News From the *ACE Electoral Knowledge Network*

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Feature Articles

An ACE & BRIDGE Hub for West Africa: the Gorée Institute When the ferry arrives on Gorée Island, a stunning atmosphere of confusion and excitement confronts visitors in the remaining ghosts of the slave trade. There is no need to turn back, but rather face this history and its dark pages upon which new hopes of peace are written. … read more »

Elections Canada workshop on Canadian Aboriginal Electoral Participation The 2009 APRC was jointly sponsored by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the University of Western Ontario and the National Association of Friendship Centres. This was the third APRC featuring 130 workshops with over 250 presenters. The event brought together researchers, students, policy makers, Aboriginal leaders … read more »

Guinea Struggles to Register Voters The obstacles to this new biometric system included months of negotiations between political parties and the Government of Guinea (GoG), as well as the postponement of the June 2007 legislative elections. Despite the obstacles, a two-phased project to support the electoral process in Guinea was finally formalized in February 2008. … read more »

A Primer on Iran's Presidential Election System Iran has had an election of some type almost every year since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The administration of these elections is decentralized and a grass-roots operation. ... read more »

What's New with ACE

New Questions Answered

Family and Proxy Voting in Macedonia *"In line with international standards and the regional forum's recommendations to outlaw and eliminate family voting, UNDP Macedonia is planning to launch a project aimed at raising public awareness on vote secrecy accentuating that proxy and family voting is a strong violation of electoral rights. We are wondering if colleagues, when working with elections in other parts of the world, have already faced similar problems of group/family voting? How did they tackle the matter, provided that regulation prohibiting proxy-family voting is not enforced?"* ... read more »

Gender Quotas in African Countries *"What are some strategies and legislation in African countries that call for the 30% quota? Have any of the quotes been adopted in national constitutions? "* ... read more »

Conduct during Elections for Civil Servants and Ministers *"This question is a request for comparative information regarding Campaign/Election related Codes of Conduct for Ministers and Civil Servants."* ... read more »

Information Resources

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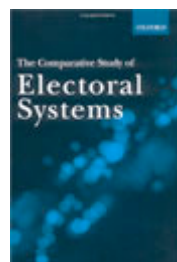

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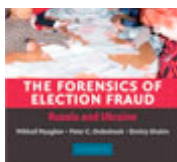Order your copy »

The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems

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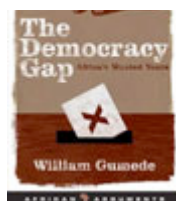**The Forensics of Election Fraud: Russia and Ukraine**

The Democracy Gap: Africa's Wasted Years

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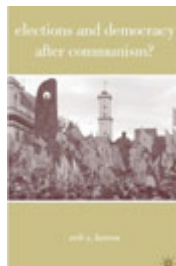Order your copy »

Ethnicity and Electoral Politics

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Election Calendar
Comoros Legislative, April
India Parliamentary, April 16
South Africa Parliamentary, April 22
India Parliamentary (Stage Two), April 23
Iceland Parliamentary, April 25
Ecuador Presidential, April 26
Andorra Parliamentary, April 26

Events Calendar
May 12-14, 2009 | Ouagadougou, Bukina Faso
The ECOWAS Network of Election Commissions (West Africa) General Meeting.

May 13 - 17, 2009 | Maseru, Lesotho
African Association of Election Authorities General Meeting. Visit: www.aaeaweb.org

June 4 - 5, 2009 | Toronto, Canada
Conference on Voter Registration Technology and Integrated Data Systems International
Foundation for Electoral Systems & PEW Center for the States
Contact: Gabrielle Bardall, GBardall@ifes.org

June 15 - 19, 2009
EC-UNDP-IDEA Joint Training on Effective Electoral Assistance
Accra, Ghana
http://www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/

