



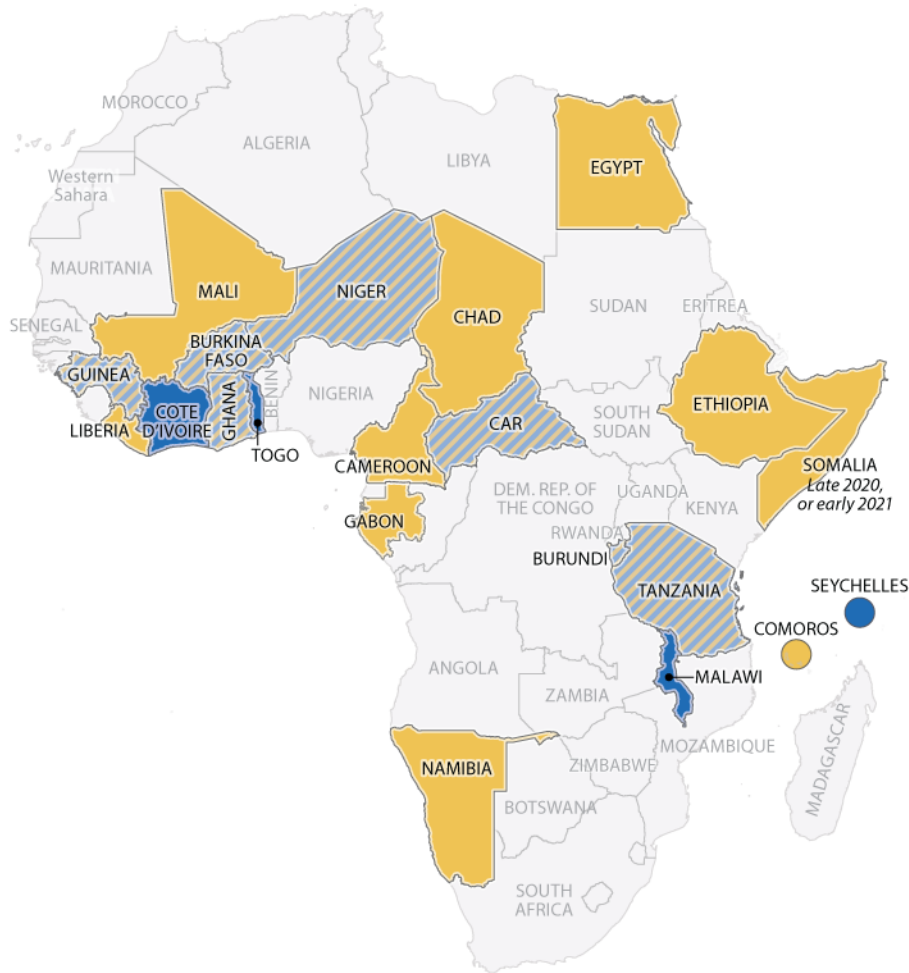
Updated February 17, 2020

# African Elections in 2020

Twenty-one African countries are to hold presidential and/or parliamentary polls in 2020.

## 2020 Elections

Presidential Parliamentary Both



### Calendar of Elections



Source: Created by CRS. Election data was derived from the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, the National Democratic Institute and other news sources. Map boundaries from U.S. Department of State (2017).

Note: Election dates are provisional and as of 2/7/2020, and have not been confirmed in several countries. Timeline is arranged by "due by" month where applicable.

## Country Election Snapshots

### **Burkina Faso** (*Presidential & Parliamentary, Nov. 22*)

President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré is expected to seek reelection amid a growing Islamist insurgency and ethnic tensions. Rising violence has undercut the initial optimism of the country's 2014-2015 democratic transition from authoritarian rule.

### **Burundi** (*Presidential & Parliamentary, May 20*)

President Pierre Nkurunziza has agreed to step down in favor of ruling party nominee Evariste Ndayishimiye. Security forces and ruling party militias continue to repress opposition supporters, the media, and civil society. Nkurunziza's reelection to a third term in 2015 circumvented constitutional term limits and a landmark peace accord, setting off a violent national crisis and an ongoing wave of political repression. Whether Nkurunziza's successor might open political space and renew ties with Western donors remains in doubt.

