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Elections in Angola

August 31 Presidential and National Assembly Elections

Frequently Asked Questions

Africa

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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Disclosure:
These FAQs reflect decisions made by the Angola election authorities as of August 29, 2012, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.

Who will Angolans elect on August 31?

Angolans will elect their country's next president and National Assembly representatives on August 31. Angolans will not directly vote for the president. Instead, the individual heading the national list of the political party that receives the most votes in the general election will be elected president.

What is the National Assembly? What is its mandate?

The National Assembly is the parliament of the Republic of Angola. It is a unicameral legislature that represents Angolans and is responsible for constitutional revisions, issuing laws, resolutions and other authorizations. This legislative body has additional competence in administrative, political and legislative matters, which are spelled out Title IV, Chapter III of the new Angolan Constitution.

Why are these elections so important?

This election will be the first peacetime presidential election in Angola's history, and the first election since the country's new constitution was written in 2010. As *Voice of America* recently reported, "Angola has an opportunity to demonstrate to the world the stability, vibrancy and plurality of its young democracy."¹

Many in the country are still recovering from 27 years of civil war. Angola has a booming oil-based economy, but has not yet been able to lift nearly two-thirds of its citizens out of poverty. Politically, Angolans saw many youth protests in 2011, which often called for the resignation of President José Eduardo dos Santos, who has led the country for nearly 32 years and is favored to win in this upcoming presidential election.²

As the Southern African Development Community's executive chairman recently pointed out, "These elections represent a meaningful landmark in the process of consolidating democracy in the country, [which is the] reason why the preservation of peace and stability is of paramount importance."³

Which institution has the legal mandate to conduct elections in Angola?

The Comissão Nacional Eleitoral (CNE) has the legal mandate to organize, implement and conduct elections in Angola. The constitution stipulates that this body will be detached from the government's direct and indirect administration, with a mandate to organize all electoral logistics.

How is election administration structured? What is its composition?

In December 2011, political parties struck a deal on a new electoral law governing the makeup of the Comissão Nacional Eleitoral. The [new commission](#) is comprised of 17 members, headed by a judge. The

¹ "Angolan Elections An Opportunity For Democracy." Editorials. Voice of America, 17, Aug 2012. Web. 21 Aug, 2012. <http://www.voanews.com/policy/editorials/africa/Angolan-Elections-An-Opportunity-For-Democracy--166608976.html>.

² Redvers, Louise. "Concerns Over Poll Preparations In Angola." Globalissues.org, 6, July 2012. Web. 21 Aug, 2012. <http://www.globalissues.org/news/2012/07/06/14097>.

³ "Over 100 SADC observers already in Luanda." Angola Press, 21, Aug 2012. Web. 21 Aug, 2012. http://www.portalangop.co.ao/motix/en_us/especiais/eleicoes-2012/noticias/2012/7/34/Over-100-SADC-observers-already-Luanda,13dd579f-4ca0-41bd-97fc-51820ea90c60.html.

other members are appointed by political parties in proportion to their seats in parliament. Members have a five-year term on the commission, which can be renewed for an equal amount of time. Structurally, the CNE is comprised of the plenary; the directorate of administration; finance and logistics; the directorate of training; civic and voter education; the directorate of election organization; statistics and technology; and office of the president.

Who is in charge of the Comissão Nacional Eleitoral?

The current president of the Comissão Nacional Eleitoral (CNE) is André da Silva Neto, who is a former Supreme Court judge in Angola. Neto was appointed to his position on June 5, 2012, by Angola's Superior Judicial Council and succeeds Susana Inglês, whose appointment was struck down by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional. Angolan electoral law requires that the president of the CNE must be a judge. Inglês did not have this qualification to hold the position.

How many electoral constituencies have been established?

There is one national constituency and 18 provincial constituencies for the election of members to the National Assembly.

What type of electoral system will be used in the August 31 election?

Angola will elect the 130 members of its National Assembly based on a closed, party-list proportional representation system. Additionally, five members of the National Assembly will be elected per province. The president will be the individual who heads the national list of the winning political party.

How many polling stations will be established?

There will be approximately 10,349 polling stations throughout the country, with approximately 25,359 voting posts.⁴

Who will monitor these elections?

The Southern Africa Development Community has sent approximately 100 observers to Angola. The African Union will also send a delegation⁵ and the U.S. Embassy in Angola will send its staff to polling locations across the country. Several independent electoral institutions were also invited to observe the election, but most have declined due to a lack of funding or inadequate preparation time.

⁴ "Angola: Electoral Commission Passes 10,349 Polling Stations." *All Africa*. Angola Press, 13, July 2012. Web. 21 Aug, 2012. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201207130930.html>.

