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Inter-Parliamentary Union
5, chemin du Pommier
Case postale 330
CH-1218 Le Grand-Saconnex
Geneva – Switzerland

Tel.: + 41 22 919 41 50
Fax: + 41 22 919 41 60
E-mail: postbox@mail.ipu.org

Office of the Permanent Observer of
the IPU to the United Nations
220 East 42nd Street
Suite 3002
New York, N.Y. 10017
USA

Tel.: +1 212 557 58 80
Fax: +1 212 557 39 54
E-mail: ny-office@mail.ipu.org

Internet: <http://www.ipu.org/parline>

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I am pleased to present this 2008 edition of the Chronicle, which covers direct elections to 53 chambers in 46 countries in 2008. An average of 69.29 per cent of the registered voters turned out at the polls, an annual increase of 3.95 percentage points based on available data.

Landmark elections

Angola and Nepal held long-awaited elections. Angola's first elections since 1992 marked a further step in the democratic process after the end of the civil war in 2002, during which some 500,000 people were killed. The elections to the Constituent Assembly in Nepal were the first to be held since 1999. Elections scheduled in 2002 had been postponed several times as a result of the Maoist insurgency and the King's decision to assume direct power in 2005. The elections led to the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic in Nepal.

The elections in Bangladesh and Thailand marked the official termination of their transitional periods. Bangladesh held the first elections since a military-backed caretaker government was installed in October 2006. In Thailand, Senate elections followed the December 2007 elections to the House of Representatives.

Bhutan held the first elections involving political parties to the new 47-member National Assembly. They followed elections to the newly-created upper chamber - the National Council - held in December 2007 and January 2008.

Early elections

Thirteen countries held elections before they were constitutionally due. Often these early elections were held as a result of the collapse of a coalition government (Austria, Italy and San Marino). In Kuwait and Nauru elections were held in a bid to resolve a standoff between the government and the parliament. The May elections in Serbia were prompted mainly by Kosovo's declaration of independence in February. In The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the first early elections since independence in 1991 took place in the wake of its unsuccessful accession bid to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in April.

Elections under the new electoral system and constitutional amendments

In 2008, a number of elections were held under revised constitutional and electoral arrangements. Malta revised its constitution in September 2007 to give more importance to the first-count vote (which is attributed to voters' preferred candidate).

San Marino also revised its electoral law in August 2008, introducing "bonus seats" for the coalition with the highest number of votes to enable it to hold a minimum of 35 seats in the 60-member Great and General Council.

Turkmenistan amended its constitution in September 2008 enlarging the Assembly from 50 to 125 members. The amendments also opened up more space for citizens to run for public office.

Powershifts

In a little over 50 per cent of the countries (19 out of 35) that held elections in 2008, and where the composition of the government depended on the

Introduction

outcome of the elections, the ruling party was returned to power. Fourteen countries voted the ruling party out of office, with many long-serving prime ministers leaving office. This was the case in Barbados where, Mr. Owen Arthur, who had been prime minister since 1994, was voted out of office. In Belize, Mr. Said Musa (prime minister since 1998) and in New Zealand, Ms. Helen Clark (prime minister since 1999) also left office.

The elections in Pakistan also led to a change in leadership. President Pervez Musharraf, who had seized power in 1999 in a military coup, resigned following the threat of an impeachment motion in the new parliament in August. In September, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, the widower of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, assassinated in December 2007, was elected as the new President.

In the United States, the Democrats significantly increased their strength in both chambers but failed to gain the 60 seats in the Senate that would have enabled them to avoid filibustering (the use of procedural hurdles to obstruct the passage of legislation). The Democrats also regained control of the executive branch, with Mr. Barack Obama becoming the first black President in US history. These elections were held against the backdrop of a financial crisis in the US, which rapidly spread to the rest of the world. The global economic crisis became a major element in many election campaigns in the second half of 2008.

Opposition gaining force

Some elections saw the opposition significantly increase its presence in parliament. In Malaysia, the number of seats controlled by the opposition rose from 19 to 82 in the 222-member House of Representatives. In Paraguay, the opposition alliance, which supported Mr. Fernando Lugo in the presidential elections, won more seats than the National Republican Association-Colorado Party (ANR), which has ruled the country since 1947. In Zimbabwe, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), the largest opposition party led by Morgan Tsvangirai, won 100 seats in the enlarged 210-member House of Assembly, one more than the ruling ZANU-PF of President Robert Mugabe, who has been in power since 1980. A new government was formed in February 2009, with Mr. Tsvangirai as Prime Minister.

Election-related violence

The year 2008 saw fewer violent incidents than previous years. However, in Mongolia, violent street protests broke out after the June elections, triggering a four-day state of emergency in the capital. Pre-election violence also marred landmark elections in Nepal, although the polling itself took place in relative calm. In Pakistan, the assassination of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto sparked street protests that disrupted the election campaign and resulted in the postponement of the elections for several weeks. Election-day violence also saw scores of people killed or wounded. In Spain, the killing of a prominent ruling-party politician led to a brief pause in the election campaign. In Zimbabwe, violence was rife prior to the run-off presidential elections, leading the opposition candidate, Mr. Tsvangirai, to withdraw his candidature. Nearly 90 MDC supporters were reported to have been killed and 200,000 people were displaced from their homes.

Women making inroads in parliament

Rwanda broke its own record for the world's highest percentage of women parliamentarians in a single or lower chamber, by returning 45 women (56.25%) to the 80-member Chamber of Deputies. In Palau, two women were elected to the enlarged 13-member Senate (up from nine), becoming the first-ever women senators. However, no women were elected to the 16-member House of Delegates. Women also failed to gain representation in Belize, Nauru, Kuwait and Tonga.

Nine women assumed the post of Speaker following the 2008 elections in the following countries: Austria (National Council), Ghana, Pakistan (National Assembly), Romania (Chamber of Deputies), Rwanda (Chamber of Deputies), Serbia, United States of America (House of Representatives), Turkmenistan and Zimbabwe (Senate).

More information on elections in 2008 is available in the *Panorama of parliamentary elections* and in the PARLINE database (www.ipu.org/parline), from which the data in the Chronicle has been extracted.

I trust readers will find this edition of the Chronicle interesting reading.



Anders B. Johnsson
Secretary General

ANGOLA

National Assembly

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Assembleia nacional / National Assembly
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	220 directly elected
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	5 - 6 September 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all seats in the National Assembly. General elections had previously taken place in September 1992.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

- 18 multi-member (5 seats) provincial constituencies
- one multi-member (130 seats) national constituency

▶ **Voting system: Proportional**

Direct election with proportional representation, using the d'Hondt method.

Of the 220 Deputies, 90 are elected in 18 provincial constituencies (5 per province) and the remainder from national lists. Three Deputies represent Angolans living abroad. Candidates figure on closed lists of parties or coalitions of parties.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled by substitutes elected at the same time as titular members.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years
- Angolan citizenship

Disqualifications: insanity, undischarged bankruptcy, criminal conviction, allegiance to a foreign State.

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: 35 years
- Angolan citizenship

► Incompatibilities

- members of the Government
- judges
- chairman of the board of a State-owned corporation
- members of the armed forces

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 4 June 2008, President José Eduardo dos Santos called parliamentary elections for 5 September, 16 years after the previous elections were held in September 1992. Elections had been postponed repeatedly as a result of the civil war that had engulfed the country following its independence from Portugal in 1975.

In the 1992 elections, President dos Santos' Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola - Workers' Party (MPLA) won 129 of the 220 seats contested in the 223-member National Assembly. Mr. dos Santos, who has been in power since 1978, was re-elected as President at the same time. The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), led by Mr. Jonas Savimbi, took 70 seats. The remainder went to small parties. The three seats reserved for Angolans living abroad were not filled.

The 1992 elections followed a peace accord signed between President dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi in May 1991. However, following its election defeat, the UNITA resumed the civil war, which would claim some 500,000 lives in total. The civil war ended in 2002 when the army killed UNITA leader Savimbi.

The country has experienced double-digit economic growth over the past six years. That figure reached 20 per cent in 2008, buoyed by the oil and diamond industries. However, nearly 70 per cent of Angolans live on less than US\$ 2 a day, and many lack access to clean water or electricity.

A total of 5,198 candidates from 10 political parties and four coalitions contested the 2008 elections, which were considered as a dry-run for presidential elections scheduled for 2009.

The MPLA was widely expected to win a majority in the new legislature. Its manifesto focused on sustained economic growth and social programmes. It pledged to build 2,000 new homes per year. President dos Santos urged Angolans to hold "democratic, free and transparent elections".

The MPLA's main rival, the UNITA, was now led by Mr. Isaias Samakuva. It

campaigned mainly in rural areas, promising to govern in the interest of all Angolans. It criticized the MPLA for the slow pace of reconstruction and widespread poverty. It further accused the MPLA of intimidating UNITA supporters and dominating the State media.

The Liberal Democratic Party (which had won three seats in 1992), led by Ms. Analia Victoria Pereira, criticized the MPLA's use of military airplanes, helicopters and boats during the election campaign, to which other parties did not have access. Campaigning by other parties was limited to small gatherings around the capital Luanda.

Fraud-proof voter cards with holograms, pictures and fingerprints were used for the first time. Due to delays in opening polling stations and ballot shortages in Luanda, voting, originally set for 5 September alone, was extended by one day. 87.36 per cent of the 8.3 million registered voters turned out at the polls.

The European Union (EU), which sent about 100 observers, praised the high turnout as evidence of Angolans' commitment to the country's democratic process. However, it criticized biased media coverage in favour of the government, for falling short of basic international standards. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) declared the polls to have been credible, peaceful and transparent.

The final results gave 191 seats to the MPLA and 16 to the UNITA. The latter originally challenged the results in Luanda, but conceded defeat after the election commission rejected its claim for lack of evidence. The remaining seats went to small parties. UNITA leader Samakuva praised the elections as an important step for the consolidation of the country's fragile democracy.

The newly elected National Assembly held its first session on 30 September 2008. It elected outgoing prime minister Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos (MPLA) as its new Speaker.

The following day, President dos Santos appointed Mr. António Paulo Kassoma (MPLA) as the new Prime Minister. On 3 October, Mr. Kassoma's cabinet was sworn in by the President.

Election results and statistics**▶ Voter turnout**

Number of registered electors	8,256,584	
Voters	7,213,281	87.36%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	762,874	
Valid votes	6,450,407	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	% votes	Seats	Number of women
Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)	81.64	191	77
National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)	10.39	16	4
Social Renewal Party (PRS)	3.17	8	0
Angolan National Liberation Front (FNLA)	1.11	3	0
New Democracy Coalition (ND)	1.20	2	0
Total		220	

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	138	
Women	82	37.27%
Total	220	

AUSTRIA

National Council

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Parlament / Parliament
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Nationalrat / National Council
Number of members	183 directly elected
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	28 September 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the National Council following premature dissolution of this body on 9 July 2008. Elections to the National Council had previously taken place on 1 October 2006.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

The 9 multi-member constituencies (from 7 to 36 seats each) correspond to the country's provinces (Länder); seats are allotted to each based on population. The provinces are broken down into 43 regional constituencies.

▶ **Voting system: Proportional**

Closed party-list system with proportional representation applying the Hare method to the regional and provincial constituencies, and the d'Hondt method at the federal level; 4 per cent threshold for parties to gain representation.

There are no reserved seats or quotas for women, ethnic minorities or other categories.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled by the "next-in-line" candidate on the list of the party which held the seat.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 16 years old on election day

- Austrian citizenship, including naturalized citizens

Disqualifications: imprisonment exceeding one year (the disqualification is valid for six months thereafter)

There is no residence requirement.

Citizens overseas can vote without restriction.

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: 18 on election day
- Austrian citizenship, including naturalized citizens

Ineligibility: imprisonment exceeding one year (the disqualification is valid for six months thereafter)

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- Federal President
- members of the Federal Council
- members of the European Parliament
- members of the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court or the Administrative Court
- President of the Audit Office
- Parliamentary Commissioners (Ombudsmen)
- executives of joint stock companies, banking, commercial, transport and industrial private limited companies, provincial credit institutes and mutual insurance companies

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- nomination by a party
- support by three outgoing National Council members from the party or by 100 to 500 electors from the party (depending on the constituency)
- submission of election platform
- in each constituency, deposit equivalent to approximately 435 euros paid by each party, not reimbursed
- number of candidates put forward by each party cannot exceed twice the number of seats to be filled

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The collapse of the coalition government in July 2008 triggered early elections to the 183-member National Council in September, nearly 25 months before they were due.

Following the previous elections in October 2006, three months of negotiations resulted in a grand coalition between the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ, 68 seats) and the People's Party (ÖVP, 66 seats). SPÖ leader, Mr. Alfred Gusenbauer, was sworn in as Prime Minister in January 2007. However, the coalition government remained fragile due to its different

political views, in particular regarding health, taxes, pensions and education.

The country of 8.2 million inhabitants had enjoyed high economic growth (3.4 per cent in 2007) and a low unemployment rate of 4 per cent. Inflation and high fuel prices reportedly disrupted the country's economy prior to the 2008 elections. In June, Prime Minister Gusenbauer announced that he would step down as SPÖ leader. On 7 July, ÖVP leader, Mr. Wilhelm Molterer, announced that his party would withdraw from the coalition government. The two parties had been in disagreement over tax reform as well as a SPÖ proposal to offset inflation. Mr. Molterer criticized the SPÖ for being "without orientation or leadership". On 9 July, the National Council voted unanimously to dissolve itself with a view to holding elections. The Government, in consultation with the Main Committee of the National Council, set the election date for 28 September.

Following a reform of the electoral law in 2007, the voting age was lowered from 18 to 16 years, and people over 18 years of age (instead of 19) became eligible to run for elections to the National Council. In the same vein, the term of the National Council was extended from four to five years starting from the new legislature.

As many as 15 parties fielded candidates in the 2008 elections. Transport Minister, Mr. Werner Faymann, led the SPÖ, which repeated its long-standing policy of making the last year of kindergarten compulsory and free of charge. The ÖVP, which had opposed that policy in the outgoing legislature, announced that it would support the SPÖ's plan. The pre-election polls suggested that neither the SPÖ nor the ÖVP would obtain a majority in the new National Council.

Two far-right parties featured prominently during the election campaign. The Freedom Party (FPÖ, which took 21 seats in the 2006 elections) of Mr. Heinz-Christian Strache and the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ), formed in April 2005 by former FPÖ leader Mr. Jörg Haider, both campaigned to end immigration and called for the expulsion of foreigners and asylum-seekers who committed crimes. During the 2008 campaign, Mr. Strache criticized the outgoing coalition government, calling its members "traitors of the people". Mr. Haider promised to fight off the "catastrophe of inflation" and provide rent subsidies and free kindergarten.

The ÖVP promised to fight abuses of asylum rules. The Greens of Mr. Alexander Van der Bellen proposed that all children born to parents who

were legal residents in Austria should be granted Austrian citizenship.

The media focused on discussion about a post-election coalition. SPÖ leader Faymann firmly rejected the possibility of forming a coalition government with either of the far-right parties. He said he preferred another coalition with the ÖVP, arguing that a broad consensus would be needed to tackle the economic downturn, health care and educational reform. ÖVP leader Molterer did not explicitly rule out the possibility of a coalition with the far-right parties. The Greens were open to coalition with the SPÖ or the ÖVP but dismissed any possibility of a coalition with the FPÖ and the BZÖ.

A total of 78.81 per cent of the 6.3 million registered voters turned out at the polls.

Both the SPÖ and the ÖVP recorded their worst results since World War II. They won 57 and 51 seats respectively. On the contrary, the FPÖ and the BZÖ increased their strength to 34 and 21 seats respectively. The Greens took the remaining 20 seats. In all 50 women were elected.

On 8 October, President Heinz Fischer (SPÖ) asked Mr. Faymann (SPÖ) to form a new government.

The newly elected National Council held its first session on 28 October and re-elected Ms. Barbara Prammer (SPÖ) as its Speaker.

On 2 December, Mr. Faymann's government comprising the SPÖ and the ÖVP was sworn in by President Fischer.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	6,332,921	
Voters	4,990,947	78.81%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	103,643	
Valid votes	4,887,304	

► **Distribution of seats according to political group**

	Votes	% votes	Seats	Gain/ Loss
Social Democratic Party (SPÖ)	1,430,202	29.26	57	-11
People's Party (ÖVP)	1,269,655	25.98	51	-15
Freedom Party (FPÖ)	857,028	17.54	34	13
Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ)	522,933	10.70	21	7
Greens	509,937	10.43	20	-1
Total			183	

► **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	133	
Women	50	27.32%
Total	183	

► **Distribution of seats according to profession**

	Seats
Entrepreneur	21
Legal profession	21
Education profession	20
Political party official	20
Agriculture/farming	17
Civil service and local authority administration	13
Clerical, secretarial, administration	12
Armed services/Police	11
Nursing	7
Economist	7
Journalism, broadcasting, media	7
Architect, surveyor, engineer	7
Finance, management or business	6
International civil servant	5
Trade union official	2
Homemaker	1
Physician, dentist	1
Social worker	1
Writer, literary, artist	1
Other	3
Total	183

► Distribution of seats according to age

21 to 30 years	4
31 to 40 years	27
41 to 50 years	62
51 to 60 years	74
61 to 70 years	16
Total	183

BANGLADESH

Parliament

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Jatiya Sangsad / Parliament
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	345 members - 300 directly elected - 45 additional seats are reserved for women, who are selected in proportion to each party's support at the general election.
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	29 December 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

300 single-member constituencies

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Direct simple majority vote.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections held within 90 days.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years

- Bangladesh citizenship

- residence in constituency of vote

Disqualifications: insanity

▶ **Eligibility**

- age: 25 years

- Bangladesh citizenship

Ineligibilities: insanity, undischarged bankruptcy, imprisonment for more than 2 years (for criminal offence involving moral turpitude), allegiance to a foreign State

▶ Incompatibilities

- certain offices of profit in the service of the Republic or of a statutory public authority

▶ Candidacy requirements

- support by two qualified voters of constituency
- deposit of 5,000 takas (US\$ 73), reimbursed if the candidate obtains at least 1/8 of the total votes cast
- candidates may run simultaneously in several constituencies

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 20 September 2008, the head of the military-backed caretaker government, Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, announced that elections would be held on 18 December 2008. On 3 November, the caretaker government relaxed the state of emergency that had been in place since January 2007, lifting the restrictions on political gatherings. It also announced that it would withdraw thousands of troops from emergency duties prior to the 2008 elections and hand over power to the elected government as of 1 January 2009. Protests from the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), some of whose key members were serving prison terms under emergency rules, led the elections to be postponed to 29 December.

In the previous elections held in October 2001, the BNP won 193 of the 300 seats at stake. The Awami League (AL), led by outgoing Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, took 62 seats. The remainder went to independent candidates and small parties. The BNP subsequently formed a coalition government with the Bangladesh Jamaytee Islami (Bangladesh Islamic Block), Islami Oikya Jote (Islamic Unity Front), and Jatiya Party (National Party) (Nazir).