June 21 – 23, 2009, Ottawa, Canada

Sixth Inter-American Meeting of EMBs
entitled : Strengthening Electoral Processes: The role of EMBs between Elections, Voter
Registry and International Electoral Observation
Co Hosted by E-Canada and Organization of American States

August 10 - 11, 2009, | Montreal, Canada
2009 Electronic Voting Technology Workshop/Workshop on Trustworthy Elections
USENIX/ACCURATE
http://www.usenix.org/events/evtwote09/

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Contribute**: We welcome contributions to the ACE newsletter**

ACE Electoral Knowledge Network

- English

A Primer on Iran's Presidential Election System

Iran's Presidential election is set for June 12, 2009. With much domestic and international attention focused on what could be pivotal elections, the following is a primer on the Presidential election system of Iran.

By Homeyra Mokhtarzada

Iran has had an election of some type almost every year since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The administration of these elections is decentralized and a grass-roots operation.

Iran's various elections are governed by both the constitution and specific electoral laws. According to the Presidential Election Law, Iran has two main bodies involved in the electoral process – the Guardian Council and the Ministry of Interior (MoI). The MoI is responsible for administration of elections while the Guardian Council is mandated with a broad supervisory role.

Photo : Hossein Fatemi   FARS NEWS AGENCY

Election Administration

Approximately three months prior to the presidential election, the MoI's Election Centre becomes operational. Iran is made up of 669 districts forming 330 counties that make up the 30 provinces of the country. Each district is headed by a District Administrator, each county is headed by a Governor. At each level, appointees of the MoI are responsible for the grass-roots organization that implements elections. In addition, prior to the election, Election Executive Committees are formed at each level. By law, these Committees are constituted of a Governor/District Administrator (who chairs the Committee), the county/district prosecutor, the head of the civil registration office and eight members of the public.

Election Executive Committees are responsible for:

- Deciding the number and location of polling stations

- Informing the public about elections including the election date, voting hours, voting qualifications and voting station locations
- Selecting eight public representatives for the Election Executive Committees
- Evaluating election complaints

The full Election Executive Committee at the district level assigns poll workers for each polling station. The polling station team is composed of a chief, a deputy and 3 secretaries. In addition to this five-member team, the Governor of each county assigns a sixth person to each polling station.

Election Supervision

For each presidential election, the Guardian Council establishes a Central Supervisory Committee made up of two members of the Guardian Council and five individuals chosen by consensus by the Council.

The Central Supervisory Committee selects a supervisor for each county and together they:

- Assign representatives to every polling station
- Supervise the overall quality of the elections, including monitoring for fraud

Meantime, the Guardian Council reserves the right to nullify or suspend the election throughout all of Iran or just in a specific region or polling station if the election or components of the election are deemed to have been fraudulent.

Becoming a candidate

Iran's president serves a 4-year term. There are general requirements for candidacy which include: the candidate be of Iranian origin, they be a citizen of Iran, they be reputable and qualified to be care-takers of the Republic, they be thoughtful and possess management abilities, they believe in Islam and the principles of the Islamic Republic and lastly, they be persons with a record of religious and political
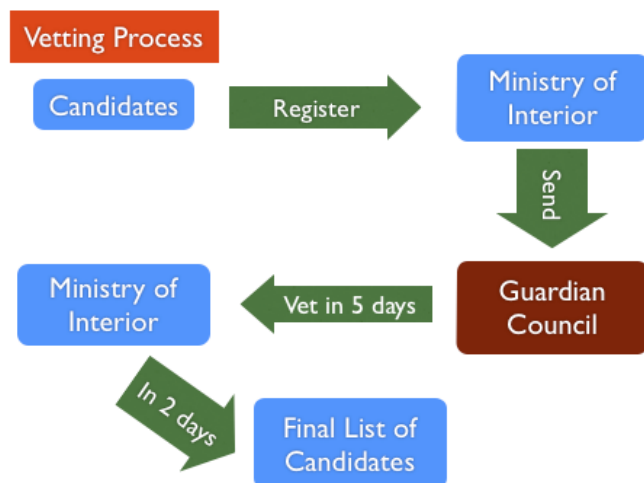
affiliation.