### **Cameroon** (*Parliamentary, Feb. 9*)

Cameroon's main opposition party boycotted legislative and municipal elections on February 9, held amid a separatist insurgency in the country's west, rising Islamist violence in the north, a crackdown on civil space, and substantial pre-election violence against candidates. Reportedly low turnout and allegations of fraud marred the polls, likely heightening perceptions of marginalization on the part of Cameroon's political opposition. The National Assembly has come to serve as a rubber stamp for long-time President Paul Biya.

### **Central African Republic** (*Presidential & Parliamentary, Dec. 27*)

President Faustin Archange Touadera is expected to run for a second term amid strains in the government's 2019 peace agreement with rebel groups and growing Russian influence. Most of the country remains outside of central government control.

### **Cote d'Ivoire** (*Presidential, Oct. 31*)

Second-term President Alassane Ouattara has publicly discussed circumventing constitutional term limits to seek reelection, as his government has moved to sideline key opposition figures. The elections (as with those in Guinea, below) will test West Africa's commitment to presidential term limits, as well as the stability of Francophone West Africa's top economic performer.

### **Ethiopia** (*Parliamentary, Aug. 29*)

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who took office in 2018 and welcomed the return of exiled opposition groups, will seek a popular mandate for his sweeping reform agenda in parliamentary elections. New political alliances are forming amid the breakup of the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) coalition. Most of its former member parties have merged into a new national party with Abiy at the helm. Rising ethno-nationalism could fuel electoral violence, threatening not only Abiy's reforms, but Ethiopia's stability.

### **Ghana** (*Presidential & Parliamentary, due by December*)

President Nana Akufo-Addo seeks reelection against former President John Mahama, while their respective political parties vie for parliamentary control in what has become a de-facto two-party system. Elections have become institutionalized in Ghana since a transition to multiparty rule in the early 1990s.

### **Guinea** (*Parliamentary, March 1; Presidential, October*)

Second-term President Alpha Condé has called for changing the

constitution in a referendum to be held simultaneously with long-delayed legislative elections, a potential step toward running for a third term. State security forces have allegedly opened fire on anti-third-term protests and arrested prominent activists.

### **Niger** (*Presidential & Parliamentary, Dec. 27*)

President Mahamadou Issoufou, elected in 2011 after a military coup, is expected to step down after two terms, which could lead to the country's first-ever democratic transition between two elected presidents. Niger is a key U.S. and European security partner in West Africa's increasingly conflict-ridden Sahel region.

**Malawi** (*Presidential, due by July 2*) On February 3, 2020, Malawi's Constitutional Court annulled the May 2019 presidential election, citing extensive irregularities and incompetence by the electoral commission. It ordered a new election by early July 2020 under a 50%-plus-one electoral system, to be established by the legislature prior to the vote; it found the current plurality-based system to be unconstitutional. It also ordered a reversion to the pre-election status quo, allowing President Peter Mutharika, the incumbent, to retain his post. In May 2019, he had won 39% of votes, against 35% and 20% for his two closest rivals, respectively.

### **Seychelles** (*Presidential, due by November*)

President Danny Faure is expected to face an uphill battle for reelection. Faure came to office when, as vice president, he succeeded then-president James Michel, who resigned after the coalition opposition, Seychelles Democratic Alliance, won control of parliament in 2016. Political gridlock between the executive and legislative branches has since prevailed.

### **Tanzania** (*Presidential & Parliamentary, Oct. 4*)

Under President John Magufuli, who is expected to seek reelection, the government has imposed increasingly severe restrictions on the opposition and civil liberties generally, including during local elections in late 2019. Zanzibar, a semiautonomous region with a history of political interference in elections and violently contested results, also is to hold simultaneous presidential and legislative polls, likely in October.

### **Togo** (*Presidential, Feb. 22*)

President Faure Gnassingbé, in office since succeeding his father in 2005, is expected to seek reelection to a fourth term, as permitted under a 2019 constitutional amendment. Protracted large protests calling for Gnassingbé's resignation shook the country in 2017-2018.

Parliamentary elections are also expected in **Chad** (late spring), **Egypt** (November), **Gabon** (late 2020), **Liberia** (October), **Mali** (March), **Namibia** (November) and **Somalia** (late 2020 or early 2021). **Comoros** President Azali Assoumani's party won a parliamentary majority in a January election that the opposition boycotted.

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**Sarah R. Collins**, Coordinator, Research Assistant

**Alexis Arief**, Specialist in African Affairs

**Lauren Ploch Blanchard**, Specialist in African Affairs

**Nicolas Cook**, Specialist in African Affairs

**Tomas F. Husted**, Analyst in African Affairs

IFI1427

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