On 27 October 2006, Parliament was dissolved with a view to holding general elections on 22 January 2007. On 30 October 2006, the government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia (BNP) was replaced by a caretaker government, led by President Iajuddin Ahmed (BNP) and tasked with overseeing the elections.

The caretaker system had been introduced in 1991 after military-backed president Hossain Mohammad Ershad was toppled by street protests led jointly by BNP leader Zia and Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina. These two women have dominated the country's politics ever since. The Constitution requires the caretaker government to be neutral and non-partisan in order to organize free and fair elections. In 2006, concerns were raised over

whether the caretaker government led by President Ahmed would indeed be neutral.

An AL-led 15-party alliance demanded Mr. Ahmed's removal as head of the caretaker government and the establishment of a new voters' list. Its demands were accompanied by violent demonstrations. On 3 January 2007, the alliance announced that it would boycott the elections along with the Jatiya Party and the Liberal Democratic Party.

On 11 January 2007, President Ahmed postponed the elections, declared a state of emergency and stepped down as head of the caretaker government. Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, a former head of the central bank, was appointed the following day to lead the government with the backing of the military. President Ahmed's term, which was due to end in September 2007, was extended in May 2007 by the caretaker government until an elected Parliament could appoint his successor.

Under the caretaker government, more than 150 politicians and civil servants were arrested. They included former prime ministers Sheikh Hasina and Zia, who were arrested on corruption charges in July and September 2007 respectively. The former was detained in a special prison on Parliament's premises until June 2008, when she was released on medical grounds. In September 2008, Ms. Zia was released from prison on bail for a period of three months. Although the corruption charges against them were maintained until the 2008 elections, both were allowed to run in the elections.

Nearly 2,500 candidates from more than 30 parties were vying for the 300 popularly elected seats at stake (the other 45 seats would be filled with women following the formation of the new government). The elections once again saw a duel between the AL and the BNP.

The BNP led a four-party alliance, promising to lower food prices and create jobs. It also called for an immediate end to emergency rule and urged the government to withdraw corruption charges against its members.

The AL-led a "Grand Alliance" comprising 15 parties. Its leader, Sheikh Hasina, also urged the immediate end of emergency rule so the elections would be free and fair. She pledged to provide healthcare for all, rid the country of illiteracy and help the poor by lowering the prices of essential goods. 86 per cent of the country's 150 million inhabitants reportedly live on less than US\$ 2

a day.

The head of the caretaker government vowed to ensure that the polls were free, fair and credible. The state of emergency was lifted on 17 December.

On 29 December, a record 87.13 per cent of the 81 million registered voters turned out at the polls. The European Union (EU) monitored the polls and concluded that the elections had been credible and transparent and reflected "the will of the people of Bangladesh".

The final results gave 263 seats to the AL-led alliance, of which 230 went to the AL. The BNP took 30 seats, and its allies, three. The remainder went to independent candidates. Nineteen women were elected.

Ms. Zia conceded defeat while other BNP members insisted that their supporters were kept from voting.

Members of parliament were sworn in on 3 January 2009. On 6 January, Sheikh Hasina (AL) became Prime Minister for the second time and formed a new government on the same day, officially terminating the mandate of the caretaker government.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	81,083,933	
Voters	70,647,508	87.13%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	635,317	
Valid votes	70,012,191	

▶ **Distribution of seats according to political group**

	Seats
AL-led alliance	263
Bangladesh Awami League (AL)	230
Jatiya Party (National Party) (Naziur)	27
Jatiya Samajtantric Dal-Jasad (National Socialist Party)	3
Bangladesh Workers Party	2
Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)	1
BNP-led alliance	33
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	30
Bangladesh Jamaytee Islami (Bangladesh Islamic Block)	2
Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP)	1
Independents	4
Total	300

▶ **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	281	
Women	19	6.33%
Total	300	

BARBADOS

House of Assembly

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Parliament of Barbados / -
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	House of Assembly
Number of members	30 directly elected
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	15 January 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for the seats of the House of Assembly following the premature dissolution of this body. Previous elections had been held in May 2003.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

30 single-member constituencies.

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Direct election. Simple majority vote.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections held within 90 days.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years

- Barbados citizenship (or Commonwealth citizenship if residence in the country for 3 years before elections)

- residence in a constituency for 3 months

Disqualifications: insanity, imprisonment, death sentence

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters

- age: 21 years

- Barbados citizenship

- residence in the country for more than 7 years

Ineligibilities: undischarged bankruptcy, allegiance to a foreign State, imprisonment exceeding 6 months, conviction of felony or of an offence

involving dishonesty, electoral fraud

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- public officers
- members of armed or police forces
- judges
- director of public prosecutions
- Auditor-General

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- nomination by 4 electors
- deposit equivalent to US\$ 125, reimbursed if the candidate is elected or obtains more than 1/6 of the total votes cast in the constituency.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 20 December 2007, Prime Minister Owen Arthur called early elections to the House of Assembly for 15 January 2008, eight months ahead of the constitutional due date.

Since independence in November 1966, the country's politics have been dominated by two parties: the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) and the Democratic Labour Party (DLP). In the previous elections held in May 2003, the BLP took 23 of the 30 seats at stake, while the remainder went to the DLP led by Mr. Clyde Mascoll. Mr. Arthur, who had been Prime Minister since 1994, was subsequently sworn in for his third term in office.

In January 2006, Mr. Mascoll resigned as DLP leader following a row over the party's leadership. He subsequently joined the BLP and later became Junior Finance Minister. A no-confidence motion against Mr. Mascoll was blocked on 4 December 2007, and the DLP boycotted parliamentary sessions until the House of Assembly was dissolved on 20 December.

On 26 November, Deputy Prime Minister, Ms. Mia Mottley, announced that a referendum on whether to retain the British Monarch as the country's Head of State would be held jointly with the parliamentary elections. The introduction of a republic, replacing the current commonwealth system, has been a long-standing promise in the BLP manifesto. However, on 2 December, Ms. Mottley announced that the government had decided to postpone the referendum due to a number of unspecified concerns.

Although two other parties - the Peoples Empowerment Party (PEP) and the

People's Democratic Congress (PDC) - were also in the race, opinion polls showed the 2008 elections would be a duel between the BLP and the DLP, led by Mr. David Thompson.

The DLP had launched its election manifesto as early as June 2007, and appealed particularly to young voters. It argued that, after 14 years of BLP government, it was "Time for a Change".

The BLP manifesto included various tax cuts, increased state allowances to the poor and measures to increase home ownership, as well as a health and wellness allowance of 5,000 Barbadian dollars (US\$ 2,500) per person. Prime Minister Arthur pledged to bring the country to "full developed status" by 2025. The Prime Minister accused Taiwan of financing the DLP campaign, an accusation strongly denied by the DLP leader, Mr. Thompson.

63.54 per cent of the country's 230,000 registered voters turned out at the polls.

The final results gave 20 seats to the DLP, including five first-time members. The BLP took only ten seats, losing 13, and nine ministers and junior ministers from the outgoing government were not re-elected. Three women were elected.

On 16 January 2008, Mr. Thompson was sworn in as the country's new Prime Minister. On 19 January, he named an 18-member cabinet, which was sworn in on 20 January.

On 12 February, the newly-elected House of Assembly held its opening session and elected Mr. Michael Carrington (DLP) as its new Speaker.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	235,510	
Voters	149,633	63.54%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	1,071	
Valid votes	148,562	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	% votes	Seats
Democratic Labour Party (DLP)	67.00	20
Barbados Labour Party (BLP)	33.00	10
Total		30

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	27	
Women	3	10.00%
Total	30	

BELARUS

House of Representatives

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Natsionalnoye Sobranie / National Assembly
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Palata Predstaviteley / House of Representatives
Number of members	110 directly elected
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	28 September 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the House of Representatives on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

110 single-member constituencies

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Simple majority vote.

In the first round, voting is considered valid if over 50 per cent of eligible voters take part in the polls. Candidates who receive over 50 per cent of votes are declared elected.

If none of the candidates obtains 50 per cent of votes, a run-off election between the two leading candidates is held within two weeks. Run-off elections are considered valid if more than 25 per cent of eligible voters take part. The candidate securing a simple majority of votes wins the seat. If the second round of voting is held for only one candidate, the candidate needs to obtain the support of over half of the voters taking part in the election.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age 18 years or over
- Belarusian citizenship

Disqualifications: citizens considered by the courts as incapable, persons sentenced by courts to confinement in places of imprisonment, and persons who have been placed in preventive detention under legislation governing penal justice procedure.

▶ Eligibility

- qualified voters
- age: 21 years or over
- Belarusian citizenship
- residence in the country

▶ Incompatibilities

- President of the Republic
- Judges
- Members of the Council of the Republic
- Members of a local Council of Deputies

▶ Candidacy requirements

Candidatures may be submitted by registered political parties, labour collectives or by individuals or groups that collect 1,000 signatures of voters residing in the constituency concerned. Any organization located in the constituency with a staff of at least 300 employees may also submit a candidature.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 24 June 2008, President Alexander Lukashenko issued a presidential decree calling elections to the House of Representatives for 28 September.

In the previous elections held in October 2004, 96 nominally independent candidates were elected, with the remainder representing pro-presidential political parties. None of the 104 candidates from the opposition Popular Coalition Five Plus (see note) were elected.

A total of 263 candidates and eight parties contested the 2008 elections.

Four pro-presidential parties backed a total of 24 candidates: the Communist Party of Belarus (15 candidates), the Liberal Democratic Party (seven), the Republican Party of Labour and Justice (one) and the Belarusian Agrarian Party (one). Other pro-presidential candidates ran as independents.

The United Democratic Force, the opposition coalition formed during the 2006 presidential elections, remained the main opposition force in 2008. It fielded 75 candidates. The coalition included the United Civic Party (UCP, 13 candidates) of Mr. Anatoly Lebedko, the Belarusian People's Front (BPF) Revival Party, Mr. Sergei Kalyakin's Party of Communists of Belarus (PCB, nine

candidates), and the Belarusian Social Democratic Party (Hramada, eight candidates), led by Mr. Anatoly Levkovich since August 2008. In the same month, former Hramada leader, Mr. Alexander Kozulin - who had been sentenced to five and a half years' imprisonment in 2006 after staging a protest against President Lukashenko - was released from prison.

In mid August, five UCP candidates in the capital Minsk announced that they would withdraw from the elections, citing obstacles encountered in their campaigning. On 30 August, the BPF, which had seen the candidatures of its two deputy chairmen rejected, announced that the party would withdraw all its candidates before polling day, criticizing the "undemocratic nature" of the elections. The government stated that the electoral process was 'open and transparent'. The candidature of the leader of an unregistered opposition coalition, the European Coalition, Mr. Mikalay Statkevich, was rejected in a Supreme Court ruling of 9 September due to a previous conviction for unauthorized demonstrations against the results of the 2004 parliamentary elections.

A total of 76.74 per cent of the 7 million registered voters turned out at the polls.

The Organisation for Security and Co operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) sent 465 and 368 observers respectively to monitor the polls. The OSCE declared that the elections fell short of OSCE commitments for democratic elections. However, it noted some improvements such as the slightly increased access of opposition representatives to election commissions and the decision to allow fairer access for all candidates to prime time television. It nevertheless criticized a "barely visible election campaign", which it deemed to be strictly controlled by the government. The CIS and the Central Election Commission said the elections had been "free and open".

Final results gave six seats to the Communist Party and one to the Agrarian Party. In all 30 outgoing members were returned. Other elected candidates included 32 managers of State-owned companies and institutions, and 17 State officials. No opposition members were elected. The UCP rejected the election results.

The newly elected House of Representatives held its first session on 27 October and elected Mr. Vladimir Andreichenko as its new Speaker. Mr. Boris Batura was elected as the new President of the Council of the

Republic on 31 October. Indirect elections for this chamber had taken place between 3 and 10 October.

Note:

The Popular Coalition Five Plus comprised five opposition parties: the Belarusian Popular Front, the Belarus Social Democratic Party, the Party of Communists of Belarus, the Belarusian Social Democratic Party, and the United Civic Party.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	7,016,711	
Voters	5,384,647	76.74%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	114,029	
Valid votes	5,270,618	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Seats
Communist Party of Belarus	6
Agrarian Party	1
Non-partisan members	103
Total	110

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	75	
Women	35	31.82%
Total	110	

► **Distribution of seats according to profession**

	Seats
State authorities	29
Industry, building and transport workers	13
Education	11
Health care service	9
Agriculture	2
Culture	2
Other	14
Total	80

Note:

Data refers to the 80 new members. Among them 32 heads of enterprises, institutions, organizations; 17 heads of local representative, executive and administrative bodies; and two Leaders of Political Parties. Thirty deputies were re-elected.

► **Distribution of seats according to age**

31 to 40 years	6
41 to 50 years	23
51 to 60 years	73
61 to 70 years	8
Total	110

BELIZE

House of Representatives

Parliament name (generic / translated)	National Assembly / -
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	House of Representatives
Number of members	32 members - 31 directly elected - 1 Speaker
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	7 February 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the House of Representatives following premature dissolution of this body on 7 January 2008. Elections had previously taken place on 5 March 2003.

Electoral system▶ **Constituencies**

31 single-member constituencies.

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Direct election, simple-majority vote.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years

- Belize or British Commonwealth citizens who are domiciled or have resided in the country for at least one year immediately before polling day.

Disqualifications: insanity, undischarged bankruptcy, electoral fraud, sentence to death or imprisonment exceeding one year

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters

- age: 18 years

- Belize citizenship

- residence in the country for at least one year immediately prior to nomination.

Ineligibilities: allegiance to a foreign State

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- election-connected offices
- membership of the armed or police forces
- government contractors

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 7 January 2008, Prime Minister Said Musa asked Governor-General Sir Colville Young to dissolve the parliament one month ahead of schedule, paving the way for the elections to the House of Representatives to be held on 7 February. They were held at the same time as the first-ever referendum in the country, on whether the members of the Senate, currently appointed by the Governor-General, should be directly elected.

In the previous elections held in March 2003, Prime Minister Musa's People's United Party (PUP) had won 22 of the 29 seats at stake, becoming the first party ever to win a second consecutive term in office since the country gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1981. The opposition United Democratic Party (UDP) had taken the remainder.

However, Prime Minister Musa's second term was marred by several incidents. In 2005, the introduction of higher taxes intended to repay the country's US\$ 3 billion foreign debt triggered riots. The UDP also alleged that Prime Minister Musa had distributed US\$ 10 million, received as aid from Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, to PUP supporters.

At stake in the 2008 elections were 31 seats in the enlarged House of Representatives. In all, 93 candidates, including three women, contested the elections. Although three other political parties - the National Reform Party (NRP), the Vision Inspired by the People (VIP), and the National Belizean Alliance (NBA) - also ran, the elections saw once again a duel between the PUP and the UDP, each of which fielded candidates for all the 31 parliamentary seats. The NPR and the NBA had 11 candidates each, while the VIP had four. In addition, there were five independent candidates.

In mid-January, the PUP presented its manifesto entitled "Blueprint - Believe in Belize". It promised to cut income tax, create new jobs, fight crime, and provide a laptop PC for every school child. It also presented a detailed

proposal for a new 14-member Senate that would be elected using the proportional representation system, starting from 2009.

The UDP leader, Mr. Dean Oliver Barrow, firmly opposed the idea of an elected Senate and called for a boycott of the referendum. He nevertheless agreed on the need to reform the Senate, insisting that one additional non-partisan senator should be appointed so as to give a combined majority to the members appointed on the advice of the opposition and non-partisan members.

The UDP's "21 pledges" focused on lowering the cost of living through various measures, including lower sales tax and electricity and telephone rates. It accused the PUP of corruption and mismanagement.

A total of 74.49 per cent of the 156,000 registered voters cast their ballot in the elections. However, only 46.63 per cent voted in the referendum, of which 61.54 per cent supported an elected Senate, while 36.60 per cent did not.

The final results gave 25 seats to the UDP, with over 56 per cent of the valid votes. Although the PUP won over 40 per cent of the valid votes, it obtained only six seats. None of the other parties secured more than eight per cent of the votes. No women were elected.

On 8 February, Mr. Barrow was sworn in as the new Prime Minister.

On 15 February, he appointed Mr. Emil Arguelles, an attorney-at-law, as the new Speaker of the House of Representatives.

On 14 March, the newly elected members of the House of Representatives were sworn in alongside the appointed senators, who included the new Senate President, Ms. Andrea Gill.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	156,993	
Voters	116,943	74.49%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	749	
Valid votes	116,194	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Votes	% votes	Seats
United Democratic Party (UDP)	66,203	56.61	25
People's United Party (PUP)	47,624	40.72	6
Total			31

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	31	
Women	0	0.00%
Total	31	

BHUTAN

National Assembly

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Chi Tshog / Parliament
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Tshogdu / National Assembly
Number of members	47 directly elected
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	24 March 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all members of the National Assembly.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

47 single-member constituencies

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Single-member plurality system ("first-past-the-post")

Elections are held in two rounds. In the "primary round" (first round), Bhutanese vote for the political party of their choice. In the "general election" (second round), the two political parties that obtain the highest number of votes in the primary round field their candidates.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- Bhutanese citizenship

- Age: at least 18 years old on election day

- Residence in the constituency at least one year prior to election

Qualified voters who are on diplomatic assignments, working in Bhutanese Embassies, on special duty abroad, their spouses and dependants, civil servants, students and those serving in the armed forces, officials on election duty and voters specifically permitted by the Election Commission in consultation with the government can vote through postal ballots.

Disqualifications:

- Persons who are mentally unfit or specifically barred from voting under

the laws of the country.
- Imprisonment

▶ **Eligibility**

- Bhutanese citizenship
 - Age: minimum of 25 years and maximum of 65 years at the time of registration
 - Registration in the constituency concerned
 - University degree
 - Members of political parties
- Ineligibilities:
- Members of the Royal Family
 - Members of the armed forces
 - Civil servants
 - Clergymen
 - Executives and members of the Electoral Commission
 - Persons married to non-Bhutanese nationals
 - Conviction for crime, bribery, or electoral offence
 - Persons who are mentally unfit or specifically barred from voting under the laws of the country.

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- Head of State
 - Members of the other chamber
 - Ministers of State
 - Holders of public office
 - Civil servants
 - Executives and members of the Electoral Commission
 - Chief of electoral staff
 - Members of the armed forces
 - Members of the police forces
 - Clergymen
- *The incompatibilities cited above are valid during the term of office.
- Holders of temporary entry permits
 - Undocumented immigrants
 - Insanity/mental illness

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- candidature must be submitted by political parties

Background and Outcome of the Elections

Pursuant to a royal decree issued in June 2007, the first general elections to the new 47-member National Assembly - the lower Chamber of the Bhutanese Parliament - were held on 24 March 2008. They followed elections to the newly-created upper Chamber - the National Council - held in December 2007 and January 2008.