Because additional requirements such as age or education are not specifically mandated, there are typically hundreds, if not thousands, of people who register to be a candidate in the presidential elections. However, registration does not guarantee the ability to run for the office.

Once candidates register with the MoI, the Ministry sends the list of names to the Guardian Council. The Guardian Council then vets the list according to the requirements laid out in the law. In this way, many people can be disqualified for lacking the requisite qualifications. While the Guardian Council is vetting the candidate list, candidates also have the opportunity to submit information or testimonials that confirm their eligibility and qualifications. Once the Guardian Council completes its vetting, a final list of candidates is sent to the MoI, which publishes the list.

Campaigning

The publication of the names of the candidates marks the start of the official campaign period. Campaigning ends 24 hours before Election Day.
To ensure all candidates benefit equally from the State's resources, the MoI establishes an Election Campaign Monitoring Commission. The members of this commission include the Attorney General or his/her representative, the Interior Minister or his/her representative, the managing director of the state media or his/her representative and a representative of the Guardian Council. According to the law, every candidate has equal access to State media for purposes of campaigning.

Some provisions governing campaigns include:

- Government employees cannot campaign for or against candidates
- It is illegal to destroy the posters or ads of any candidates during the campaign period
- Candidates and their supporters are prohibited from insulting or defaming other candidates
- Election officials are barred from campaigning for candidates

Voting in Iran

In Iran, there is no voter registration or roll. Iranians can vote anywhere as long as they present their national identification book, or *Shenasnameh*. The system is set up to prevent fraud at a number of levels, starting with voting procedures.

 Iran has a two-part ballot – the ballot itself and a stub portion. When a voter enters the polling station, there is a check of their *shenasnameh* for authenticity to ensure the voter is eligible to vote (the voting age in Iran is 16) and that the voter has not already voted in the election. For every election in Iran, there is a unique ink stamp which is stamped into a voter's *shenasnameh*. This latter check is based on an examination of the *shenasnameh* to ensure there is not already a stamp from the current election in the booklet.

The voter's information, consisting of basic biographical data, is then entered onto the stub portion of the ballot. It is important to note that the stub, once detached from the ballot, cannot be matched to the ballot. There are no serial numbers or any other markings that tie the two parts together. Thus, it is realistically impossible to know for whom a voter cast a ballot.

Once the stub portion of the ballot is completed and the *shenasnameh* stamped, the stub is separated from the ballot and deposited into a box where all the stubs are collected. The voter then proceeds to the voting station, fills in the name of their desired candidate, folds the ballot in half and casts their ballot in a ballot box.

The Count

Polling stations in Iran are typically open from 8am to 8pm. These hours can be extended by the MoI if the turnout warrants it.

Once the polling station is closed, the counting process begins. Polling station officials first count the ballot stubs, followed by the ballots. If the number of stubs and ballots are equal, then the actual vote count begins. If there are more votes than ballots, then the difference is randomly selected from the ballot box

and the votes cancelled, then the ballots are counted. In cases where there are more stubs than ballots, the discrepancy is reported and the votes are counted.

Once the votes are counted and results tallied, the official results are certified, all ballots are returned to the ballot box, which is then sealed and officially transferred to the Executive Committee.

It is important to note that neither the general public nor outside entities are permitted to officially monitor the elections. However, candidate agents may be present at every polling station during the voting hours and during the vote count. Additionally, they may attend every Election Executive Committee meeting during the election period.

Determining the Winner

The Iranian President is determined through an absolute majority. In other words, the person with 50%+1 of the votes is the winner. However, in cases where there is no absolute majority, the law calls for a runoff election between the top two vote getters. The runoff election is mandated to take place within one week of the first round of elections.

