

Upcoming African Elections for 2021/2022 (now 'til March)

2021

1. Somalia's Presidential Election

Somalia's political leaders have agreed to hold a long-delayed indirect presidential election on October 10th, following a prolonged period of deadlock and violence. However, it is likely that this election will be further postponed with the federal government spokesman describing how "the specified date will not be met" and attributing this to administrative problems. This election follows an unprecedented constitutional crisis which was triggered when the President and the leaders of Somalia's five states had been unable to agree on the terms of a vote before his term lapsed in February 2020. In April, the political impasse exploded into violence when negotiations collapsed and the lower house extended the President's mandate by two years, sparking gun battles on the streets of Mogadishu and putting the country on the verge of sinking into a new civil war. Under pressure, the President reversed the extension decision and ordered his Prime Minister and state leaders to chart a fresh roadmap towards elections. In May 2020, plans to commence the multi-stage election within 60 days helped to ease political tensions with Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble releasing a statement hoping that "the election will be a peaceful and transparent one." However, the recent departure from the announced schedule further exacerbates the election crisis and disturbs the peace of Somalia which has long suffered from political instability and deep security problems, not to mention mounting political and tribal polarization. Any further delay increases the potential for violence and plays into the hands of al-Shabaab and other extremist groups seeking to destabilise the country. In turn, international bodies have doubled their calls for dialogue in recent weeks to prevent the country from falling into chaos again.

2. Cabo Verde Presidential Election

The Cabo Verde presidential election will take place October 17th, 2021, following the electoral campaign period from 30 September to 15 October 2021. The Constitutional Court announced that seven candidates would compete with the main parties including the ruling Movement for Democracy (MPD) that supported the former president and the opposition African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV). President Jorge Carlos Fonseca who came to power in 2011 and was re-elected in 2016 with 74% of votes will not run as he has reached the maximum limit of two terms according to the country's regulations. In comparison to other African nations, the political situation in Cabo Verde is generally stable with regular elections and peaceful transfers of power as seen in the last election held in 2016 which was regarded as free and fair. In saying that, authorities will nonetheless deploy additionally security personnel during the campaign period despite the potential for widespread clashes being unlikely.

3. Chad National Assembly & Local Elections

The upcoming elections in Chad, scheduled for the 24th of October 2021, follow the dramatic events earlier this year. The April 2021 election saw Chad's long-ruling President Idriss Deby Into be re-elected to a 6th term securing 79% of votes cast. However, the following day, a sudden advance of the insurgency group Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT) from its Libyan sanctuary was met by a strong military response led by President Idriss Déby Into, who died on the frontline. This created a dangerous vacuum of power in the country combined with uncertain facts around his death, lending to conspiracy theories. In the

subsequent tumult, the President's son, Mahamat Idriss Déby grabbed power with the support of people close to the former president. Following these dramatic events, on the 29th of July 2021, the National Transition Council in N'Djamena presented a roadmap for the reintroduction of democracy in Chad. Within the roadmap, the Council promised parliamentary and presidential elections between June and September 2021. These elections come at a time when the political situation in Chad is dangerously fluid with fears of a coup or civil war accompanying high hopes for real democratic change and reconciliation. The most realistic scenario frustratingly familiar with the country's political and security institutions being corroded which makes true political reforms highly unlikely.

4. The Gambia Presidential Election

The Gambia is approaching presidential elections which are set for the December 4th, 2021. This will be the first vote since the electoral defeat of former President Yaha Jammeh in January 2017 by a coalition of opposition parties which ended 22 years of his leadership. The next presidential election has extremely high stakes and will be central to cementing the country's transition to a democratic state. Important contextual vulnerabilities such as legal, political, and socio-economic drivers will contribute to the risk of election-related violence, and there is also a threat that the country's democratic transition may be subverted by the return to government of Jammeh. Gambia's current President Adama Barrow dropped a political bombshell earlier this month by forming an alliance with the political party of the exiled Jammeh in saying he would grant Jammeh amnesty should he win the December presidential election. Mr Jammeh took power in 1994 in a military coup and until 2017 ruled The Gambia in a tough manner before leaving to Equatorial Guinea after losing the presidential election to Adama Barrow.

The next Gambia Legislative election is set to take place in April 2022, with a specific date yet to be decided. This follows the last legislative election which was held on the 6th of April 2017 and resulted in a landslide victory for the United Democratic Party, winning 31 of 53 seats.

1. Libya Presidential and Parliamentary Elections

The 2021 Libyan presidential election is scheduled to take place on 24 December 2021, followed by the parliamentary election a month later. Since the 2011 fall of dictator Moamer Kadhafi, Libya has endured a decade of conflict in the form of a complex civil war that has dragged in multiple foreign powers. A landmark ceasefire between eastern and western camps last year paved the way for a United Nations backed peace process and sparked hope for stability and unity. However, tensions and negotiations over how voting would take place, including a controversial law the parliament speaker issued for the presidential election, has thrown into question whether elections will happen at all. Such disputes have laid bare the extent of the split between the country's east and west despite the election supposedly helping to unify the country after years of division.

The elections are due to take place in just over 2 months however an agreement is yet to be made within the country on laws governing the election. Further, there are signs that the populist interim government, theoretically appointed by the UN to manage services ahead of the elections, may seek to capitalise on the impasse and stay in power indefinitely.

2022

5. Mali Legislative and Presidential Election

Mali's presidential and legislative elections are set to take place on the 27 February 2022. This will uphold the promises of an 18-month transition for returning to an elected government, replacing the transitional government who took power after a military coup in 2020. The coup occurred on 18 August when young military officers overthrew the country's elected president after a mounting wave of protests on his handling of Mali's conflict and the country's economic malaise. Heading into the elections, doubts have grown on whether this ambitious timetable will be met due to a year of the transition being unproductive as well as the country facing major logistical and security challenges, as swathes of territory are in the hands of armed groups. The international community considers the restoration of constitutional order to be essential to overcome security, social and economic issues and for which Mali is crucial to the stability of the Sahel. In saying that, with the absence of progress, it appears people may be resigned to the possibility of postponing the February elections.

Republic of Congo National Assembly Election

- Expected to be held by July 2022

Senegal National Assembly Election

- Expected to be held by July 2022

Angola Presidential, National Assembly & local Elections

- Set for August 2022

Kenya General Election (President, National Assembly, Senate, County Assemblies and Local)

- Set for August 9th, 2022

Lesotho General Election

- Set for September 2022

Sierra Leone Local Elections

- Speculation on whether will occur 2022/2023/2024

Somaliland Presidential Election

- Set for November 2022

Sudan General Election

- Set for late 2022