The previous 150-member National Assembly had been a non-partisan body. Elections to that body had taken place at the district level. On 31 July 2007, it was dissolved in view of the 2008 elections.

On 22 April 2007, a royal edict was issued allowing the establishment of political parties in Bhutan. The Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (Bhutan Unity Party - DPT) was led by former prime minister Jigme Y. Thinley. On 21 July, the Bhutan United Peoples Party (BPUP) and the All Peoples Party (APP) merged under the banner of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). It was led by Mr. Sangay Ngedup, former prime minister and uncle of former King Jigme Singye Wangchuck. The PDP promised to establish a solid democracy and pledged to serve the royal family with absolute loyalty and devotion. The Election Commission subsequently registered the DPT and the PDP as parties to be contesting the 2008 elections.

Another party, the Bhutan National Party (BNP), comprised retired civil servants and defence officers. It vowed to fight corruption and unemployment. On 28 November, the Election Commission announced that the BNP did not meet the requirements to be registered as a political party. It explained that the BNP did not have the required cross-national membership and support or a manifesto with a clear ideology.

According to the electoral rules, elections to the National Assembly are held in two rounds. In the "primary round" (first round), Bhutanese vote for the political party of their choice. In the "general election" (second round), the two political parties that obtain the highest number of votes in the primary round field their candidates.

With only two political parties, namely the DPT and PDP, registered to contest the elections, the primary round was not held for the 2008 elections. The two parties nevertheless were given time to present their manifestos. Both parties campaigned on similar platforms, promising to construct new roads and schools. The DPT emphasized "equity and justice", focusing on education, employment and infrastructure. The PDP promised to fight poverty and boost

the rural economy.

On 20 January 2008, a series of bomb attacks occurred in four places in the country, including the capital, Thimphu. A newly-formed radical group, the United Revolutionary Front of Bhutan, claimed responsibility for the blasts.

Of the country's 634,000 inhabitants, 318,000 were eligible to vote. In a measure intended to guarantee the independence of the elections, members of the royal family and Buddhist monks are not allowed to vote. Despite the pre-election violence, the polling went off in relative peace. A total of 79.45 per cent of eligible voters turned out at the polls, almost 25 percentage points higher than the turnout recorded for the National Council elections two months earlier.

42 international observers, including the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU-EOM), monitored the polls. The EU mission declared that the elections generally met international standards for democratic elections, but fell short in certain areas. It emphasized the importance of giving the voters "a genuine choice of alternative ideologies".

The final results gave a resounding victory to the DPT, which won 45 of the 47 seats. PDP leader Ngedup was not re-elected. The local media attributed the DPT victory to the popularity of Mr. Thinley, considered to be close to the people. On the contrary, the PDP was reportedly damaged by its strong ties to the royal family. Four women were elected.

On 29 March, the two elected PDP candidates announced that they would resign. They subsequently reversed their decision and pledged to work towards building a "strong opposition" in the National Assembly. On 2 April, two representatives of the PDP filed a petition to the High Court, demanding that the election of 19 candidates be declared null and void. They argued that the elections had not been free and fair, insisting that civil servants had influenced voters. On 7 April, the High Court rejected the petition, stating that the allegations were speculative.

On 9 April, the King designated Mr. Thinley as the new Prime Minister. He subsequently announced his 10-member cabinet and the nominees for the posts of Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly.

The National Assembly held its first session on 22 April and elected Mr. Jigme Tshultim (DPT) as its new Speaker.

Election results and statistics**▶ Voter turnout**

Number of registered electors	318,465	
Voters	253,012	79.45%

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Seats	Number of women
Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT)	45	4
People's Democratic Party (PDP)	2	0
Total	47	

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	43	
Women	4	8.51%
Total	47	

CAMBODIA

National Assembly

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Parliament / Parliament
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Radhspeha Ney Preah Recheanachakr Kampuchea / National Assembly
Number of members	123 directly elected
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	27 July 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the National Assembly on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

21 multi-member constituencies corresponding to the country's provinces.

▶ **Voting system: Proportional**

Closed party-list proportional representation system.

The allocation of seats is effected on the basis of the Hare electoral quotient and remaining seats according to the greatest remainders.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled by the "next-in-line" candidates of the same party that held the seats in question. Vacancies are not filled in the last six months of the Assembly's term.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years
- Cambodian citizenship

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: 25 years
- Cambodian citizenship

▶ Incompatibilities

- any other public function
- membership in other institutions provided for in the Constitution (except when MPs required to serve in the Government)

▶ Candidacy requirements

- nomination by duly registered party in the province in which the candidate is a registered voter

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 9 June 2007, Prime Minister Hun Sen called elections to the National Assembly for 27 July 2008.

Hun Sen has been in power since 1985 when he became Prime Minister of the government that was installed after the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime.

In the previous elections in 2003, Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP) won 73 of the 123 seats in the National Assembly. Its coalition partner, the United National Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Co-operative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC), took 26; while the main opposition Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) obtained 24. The CPP formed once again a coalition government with the FUNCINPEC in order to secure the two-thirds majority required to pass bills in the National Assembly. In March 2006, the National Assembly amended the constitution to enable it to pass bills with a simple majority.

In October 2006, the FUNCINPEC leader and Speaker of the National Assembly, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, lost the party leadership to Mr. Keo Puth Rasmeyand (the son-in-law of former King Norodom Sihanouk) and formed his own self-named party. Mr. Heng Samrin (CPP) succeeded him as Speaker. The FUNCINPEC subsequently filed a criminal lawsuit against Prince Ranariddh for breach of trust in handling the sale of the party's land. Prince Ranariddh left the country and has been in exile in Malaysia ever since. In March 2007, the Court of First Instance in Phnom Penh sentenced him in absentia to 18 months in prison and ordered him to pay US\$ 150,000 compensation to the FUNCINPEC. His appeal was rejected by the Appeal Court, and the Supreme Court had not made its ruling before the 2008 elections. Prince Ranariddh led his campaign from Malaysia, calling in vain for an opposition alliance.

As a result of the FUNCINPEC's internal rifts, the real duel in the elections,

which 12 parties contested, was between the CPP and the SRP. In June, Hun Sen announced that the CPP would form a coalition government only with the FUNCINPEC, and it would form a new government on its own should the FUNCINPEC fail to win any seats.

Hun Sen campaigned on his government's achievements in ushering in peace and stability after defeating the Khmer Rouge regime. He promised to provide better infrastructure, including roads, bridges, hospitals and schools. His free-market policies reportedly contributed to the country's economic development, resulting in over 11 per cent annual economic growth between 2004 and 2007 in the country of 14 million inhabitants.

The SRP was led by Mr. Sam Rainsy, a prominent opposition figure and a longtime rival of Prime Minister Hun Sen. It accused the government of corruption and failing to combat widespread poverty: around 50 per cent of Cambodians reportedly live on less than US\$ 1 a day. The SRP pledged to work for human rights and to tackle corruption and poverty.

Prior to the elections, defamation proceedings were initiated against Mr. Rainsy following an April 2008 speech in which he alluded to the participation of members of the current government in the Khmer Rouge regime. A court request in June to temporarily lift Mr. Rainsy's parliamentary immunity was postponed until after the elections. In December 2005 he had been sentenced in absentia to 18 months in prison and US\$ 14,000 in fines and compensation for defaming the Prime Minister. He returned to the country in February 2006 after receiving a royal pardon by King Norodom Sihamoni at Hun Sen's request.

The Human Rights Party, formed in July 2007 by Mr. Khem Sokha, pledged to bring about true justice, freedom and democracy to Cambodia. It reportedly was popular in the countryside.

Traditional election issues were pushed into the background by a military standoff in mid-July 2008 between Cambodia and Thailand over the Preah Vihear temple site situated on the border between the two countries. The International Court of Justice awarded the temple site to Cambodia in 1962 but the land around the temple (4.6 kilometers) continued to be a subject of dispute. On 8 July, UNESCO decided to list the temple as a World Heritage Site in Cambodia. Demonstrators from Thailand assembled near the temple and the Thai government sent troops to the border, followed by the deployment of Cambodian troops. Hun Sen's popularity was reportedly

boosted by his firm stance. Both countries agreed to resume negotiations on the border row.

On 27 July, 75.21 per cent of the country's 8.1 million eligible voters turned out at the polls.

Mr. Rainsy (SRP) demanded that the polls be invalidated, claiming that some 200,000 registered voters in the capital - a traditional SRP stronghold - had been unable to cast their ballots because their names had been omitted from the voters' list.

European Union (EU) observers said the elections had fallen short of a number of key international standards for democratic elections, but welcomed the fact that the election campaign had been more peaceful and open than in previous elections. They reported that about 50,000 people could not find their names on the voters' list on polling day.

On 28 July, the National Election Committee (NEC) announced preliminary results, giving 90 seats to the CPP. The SRP became the second largest party, winning 26 seats. The Human Rights Party and the Norodom Ranariddh Party won three and two seats respectively. The FUNCINPEC took only two. Following a Supreme Court ruling of 30 July to uphold the judgment of the Appeal Court, Prince Ranariddh was barred from taking up one of the seats won by his party.

On 31 July, the SRP, the Human Rights Party, and the Norodom Ranariddh Party filed a complaint to King Norodom Sihamoni against election officials claiming they had prevented one million people from voting. On 2 September, the NEC confirmed that the final results showed no changes to the preliminary results.

On 24 September, the newly elected National Assembly held its first session. The following day, it re-elected Mr. Heng Samrin (CPP) as Speaker.

The CPP and the FUNCINPEC once again formed a coalition government. The 26-member cabinet dominated by the CPP was approved by the National Assembly on 25 September.

On 25 September, the King granted Prince Ranariddh a royal pardon at the request of Prime Minister Hun Sen. Prince Ranariddh returned from exile on 30 September.

Election results and statistics**▶ Voter turnout**

Number of registered electors (turnout)	8,125,529	(75.21%)
Valid votes	6,010,277	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Votes	% votes	Seats	Number of women
Cambodian People's Party (CPP)	3,492,374	58.11	90	14
Sam Rainsy Party (SRP)	1,316,714	21.91	26	6
Human Rights Party	397,816	6.62	3	0
Norodom Ranariddh Party	337,943	5.62	2	0
United National Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Co-operative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC)	303,764	5.05	2	0
Total			123	20

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	103	
Women	20	16.26%
Total	123	

CANADA

House of Commons

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Parliament of Canada - Parlement du Canada / -
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	House of Commons
Number of members	308 directly elected
Term of House	4 years Subject to an earlier dissolution of Parliament, a general election must be held on the third Monday in October in the fourth calendar year following polling day for the last general election.
Date of elections	14 October 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all members of the House of Commons following the premature dissolution of this body on 7 September 2008. General elections had been held previously on 23 January 2006.

Electoral system

► **Constituencies**

- 308 single-member constituencies :
- 106 members from Ontario
 - 75 from Québec
 - 36 from British Columbia
 - 28 from Alberta
 - 14 each from Manitoba and Saskatchewan
 - 11 from Nova Scotia
 - 10 from New Brunswick
 - 7 from Newfoundland and Labrador
 - 4 from Prince Edward Island
 - 1 from the Northwest Territories
 - 1 from Nunavut
 - 1 from Yukon

► **Voting system: Majority**

- Simple majority vote (single-member plurality system, first past the post)
- A general election must be held on the third Monday in October in the

fourth calendar year following polling day for the last general election. Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18

- Canadian citizenship

- residence in Canada; non-residents (except diplomats, armed forces personnel or other government officials abroad) cannot have been absent for more than 5 years

Disqualifications: corrupt or illegal practices, Chief and Assistant Chief Electoral Officer

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters

- age: 18

- Canadian citizenship

- residence in Canada; non-residents cannot have been absent for more than five consecutive years

Ineligibilities: electoral fraud, conviction for corrupt or illegal election practices (for five to seven years), for candidates in the previous election, failure to file an election finance report

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- certain public and election officers

- members of provincial legislatures

- judges

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- the names, addresses and signatures, provided in the presence of a witness, of at least 100 electors resident in the electoral district (50 electors in sparsely populated districts)

- the closing day for nominations is on Monday, the 21st day before polling day.

- mandatory deposit (1,000 Canadian dollars) accompanying the nomination; full amount of deposit is reimbursed if required financial reports are submitted within specified time after election day. Candidates who have obtained at least 10 per cent of the valid votes cast within their electoral districts are entitled to a partial reimbursement of their paid expenses and their paid personal expenses.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 7 September 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper asked Governor General Michaëlle Jean to dissolve Parliament and call new elections to the House of Commons for 14 October. This would be the third elections in four years. According to an amendment to the Elections Act in November 2006, elections were not due until 19 October 2009. However, the amendment did not divest the Governor General of the power to dissolve parliament before the end of its term. Prime Minister Harper used this legal loophole to call for early elections in a bid to secure a parliamentary majority, arguing that the parliament was "dysfunctional".

In the previous elections held in January 2006, Mr. Harper's Conservative Party won 124 of the 308 seats at stake. The Liberal Party, which had ruled the country since 1993, came in second with 103 seats. The Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party (NDP) took 51 and 29 seats respectively. Mr. Harper subsequently formed the smallest minority government in Canadian history.

Although no specific issues dominated the political agenda at the time of the dissolution, the global financial crisis pushed the economy to the forefront of the election campaign. Major parties presented various tax-reduction plans to boost the economy, trying to win over the provinces of Ontario and Québec, which account for a total of 181 out of the 308 seats in the House of Commons. In all, 1,601 candidates, including 445 women, were vying for the 308 seats at stake.

Prime Minister Harper argued that Canada was on a better economic footing than the United States, where the financial crisis had originated. He pledged to maintain tax cuts, especially for senior citizens and single parents. He also campaigned on reduced debt and prudent spending. However, one week before polling day, he announced a plan to help the aerospace and automobile sectors with loans amounting C\$ 400 million (US\$ 320 million).

The Liberal Party, led by former environment minister Stéphane Dion, criticized the Prime Minister for failing to come up with an economic plan. Mr. Dion continued to advocate a tax increase on greenhouse gas emissions in order to fund tax cuts for low- and middle-income earners and small businesses.

The Bloc Québécois of Mr. Gilles Duceppe also criticized the Prime Minister's

economic policy, accusing him of laissez-faire economics.

The NDP, led by Mr. Jack Layton, promised to cancel corporate tax cuts introduced by the Prime Minister. It also promised to introduce a nationwide child care plan and home care for the elderly.

The campaign was also dominated by Canada's ongoing involvement in the war in Afghanistan. A few days before polling day, a parliamentary report indicated that the mission would cost C\$ 18 billion (US\$ 14.4 billion) by the time its mandate ended in 2011. At the time of the 2008 elections, nearly 100 Canadian soldiers had been killed in Afghanistan.

The Bloc Québécois called for the withdrawal of troops from Kandahar province, arguing that the mission should focus on humanitarian aid instead. The NDP also called for a withdrawal of the troops and for the mission to be taken over by the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The Green Party, led by Ms. Elizabeth May, insisted that troops should start leaving no later than February 2009. The Conservative Party promised to withdraw most of the 2,500 troops by 2011. The Liberal Party committed itself to withdrawing the troops without specifying any deadline.

A total of 58.83 per cent of the 23.6 million registered voters turned out at the polls.

The final results gave 143 seats to the Conservative Party. The Liberal Party's share dropped to 76. The Bloc Québécois remained the third largest party with 50 seats. The New Democrats increased its strength to 37. The Green Party lost the one seat that it held in the outgoing parliament. Two independent candidates were elected. In all, 68 women were elected.

On 30 October, Mr. Harper once again formed a minority government.

The newly elected House of Commons held its first session on 18 November and re-elected Mr. Peter Milliken (Liberal Party) as its Speaker.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	23,677,639	
Voters	13,929,093	58.83%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	94,799	
Valid votes	13,834,294	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Seats
Conservative Party	143
Liberal Party	76
Bloc Québécois (BQ)	50
New Democratic Party (NDP)	37
Independents	2
Total	308

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	240	
Women	68	22.08%
Total	308	

CUBA

National Assembly of the People's Power

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Asamblea nacional del Poder popular / National Assembly of the People's Power
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	614 directly elected
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	20 January 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all seats in the National Assembly of the People's Power on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

According to the Electoral Law, there is one Deputy for every 20,000 inhabitants or fraction above 10,000 in each of the country's 169 municipalities. These are divided into units, which are delimited according to population. There is a minimum of one unit for a constituency of up to 399 inhabitants and a maximum of eight for constituencies of more than 2,800 inhabitants.

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Majority system: To be declared elected, each candidate must obtain more than 50% of the valid votes cast in the constituency in which he or she is running. If this is not attained, the seat in question remains vacant unless the Council of State decides to hold another election.

Vacancies between elections are filled through by-elections.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 16 years

- Cuban citizenship

- residence in country for at least two years prior to elections

Disqualifications: insanity, court-declared incapacity, detention, deprivation of political rights

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters

- age: 18 years
- Cuban citizenship
- full possession of political rights for at least five years prior to elections

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

According to law, up to 50% of the Deputies must be delegates chosen in each municipality. Parliamentary candidates are otherwise proposed by nominating assemblies which comprise representatives of workers, youth, women, students and farmers as well as members of the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution. The final list of candidates, which corresponds to the number of seats to be filled, is drawn up by the National Candidature Commission taking into account criteria such as candidates' merit, patriotism, ethical values and revolutionary history.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The main issue in the January 2008 elections was whether President Fidel Castro would seek re-election as Head of State. Mr. Castro, who is 81, had led Cuba since 1959, but handed over control of the government to his younger brother, Raúl, following surgery in July 2006. The National Assembly of the People's Power, the unicameral Parliament of Cuba, elects the 31 member Council of State, whose President is also the leader of the country.

At stake in the 2008 elections were 614 seats in the National Assembly of the People's Power. The number of seats was increased from 609 due to an increase in the population.

As in previous elections, a minimum of two candidates per constituency were nominated by municipal assemblies. Voters were asked to vote for either the full list or each candidate individually in their constituency. In order to be elected, candidates need to secure at least half of the valid votes.

Election campaigning is forbidden in the country. On the polling day, President Castro sent a message to Cubans announcing that he had cast an absentee ballot and urged them to vote massively.

Although voting is not compulsory, turnout has been traditionally high. In the 2008 elections, 96.89 per cent of the 8.4 million registered voters turned out at the polls. A total of 91 per cent of voters approved the full list of candidates, while others opted to vote selectively for some but not all candidates. All 614 candidates were elected. Mr. Raúl Castro was elected

with the highest score - 99.4 per cent of the votes - surpassing his elder brother by one percentage point.

Among the 614 newly elected members, 265 were women, while 385 were first timers. 56 per cent of them were born after the 1959 Revolution. The average age of the newly elected members is 49 years.