Once a winner is determined, the Guardian Council approves the election process and the Supreme Leader signs off on the Letter of Presidency. The new president takes the oath of office before the Iranian Majles (Parliament).

Homeyra Mokhtarzada is a Programme Manager specializing in Afghanistan and Iran with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems.

ACE Electoral Knowledge Network

- English

An ACE & BRIDGE Hub for West Africa: the Gorée Institute

This article chronicles the Institute's efforts to develop the electoral capacity of the West Africa Region.

By Ibrahima Amadou Niang

When the ferry arrives on Gorée Island, a stunning atmosphere of confusion and excitement confronts visitors in the remaining ghosts of the slave trade. There is no need to turn back, but rather face this history and its dark pages upon which new hopes of peace are written. As most visitors rush to the Slave House, others serenely move towards an old ochre building which the indigenous people take pride in calling the Gorée Institute.

With a mission to build open and self-reliant societies on the African continent, the Gorée Institute is the major link between the Pan-African intelligentsia and the rest of the world. From March 23 – 27, 2009, the Gorée Institute hosted the very first Building Resources in Democracy Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) training course in Senegal specifically for west African civil society Organisations (CSOs) working in electoral processes. This five-day training facilitated by both Theophilus Dowetin of IDEA and Ibrahima Amadou Niang of Gorée completed the following set of BRIDGE objectives:

- Train CSOs in various aspects of electoral management
- Introduce the BRIDGE curriculum and its pedagogy to West African CSOs
- Position the Gorée Institute as a hub of excellence for both Administrations and Cost of Elections (ACE) and BRIDGE in West Africa

- Allow potential donors to familiarize themselves with BRIDGE

At the end of the BRIDGE training hosted by the Gorée Institute, all participants expressed a willingness to see this curriculum introduced to more west African civil society organisations. They believe BRIDGE is the most comprehensive and participant oriented course on elections they have attended and expressed a wish to see more *Train the Facilitator* courses organised for West African Civil Society Organisations.

Since July 2007, Gorée Institute has been the ACE Regional Electoral Centre for West Africa and has been working closely with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) to implement the ACE project in the region. Thanks to this dynamic partnership, the Institute accomplished many necessary goals over the course of 20 months:

- Take part in three election observation missions
  - Zambia General Elections 2008 with EISA
  - Ghana General Elections 2008 1 & 2 with the African Union
- Participate in top regional meetings on elections
  - Convention of Democracies 2007 in Mali
  - Two 2008 Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) conferences
  - Centre Africain de Formation et de Recherche Administratives pour le Développement (CAFRAD) meeting on Electoral Dispute Resolution 2008 in Tangier
- Have a staff member accredited as a bilingual full BRIDGE facilitator
- Get funds from the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDF) to implement a new project called *Gorée Centre for Electoral Processes* in which three (3) BRIDGE trainings are to be organised for West African Civil Society Organisations
- Disseminate electoral information and electoral materials in West Africa
- Promote ACE and BRIDGE in the region

Under the *Gorée Centre for Electoral Processes* project, the Gorée Institute launched the first network of West African Civil Society organisations working in electoral processes on January 30, 2009. About 15 west African civil society organisations agreed to establish a network to share best practices, develop capacities of their staff and increase the quality of civil society work in elections. This new network is called the *West African Centre for Elections*.

Along with complete synchronization between all electoral process projects currently managed by the Gorée Institute, ACE is the knowledge sharing channel through which best practices and information are disseminated. BRIDGE is the capacity development course used by the Gorée Centre for Electoral Processes project to build the capacities of west African civil society organisations working in electoral processes.

The steering committee is composed of seven member organisations out of which six have been already designated: West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF), the Gorée Institute, the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) in Ghana, ADG in Burkina Faso, La Rencontre africaine pour la défense des droits de l'Homme (RADDHO) and REDEMEC Cape Verde. This centre will soon be fully operational, basing the coordinating secretariat at the Gorée Institute.

