

MADAGASCAR: REPORT ON DECEMBER 2006 ELECTION

Introduction:

It will be recalled that Madagascar became independent on the 26th of June 1960. President Philibert Tsiranana was the first President of Madagascar from the Social Democratic Party (SDP). He was re-elected in March 1972. However, in 1972 the army intervened and deposed him, and Gen. Gabriel Ramanatsona became the Head of the State. Subsequently, in 1975, a Provisional Government was formed and Mr. Didier Ratsiraka became the Head of the government. In the early 1990s, Mr. Ratsiraka gradually began to ease political restriction and in effect paved the way for the formation of political parties. In 1993, Mr. Albert Zafy, member of the Henry Velona Movement became the second elected President of Madagascar. Mr. Ratsiraka was re-elected President in 1997 from the platform of the Association for the rebirth of Madagascar (AREMA).

In 2001 election the two presidential candidates Mr. Marc Ravalomanana and Mr. Didier Ratsiraka claimed victory. However, the power struggle ended with the intervention of the international community and recognition of Mr. Ravalomanana by US and France as President. Thus, the December 2006 election was an attempt to deepen the democratic process in Madagascar.

The election process began on the 3rd of December 2006. There were 14 presidential candidates that includes the incumbent President Ravalomanana from the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD). The others were: Elia Ravelomanantsoa, the only female candidate; Pierrot Rajaonarivelo of the Association of the Rebirth of Madagascar (AREMA) party; former speaker of the National Assembly, Jean Lahiniriko; former church minister, Richard Andriamanjato; and Roland Ratsiraka, mayor of the port

city of Toamasina and nephew to former president, Didier Ratsiraka. AREMA is the former party of Didier Ratsiraka.

There were no major problems in the build up to the election. However, an incident occurred when General Andrianafidisoa, on the 17th November, called for the President to stand down and announced provisional government. Nevertheless, the military did not respond to this call and the incident apparently did not affect the election.

The planning of the election was in accordance with Madagascar's constitution. The Ministry of Interior and Administration (MIRA) managed the administrative process under the supervision of the National Electoral Council (NEC). It was clear from the early provisional results as shown below that Mr Ravalomanana leads with 69.62% in the counted votes and the indication is that he could be returned as the President.

Provisional Results:

1.	Marc Ravalomanana	69.62%
2.	Norbert Ratsirahonana	8.86%
3.	Herizo Razafimahaleo	7.11%
4.	Roland Ratsiraka	5.98%
5.	Jean Lahiniriko	3.34%
6.	Elia Revelomanantsoa	1.89%
7.	Ny Hasina Andrimanjato	1.54%
8.	Pasteur Randrianjoary	0.96%
9.	Pety Rakotoniaina	0.31%
10.	Daniel Rajakoba	0.31%
11.	Manandafy	0.06%
12.	Philippe Tsiranana	0.01%
13.	Razakarimanana Ferdin	0.00%
14.	Monja Roindefo	0.00%

According to the election rules, the High Constitutional Court (HCC) is required to announce the final results within 20 days.

Conclusion

The successful conclusion of the Madagascar third Presidential election voting process is another indication of sound development in peaceful democratic change in Africa. Provisional results show President Ravalomanana is ahead of his challengers. The international community will be keen to see a successful conclusion to the election in Madagascar, bearing in mind the history of conflict and political instability that has dogged Madagascar since its independence.

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