On 19 February, Mr. Fidel Castro announced in the official Communist Party paper that he would not seek a new presidential term, but would retain his seat in parliament.

The newly elected Assembly held its first session on 24 February and re-elected Mr. Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada as its Speaker.

On the same day, the National Assembly of the People's Power elected the 31 members of the Council of State. Mr. Raúl Castro was unanimously elected as President of the Council of State.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	About 8,400,000	
Voters	8,231,365	96.89%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	392,007	
Valid votes	7,839,358	

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	349	
Women	265	43.16%
Total	614	

► **Distribution of seats according to profession**

	Seats
Production and service activities	175
Delegates to Local People's Power Bodies	130
Political party officials	54
Students and mass Organization officials	51
Members of the State and Government	51
Members of the Armed Force and the Ministry of Interior	43
Writers and artists	26
Research activities	25
Other administrative officials	18
Journalism, broadcasting, media	16
Sports	10
Pensioners	5
Religious Institutions representatives	4
Others	6
Total	614

► **Distribution of seats according to age**

Under 35 years	54
36 to 40 years	58
41 to 50 years	236
51 to 60 years	149
Over 61 years	117
Total	614

CZECH REPUBLIC

Senate

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Parliament / Parliament
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Senat / Senate
Number of members	81 directly elected
Term of House	6 years; one-third of the membership is renewed every two years.
Date of elections	17 – 18 & 24 – 25 octobre 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for one-third (27) of the Senate seats upon the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

81 single-member constituencies.

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Majority system based on single-member constituencies

Direct, absolute majority vote. If necessary, a second round is held six days after the first round. No threshold is required to win a seat. There are no reserved seats or quotas for women, ethnic minorities or other categories.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections held within 90 days, except in the last year of the term of the Senator concerned.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years

- Czech citizenship (including naturalized citizens)

- residence in the country at the time of the election

Disqualifications: restricted freedom of movement for public health reasons, legal incapacity to vote.

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters

- age: 40 years
 - Czech citizenship (including naturalized citizens)
- Ineligibilities: insanity/mental illness, holders of temporary entry permits, undocumented immigrants, members of the Electoral Commission, restricted freedom of movement for public health reasons, legal incapacity to stand for election

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- President of the Republic
- judge, attorney or State arbiter
- member of the Chamber of Deputies
- head of a local authority

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- nomination by political parties, coalitions, or independents
- candidatures must be submitted at least 60 days prior to polling, accompanied by monetary deposit of Kcs 20,000, reimbursed if the candidate has obtained at least 6% of the vote in the constituency concerned.
- any contending party must have at least 10,000 members or supporters
- list of candidates in each district must be submitted at least 60 days prior to polling

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 16 July 2008, President Václav Klaus called elections for one third of the 81-member Senate and 13 of the 14 regional assemblies for 17 and 18 October (with run-off Senate elections scheduled for the following week).

In the previous elections held in October 2006, the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), led by Mr. Mirek Topolánek, won 14 of the 27 seats at stake, taking a narrow overall majority in the Senate with 41 seats. This victory helped resolve the stalemate that followed the June 2006 elections to the 200-member Chamber of Deputies in which the main forces, led by the ODS and the Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD), had won 100 seats each. Mr. Topolánek's minority government won a vote of confidence in January 2007. It comprised the ODS, the Christian Democratic Union-Czech People's Party (KDU-CSL, four seats in the Senate) and the Green Party (SZ, one seat). The coalition government was divided over some key issues, such as health care reform, the stationing of a US radar base on Czech territory and the deployment of Czech soldiers in Afghanistan.

On 15 February 2008, parliament re-elected Mr. Klaus (ODS's honorary Chairman) as the country's President in the fourth round of voting. His main rival was Mr. Jan Svejnar (CSSD).

Prior to the 2008 elections, the relationship between the President and the Prime Minister reportedly deteriorated due to policy differences towards the European Union (EU) and a planned US radar base. The Czech Republic is due to take over the EU Presidency in January 2009. Mr. Klaus has publicly opposed further transfer of power to the EU, the Lisbon Treaty (aimed at reforming EU institutions) and the introduction of the euro. Parliament is due to vote on the Lisbon Treaty after the Constitutional Court decides whether or not it violates the country's Constitution.

The disputes caused an internal rift within the ODS with its two Deputy Chairmen - Mr. Pavel Bém and Mr. Petr Bendl - allying with the President. President Klaus said that the 2008 Senate elections would be a referendum on Prime Minister Topolánek's government. Prime Minister Topolánek did not lead the ODS election campaign, saying that regional politicians had argued that the campaign should not be conducted on the central level.

The introduction in January 2008 of direct payment of health care fees as the first phase of a reform to curb waste and abuse in the healthcare system had rendered the ODS unpopular. The CSSD urged voters to ensure that the Senate could act as a counterweight to the Chamber of Deputies, by refusing an ODS majority.

In early September, the ODS was rocked by accusations that one of its members in the Chamber of Deputies was trying to blackmail another ODS member and a SZ member. The accused parliamentarian resigned on 8 September. Several ODS deputies protested against Mr. Topolánek's leadership, with some supporting First Deputy Chairman Bém. CSSD Chairman Jiri Paroubek called on Prime Minister Topolánek to resign.

A total of 39.52 per cent of the 2.8 million registered voters turned out the polls. Only one candidate, a CSSD candidate secured an absolute majority to be elected in the first round. Other CSSD candidates had a clear lead in many constituencies. In the regional elections, the CSSD won in all 13 regions, 12 of which had been ruled by the ODS.

The run-off elections on 24 and 25 October recorded an unusually high turnout of 29.85 per cent, the second highest in run-off elections since the

Senate's inception in 1996.

The CSSD won the Senate elections for the first time, taking 23 of the 27 seats at stake. Its strength in the Senate increased to 29 in total. The ODS recorded its worst results, taking only three seats. With 35 seats in all, the ODS lost its absolute majority in the Senate. The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM) took the remaining seat, thus holding three seats in the Senate. Five women (four from the CSSD and one from the KSCM) were elected, bringing the total number of women senators to 14.

Prime Minister Topolánek conceded defeat and admitted that his ODS had failed to articulate its goals in the elections.

The newly elected Senate held its first session on 26 November and re-elected Mr. Premysl Sobotka (ODS) as its new Speaker.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

	Round 1 (17 - 18 October)		Round 2 (24 -25 October)	
Number of registered electors	2,852,506		2,764,218	
Voters	1,127,259	39.52%	825,126	29.85%
Blank or invalid ballot papers				
Valid votes	1,047,358		822,353	

► **Distribution of seats according to political group**

	Round 1	Round 2	Seats 2008	Grand Total
Civic Democratic Party (ODS)	0	3	3	35
Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD)	1	22	23	29
Christian Democratic Union (KDU)	0	0	0	7
Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM)	0	1	1	3
Association of Independents - European Democrats	0	0	0	1
Civic Democratic Alliance - Freedom Union	0	0	0	1
Green Party (SZ)	0	0	0	1
Independents Mayors for Region (NSK)	0	0	0	1
Open Society Party	0	0	0	1
United Democrats-Union of Independents	0	0	0	1
Independents	0	0	0	1
Total	1	26	27	81

► **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	22		14	
Women	5	18.52%	67	17.28%
Total	27		81	

DJIBOUTI

National Assembly

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Assemblée nationale / National Assembly
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	65 directly elected
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	8 February 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the National Assembly on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

Six multi-member constituencies (4 to 37 seats, according to population).

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Party-list simple majority system in one round of voting, without vote-splitting or preferential vote.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- Age: 18 years
- Djibouti citizenship
- Full enjoyment of civil and political rights

Disqualifications:

- Persons convicted for a crime, convicted of an offence and sentenced to a prison term exceeding three years or a suspended prison sentence exceeding one year, except for convictions involving misdemeanour
- Non-Djiboutian nationals

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- Age: 23 years
- Djibouti citizenship
- Residence in the country

- Ability to read, write and speak French or Arabic fluently

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- President of the Republic
- National Commissioners, district chiefs and deputy district chiefs, subdistrict (arrondissement) chiefs in the district of Djibouti
- Government and ministry secretaries general
- Magistrates
- State supervisors, labour inspectors and school supervisors
- Members of the armed forces and of the national security force
- Police commissioners and inspectors

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- party lists must be submitted at least 15 days before the start of the election campaign
- a deposit of D.Fr. 500,000 per candidate is required if it is reimbursed to all candidates on party lists having obtained at least 5 per cent of the votes cast.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

Elections were called for 8 February 2008 upon the normal expiry of the term of the National Assembly.

In the previous elections held in January 2003, the Union for the Presidential Majority (UMP) supporting President Ismael Omar Guelleh, who had been in power since 1999, had taken all 65 seats in the National Assembly. It had comprised four parties: the People's Rally for Progress (RPP), the Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD), the National Democratic Party (PND) and the Social Democratic Party (PSD).

The opposition coalition, the Union for Democratic Change (UAD), led by former prime minister Ahmed Dini, had failed to win parliamentary representation despite polling 28 per cent of the votes. The coalition included the Republican Alliance for Democracy (ARD), the Union for Democracy and Justice (UDJ), the Movement for Democratic Renewal (MRD) and the Djibouti Party for Development (PDD). It had boycotted the 2005 presidential elections in which Mr. Guelleh was re-elected.

The UAD demanded the introduction of the proportional representation system but the government rejected it. Prime Minister Dileita Mohamed Dileita argued that such a system would upset the tribal balance in Djibouti.

The UAD subsequently boycotted the 2008 elections, claiming that they would be undemocratic. Its leader, Ismaël Guedi Hared, criticized the government for holding elections despite the opposition's boycott. He accused the government of trying to return to the de facto one-party system.

Consequently, only the UMP, led by Prime Minister Dileita, fielded candidates in the 2008 elections. The UMP, which also now included the Union of Reform Partisans (UPR), endorsed 65 candidates, including nine women. Its platform was similar to the one used for the 2003 elections, promising a better quality of life through economic development and national unity.

Almost 110,000 (over 72 per cent) of the 151,000 registered voters turned out at the polls, of whom some 103,000 voted in favour of the UMP list.

The African Union and the Arab League, which monitored the polls, said they were "satisfied" with the election process, which they deemed to have taken place in "a democratic atmosphere".

On 17 February, the Constitutional Council validated the elections of all 65 members.

On 20 February, the newly-elected National Assembly held its first session and re-elected Mr. Idriss Arnaoud Ali (UMP) as its Speaker.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	151,490	
Voters	109,999	72.61%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	6,536	
Valid votes	103,463	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Seats
Union for the Presidential Majority (UMP)	65
Total	65

▶ **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	56	
Women	9	13.85%
Total	65	

▶ **Distribution of seats according to profession**

	Seats	
Civil service and local authority administration	41	
Entrepreneur	7	
Education profession	4	
Armed services/Police	3	
Nursing	2	
Journalism, broadcasting, media	2	
Legal profession	2	
Other	4	
Total	65	

▶ **Distribution of seats according to age**

31 to 40 years	11
41 to 50 years	19
51 to 60 years	19
61 to 70 years	14
Over 70 years	2
Total	65

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

House of Peoples' Representatives

Parliament name	Cámara de los Representantes del Pueblo /
(generic / translated)	House of Peoples' Representatives
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	100 directly elected
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	4 May 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the House of Representatives of the People following premature dissolution of this body on 29 February 2008. Elections to the House of Representatives of the People had previously taken place on 25 April 2004.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

Multi-member constituencies corresponding to the country's administrative units.

▶ **Voting system: Proportional**

Closed party-list proportional representation system.
Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Eligibility**

- Be a citizen of Equatorial Guinea over 25 years of age.
- Be in full possession of one's civil and political rights.
- Be a native or have taken up residence in an electoral district and have been registered as living there in the census.
- Know how to read and write properly.
- Have been declared a candidate in accordance with the present Law.

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- Those subject to a sentence depriving them of their liberty, for the duration of the sentence.
- Even if the sentence does not involve imprisonment, those convicted of electoral fraud, rebellion, breaches of State security or attacks on the life, physical integrity or liberty of persons.

- Church ministers of any religion.
- Members of a political party other than the one for which they ran as candidates.
- Persons who, having opted for a foreign nationality, have not given up such a nationality as provided for by law.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 29 February 2008, President Teodoro Obiang Nguema dissolved the House of Representatives of the People and called early elections for 4 May, 11 months earlier than the constitutional due date. The government argued that holding legislative elections in parallel with municipal polls would save money.

In the previous elections held in April 2004, President Obiang's Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE) took 68 seats in the enlarged 100-member parliament. Its ally, the pro-government "Electoral Coalition" (also known as the "Democratic Opposition") took 30. The opposition Convergence for Social Democracy (CPDS) of Mr. Plácido Micó Abogon won the two remaining seats.

President Obiang seized power in a coup d'état in 1979, ousting his uncle, Francisco Macias Nguema. The country introduced a multi-party system in 1991 and the PDGE has remained the dominant party. Having become sub-Saharan Africa's third largest oil producer, Equatorial Guinea has enjoyed rapid economic development in recent years, with a double-digit growth rate. Despite GDP of 7,874 US dollars per capita, many people still live in poverty however.

In the 2008 elections, the PDGE and the Democratic Opposition (comprising nine parties) formed an electoral alliance that pledged to work towards stability and further economic development. Their campaign focused on the government's achievements in the development of national infrastructure. President Obiang also promised to give citizens an opportunity to express their opinion on the government's performance.

The CPDS was the main opposition force in the 2008 elections. It urged voters not to be afraid to vote for the opposition. The CPDS tried to appeal to young voters, arguing that they needed to take back the country from a small "oil-rich elite".

The opposition Progress Party was barred from participating in the 2008

elections. Its leader, Mr. Severo Moto - who had been in exile in Spain since the 1980s - had been sentenced in absentia to 62 years in prison for his alleged involvement in a 2004 coup attempt. In April 2008, Mr. Moto was arrested in Spain on charges of trafficking arms to Equatorial Guinea.

Another opposition party, the Popular Union (UP), was weakened by an internal split prior to the 2008 elections.

Turnout was reportedly low among the 278,000 eligible voters.

No major incident was reported on polling day. However, CPDS Secretary General Micó insisted that the elections had been rigged, referring to the disappearance and shortage of ballot papers in some polling stations as well as acts of intimidation against CPDS representatives.

The final results gave 89 seats to the PDGE and ten to the Democratic Opposition, or 99 seats in all. The PDGE won 100 per cent of the votes in several polling stations. The CPDS took the one remaining seat.

On 18 June, the newly elected House of Representatives of the People held a special session to elect a new bureau. Mr. Angel Serafin-Seriche Dougan Malabo was elected as the new Speaker.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	About 278,000
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▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Seats
Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE)	89
Democratic Opposition (Electoral Coalition)	10
Convergence for Social Democracy (CPDS)	1
Total	100

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	94	
Women	6	6.00%
Total	100	

GEORGIA

Parliament

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Sakartvelos Parlamenti / Parliament
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	150 directly elected
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	21 May 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the Parliament on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

- One nationwide constituency for the PR system.
- 75 single-member constituencies for the majority system.

▶ **Voting system: Mixed**

- 75 seats by the Proportional Representation system (Party List system)
Parties exceeding a 5-per cent threshold are entitled to win seats under the PR system.
- 75 seats by the Majority system (first past the post):
If no candidate secures 30 per cent of the valid vote, run-off elections will be held between the two leading candidates.
- Under both systems, at least 50% of the registered electors in each constituency must have voted for the poll to be deemed valid, otherwise it is repeated. If no candidate obtains at least 33% of the votes cast in the constituency, a runoff simple majority vote is held between the two top candidates.
Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years
- Georgian citizenship

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: 25 years

- Georgian citizenship
- fulfilment of residence requirements

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- any position in a state office
- industrial activities
- membership of territorial representative body (except Abkhazian or Adjarian supreme bodies)

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- proportional system: nomination by duly registered parties or blocs supported by at least 30,000 electors or already represented in Parliament
- majority system: each candidate must be nominated by a party or needs backing of at least 1000 electors unless he/she is member of outgoing legislature

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The May 2008 parliamentary elections followed the re-election of President Mikhail Saakashvili in January. In the referendum held concurrently with the presidential elections, Georgians decided to hold the parliamentary elections in the spring instead of the autumn of 2008. On 21 March, President Saakashvili signed a decree calling elections for 21 May.

In previous elections in November 2003, the results for the 150 seats filled under the proportional representation (PR) system were cancelled by the Constitutional Court. The elections for the PR seats were repeated in March 2004. The final tally gave President Saakashvili's National Movement-Democrats (which renamed itself the United National Movement, UNM) a total of 161 of the 235 seats, while the Right Opposition took 17. The remainder went to independents and small parties.

For the 2008 elections, the statutory number of seats in parliament was reduced from 235 to 150, in keeping with a referendum held in November 2003. Based on recommendations by international organizations, such as the Council of Europe, and an agreement among political parties, the electoral code was modified in March 2008. In order to make the elections more competitive, the threshold to win seats under the PR system dropped from 7 to 5 per cent, and the number of signatures required for political parties to register their candidates was reduced from 50,000 to 30,000.

In March 2008, the opposition parties demanded that 100 seats be elected by the PR system, arguing that the new electoral system favoured the ruling UNM. The Government dismissed the argument and insisted that 75 members each should be elected under the PR and the majority systems. Despite an 18-day hunger strike led by opposition members, the government proposal was adopted for use in the 2008 elections.

In April, the outgoing Speaker of Parliament, Mrs Nino Burdjanadze - who was due to be first on the UNM PR list - announced that she would not run following disagreements over the composition of the list of candidates. She emphasized that the 2008 elections were a test for democracy in the country and urged the Government to ensure that voters were able to cast their ballots freely.

In all, three election blocs and nine parties contested the elections. Former Foreign Minister David Bakradze led the UNM which campaigned on the government's record. Pro-Europe President Saakashvili pledged to revive the economy and tackle corruption. He promised to work toward the country's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). At a summit in Bucharest in April, NATO stressed that free and fair parliamentary elections were key criteria for Georgia to sign the Membership Action Plan (MAP).

President Saakashvili's rival in the 2008 presidential elections, Mr. Levan Gachechiladze, led the Joint Opposition (National Council, New Rights), which had been formed in 2007 by nine parties. It ran an election campaign under the slogan "Movement for the liberation of Georgia". Mr. Gachechiladze termed President Saakashvili's regime "political terror". He accused the President of corruption and restricting freedom of speech. He also promised to soften the country's policy towards Russia, which opposed the country's NATO accession bid.

A former presenter on an opposition television station, Mr. Giorgi Targamadze, led a new party, the Giorgi Targamadze-Christian Democrats. He vowed to make Orthodox Christianity the official religion in Georgia (over 80 per cent of Georgians are reportedly Orthodox). The Republican Party, which has traditionally been supported by intellectuals and middle-class voters, called for a parliamentary system and stronger ties with Europe. It criticized President Saakashvili's "autocratic" style. Other opposition parties included the Labour Party (LP) of veteran politician Shalva Natelashvili.