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Ibrahima Amadou Niang is a Project Manager for the Gorée Institute

ACE Electoral Knowledge Network

- English

Guinea Struggles to Register Voters

After years of trials and tribulations, including the death of a president, a military coup, political deadlock, and general strikes, Guinea is a few days away from having a new voter registry.

By Elizabeth Côté

This new biometric system was chosen following years of negotiations between political parties and the Government of Guinea, as well as the repetitive postponement of the June 2007 legislative elections. Despite the obstacles, a two-phased project to support the electoral process in Guinea was finally formalized in July 2007. The first phase consisted of the organization of the voter registration process. The second phase consisted of assisting all aspects of the electoral process.

The Voter Registration process is funded chiefly by the European Union (EU) and managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through a trust fund. 11 companies competed to be the providers of the biometric registration kits. Of these, three finalists (ZETEC, SMARTMACT and SAGEM) were selected to participate in a pilot test. SAGEM emerged as the winner of the contract to provide the necessary equipment, training and technical assistance to the first ever biometric voter registration in Guinea.

After months of delays and arduous negotiations between the EU, UNDP, the GoG and SAGEM, 1000 kits were delivered, 1,800 operators trained and deployed, over 900 administrative commissions set up to receive an estimated 5 million potential electors. Voter registration, officially launched on August 28 2008, is now scheduled to end April 16.

The voter registry process faced many obstacles. Slow downs and delays have been costly. Initially planned to last 1 month, we are now entering the 5th month of registration on the ground. The cost in salaries alone is valued at approximately 350,000$ a week, a situation that has affected the timely payment of salaries. This caused many kit operators and local staff to abandon their posts and affected the distribution of materials and the ability to coordinate and supervise operations adequately on the ground. In many instances materials such as ink, gas coupons, CDs and paper were diverted and sold on the market. By the end of October, the registration process had come to a halt in most localities due to lack of material and/or human resources.
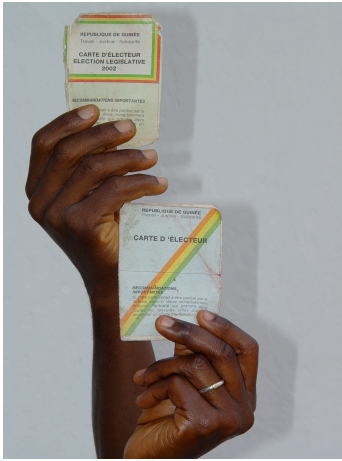
The government was ready to remedy some of these problems by releasing promised funds when President Lansana Conté died on December 22. The military coup that followed a few hours later did not help to speed the process, even though the junta and new self-proclaimed President asked that the registration process continue as planned.

Government funds to this day are still blocked and over 3,000 local election officials and 10,000 members of the administrative commissions have yet to be paid for their extra time. An assessment carried out in February indicated that almost 50% of eligible voters had registered making it clear that much more work remains to be done. A rescue mission of over 100 people (CENI, Ministry, IFES, UNDP, civil society and political parties), sponsored by USAID and the French Embassy is currently being deployed throughout the country to boost the process on these last days of registration and help Guinea meet its objective. This includes delivering funds and materials to on site operators and an extensive media campaign to inform Guineans of the proceedings.

There is a great deal of speculation as to how long the military transition will last and exactly when the next election will take place. Political parties and civil society have agreed on a timeline for the transition that was accepted by the President Dadis Camara. However growing support for the new president's actions against corruption, drug trafficking and overall bad governance could push elections back to 2010. Hopefully, this new registration process will help build trust and confidence amongst stakeholders and contribute to peaceful and credible elections.

Elizabeth Coté is Chief of Party in Guinea for the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. She has been based in Conakry, Guinea since 2001.