⁵ "Over 100 SADC observers already in Luanda." Angola Press, 21, Aug 2012. Web. 21 Aug, 2012. http://www.portalangop.co.ao/motix/en_us/especiais/eleicoes-2012/noticias/2012/7/34/Over-100-SADC-observers-already-Luanda,13dd579f-4ca0-41bd-97fc-51820ea90c60.html.

Domestically, there will also be approximately 3,000 accredited election monitors around the country. Many of these national monitors will come from local civil society organizations or religious institutions.

How will the Angolan government ensure an orderly Election Day?

The Angolan government has mobilized nearly 70,000 police officers in an effort to ensure a peaceful election. The police officers have been trained to perform in the context of an electoral process.⁶

What are the treaty obligations related to holding democratic elections in Angola?

Under Article 13 of the Angolan Constitution, a duly ratified or approved international treaty forms an important part of the Angolan legal system. Angola has signed and ratified the following treaties that contain election-related obligations:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):
 - Committing its parties to respect the civil and political rights of individuals, including the right to life, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, electoral rights and rights to due process and a fair trial.
- Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (1948):
 - Workers and employers' organizations have the right to draw up their constitutions and rules, elect their representatives in full freedom, organize their administration and activities and formulate their programs.
- African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights:
 - Also known as the Banjul Charter, this charter is an international human rights instrument which promotes and protects human rights and basic freedoms in the African continent.

Does the Angolan government provide political parties with any funding?

The nine Angolan political parties or coalitions on the 2012 ballot each received approximately \$870,000 (USD) to use toward their electoral campaigns.⁷

Who is eligible to vote?

Under Article 54 of the constitution, all Angolan citizens who are at least 18 have the right to vote.

The eligibility to vote is only restricted in regard to the "incapacities and ineligibilities" enumerated in the constitution.

⁶ "Over 70,000 police officers to secure election". Angola Press, 20 Aug 2012. Web. 21 Aug, 2012.
<http://allafrica.com/stories/201207130930.html>.

⁷ "Angola: Political Parties Get AKZ 87 Million for Election." *All Africa*. Angola Press, 20 July 2012. Web. 21 Aug., 2012.
<http://allafrica.com/stories/201207230392.html>.

Who can be a candidate?

Under Article 54 of the constitution, Angola extends the right to be a candidate to every citizen who is at least 18 years of age. These individuals may run for any state or local election. To be president, however, the Angolan citizen must be 35 years of age and have habitually resided within the country for at least 10 years.

Which political parties are the main contenders in August elections?

There a total of nine political parties or coalitions on the 2012 Angolan ballot, but there will be three primary contenders. The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), led by José Eduardo dos Santos, is the political party that has been in power since the country's liberation from Portugal in the mid-1970s. The MPLA won a majority of seats in 2008 and is expected to do well again in 2012.

The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), led by Isaiás Samakuva, is the second-largest political party and won 16 of 220 seats in the 2008 election.

Additionally, the Broad Convergence for the Salvation of Angola – Election Coalition (CASA-CE), led by Abel Chivukuvuku, is a splinter group from UNITA.

Can a voter who resides abroad cast a ballot in the national election?

Under Article 143 in the constitution, Angolan citizens who are residing abroad for the purposes of work, study, illness or a similar reason may vote in national elections. However, the national election commission has not been able to implement the logistics of diaspora voting, whether in Angolan Embassies or Consulates around the world or elsewhere. The election commission also cancelled the early voting for members of the military, police, firemen and election observers who will be at work on August 31.⁸

How are ballots and polling station materials being transported throughout the country?

The election commission has allocated a range of transportation options for the movement of ballots across the country. In more remote areas of the country, the election commission has made both planes and helicopters available to assist with the movement of this sensitive material. This will be an important area for observers to watch, as in 2008 there were delays in the transportation of ballots to counting centers. This fueled mistrust and allegations of ballot stuffing.⁹

⁸ Angola Elections Update. National Democratic Institute. Issue 2. 10 August 2012.

⁹ Angola Elections Update. National Democratic Institute. Issue 2. 10 August 2012.

Resources

The Official Website of the Comissão Nacional Eleitoral

- <http://www.cne.ao> (Portuguese)

Constitution of the Republic of Angola

- <http://www.comissaoconstitucional.ao> (Portuguese)

Report on Angola's Upcoming Election by Human Rights Watch

- <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/angola0812ForUpload.pdf> (English)

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

- <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm> (English)

Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention

- http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312232
(English)

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

- <http://www.achpr.org/instruments/achpr> (English)