In all, 53.39 per cent of the 3.4 million registered voters turned out at the polls.

About 400 observers from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) monitored the polls. The OSCE praised the participation of various political parties as "a wide array of choices" for voters, and acknowledged the authorities' efforts to conduct elections in line with OSCE and Council of Europe standards. However, it concluded that a number of irregularities, such as insufficient use of indelible ink, made the application of these standards "uneven and incomplete". Georgian Prime Minister Lado Gurgenidze said that the elections took place in a calm atmosphere.

The final results gave a total of 119 seats to the UNM. The Joint Opposition came in a distant second with 17 seats. The Christian Democrats and the LP won six seats each, while the Republican Party took two.

LP leader Natelashvili urged the electoral commission to annul the results in several districts. The Joint Opposition denounced irregularities in the poll. Arguing that the official election results did not reflect the political will of the Georgian people, its leaders convinced 12 members elected under the Joint Opposition ticket to renounce their parliamentary mandate, which the parliament confirmed on 20 June. Five other members on the Joint Opposition ticket refused to give up their mandate.

The newly elected Parliament held its first session on 7 June. The session was boycotted by the opposition, except two members of the LP and the two Republican Party members. Mr. David Bakradze (UNM) was elected as the new Speaker.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	3,465,736	
Voters	1,850,407	53.39%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	56,099	
Valid votes	1,794,308	

► **Distribution of seats according to political group**

	Majority	Proportional	Seats
United National Movement (UNM)	71	48	119
"The Joint Opposition (National Council, New Rights)"	2	15	17
"Giorgi Targamadze -Christian -Democrats"	0	6	6
"Shalva Natelashvili-Labor Party"	0	6	6
Republican Party	2	0	2
Total	75	75	150

► **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	141	
Women	9	6.00%
Total	150	

GHANA

Parliament

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Parliament / -
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	230 directly elected
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	7 December 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

- ▶ **Constituencies**
230 single-member constituencies.
- ▶ **Voting system: Majority**
Direct simple majority system.
Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections.
Voting is not compulsory.
- ▶ **Voter requirements**
 - age: 18 years
 - Ghanaian citizenship
 - ineligibility: insanity
- ▶ **Eligibility**
 - age: 21 years
 - Ghanaian citizenship
 - residence in the constituency where running or residence there for at least five of the 10 years immediately preceding the elections
 - payment of taxes (or satisfactory arrangements to this effect)

Ineligibilities: allegiance to a foreign State, undischarged bankrupts, detained criminal lunatics, conviction for high crime or treason or for an offence involving the security of the State, fraud, dishonesty or moral turpitude, death sentence, imprisonment for at least 10 years, electoral offence, incompetence to hold public office, unlawful acquisition of

assets while being a public officer, defraud of the State or misuse or abuse of office, wilful action in a manner prejudicial to the interest of the State

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- election-connected offices
- membership of the Civil Service and various other public services
- membership of the armed forces
- traditional chiefs

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- support of qualified voters from same constituency
- monetary deposit required

Background and Outcome of the Elections

As in previous years, the December 2008 elections were held jointly with presidential elections.

In the last elections held in December 2004, President John Kufuor's New Patriotic Party (NPP) won 122 seats in the 230-member parliament. The National Democratic Congress (NDC) of former President John Rawlings followed with 94 seats. The remainder went to the opposition Convention People's Party (CPP), the People's National Convention (PNC) and one independent candidate. In the presidential elections, Mr. Kufuor defeated his long-standing rival, Mr. John Atta-Mills (NDC) to win a second term. He was constitutionally barred from seeking a third term in the 2008 elections. The NPP endorsed Mr. Nana Akufo-Addo, a former foreign minister, as its presidential candidate.

1,060 candidates were vying for parliamentary seats. Once again, there was a duel between the NPP and the NDC. Pre-election polls indicated that it would be a close race.

The NPP campaigned on its record of fostering peace in the country and good relations with its neighbours. Its parliamentary candidates promised to provide better infrastructure, including roads and more police stations to maintain peace and security. Its presidential candidate, Mr. Akufo-Addo, promised to bring about a "modern, responsible, educated nation".

Former President Rawlings (NDC) argued that the country's wealth was being enjoyed by a few members of the government and their families at

the expense of the citizens. The former president pointed out that most Ghanaians could not afford to pay school fees or electricity bills. The NDC promised to provide more welfare and more educational facilities. Mr. Atta-Mills, once again the NDC presidential candidate, pledged to ensure good governance.

The CPP, led by Mr. Paa Kwesi Nduom, promised to achieve responsible governance and good international relations through self-determination, social justice and pan-africanism. It also promised to provide more jobs by establishing a larger number of factories. In November, Mr. Nduom announced his intention to run in the presidential race. The PNC, led by Mr. Edward Nasigri Mahama, pledged to fight corruption in all sectors of the economy.

In the run-up to the elections, leaders across the political spectrum called for peaceful and non-violent elections and pledged to do all in their power to achieve this objective.

69.52 per cent of the 12.4 million registered voters turned out at the polls. Apart from a few minor incidents, voting was peaceful.

The European Union (EU), the Carter Center and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) monitored the polls. The EU concluded that the elections took place in "an open, transparent and competitive environment". The Carter Center also praised the elections as being "competitive" and "further reinforcing Ghana's democratic tradition". ECOWAS hailed the elections as "peaceful, transparent and credible".

The NDC became the largest party, winning 114 seats, seven more than the NPP. The PNC and the CPP won two seats and one seat respectively. Four independent candidates were elected. Eighteen women were elected. Two seats were undecided as at 10 March 2009.

In the presidential elections, no candidate won 50 per cent of votes to be elected in the first round. Run-off elections between Mr. Akufo-Addo (NPP) and Mr. Atta-Mills (NDC) were held on 28 December. Mr. Atta-Mills was elected with 50.23 per cent of the votes.

On 7 January 2009, the newly elected parliament held its first session. A former Supreme Court Judge, Ms. Joyce Bamford-Addo, was elected as its

new Speaker, becoming the first woman to assume the post (see note).

Note:

After a general election the majority party, in consultation with the other parties, nominates the Speaker. Ms. Bamford-Addo is not an elected member and will not become a member of parliament.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	12,472,758	
Voters	8,671,272	69.52%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	205,438	
Valid votes	8,465,834	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Seats
National Democratic Congress (NDC)	114
New Patriotic Party (NPP)	107
People's National Convention (PNC)	2
Convention People's Party (CPP)	1
Independents	4
Total	228

Note:

As at 10 March 2009, there were two vacant seats.

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	210	
Women	18	7.89%
Total	228	

GRENADA

House of Representatives

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Parliament / -
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	House of Representatives
Number of members	15 directly elected Note: The Speaker may be elected either from among the members of the House of Representatives who are not Ministers or Parliamentary Secretaries, or from among persons who are not members of the House of Representatives.
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	8 July 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the House of Representatives following premature dissolution of this body on 3 June 2008. Elections to the House of Representatives had previously taken place on 27 November 2003.

Electoral system

- ▶ **Constituencies**
15 single-member constituencies.
- ▶ **Voting system: Majority**
Simple majority vote.
Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections.
Voting is not compulsory.
- ▶ **Voter requirements**
 - age: 18 years
 - British Commonwealth citizenship
 - fulfilment of residence or domicile requirements
- ▶ **Eligibility**
 - qualified voters
 - age: 18 years

- British Commonwealth citizenship
 - residence in country or residence for at least 12 months immediately before polling
 - sufficient ability to speak and read English
- Ineligibilities: undischarged bankruptcy, allegiance to a foreign State, insanity, sentence of death or imprisonment exceeding one year, government contractors

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- nomination by at least six registered electors of the constituency
- deposit of EC\$ 300 (US\$ 110), reimbursed if candidate obtains at least 1/8 of the constituency vote

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 1 June 2008 Prime Minister Keith Mitchell announced that elections would be held on 8 July. They were constitutionally due in January 2009 but were widely expected to be called in late 2008. On 3 June, the parliament was dissolved, paving the way for the seventh elections since the country gained independence from Britain in 1974. The country enjoys a relatively stable economy thanks to tourism and offshore banking, although poverty remains a significant problem.

In the last elections, held in November 2003, Prime Minister Mitchell's New National Party (NNP) had won 8 of the 15 seats in the House of Representatives, giving him a third consecutive term. The main opposition, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) led by Mr. Tillman Thomas, took the remainder.

Prior to the 2008 elections, Prime Minister Mitchell was dogged by allegations dating back to 2002 that he had received half a million US dollars in payment for appointing Mr. Eric Resteiner - a German national and fugitive from US justice, where he faced corruption charges - as Grenada's ambassador-at-large. In May 2008, a Commission of Inquiry cleared the Prime Minister of these allegations.

As in previous elections, 2008 saw a duel between the NNP and NDC, which both fielded candidates in all 15 of Grenada's electoral districts. The NNP promised to reduce the cost of living by abolishing taxes on basic products, such as food and text books. It also pledged to build and repair 1,000 homes a year and provide a low-income housing programme for 5,000 families over the next five years. Other proposed measures included combating

white-collar corruption by establishing a special anti-corruption unit within the police force.

The NDC leader Mr. Thomas argued that only his party could bring about the change that Grenadians yearned. He criticized the NNP for not providing adequate housing, welfare or education. He promised to better manage the economy, create jobs and lower the cost of living. The NDC criticized the NNP government for failing to comply with the conditions for receiving financial aid under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In 2006, the country had received US\$ 1.6 million of its US\$16 million entitlement before the programme was suspended.

The Grenada United Labour Party (GULP), led by former Prime Minister Eric Matthew Gairy, and the People's Labour Movement (PLM), led by former Attorney General Francis Alexis, formed a coalition (GULP-PLM) and fielded 14 candidates. Both parties had participated in the 2003 elections but had not won seats. Former opposition leader Michael Baptiste (GULP) turned down the coalition's leadership position and publicly backed the NDC, arguing that the GULP should resolve its internal problems before participating in the elections. He nonetheless remained a GULP member and pledged to "rebuild" the party after the elections.

Both the NNP and NDC accused each other of perpetrating violence. Candidates complained of having received death threats or being harassed.

On 4 June, NDC leader Mr. Thomas asked the Organization of American States (OAS) to cancel a planned mission to the country by Assistant Secretary General Albert Ramdin, who the NDC alleged, had close ties with the NNP.

The NNP government unsuccessfully petitioned the courts several times to disqualify from the elections the NDC General Secretary Mr. David Peter on grounds that he was a Canadian citizen.

A poll published by the Caribbean Development Research Services (CADRES) in late June indicated a close fight between the NNP and NDC. Other opinion polls suggested a large turnout might be detrimental to the NNP.

A review of voter rolls by the Elections and Boundaries Commission prior to

the elections showed that the number of registered voters had dropped drastically from over 82,000 in the 2003 elections to 67,000 in 2008 (in a country of 90,000 inhabitants).

On 8 July, 80.30 per cent of registered voters turned out at the polls. The OAS (which sent 36 observers, led by Mr. Ramdin) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) praised the high turnout and orderly election process.

The final results gave victory to the opposition NDP, which took 11 of the 15 seats. The NNP took the remainder. Two women were elected (one from each party). On 9 July, Mr. Thomas was sworn in as the new Prime Minister. His cabinet members were sworn in on 14 July.

On 20 August, the newly elected members to the House of Representatives were sworn in alongside 13 members appointed to the Senate. The House elected Mr. George James McGuire (NDC) as its new Speaker. Prime Minister Thomas appointed Ms. Joan Purcell as Senate President.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	70,869	
Voters	56,911	80.30%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	222	
Valid votes	56,689	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Candidates	Votes	% votes	Seats
National Democratic Congress (NDC)	15	29,007	51.17	11
New National Party (NNP)	15	27,189	47.96	4
Total				15

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	13	
Women	2	13.33%
Total	15	

GUINEA-BISSAU

People's National Assembly

Parliament name	Assembleia Nacional Popular / People's
(generic / translated)	National Assembly
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	102 directly elected
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	16 November 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for 100 of the 102 seats in the People's National Assembly following the dissolution of this body on 5 August 2008. General elections had previously been held in March 2004.

Electoral system

- ▶ **Constituencies**
27 multi-member constituencies.

- ▶ **Voting system: Proportional**
Party-list system. National Deputies are elected by the country's regional councils from among their own members.
At least 50% of the voters of each constituency must cast ballots for the poll to be valid.

- ▶ **Voter requirements**
 - age: 18 years
 - Guinea-Bissau citizenship

- ▶ **Eligibility**
 - qualified voters
 - age: 21 years
 - Guinea-Bissau citizenship

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 25 March 2008, the authorities announced that parliamentary elections, which were originally due by March 2008, would be held on 16 November.

In the previous elections held in March 2004, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) won 45 seats in the

100-member People's National Assembly. The PAIGC had been the only political party after the country gained independence from Portugal in 1974 until the first multi-party elections in 1994. The Party for Social Renovation (PRS) came in second with 35 seats. The Social Democratic United Party (PUSD) took 17 and the remaining three seats went to small parties.

President Joao Bernardo Vieira had led the country since a coup in 1980 until he was ousted by the military in 1999. His successor, Mr. Kumba Yala (PRS) was also removed in a coup in 2003. President Vieira regained the presidency in July 2005 by winning the presidential elections as an independent candidate. He was sworn into office in October and subsequently named Mr. Aristide Gomes as his Prime Minister. However, the President's camp never secured a parliamentary majority, resulting in the formation of three different governments before the 2008 elections.

In March 2007, the PAIGC, the PRS and the PUSD signed a "Political Stability Pact" and tabled a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Gomes, forcing him to resign in late March. The following month, President Vieira agreed to name former defence minister, Mr. Martinho Ndafo Kabi (PAIGC), as prime minister. On 17 July the same year, President Vieira announced that parliamentary elections would be held in parallel with the presidential elections in 2009. In late July, the PAIGC withdrew from the Pact after Prime Minister Ndafo Kabi dismissed several high-ranking officials without informing the PAIGC and the other signatories of the Pact.

On 5 August 2008, President Vieira dissolved parliament without specifying the reason. The following day, Rear-Admiral Jose Americo Bubo Na Tchuto was placed under house arrest for allegedly plotting a coup. Mr. Na Tchuto fled the country and was subsequently detained in Gambia.

The Constitution provides for the dismissal of the government when parliament is dissolved, and President Vieira appointed Mr. Carlos Correia as the new Prime Minister. His cabinet, sworn in on 9 August, comprised the PAIGC, the PRS, the Republican Party for Independence and Development (PRID), as well as the United People's Alliance (APU). The PRID had been formed in March 2008 by PAIGC dissidents supporting President Vieira, and was led by former prime minister Carlos Gomes Júnior.

The 2008 elections were seen as a crucial step towards securing stability in the country of 1.6 million inhabitants. The United Nations, the European Union (EU) as well as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

helped defray the cost of the elections (US\$ 8 million).

Guinea-Bissau is one of the poorest countries in the world. The majority of the country's citizens do not have access to clean water, electricity or adequate sanitation facilities. This provoked a cholera epidemic in October 2008. Prior to the elections, the government was reportedly unable to pay public servants' salaries in a timely manner. High food and fuel prices further worsened the country's fragile economy.

More than 20 parties and coalitions contested the 2008 elections. Major contenders were the PAIGC, led by former prime minister Carlos Gomes Júnior; former president Yala's PRS; and the PRID of former prime minister Aristide Gomes, a close ally of the President. Other parties included another breakaway party from the PRS, the National Democratic Party (PND), and the Alliance of Patriotic Forces (AFP), which had won one seat in the 2004 elections. The PAIGC was widely expected to win a landslide victory.

Many parties initially focused on traditional election issues, promising to provide a stronger economy, better health care and education and more reliable energy supplies. In the run-up to the polls, however, drug trafficking became a major issue after former president Yala (PRS) accused President Vieira of being the country's No. 1 drug trafficker. Other parties accused their rivals of being directly or indirectly involved in illicit activities. Guinea-Bissau is considered a hub of drug trafficking between Latin America and Europe. In early October, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon invited the Security Council to consider imposing sanctions on those responsible for drug trafficking in the country.

A total of 82 per cent of the 600,000 registered voters turned out at the polls. Polling took place without any major incident. For financial reasons, no elections were held for the two seats reserved for Guinea-Bissau citizens living overseas.

More than 150 international observers, including 50 from the EU, monitored the polls. The EU observer mission praised the calm and orderly elections, as well as the high turnout. The United Nations praised the elections as a "victory for democracy".

The PAIGC won 67 seats, securing a two-thirds majority in parliament. The PRS followed with 28 seats. The PRID took three seats. The remainder went to

small parties. Former president Yala (PRS) denounced what he considered to be a manipulation of the vote.

On 23 November, there was a failed coup attempt against President Vieira in which one security guard was killed and several others were injured.

On 22 December, the newly elected People’s National Assembly held its first session and elected Mr. Raimundo Pereira (PAIGC) as its new Speaker.

On 2 January 2009, Mr. Carlos Gomes Júnior (PAIGC) was sworn in as Prime Minister.

On 2 March, President Vieira was assassinated by a group of soldiers. The following day, Speaker Pereira was sworn in as Acting President, tasked with organizing presidential elections within two months.

Election results and statistics

▶ **Voter turnout**

Number of registered electors	593,739	
Voters	486,873	82.00%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	27,735	
Valid votes	459,138	

▶ **Distribution of seats according to political group**

	Votes	% votes	Seats	Number of women
African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV)	227,350	49.52	67	9
Party for Social Renovation (PRS)	115,755	25.21	28	1
Parti républicain de l’indépendance pour le développement (PRID)	34,341	7.48	3	0
Democratic Alliance (AD)	6,321	1.38	1	0
New Democracy Party (PND)	10,726	2.34	1	0
Total			100	10

Note:

For financial reasons, no elections were held for the two seats reserved for Guinea-Bissau citizens living overseas.

▶ **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	90	
Women	10	10.00%
Total	100	

IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)

Islamic Consultative Assembly

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Majles Shoraye Eslami / Islamic Consultative Assembly
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	290 members - 285 directly elected - 5 reserved seats for the following minorities. Zoroastrians: 1 Jews: 1 Assyrian and Chaldean Christians: 1 Armenian Christians in the north of the country: 1 Armenian Christians in the south of the country: 1
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	14 March & 25 April 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the Islamic Consultative on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

196 single or multi-member constituencies.

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Majority system in two rounds.