ACE Electoral Knowledge Network

- English

Elections Canada workshop on Canadian Aboriginal Electoral Participation

On March 12, 2009, Elections Canada hosted a workshop on Aboriginal electoral participation as part of the 2009 Aboriginal Policy Research Conference (APRC) in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, from March 9–12, 2009.

By Paul Laronde

The 2009 APRC was jointly sponsored by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the University of Western Ontario and the National Association of Friendship Centres. This was the third APRC featuring 130 workshops with over 250 presenters. The event brought together researchers, students, policy makers, Aboriginal leaders and other national and international interested parties to present and debate new research on Canadian Aboriginal issues. Aboriginal people in Canada are recognized as belonging to three groups: First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

Elections Canada participated in the conference by organizing a workshop on Aboriginal electoral participation in Canada. The objective of the workshop was to deepen the knowledge base on Aboriginal turnout in Canada and examine factors that engage Aboriginal electors in voting.

Elections Canada's workshop featured three presentations by Canadian academics on factors leading to participation or non-participation of Aboriginal electors in Canada and potential ways to encourage and facilitate voting.

Lesley A. Jacobs (Professor, York University) presented his paper, *Mapping the Legal Consciousness of Aboriginal Voters: Understanding Voting Rights Mobilization.* In his paper, Professor Jacobs applies the framework of legal consciousness to conceptualize voting rights mobilization among First Nations people in Canada. According to the author, voting rights mobilization for First Nations electors can be understood as an expression of what those rights mean to them. His paper distinguishes between three forms of legal consciousness – enfranchisement, citizen plus and disenfranchisement – to define different modes by which First Nations electors construct their legal voter status.

In the second presentation, Allison Harell (Professor, Queen's University), Dimitrios Panagos (Professor, Royal Military College) and Scott Matthews (Professor, Queen's University) shared important findings from their paper, *Explaining Aboriginal Turnout in Federal Elections: Evidence from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.* In this paper, the authors examined a unique dataset produced by the Institute for Social Research at York University, the *Equality, Security and Community Survey*, which includes a sample of Aboriginals living in the Prairie provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba). This paper examines factors specific to Aboriginal communities that may promote turnout, including differences across First Nations communities, involvement in Aboriginal politics and relevance of Aboriginal issues. The authors found little evidence of differences between on-reserve and off-reserve electors in their willingness to vote, but significant differences across bands and language groups.

Lastly, Paul Howe (Professor, University of New Brunswick) and David Bedford (Professor, University of

New Brunswick) presented their paper, *The Electoral Participation of Aboriginals in Canada.* The authors analyzed patterns of electoral participation among Aboriginal Canadians, drawing on a large-scale Statistics Canada survey (*The General Social Survey Cycle 17*) designed to support broad-based analysis of social, civic and political engagement among Canadians at large. The paper examines socio-demographic factors, such as age, education, income and place of residence (urban vs. rural), that are found to greatly effect whether an elector participates or not. Confidence in political institutions, sentiments of community attachment and other attitudinal factors are also linked to voting. Practical hindrances to participation, such as residential mobility were also discussed. The authors added there is much more to learn about Aboriginal electoral participation and additional research is needed.

The session concluded with comments from Tonio Sadik, Senior Director, Policy Coordination and Operations at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). Mr. Sadik spoke about the relevance of the research, noting activities the AFN carried out in partnership with Elections Canada during the 2008 Federal General Election to facilitate voter turnout among First Nations electors. He described recent amendments to the *Canada Elections Act* requiring proof of identity and residence when voting as making a challenging situation even more difficult. He remarked the scope of research on Aboriginal electoral participation needs to be expanded and enriched while quantifying the effects of legislative changes on turnout rates.

For more information on the conference and workshop, please visit the Aboriginal Voters section on Elections Canada's website at www.elections.ca. Full papers and presentations will be available in English and French in late spring 2009.

Paul Laronde is an Analyst in the Elections Canada Research and Parliamentary Affairs Directorate