of girls, women, pregnant and breastfeeding women, elderly people and those living with disabilities throughout electoral processes in Africa while developing access ramps and adoption of ballots in braille to facilitate their full participation in elections;
- Increase their participation among electoral staff and delegates of candidates, political parties and coalitions contesting in order to promote inclusive participatory democracy;
- Pay particular attention to gender parity under continental and international provisions such as the Maputo Protocol, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), Vision 2030, Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- Prioritize consolidating reforms and reject the use of unconstitutional changes, coups d'Etat, terrorism, violence and hate speech in all circumstances in Member States, particularly during electoral processes;
- Popularize the 2022 Accra and Malabo Declarations, Vision 2030 and Agenda 2063 of the AU as well as AU instruments that contribute to the consolidation of democratic peace on the continent;
- Continue to better integrate the African diasporas in the choice of leaders and to involve them more dynamically in the definition of national policies so that their expertise also serves the good governance of Member States;
- Strengthen the resilience capacities of Member States to better cope with the repercussions in terms of spill over effects of the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ukrainian-Russian conflict against the backdrop of the struggle of the great powers on national economies and living together but also the deregulation of hydrocarbon prices and their impact on the stable and efficient organization of elections in the Member States;
- Adopt the art of good governance to better face contemporary issues and challenges in order to strengthen the fundamentals of Nation States, peace, security and stability, guarantees of any sustainable development;
- Urge Member States holding elections in the second half of 2023 to take all necessary measures to ensure inclusive, peaceful, credible and transparent elections;

- Renewal of the request for the PSC to work together with the Permanent Representative Committee (PRC) and its appropriate Sub Committee in allocating adequate resources to the AUC in support of electoral processes on the continent;
- Note with satisfaction the progress on the preparation of the 2022 Annual Report on Elections in Africa - Democracy at Work and the Documentary on AUEOMs; and urge the DPAPS to finalise and disseminate them.

IX. CONCLUSION

101. As the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP) of Agenda 2063 ends, a set of goals, priority areas and targets that the continent aims to achieve at national, regional and continental levels in promoting democratic governance will be key. Against this background, efforts have been noted during this first half of the year as progress in terms of participatory democracy within Member States, in particular the regular holding of elections in peaceful atmosphere, acceptance of the results and no boycott of the elections.

a. However, the use of violence and hate speech has been marginal but intermittently existing on the one hand; and that the resurgence of coups and the non-return for the moment to constitutional order on the other hand; in some Member States constitute real challenges for our Organization and the RECs and RMs.

b. Cognizant of the fact that the FTYIP comes to an end in 2023 and before to start with the second Ten-Year Plan from next year 2024, this is an opportunity to take stocks and call on Member States to further promote the dynamics of virtuous national, regional and international cooperation and more consolidate democratic peace in Africa.

c. The AU will spare no effort to ensure that the continent continues its path towards greater democracy, peace, security and stability in order to induce the optimal conditions for harmonious, equitable and sustainable development. Hence the need to strengthen the means of action of the AU DPAPS, in particular the Democracy and Elections Unit (DEU), which plays a decisive role in the fulfilment of its mandate for good democratic governance.

X. ANNEX: AU 2023 PROVISIONAL ELECTIONS CALENDAR IN MEMBER STATES

105. The AU 2023 provisional elections calendar indicates that presidential and national assembly elections are scheduled to take place in fifteen (15) AU Member States. Specifically, eight (8) presidential and thirteen (13) legislative / national assembly elections will be organised across de continent with regard to the normal electoral cycle of respective countries, as shown in the table below. Elections have already been organised in six (6) Member States during this first half of 2023. It is expected at least nine (9) Members States to hold elections in the second half of the year 2023.

AU 2023 Provisional Elections Calendar

No.	COUNTRY	TYPE OF ELECTION	DATE	RUN-OFF	REMARKS
1.	Benin	National Assembly	8 January		
2.	Djibouti	Parliamentary	24 February		
3.	Nigeria	President, House of Representatives & Senate	25 February		
4.	Mauritania	National Assembly	13 May	27 May	
5.	Guinea Bissau	National Assembly	4 June		
6.	Sierra Leone	Presidential	24 June		
7.	Zimbabwe	General	23 August		
8.	Gabon	General	26 August		
9.	Eswatini	Parliamentary	29 September		
10.	Rwanda	National Assembly	September		Postponed to 2024
11.	Liberia	Presidential	10 October		
12.	Mali	National Assembly	29 October	19 November	
13.	Madagascar	Presidential	9 November	20 December	
14.	Togo	National Assembly	November		
15.	DRC	Presidential & National Assembly	20 December		
16.	Libya	Presidential & Parliamentary	TBD		

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Communiqué of the 1165th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council held on 31 July 2023, on the Consideration of the Mid-Year Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Elections in Africa, Covering the Period from January to June 2023 and the Outlook of Elections to be Organized in Africa During the Second Half of the Year.

Peace and Security Council

African Union Commission

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