In order to be elected, a candidate must, in his/her constituency, obtain at least one-third of the votes cast in the first round in single-member constituencies (or from one-third of voters in multi-member constituencies) and a simple majority in the second. The number of candidates who may run in the second round is restricted to those in the lead and to twice the number of seats to be filled in the constituency concerned. If the number is less than double, all remaining candidates may run. If those remaining are equal to or less than the number of unfilled seats, the second round is not held and the results of the first ballot are conclusive.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections. No by-elections are, however, held within the last year of the legislature's term, unless the total number of filled Assembly seats

falls below 200.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years
- Iranian citizenship
- disqualifications: insanity

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: 26 to 75 years
- Iranian citizenship
- belief in and active obligation to Islam and the system prevailing in the country (candidates of religious minorities exempted from obligation to Islam)
- pledged faithfulness to the Constitution
- literacy
- physical well-being

Ineligibilities: persons who played leading roles in strengthening the former (pre-Islamic) regime, large landowners, persons belonging to illegal groups, those convicted of action against the State or apostasy, drug addicts

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- President of the Republic and his counsellors
- Prime Minister, Ministers, Deputy Ministers and their advisers
- members of the Council of Guardians
- members of the High Judicial Council
- Head of the Administrative Court of Justice
- Head of General Inspection
- certain public officials and religious leaders
- members of the armed forces

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The 2008 elections were the eighth to be held since the Islamic Revolution in 1979. In January 2007, the minimum voting age was raised from 15 to 18 years. There is no party system, and the main political forces are generally considered to be conservatives (often referred to as principle-ists or fundamentalists) and reformists. In the previous elections, held in February 2004, conservatives won over 150 seats, while reformists took 40. The remainder went to independent candidates.

Conservatives uphold the principles of the Islamic Revolution and are divided into two main groups: the United Principle-ist Front (UPF) and the Broad Principle-ist Front (BPF). The UPF supports President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who was elected in 2005 on the pledge to bring oil revenues to every family and tackle poverty and unemployment. The BPF had supported Mr. Ahmadinejad in 2005, but reportedly shifted its support to the former chief nuclear negotiator, Mr. Ali Ardeshir Larjani, who resigned from the post in 2007 citing differences with President Ahmadinejad.

Reformists advocate press liberalization and the promotion of civil society organizations in the country. In December 2007, former President Mohammad Khatami announced that he would lead the Coalition of Reformists in the 2008 elections. This Coalition comprised the Islamic Iran Participation Front, founded by Mr. Mohammad Reza Khatami (the former president's brother), and the Organization of Mujaheddin of the Islamic Revolution and Civil Servants, led by former president Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

Nearly 7,600 citizens submitted candidacies for the 2008 elections. Around 40 per cent of these were rejected as "unsuitable" by the Council of Guardians (a body of clerics and jurists whose responsibilities include ensuring compatibility between legislation and Islam). Many of the rejected candidates - including former ministers and outgoing members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly - were reportedly members of the Coalition of Reformists.

In the end, around 4,600 candidates were allowed to run. Women accounted for 8 per cent of candidates, down from 10 per cent in the 2004 elections.

At stake were 285 of the 290 seats (the remainder being reserved for religious minorities, see note).

The economy and the nuclear programme took centre-stage in the campaign. Both reformists and some conservatives criticised President Ahmadinejad. Although the country's official unemployment rate was 10 per cent, many experts argued that the real figure was higher. Conservatives (in particular the UPF) argued that the government's nuclear policy was key to the country's defence from "all forms of foreign hegemony". Reformists accused President Ahmadinejad of mishandling ongoing negotiations on

the nuclear programme and promised to establish better relations with the West.

Approximately 50 per cent of the 49 million eligible voters turned out at the polls on 13 and 14 March, while only 26 per cent participated in the run-off elections of 25 April.

A total of 45,000 national observers worked under the supervision of the Interior Ministry. There were no foreign observers.

The Council of Guardians validated the results for 205 seats (including the five reserved for religious minorities) in the first round. Another 81 candidates were elected in the run-off elections. The results for four seats (one from the first round and three from the run-off elections) were invalidated by the Council of Guardians and would be decided in by-elections to be held at the same time as the 2009 presidential elections.

The final results showed that conservatives had won about 200 seats. Reformists took about 50 seats and independents obtained about 40. Following the results, some independent candidates joined the conservative groups in parliament, bringing the total seats for conservatives to 210 and for reformists to 60. Some 20 members of parliament remain independent. In all, eight women were elected, down from 14 in the outgoing legislature.

The newly elected Islamic Consultative Assembly held its first session on 27 May. On the following day, it elected Mr. Larijani as its temporary Speaker. He was confirmed as the official Speaker on 1 June.

Note:

Five seats are reserved for the following minorities.

Zoroastrians: 1

Jews: 1

Assyrian and Chaldean Christians: 1

Armenian Christians in the north of the country: 1

Armenian Christians in the south of the country: 1

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

	Round 1 (14 March)	Round 2 (25 April)		
Number of registered electors	49,000,000		N/A	
Voters	24,240,269	49.47%	5,443,161	26.00%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	1,049,370		196,031	
Valid votes	23,190,899		5,247,130	

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	278	
Women	8	2.80%
Total	286	

Note:

There are four vacant seats.

ITALY

Chamber of Deputies

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Il Parlamento / Parliament
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Camera dei Deputati / Chamber of Deputies
Number of members	630 directly elected
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	13 - 14 April 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the Chamber of Deputies following premature dissolution of this body on 6 February 2008. Elections had previously taken place in April 2006.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

- 26 multi-member constituencies for 617 seats
- 1 single-member constituency in Valle d'Aosta
- 1 constituency for Italians abroad representing 4 geographical groups (12 seats): a) Europe (including the entire Russian Federation and Turkey); b) South America; c) North and Central America; and d) Africa, Asia, Oceania and Antarctica.

▶ **Voting system: Proportional***

- proportional representation system for 629 of 630 seats, using blocked party lists for 617 of the 630 members elected from Italy and for the 12 members elected by Italian citizens overseas

*First-past-the-post system for the single-member constituency in Valle d'Aosta

The minimum thresholds for a seat in the Chamber of Deputies are:

- for a political coalition: 10 % of total valid votes;
- for a political party (list) within a coalition: 2% of total valid votes;
- for a political party (list) which is not affiliated with any political coalition: 4% of total votes cast nationwide;
- for language minority lists: 20% of the votes cast in their constituency.

However, any list obtaining the highest number of votes among all lists and which fails to win 2% of the votes cast is also entitled to a seat.

If the political coalition or party with the highest number of votes falls to

win 340 seats, it is given "bonus" seats to meet the 340-seat requirement. The 277 remaining seats are distributed among the other coalitions or unaffiliated lists using the whole number quotient and highest remainders method.

Seats which become vacant between general elections are filled by the "next-in-line" candidate of the same party list. By-elections are held in the case of majority seats.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: minimum 18 years old
- Italian citizenship

Disqualifications: criminal conviction, immoral character as defined by the law

Italians abroad meeting the above-mentioned requirements are entitled to elect 12 members representing the Constituency for Italians Abroad (Circonscrizione Estero). They can vote by post or in the constituency in Italy in which they are registered. Electors residing overseas and wishing to return to Italy to cast their vote must notify the relevant Consular Office in writing by 31 December of the year before the normal expiry of the legislature or, if Parliament is dissolved early, within 10 days of the calling of the election.

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: minimum 25 years old
- Italian citizenship

Candidates running in the Constituency for Italians Abroad must be both resident and qualified voters of that geographical group.

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- public posts (including the Constitutional Court judges and members of the National Council for Economic Affairs and Labour)
- executive of a State enterprise or State-assisted company

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

Parties represented in parliament or those running in coalitions with two or more parliamentary parties may register candidate lists without collecting supporting signatures from voters. Other parties need to collect between 1,500 and 4,000 signatures from voters residing in the constituency (300 signatures for the single-member constituency in Valle

d'Aosta).

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The 2008 elections were called three years earlier than they would have been constitutionally due, following the collapse of Prime Minister Romano Prodi's centre-left coalition in January.

In the previous elections held in April 2006, Mr. Prodi's nine-party "Union" coalition had won 49.8 per cent of the votes. Based on the revised electoral system that awards bonus seats to the winning coalition, the Union had obtained 348 seats in the 630-member Chamber of Deputies. The House of Freedoms coalition of the then Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, which had secured 49.7 per cent of the votes, had received 281 seats. In the Senate, the Union had taken 158 of the 315 directly-elected seats, only two more than the House of Freedoms.

Mr. Prodi cracked down on tax evasion and increased income tax. Measures to put the public accounts into order reportedly made him unpopular.

In October 2007, Mr. Walter Veltroni, the Mayor of Rome, formed a new party, the Democratic Party (PD). It absorbed most of the parties in Mr. Prodi's coalition. In December 2007, Mr. Berlusconi officially launched the centre-right People of Freedom (PdL) party.

In the meantime, more than 600,000 people signed a petition calling for a referendum to demand that parliament pass a new electoral law. Advocates of a new law called for a proportional representation system with a higher threshold to win parliamentary representation. They argued that the new system would bring about a two-party system, thus providing a more stable parliament.

Both Mr. Veltroni and Mr. Berlusconi insisted that parliament should maintain control over the electoral law. Some parties in Mr. Prodi's coalition, including the Catholic Christian Democrats (UDEUR, which held 14 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and three seats in the Senate), opposed the referendum. However, on 16 January 2008, the Constitutional Court authorized the referendum to be held in May. On the same day, UDEUR leader and Justice Minister, Mr. Clemente Mastella, announced that he would step down as Justice Minister over an alleged corruption scandal involving his wife. He subsequently withdrew from Mr. Prodi's coalition, triggering a parliamentary vote of confidence.

Mr. Prodi lost the vote of confidence in the Senate on 24 January. On 30 January, President Giorgio Napolitano asked Senate President Franco Marini to form an interim government in order to pass the new electoral law before the next elections. While many senior senators reportedly favoured the formation of the interim government, former prime minister Berlusconi insisted that the country should have snap elections to end the impasse. Former Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies and leader of the Union of Christian and Centre Democrats (UDC), Mr. Pier Ferdinando Casini, also called for new elections. Following unsuccessful talks to form an interim government, President Napolitano dissolved the parliament on 6 February 2008.

In all, some 160 parties were vying for seats in the parliament. The main contenders were the PD and the PdL. On 16 February, UDC leader Casini announced that his party would contest the elections outside the PdL coalition. The PD was in coalition with the Italy of Values (IV-LDP) party of Mr. Antonio Di Pietro. The National Alliance of Mr. Gianfranco Fini, which originally stayed outside the PdL, joined it shortly after the collapse of Mr. Prodi's government. The PdL formed an electoral alliance with the Northern League of Mr. Umberto Bossi, which demands more autonomy for the regions; and the Movement for Autonomy, led by Mr. Raffaele Lombardo, who had left the UDC in 2005.

The 2008 elections were held against the backdrop of the country's economic slowdown due mainly to the strong euro and low productivity. The main issues were the economy, immigration, and foreign policy.

The PdL led by Mr. Berlusconi pledged to introduce a wide range of tax cuts. Its leader promised to provide a clear solution to debt generated by the national airline Alitalia. He emphasized the need for investment and infrastructure. He also promised to raise State pensions and provide financial aid to boost the country's birth rate.

The 52-year-old Mr. Veltroni urged voters to "turn the page" on the older generation represented by Mr. Berlusconi. He pledged to provide better welfare and cut income tax by 1 per cent a year starting from 2009 for three years. The PD coalition also promised to raise child benefits.

On immigration policy, Mr. Berlusconi vowed to expel all illegal immigrants. Mr. Veltroni promised to extend residence permits for immigrants, while pledging to enforce all expulsion orders for illegal immigrants. On foreign policy, Mr. Berlusconi argued that while Italy might send more troops to

Afghanistan, it should either reduce or withdraw its troops from Lebanon. Mr. Veltroni insisted that both sets of troops should be deployed under the same conditions agreed under Mr. Prodi's government. Italy had a little less than 2,000 soldiers in Afghanistan and around 2,500 in Lebanon.

Pre-election polls indicated a clear lead for Mr. Berlusconi's camp.

Over 80 per cent of the 47 million eligible voters turned out at the polls.

The PdL coalition won the elections, taking 344 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 174 seats in the Senate, thus regaining control of both chambers. The PD and its allies won 246 and 132 seats respectively. The UDC won 36 and 3 seats.

The newly elected parliament held its first session on 29 April. The Senate elected Mr. Renato Schifani (PdL) as its President. On the following day, the Chamber of Deputies elected Mr. Gianfranco Fini (PdL) as its Speaker.

On 8 May, Mr. Berlusconi was sworn in as Prime Minister for a third time. He subsequently appointed a 21-member cabinet that included four women.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	About 47,000,000	
Voters	37,954,253	80.51%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	1,929,709	
Valid votes	36,024,544	

► **Distribution of seats according to political group**

	Seats
PdL coalition	344
<i>People of Freedom (PdL)</i>	276
<i>Northern League</i>	60
<i>Movement for Autonomy</i>	8
PD coalition	246
<i>Democratic Party (PD)</i>	217
<i>Italy of Values (IV-LDP)</i>	29
Union of the Centre	36
South Tyrolean People's Party (SVP)	2
Associative Movement of Italians Abroad	1
Autonomy Liberty Democracy (ALD)	1
Total	630

► **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	496	
Women	134	21.27%
Total	630	

ITALY

Senate

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Il Parlamento / Parliament
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Senato della Repubblica / Senate
Number of members	322 members - 315 directly elected - 4 appointed by the President. - 3 ex-officio members (former Presidents of the Republic)
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	13 - 14 April 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the Senate following premature dissolution of this body on 6 February 2008. Elections had previously taken place in April 2006.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

- 20 multi-member constituencies (302 seats)
- 1 single-member constituency in Valle d'Aosta (1 seat)
- 6 single-member constituencies in Trentino-Alto Adige (6 seats) equally distributed between Italian-speaking Trento (Trent) province and German-speaking Bolzano (Südtirol) province
- 1 constituency for Italians abroad representing 4 geographical groups (6 seats): a) Europe (including the entire Russian Federation and Turkey); b) South America; c) North and Central America; and d) Africa, Asia, Oceania and Antarctica

▶ **Voting system: Proportional***

- proportional representation system applying the d'Hondt method to regional voting results for 302 seats
- proportional representation system for the constituency for Italians abroad representing 4 geographical groups (6 seats)

*First-past-the-post system for single-seat-constituencies in Valle d'Aosta and Trentino-Alto Adige (12 seats).

The minimum thresholds for a seat in the Senate are based on regional

voting results:

- for a political coalition: 20 per cent of the total number of valid votes in every region/constituency;
- for a political list within a coalition: 3 per cent of the total number of valid votes in every region/constituency;
- for a political party (list) not affiliated with any political coalition: 8 per cent of the total number of valid votes in every region/constituency.

If the political coalition or political party with the highest number of votes fails to win 55 per cent of the seats to be filled in the region, it is given "bonus" seats to obtain the minimum of 55 per cent of seats required in the region. The remaining seats are distributed among the other qualifying coalitions and individual parties. However, no regional majority bonus seats are awarded in Molise, which elects only two senators.

Seats which become vacant between general elections are filled by the "next-in-line" candidate of the same party list. By-elections are held in the case of majority seats.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: minimum 25 years old
- Italian citizenship

Disqualifications: criminal conviction, immoral conduct as defined by the law

Italians abroad meeting the above-mentioned requirements are entitled to elect 6 members representing the Constituency for Italians Abroad (Circonscrizione Estero). They can vote by post or in the constituency in Italy in which they are registered. Electors residing overseas and wishing to return to Italy to cast their vote must notify the relevant Consular Office in writing by 31 December the year before the normal expiry of the legislature or, if Parliament is dissolved early, within 10 days of the calling of the election.

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: minimum 40 years old
- Italian citizenship

Candidates running in the Constituency for Italians Abroad must be both resident and qualified voters of that geographical group.

▶ Incompatibilities

- public posts (including the Constitutional Court judges and members of the National Council for Economic Affairs and Labour)
- executive of a State enterprise or State-assisted company

▶ Candidacy requirements

- signatures of between 1,000 and 1,500 electors (for independent candidates)
- signatures of between 1,000 and 3,500 electors (for candidates associated with a group having at least two other candidates in other constituencies of the same region)

Background and Outcome of the Elections

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In the meantime, more than 600,000 people signed a petition calling for a referendum to demand that parliament pass a new electoral law. Advocates of a new law called for a proportional representation system with a higher threshold to win parliamentary representation. They argued that the new system would bring about a two-party system, thus providing a more stable parliament.

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On 8 May, Mr. Berlusconi was sworn in as Prime Minister for a third time. He subsequently appointed a 21-member cabinet that included four women.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	About 47,000,000	
Voters	34,718,630	80.40%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	1,318,658	
Valid votes	33,399,972	

► **Distribution of seats according to political group**

	Seats
PdL coalition	174
<i>People of Freedom (PdL)</i>	147
<i>Northern League</i>	25
<i>Movement for Autonomy</i>	2
PD coalition	132
<i>Democratic Party (PD)</i>	118
<i>Italy of Values (IV-LDP)</i>	14
Union of the Centre	3
South Tyrolean People's Party (SVP)	2
SVP - Together for Autonomy	2
Associative Movement of Italians Abroad	1
For Aosta Valley (PvdA)	1
Total	315

► **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	264	
Women	58	18.01%
Total	322	

Note:

Fifty-seven women were directly elected while one woman was appointed by the President of the Republic.

KUWAIT

National Assembly

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Majles Al-Ommah / National Assembly
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	65 members - 50 directly elected - 15 Cabinet ministers who were not elected as members. Cabinet members sit in parliament as ex officio and enjoy the same voting rights as elected members. Since the Cabinet comprises a maximum of 16 members (including at least one member elected to parliament), this brings the parliament's total membership to 65.
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	17 May 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for the elective seats in the National Assembly following a premature dissolution of this body on 19 March 2008. Elections had previously been held on 29 June 2006.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

5 multi-member constituencies (10 seats each)

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Simple majority vote

Each voter makes no more than four choices. The 10 candidates with the most votes in each district are declared elected. If two candidates receive an equal number of valid votes, the polling committee draws lots and the winner is declared elected.

There is no threshold to win a seat.

There are no reserved seats or quotas for women, minorities or other categories.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections. However, no by-elections are held when a vacancy occurs within six months of the expiry of the legislative term.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ Voter requirements

- age: 21 years
- citizens of Kuwait with Kuwaiti father
- residence in the country at the time of election
- citizens overseas can not vote

Disqualifications: any imprisonment, persons naturalized within the last 20 years, military personnel and policemen, unrehabilitated persons convicted of a felony or dishonorable crime

▶ Eligibility

- qualified voters
- age: 30 years
- citizens of Kuwait with Kuwaiti father
- residence in the country at the time of election
- ability to read and write in Arabic

▶ Incompatibilities

- Head of State
- ministers of State
- holders of judicial offices (judges)
- executives of the Electoral Commission
- members of the Electoral Commission
- members of the armed forces
- members of the police forces

▶ Candidacy requirements

- by individual candidatures (there are no political parties)
- deposit of 50 dinars, which is reimbursed if the candidate obtains at least 10 valid votes cast in the constituency. Failing this or if the candidate withdraws, this amount is paid to charity.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 9 April 2008, Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah issued a decree setting 17 May as the date for early elections to Kuwait's National Assembly, less than two years after the last elections, held in June 2006.

