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Elections in Mali

July 28 Presidential Elections

Frequently Asked Questions

Africa

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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Frequently Asked Questions

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Disclosure:
These FAQs reflect decisions made by the Malian elections authorities, to the best of our knowledge as of July 24, 2013. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.

When is Election Day?

Mali was scheduled to hold presidential elections in April 2012. The sitting President, completing his second and final term in office, was not a candidate, thus setting the stage for a democratic transition. However, in the month preceding scheduled elections, elements within the Malian military staged a coup d'état, overthrowing the government. The coup resulted in a security vacuum within the country, enabling Touareg rebels in the North and their jihadist allies to seize a significant portion of the nation. All preparations for elections came to a halt as Mali dealt with a political and security crisis.

Following widespread condemnation of the coup, a civilian transitional government was installed and a unity government was formally appointed in August 2012. The mandate of this transitional government included holding elections within a year and resolving the security situation in the North.

However, security remained volatile. Following a formal request from this interim government, France intervened militarily. This intervention led to the dispersal of rebel forces and liberation of much of the North.

On May 20, 2013, the Malian National Assembly adopted a new electoral law, which was promulgated by the interim President the following day. Days after, the interim President signed a decree setting Election Day for July 28, 2013. This date has since been confirmed, and preparations have been underway to meet this deadline.

Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?

Citizens will cast ballots for the President of the Republic. There are currently 27 presidential candidates running in this election, including former ministers and Malian politicians.

Who can vote in the country?

Malian citizens age 18 and older who had photos and fingerprints taken during the civil registry national census exercise between 2009 and 2011 are eligible to vote.

How many registered voters are there?

The final voter list drawn by the General Delegation for the Elections (*Délégation Générale aux Elections*) – the agency in charge of the voter list – has a total of 6,829,696 registered voters: 3,422,140 women and 3,407,556 men.

What is the structure of the government?

Mali is a unitary semi-presidential republic, currently in a state of transition following the coup d'état. There is a transitional President; a transitional Prime Minister appointed by the President; and a Cabinet, also appointed by the President following propositions from the Prime Minister. Under normal circumstances, the Cabinet is formed by the majority group in the legislature.

The legislative branch is composed of the National Assembly, a unicameral body responsible for voting laws. The highest judiciary court in Mali is the Supreme Court. Parallel to the Supreme Court, there is a Constitutional Court that deals with presidential and legislative election disputes, as well as ensuring that laws do not violate the constitution.

What is the election management body? What are its powers?

Several institutions are involved in the electoral process. These include:

- *Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale, de la Décentralisation et de l'Aménagement du Territoire* (MATDAT), or the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Territorial Development, which is in charge of technical and logistical aspects of the electoral process.
- *Délégation Générale aux Elections* (DGE), or the General Delegation for Elections, which is in charge of voters' list and the public financing of political parties.
- *Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante* (CENI), the National Independent Electoral Commission, which is responsible for supervising the electoral process.

What is the set up of polling stations in Mali?

Polling places/centers are where the elections are held. In Mali, these may include a variety of locations, such as schools and administrative buildings where voters cast their ballots.

A polling station is the physical space within the polling place or center where a voter casts a ballot. Polling stations open at 8:00 a.m. and close at 6:00 p.m., however, voters in the line by 6:00 p.m. will be allowed to cast their ballots.

By law in Mali, a polling station has a maximum number of 500 registered voters, so there are 20,275 polling stations inside the country and 748 abroad – a total of 21,023 polling stations and 13,075 polling centers.

What is the campaign process like?

There is a three-week campaign period, which began on July 9, 2013. It will end at midnight on the July 26 to allow for a full day, July 27, without any campaigning before elections.

Will out-of-country voting be allowed?

Out-of-country voting is permitted. Malians who registered to vote at their embassies will be able to cast their ballots through embassies and consular offices. This year, 748 out-of country polling stations will be open for the July 28 poll.

How will voters with disabilities cast their ballots?

Voters with disabilities may request the assistance of a family member or friend when they come to their polling station. They will be given priority, but there are no other special arrangements to accommodate them.

What technology will be used?

Voting in Mali is done using single paper ballots, which show the names and photographs of presidential candidates. Citizens vote by placing a fingerprint inside a white square next to the candidate of their choice. Ballots are then counted by hand; no optical scanning or other technology will be used.

Will the election management body use a media center?

The Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Territorial Development does not have a media center in place for this election. Private groups will have their own media centers; media coverage will be generated by both State-run media and privately-owned media.

Where is voting, counting and tabulation held?

Voting and counting will take place in the polling place after voting has ended. The results will be sent from the *commune*, which is the third level administrative unit in Mali, to the *cercle*, the second level administrative unit, where they will be tabulated and sent via Internet to the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Territorial Development.

Who will observe during Election Day? How can they get accreditation?

Domestic and international groups are allowed to observe polling. Observers can be accredited through the National Independent Electoral Commission.

International observation missions are as follows:

- The U.S. Embassy will have 70 observers across Bamako, Segou, Sikasso, Koutiala, Selingue and Koulikourou
- The European Union will have 50 observers in southern Mali
- The African Union will have 60 observers in southern Mali
- The Economic Community of West African States will have 300 observers
- The British Embassy will have six observers
- The International Republican Institute will have 12 observers across Bamako, Kayes, Segou, Sikasso
- CARITAS will have 30 observers

Domestic observation missions include 2,500 observers from the civil society group *Appui au Processus Electoral au Mali*, also known as APEM, as well as several smaller organizations.

When will official results be announced?

The law requires the release of provisional results by the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Territorial Development no later than five days after polling. Results are then transmitted to the Constitutional Court, which announces the final results. The law does not give any deadline to the Constitutional Court to pronounce final results.

How will election disputes be adjudicated?

Election disputes will be adjudicated by the Constitutional Court. Once provisional results have been released by the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Territorial Development, any candidate may file a complaint with the Constitutional Court within 48 hours.

Voters may file complaints with civil courts during the pre-election period for issues related to their registration. Any Election Day complaints from voters are dealt with at the civil court level. Voters cannot file complaints directly with the Constitutional Court.

How will Election Day security be ensured?

Election Day security will be provided by Malian security forces, including police, gendarmerie and national guard. They will be aided by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali and French troops in the North, including the regions of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal.

Resources

- [Malian Constitution](#)
- [Presidential Candidate Profiles](#)