While there are no official political parties in Kuwait, some members are regarded as being in opposition to the government. Prior to the 2006 elections they formed a loose pro-reform alliance, led by Islamists but also including nationalists and liberals, and reportedly won 33 of the 50 seats. After the elections, the National Assembly adopted electoral reforms

including a key opposition demand to reduce the number of electoral districts from 25 to 5. This provision was applied for the first time in the 2008 elections. An earlier electoral reform passed in 2005 had given women the right to vote and run in the elections, but no women had been elected in 2006.

The 2008 elections were triggered by a standoff between the government and parliament and sectarian tensions. A string of no-confidence votes in parliament against individual ministers had resulted in four cabinet reshuffles since the last elections. The tension between the parliament and the government resulted from disagreement over the magnitude of public sector pay increases needed to respond to record inflation. The parliament favoured higher increases while the government was reluctant to increase government spending.

Following the resignation of the cabinet on 17 March, the emir dissolved the parliament, accusing it of irresponsibility. He also justified his action by the need to safeguard national unity.

A total of 274 candidates, including 27 women and 38 outgoing members of parliament, vied for the 50 seats in parliament. Opposition candidates, reportedly numbering around 45, were less united than in the 2006 elections.

Despite the absence of official political parties, some of the candidates were endorsed by political groups. These included the Islamic Salafi Alliance and the Islamic Constitutional Movement (better known as "Hadas"), the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood. Both groups opposed women's empowerment and called for the enforcement of Shari'a law in Kuwait.

The liberal National Democratic Alliance, as well as two Shiite groups - the National Islamic Alliance and the Justice and Peace Alliance - argued in favour of women's participation, as necessary to national progress. The larger electoral districts introduced in the 2008 elections reportedly helped the Shiite minority mobilize supporters, with Shiite groups forming a coalition in some districts. Sunni candidates tended to receive backing from tribal and family ties, rather than political groups.

Former Speaker and prominent opposition figure Ahmad Al Saadun led the Popular Action Bloc, running on a platform of better housing and higher wages.

Many independent candidates called for national unity. Some candidates criticized the outgoing legislature for encroaching on the prerogatives of the executive branch. A number of women candidates advocated amendments to legislation concerning women, calling on voters to support women's representation in parliament as the path to "full democracy".

Out of the country's approximately 360,000 eligible voters, 59.41 per cent turned out at the polls.

Islamists made strong gains, obtaining a total of 26 seats. Of these, 21 were won by Sunnis, including 10 associated with the Islamic Salafi Alliance. The Islamic Constitutional Movement won three seats, down from six. The number of Shiite members rose from one to five. Liberals, including members of the National Democratic Alliance, took seven seats. The Popular Action Bloc took four seats. In all, 22 members were elected to parliament for the first time.

No women were elected although some of the women candidates were runners-up. On 28 May, the Emir appointed a new 16-member cabinet, including two women, who are *ex officio* members of parliament. Mr. Fadil Safar, a Shiite activist arrested in a March 2008 crackdown, became Minister of Public Works and Municipalities.

The newly elected parliament held its first session on 1 June and re-elected Mr. Jassem M. Al-Kharafi as Speaker for the fourth time.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	361,684	
Voters	214,886	59.41%

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	50	
Women	0	0.00%
Total	50	

Note:

No woman candidate was elected in the 2008 elections. Two women were appointed to the 16-member cabinet sworn in in June 2008. As cabinet ministers also sit in parliament, there are two women out of a total of 65 members.

LITHUANIA

Parliament

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Seimas / Parliament
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	141 directly elected
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	12 & 26 October 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

- 71 single-member constituencies
- 1 multi-member (70 seats) nationwide constituency

▶ **Voting system: Mixed**

Mixed system:

-A candidate shall be considered elected in a single-member constituency, if not less than 40 percent of the registered voters of that constituency have participated in the elections, and the said candidate has received more than half the votes cast by the registered voters. If less than 40 percent of the registered voters of that constituency have participated in the elections, the candidate who has received the majority, but not less than one-fifth of the votes cast by all the registered voters of that constituency, shall be considered to have been elected.

-If more than two candidates have participated in the elections and none has been elected pursuant to above-mentioned procedure, a second poll is held after two weeks, in which the two candidates who have received the majority of votes shall participate. In this case, the candidate who has received more votes, regardless of the number of voters, shall be considered to have been elected. In the event of a tie, the candidate who received more votes during the initial poll shall be declared elected. If both candidates received an equal amount of votes during the initial poll, lots are drawn to determine the winner.

-nationwide party-list proportional system, on the basis of the simple

quotient and greatest remainders rules, with the country as a whole forming one constituency (for 70 seats). In order for the election to be valid, at least 25% of the electorate must have cast its vote.

-Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections (in the single-member constituencies) or by the "next-in-line" candidates of the same party (in the multi-member constituency).

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years

- Lithuanian citizenship

Disqualifications: incapability declared by a court of law

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters

- age: 25 years

- Lithuanian citizenship

- permanent residence in Lithuania

Ineligibilities: past service of court-imposed sentence

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- membership of the armed forces, police and similar services

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- candidatures submitted by duly registered political parties, or individuals (in single-member constituencies) with the support of no less than 1,000 electors. A security deposit equal to one average monthly wage must be paid. This sum is reimbursed if the individual candidate wins.

- list of not less than 25 candidates (in multi-member constituencies) submitted by duly registered political parties. A security deposit equal to 20 average monthly wages must be paid. This sum is reimbursed if the list becomes eligible for distribution of seats by having obtained at least 5% of the votes cast.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The 2008 elections were held in parallel with a consultative referendum on the Ignalina nuclear power plant. This plant had been earmarked for closure by the end of 2009 as one of the conditions for accession to the European Union in 2004. The government was seeking voters' views on a request for a possible extension of this deadline to 2012. The elections were held against a

background of rising inflation following two years of prosperity.

In the previous elections held in October 2004, the Labour Party (DP), led by wealthy Russian-born businessman Mr. Viktor Uspaskich, became the largest party, winning a total of 39 seats in the 141-member parliament. The outgoing governing coalition, "Working for Lithuania", won 31 seats. It comprised the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP, formerly the Communist Party) and the Social Liberal Party (SLP), led respectively by Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas and Speaker Arturas Paulauskas. The Homeland Union (TS) and the Liberal Centre Union took 25 and 18 seats respectively. After lengthy power-sharing negotiations, Mr. Brazauskas (LSDP) was re-elected Prime Minister on 14 December. He subsequently formed a new coalition government comprising the LSDP, the SLP, the DP, and the Union of Farmers' Party and New Democracy Party.

Police investigations initiated into the DP's finances in May 2006 sparked a crisis that led its leader Mr. Uspaskich to leave the country for Russia, where he stayed until May 2008. DP ministers also resigned from the government in protest against criticism by President Valdas Adamkus. Following the subsequent resignation of Prime Minister Brazauskas (LSDP) and his entire cabinet, a new caretaker prime minister was appointed in the person of the outgoing Minister of Finance Zigmantas Balcytis (LSDP). His appointment was rejected by Parliament after some members sought clarification about his activities as the head of the Communist Youth Union during the Soviet era and an alleged attempt to join the KGB. In early July, former defence minister, Mr. Gediminas Kirkilas (LSDP), became the country's eleventh Prime Minister since it gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

May 2008 also saw the formation of two new parties: the TS-LKD (the result of a merger between the Homeland Union and the Lithuanian Christian Democrats) under the leadership of former prime minister Mr. Andrius Kubilius; and the Rising Nation Party (RNP), formed by TV show host and lawyer, Mr. Arunas Valinskas.

In all, 1,583 candidates (including 456 women) from 20 parties and coalitions ran for the 2008 elections.

Prime Minister Kirkilas pledged to introduce progressive taxation. He also argued that the country should introduce the euro in 2011. He vowed to leave the LSDP if it lost the elections.

TS-LKD leader, Mr. Kubilius, pledged to continue to negotiate with the European Commission (EC) to extend the Ignalina nuclear plant's deadline for closure. The party also promised to introduce the euro without specifying any date. It pledged to cut income tax by introducing a land tax.

The Order and Justice Party (Liberal Democratic Party), led by former president Rolandas Paksas, who had been impeached in April 2004 over a bribe-taking scandal, advocated maintaining pragmatic ties with Moscow. Mr. Paksas promised to hold a referendum on the adoption of the euro.

The DP was led by Mr. Uspaskich, who was barred from leaving Lithuania until the investigation into his party's finances was completed. The DP, which has its stronghold in small towns, campaigned for pro-market policies with more security for small and medium-sized businesses. It formed a coalition with the Youth Party under the name Labour Party + Youth Coalition.

RNP leader Valinskas dismissed criticism accusing him of "showbiz" politics, and ruled out the possibility of forming a coalition government with the Order and Justice Party (Liberal Democratic Party).

Pre-election polls showed the TS-LKD in the lead.

On 12 October, 48.59 per cent of the nearly 2.7 million registered voters turned out at the polls.

Seven parties surpassed the five per cent threshold to win a share of the 70 seats available under the proportional representation (PR) system. The TS-LKD won 18 of the PR seats. The RNP surprised many observers by coming in second with 13 seats, followed by the Order and Justice Party (Liberal Democratic Party) with 11 seats. The LSDP took ten seats. The Labour Party + Youth Coalition won eight seats. The Liberals' Movement of the Republic of Lithuania (led by Mr. Elgijus Masiulis) and the Liberal and Centre Union (led by former mayor of Vilnius, Mr. Arturas Zuokas) took five seats each.

As for the 71 members elected by the majority system, only three candidates won the absolute majority of votes required to be elected in the first round. Among the three candidates elected, two were from the LSDP and one was from the Lithuanian Poles' Electoral Action, a party representing the Polish minority in Lithuania.

Run-off elections for the 68 remaining seats were held on 26 October. The

final results gave 45 seats to the TS-LKD, and 25 seats to the LSDP. The RNP took 16 seats. In all 25 women were elected.

In the referendum on the Ignalina nuclear power plant, 88.56 per cent of voters approved the extension of the lifetime of the plant. However, turnout was below the 50 per cent required to validate the referendum.

The newly elected parliament held its first session on 18 November, and elected Mr. Arunas Valinskas (RNP) as its new Speaker.

In the meantime, on 17 November Mr. Kubilius' TS-LKD, the RNP, the Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania and the Liberal and Centre Union agreed to form a coalition government. On 20 November, President Adamkus nominated Mr. Kubilius for the position of the Prime Minister. His nomination was endorsed by the Seimas on 27 November.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

	Round 1 (12 October)	Round 2 (26 October)
Number of registered electors	2,696,090	2,581,305
Voters	1,309,965 48.59%	835,636 32.37%
Blank or invalid ballot papers		
Valid votes	1,236,716	800,043

► **Distribution of seats according to political group (Round 1)**

	Candi- dates	PR	Major- ity	Seats
Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS-LKD)	142	18	0	18
Rising Nation party (RNP)	73	13	0	13
Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP)	141	10	2	12
Order and Justice Party	140	11	0	11
"Labour Party + Youth" Coalition	130	8	0	8
Liberal and Centre Union	141	5	0	5
Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania	101	5	0	5
Lithuanian Poles' Electoral Action	143	0	1	1
New Union (Social Liberals)	138	0	0	0
Union of Lithuanian Peasants and Peoples	125	0	0	0
Independents		0	0	0
Total		70	3	73

► **Distribution of seats according to political group (Round 2)**

	Seats (Round 2)	Total Seats
Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS-LKD)	27	45
Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP)	13	25
Rising Nation party (RNP)	3	16
Order and Justice Party	4	15
Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania	6	11
"Labour Party + Youth" Coalition	2	10
Liberal and Centre Union	3	8
Lithuanian Poles' Electoral Action	2	3
Union of Lithuanian Peasants and Peoples	3	3
New Union (Social Liberals)	1	1
Independents	4	4
Total	68	141

► **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	116	
Women	25	17.73%
Total	141	

MALAYSIA

House of Representatives

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Parlimen / Parliament
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Dewan Rakyat / House of Representatives
Number of members	222 directly elected
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	8 March 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the House of Representatives following premature dissolution of this body on 13 February 2008. Elections had previously taken place on 21 March 2004.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

222 single-member constituencies.

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Direct simple majority vote.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled within 60 days through by-elections.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 21 years and above

- Malaysian citizenship

- residence in the constituency where voting

Disqualifications: insanity, undischarged bankruptcy, imprisonment, sentence of death or imprisonment exceeding 12 months

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters

- age: 21 years

- Malaysian citizenship

- residence in the country

Ineligibilities: insanity, allegiance to a foreign State, imprisonment for at least one year or fine of at least RM 2,000 (US\$ 540).

▶ Incompatibilities

Holders of an "office of profit" (i.e., a full-time office in the public services) such as:

- Judge of the Federal Court or a High Court
- Auditor-General
- member of the Election Commission

▶ Candidacy requirements

- each candidate (party member or independent) must be supported by a proposer and a seconder of same constituency.
- deposit of RM 10,000 (US\$ 2,700), reimbursed if the candidate polls more than 1/8 of the total number of votes obtained by all the candidates in the constituency

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 13 February 2008, King Sultan Mizan Zainal Abi dissolved Parliament on the advice of Prime Minister Badawi Abdullah, paving the way for early elections to the House of Representatives to be held on 8 March. The elections were constitutionally due by March 2009, but have traditionally been held in the fourth year of parliament's five-year term in this country of 26 million inhabitants (66% ethnic Malay, 25% ethnic Chinese and 8% ethnic Indian).

In the elections held in March 2004, the National Front (BN), the multi-ethnic 14-party coalition that includes Prime Minister Abdullah's United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), had won 199 of the 219 seats at stake, its eleventh consecutive victory. The opposition Democratic Action Party (DAP), which has the support of the country's ethnic Chinese, had won 12 seats. The Alternative Front, composed of the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS) and the People's Justice Party (Parti KeADILan Rakyat, PKR), had won seven seats.

Mr. Anwar Ibrahim, a former deputy prime minister, criticized the decision to hold early elections, which would take place one month before the ban on his participation in elections was due to expire. An outspoken critic of former prime minister Mr. Mohamad Mahathir, was convicted of corrupt practices and sodomy in a controversial 1999 court decision and barred from running for election until 15 April 2008. His wife and PKR president, Mrs. Wan Azizah, said that if she was elected in the 2008 elections, she would step down so that Mr. Ibrahim would be able to contest the ensuing by-election.

The 2008 elections to the enlarged 222-seat House of Representatives were

held amid increasing ethnic and religious tension and concern over crime and rising food and fuel prices. In November 2007, over 10,000 ethnic Indians led street protests, insisting that they were victims of official discrimination. The 37-year-old affirmative action programme favouring ethnic Malay applications for government jobs and educational institutions was reportedly unpopular among ethnic Chinese and Indians. The Government argued that the monthly income of ethnic Indians was higher than the national average.

Prime Minister Abdullah called on voters to renew the BN's mandate, arguing that its numerous programmes had reduced poverty from 60 per cent at the time of independence to the current 5.7 per cent. He emphasized that the BN had the necessary experience and capability to further develop the country.

Before the 2008 elections, the DAP and the PKR agreed not to field candidates in the same constituencies, so as to avoid splitting the opposition vote. The DAP aimed to prevent a two-thirds majority of the ruling parties in the Parliament and said it would abolish the system whereby Senators are appointed. Mr. Ibrahim's legacy reportedly boosted support for the PKR, which ran on an anti-corruption platform. Many opposition candidates conveyed their campaign messages via the Internet.

The Election Commission introduced transparent plastic ballot boxes for the first time. Its original plan to use indelible ink to prevent multiple voting was cancelled at the last minute, a decision criticized by the PKR. The Election Commission announced that the decision had been taken to ensure smooth conduct of elections.

74.72 per cent of nearly 11 million registered voters turned out at the polls.

The BN remained the largest force in the new parliament with 140 seats but failed to secure a two-thirds majority, its worst result since the country's independence in 1957. Former prime minister Mahathir called for Mr. Abdullah's resignation, a demand the latter rejected.

The opposition parties took a total of 47.8 per cent of the votes nationwide. The number of seats controlled by the opposition jumped from 19 to 82. The PKR won 31, followed by the DAP with 28. The PAS took 23. Mrs. Azizah (PKR) was re-elected, paving the way for Mr. Ibrahim's possible return to parliament.

On 10 March, Mr. Abdullah was sworn in as prime minister for a second five-year term.

The newly elected House of Representatives held its first session on 28 April, and elected Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Hj Mulia as its new Speaker.

On 31 July, Ms. Wan Azizah (PKR) resigned her seat. Her husband, Mr. Ibrahim, won the resulting by-election on 26 August by a landslide.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	10,922,139	
Voters	8,161,039	74.72%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	177,256	
Valid votes	7,983,783	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Votes	% votes	Seats
National Front (BN)	4,081,115	51.12	140
People's Justice Party (PKR)	1,529,256	19.15	31
Democratic Action Party (DAP)	1,097,752	13.75	28
Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS)	1,140,598	14.29	23
Total			222

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	198	
Women	24	10.81%
Total	222	

MALTA

House of Representatives

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Il-Kamra Tad-Deputati / House of Representatives
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	65 members - 65 directly elected - 4 co-opted members ("bonus seats") Additional members may be co-opted to ensure that a party with a majority of first-preference votes secures a majority of seats in the House of Representatives. The Speaker may be designated from outside parliament but does not become an ex officio member of the House
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	8 March 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the members of the House of Representatives following the premature dissolution of this body on 4 February 2008. General elections had previously been held on 12 April 2003.

Electoral system▶ **Constituencies**

13 multi-member (5 seats) constituencies ("divisions").

▶ **Voting system: Proportional**

Single-transferable-vote (STV).

Each elector indicates his/her order of preference among all the candidates in his/her electoral district regardless of candidates' political affiliation. In the first count, those who satisfy the Hagenbach-Bischoff quotient are declared elected. Should any seats remain vacant, the surplus votes polled by candidates already elected are transferred proportionately to the remaining candidates on the basis of the second preferences indicated. The votes thus transferred are added to those polled by each remaining candidate. The candidate (candidates) who now possesses (possess) a number of votes equal to, or greater than the quotient is (are) elected. Candidates with the lowest number of votes

are eliminated and their votes are transferred to the other remaining candidates according to the next preference shown on the ballot paper. The same operation is repeated until there are no more seats to be filled.

If necessary, "bonus seats" are allocated to any party receiving the highest percentage of votes under the first-count votes to ensure that it secure a majority of seats in Parliament. The bonus seats are given to the remaining unelected candidates of the winning party irrespective of the district contested.

Candidates to the general elections may contest no more than two districts. In case they are elected from two districts, they will choose one district that they will represent after the elections. The seats vacated by these candidates will be filled by "casual elections" prior to the first session of the House of Representatives (which must be held within two months of the announcement of the official results of the general elections to the President). Any unsuccessful candidates in the general elections may run for their district's casual election. In practice, however, only the candidates from the party that vacated the seat contest the casual elections (thus the overall election results are not affected). To be elected in the casual elections, candidates must obtain more than 50 per cent of the total votes cast. Other vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections. Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years
 - Maltese citizenship
 - residence in the country (for a continuous period of six months, or for periods amounting in the aggregate to six months, during the 18 months immediately preceding registration as elector)
- Disqualifications: insanity, sentence of death or imprisonment exceeding 12 months, conviction for elections-connected offence

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
 - age: 18 years
 - Maltese citizenship
- Disqualifications: allegiance to a foreign State, undischarged bankruptcy

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- holders of public office
- members of the armed forces
- certain government contractors
- officials connected with the conduct of the elections

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- nomination by four voters registered in the same electoral division
- deposit equivalent to approximately US\$ 100, which is reimbursed if the number of votes obtained exceeds 1/10 of the applicable electoral quotient for the division.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 4 February 2008, Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi called general elections for 8 March, five months before they were constitutionally due. President Eddie Fenech Adami subsequently dissolved the House of Representatives. Mr. Gonzi had succeeded Mr. Fenech Adami as Prime Minister in March 2004. The following month, the Parliament elected the latter as the new President.

The country's Constitution was revised in September 2007 to give more importance to the first-count vote (which is attributed to voters' most preferred candidate) in general elections. If necessary, the party that wins the highest percentage of first-count votes is given "bonus seats" in order to secure a majority in the House of Representatives. As in previous elections, candidates were allowed to contest in two districts.

In the last elections held in April 2003, the Nationalist Party (PN), now led by Prime Minister Gonzi, had won 35 of the 65 seats at stake. Mr. Alfred Sant's main opposition Malta Labour Party (MLP) had taken the remainder. The PN has governed the country since 1987, except from 1996 to 1998, when the MLP controlled the Parliament.

The 2008 elections were the first to be held after the country's accession to the European Union (EU) in May 2004 and the introduction of the euro in January 2008. Some 260 candidates contested the elections. Once again, there was a duel between the PN and the MLP.

Prime Minister Gonzi, an advocate of pro-EU policies, highlighted the PN's past achievements, arguing that his government had created 20,000 new jobs in the past five years and had reduced the public deficit from 10 per

cent of the GDP in 2004 to 1.6 per cent in 2007. He promised to lower the maximum rate of income tax from 35 to 30 per cent.

MLP leader Sant promised to create 2,000 jobs in industry and 4,000 in new technologies to boost economic growth to over 4 per cent. He alleged corruption within the PN Government, insisting that he had concrete evidence. However, he did not reveal it, arguing that it would endanger the lives of the persons who had leaked the information.

In addition, six other parties were vying for seats. They included the Democratic Alternative (AD, a Green party) led by Mr. Harry Vassallo and the National Action (AN). The AN was founded in June 2007 by Mr. Josie Muscat, a former member of the PN. He argued that Malta could not remain the only EU Member State to have just two parties represented in Parliament. The AD leader Vassallo supported the tax cuts proposed by the PN but criticized the lack of a plan to finance the resulting shortfall. The AD proposed to meet the shortfall by increasing the tax rate of banks from 35 to 40 per cent.

93.30 per cent of some 315,000 registered voters turned out at the polls, down from 97 per cent recorded in the 2003 elections.

The PN's victory was announced more than 24 hours after the close of the polling stations, due to its narrow advantage of 1,580 first-count votes. The MLP won 34 seats, three more than the PN. However, since the PN took the most first-count votes, it was given four "bonus seats", making 35 seats in all. Neither the AD nor the AN won a seat.

Twelve of the 65 members (ten men and two women) were elected in two separate districts, and had to give up one of their seats. Elections to fill the 12 vacant seats were held on 17 April. In the meantime, on 12 March, Mr. Gonzi's new 14-member cabinet was sworn in.

The House of Representatives held its first session on 10 May. Due to the PN's narrow majority, the Speaker Louis Galea was appointed from outside the House. He replaced Mr. Anton Tabone (PN), who himself was a member of parliament.

Election results and statistics**▶ Voter turnout**

Number of registered electors	315,357	
Voters	294,214	93.30%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	3,415	
Valid votes	290,799	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Votes	% votes	Seats
Nationalist Party (PN)	143,468	49.34	35
Malta Labour Party (MLP)	141,888	48.79	34
Total			69

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	63	
Women	6	8.70%
Total	69	

Note:

Six of the 65 candidates elected were women. The four "bonus seats" went to male candidates. Among the six women, two were elected in two separate districts. The seats they vacated were filled by male candidates. The number of women thus remained at six.

MONACO

National Council

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Conseil national / National Council
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	24 directly elected
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	3 February 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the National Council on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

1 multi-member nationwide constituency.

▶ **Voting system: Mixed**

- Two-thirds of the seats on the National Council are filled by majority voting, while the remainder are filled by proportional voting.
- Each ballot paper includes the names of candidates of the same party/coalition list, which shall not exceed the total number of seats to be filled (i.e. 24). Each voter may either approve one of the lists as a whole, or replace some of candidates across different party/coalition lists ("panachage") by indicating the full name of the candidates of their choice. The ballot paper after the "panachage" should contain no more names than the number of seats to be filled.
- First to be elected are the sixteen candidates who have obtained the most votes. In case of a tie, the eldest candidate is declared elected.
- The eight remaining seats are filled from the electoral lists that have polled at least five per cent of the valid votes cast, as per the proportional representation system.
- Each list contains a number of seats equal to the number of times the electoral quotient is contained in the total number of valid votes cast for all candidates on the list. The electoral quotient is obtained by dividing the total number of valid votes cast by the number of seats to be filled by proportional voting. Any remaining seats are filled by applying the rule of the highest average. This figure is determined for each list by adding, whenever a seat is left, a fictitious seat to the number of seats

the list has won via proportional voting and by dividing the total number of votes it has obtained by the number of seats, including the fictitious seat that has been added. Within each list, the seats obtained are allocated to candidates depending on the number of votes obtained. In case of a tie, the eldest candidate is elected.

- Once there are four vacancies in the National Council, by-elections are held within three months after the last of the seats falls vacant. No by-elections are scheduled, however, within six months of general elections, unless the number of vacancies exceeds half of the parliamentary seats.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years

- Monegasque nationality for a minimum of five years

- disqualifications: undischarged bankruptcy, imprisonment, second conviction for drunkenness by a court of summary jurisdiction resulting in imprisonment, unsuspended or suspended sentences of imprisonment of certain lengths, conviction in absentia (suspension)

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters

- age: 25 years

- Monegasque citizenship

Ineligibilities: members of the Council of State, the Council of the Crown, the Supreme Tribunal, persons who - having a dual citizenship - hold a public or elective office in a foreign country

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- members of the sovereign House

- government councillors

- diplomats

- magistrates

- certain high-ranking civil servants

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- submission of candidatures 8 to 15 days before election day; for the second ballot, candidatures may be presented up to the Tuesday following the first ballot.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The February 2008 elections were the first to be held under the reign of HRH Sovereign Prince Albert II of Monaco, who succeeded his father, Prince Rainier, upon the latter's death in April 2005.

In the previous elections held in February 2003, the opposition coalition, the Union for Monaco (UPM) led by Mr. Stéphane Valéri comprising the Union for the Principality (UP), the National Union for the Future of Monaco (UNAM), and the Promotion of the Monegasque Family (PFM) had won 21 of the 24 seats in the National Council. The National and Democratic Union (UND), which had dominated the country's politics for 40 years, had taken only three seats. Its leader and outgoing Speaker, Mr. Jean Louis Campora, had lost his seat. Mr. Valéri was subsequently elected Speaker of the National Council.

Prior to the 2008 elections, the PFM, the Monegasque Synergy, and the Association of Non Attached Monegasques formed an alliance called "Monaco Together". Another opposition coalition, Rally and Issues for Monaco (REM), comprised the Values and Issues party of Mr. Laurent Nouvion and the Rally for Monaco party (RPM) of Mr. Guy Magnan.

In all, 63 candidates - 24 each from the UPM and the REM, and 15 from "Monaco Together" - stood for the 2008 elections. All the coalitions pledged to uphold the values of the Principality.

The UPM, led by Speaker Valéri, called for voters' support for continuous "evolution". Its programmes focused on enhancing the quality of life, pursuing economic development and implementing a highly advanced social policy. The UPM's main rival, REM, criticized what it termed as "a drift towards parliamentarism", claiming that the UPM was trying to transform the monarchy into a parliamentary system. Mr. Valéri dismissed the criticism, reaffirming his loyalty to the Sovereign Prince and to the institutions of the Principality. The "Monaco Together" alliance promised to provide more jobs and facilitate the setting up of companies.

In all, 76.85 per cent of the 6,316 registered voters turned out at the polls.

Observers from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) declared the elections free and fair. They nevertheless recommended early publication of political programmes as well as more public debates so that

voters could acquire a better understanding of the platforms of each political party.

The UPM retained its 21 seats, winning nearly 53 per cent of the valid votes. Under the proportional representation system, only the conservative opposition party, REM, secured enough votes (40 %) for three of its representatives to take up seats in parliament. The "Monaco Together" alliance failed to win any parliamentary representation with about 7 per cent of valid votes. In all, six women were elected.

The newly elected National Council held its first session on 14 February and re-elected Mr. Valéri (UPM) as its Speaker.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	6,316	
Voters	4,854	76.85%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	204	
Valid votes	4,650	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Candidates	Votes	% votes	Seats
Union for Monaco (UPM)	24	53,523	1,151.03	21
Rally and Issues for Monaco (REM)	24	41,512	892.73	3
Total				24

Note on the number of votes

Each voter casts one ballot paper containing up to 24 candidates. The number of votes won by each political party thus exceeds the total number of voters.

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	18	
Women	6	25.00%
Total	24	

► **Distribution of seats according to profession**

	Seats
Finance, management or business	6
Physician, dentist	4
Entrepreneur	3
Civil service and local authority administration	2
Legal profession	2
Architect, surveyor, engineer	1
Education profession	1
Home-maker, care-taker	1
Other	4
Total	24

► **Distribution of seats according to age**

31 to 40 years	3
41 to 50 years	12
51 to 60 years	7
61 to 70 years	1
Over 70 years	1
Total	24

MONGOLIA

State Great Hural

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Ulsyn Ikh Khural / State Great Hural
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	76 directly elected
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	29 June 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the State Great Hural on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

26 multi-member constituencies.

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Simple majority vote. Polling only valid if at least 50% of the registered electors have turned out in each constituency.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years
- Mongolian citizenship
- residence in Mongolia

Disqualifications:

- insanity/mental illness
- guardianship/ward
- holders of temporary entry permits
- undocumented immigrants

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: 25 years
- Mongolian citizenship

Ineligibilities: Head of the Election Commission, civil servants.

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- Head of State
- Ministers of State
- Holders of public posts
- Holders of judicial offices (judges)
- Civil servants
- Government advisors
- Head of the Electoral Commission
- Executive of a public (state) corporation
- Staff member of a public (state) corporation
- Members of the armed forces
- Members of the police forces

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- by officially registered political parties or coalitions thereof
- support of at least 801 electors of the constituency concerned
- deposit of 10,000 tögrögs (US\$ 6.5), reimbursed by half if the candidate is elected or if he/she obtains the percentage of vote surpassing the average of the vote cast in the constituency

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The June 2008 elections were the fifth to be held since the introduction of the multi-party system in 1990.

In May 2005, the country elected the then Speaker Nambar Enkhbayar of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) as the new President. The formerly communist MPRP, which had ruled the country since independence from China in 1921, had regained power in 2000 after four years of rule by the Motherland-Democracy Coalition (MDC).

In the last parliamentary elections, held in June 2004, the number of MPRP seats had dropped from 72 to 37. An ally, the Republican Party (MRP), took one seat. The MDC (comprising the Democratic Party (DP) and two small parties, see note) obtained 35 seats. The three remaining seats went to independents allied with the MDC. The MPRP and MDC camps, which held the same number of seats in parliament, subsequently formed a first-ever coalition government, with the DP's Mr. Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj elected as Prime Minister in August. The coalition government remained fragile and divided, however, as witnessed when the MPRP sought to expand the civil service, which the MDC saw as an increased burden on taxpayers.

In late 2005, DP Deputy Chairman Mr. Lamjavyn Gündalai left the DP and formed the People's Party (PP), blaming Prime Minister Elbegdorj for slow economic growth. In January 2006, four other DP members defected to the MPRP camp, and the MPRP withdrew its support for the coalition government. On 25 January, MPRP Chairman Mr. Miyegombyn Enkhbold was elected as the new Prime Minister and formed a MPRP-led 'national solidarity' government that included the DP dissidents. In November 2007, following his defeat in the MPRP's chairmanship election to Mr. Sanj Bayar the previous month, Mr. Enkhbold resigned. Mr. Bayar was elected as Prime Minister in late November, pledging to "uproot corruption and bureaucracy".

The elections were contested by 12 political parties, including the MPRP and the DP. Prior to the 2008 elections, the MPRP government was dogged by allegations of official corruption and misconduct. In May, Mr. Gündalai left the PP and re-joined the DP and most PP members ran under the DP banner.

With more than 10 per cent of Mongolia's 2.7 million inhabitants living on less than one US dollar per day, according to figures from the United Nations, modernizing the country's agriculture-based economy has been a top priority.

Prime Minister Bayar's MPRP promised greater prosperity through 10 per cent economic growth and boosting GDP per capita to US\$ 5,000 by 2012 (from US\$ 2,900 in 2007). The MPRP also promised to improve the welfare system and provide subsidies to families, single mothers and the poor. In April, on the occasion of its 18th anniversary, the DP published a ten-article development policy document, pledging to work for human development and tackle poverty and corruption.

A key debate in the run-up to the 2008 elections was how to make the best use of recently discovered mineral deposits in the country, including copper, gold and coal. The MPRP advocated maintaining government control over these resources, while the DP called for private sector involvement. Both parties promised to use budget surpluses from the mining industry to pay for public expenditures. Under the current law, the government can take up to a 50 percent interest in mineral deposits discovered using State funds.

During the election campaign, the General Election Committee admitted that the electoral roll contained over 116,000 people listed twice under different addresses, and pledged to clean up the roll before polling day.

On the day of the election, over 74 percent of some 1.6 million registered voters turned out at the polls, with no major incidents reported. A 16-member international observer panel declared the elections largely free and fair.

As a result of the newly introduced multi-member constituency system, final results were delayed. But after preliminary results gave 47 seats to the MPRP and 27 to the DP, the former declared victory.

The DP accused the MPRP of rigging the elections and claimed that some MPRP supporters had voted twice. Large-scale street protests turned violent: the MPRP's headquarters were set on fire, at least five people were killed and hundreds injured. Prime Minister Bayar accused the DP of inciting the violence. On 1 July, President Enkhbayar declared a four-day state of emergency in the capital, allowing the police to use "necessary force to crack down on criminals". The DP called for a re-vote in several districts.

Prior to the first session of the State Great Hural on 23 July, the election of 66 members (39 from the MPRP, 25 from the DP, one Civil Will Republican Party member and one independent) had been confirmed. However, due to a boycott by the DP, parliament failed four times to reach the quorum of two thirds of members required to swear in the new members. Parliament was finally able to resume its work on 28 August after the quorum was achieved. On 1 September, Mr. Damdin Demberel (MPRP) was elected as the new Speaker.

On 11 September, the State Great Hural elected Mr. Bayar (MPRP) as Prime Minister. On 17 September, it approved a new coalition government comprising the MPRP and the DP.

Note:

The two parties were the Mongolian New Democratic Socialist Party (MNDSPP) and the Civil Will Republican Party (CWRP).

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	1,534,074	
Voters	1,139,984	74.31%

► **Distribution of seats according to political group**

	Seats
Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP)	45
Democratic Party (DP)	27
Civil Will Republican Party (CWRP)	1
Green Party	1
Independents	1
Total	75

Note:

As at 4 March 2009, there was one vacant seat.

► **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	72	
Women	3	4.00%
Total	75	

► **Distribution of seats according to profession**

	Seats
Economist	20
Architect, surveyor, engineer	18
Legal profession	13
Education profession	7
Research/sciences	7
Journalism, broadcasting, media	3
Physician, dentist	2
Agriculture/farming	1
Armed services/Police	1
Writer, literary, artist	1
Civil service and local authority administration	1
Trade union official	1
Total	75

► **Distribution of seats according to age**

31 to 40 years	10
41 to 50 years	41
51 to 60 years	23
61 to 70 years	1
Total	75

NAURU

Parliament

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Parliament / -
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	18 directly elected
Term of House	3 years
Date of elections	26 April 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the Parliament following its premature dissolution on 18 April 2008. The elections had previously taken place on 25 August 2007.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

8 multi-member constituencies.

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Direct vote on majority and preferential basis.

In each constituency, the candidate who has received the largest number of first-preference votes is declared elected, if that number constitutes an absolute majority of the votes cast.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections.

Voting is compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 20 years
- Nauru citizenship
- residence in the country

▶ **Eligibility**

- age: 20 years
- Nauru citizenship
- residence in the country

Ineligibilities: insanity, undischarged bankruptcy, sentence of death or imprisonment for at least one year

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- office of profit in the service of Nauru or of a statutory corporation

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- written nomination must be submitted at least 14 days prior to polling day, signed by the candidate and two or more electors of his/her district

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 18 April 2008, President Marcus Stephen invoked his executive powers and declared a state of emergency in order to dissolve parliament and call elections for 26 April, only eight months after the previous elections had been held in August 2007.

Prior to the 2008 elections, the country was experiencing a financial crisis, with its debts approaching US\$ 1 billion and public servants' salaries unpaid. Nauru's economy was expected to be further damaged by the closure of Australia's off-shore camp for asylum-seekers by the end of March 2008. Due to a stalemate in parliament, however, no decisions on the national budget or investment projects could be taken.

The country of 12,000 inhabitants was also experiencing political instability since October 2007, when a leaked report revealed allegations of corruption against the then Finance and Foreign Minister, Mr. David Adeang. On 5 November, three senior ministers resigned, accusing the then President, Mr. Ludwig Scotty, of not taking sufficient action over the scandal. In late November, eight parliamentarians defected from the government camp and in December, President Scotty was ousted by a no-confidence vote. Mr. Stephen, a former professional weightlifter, was sworn in as the new President, with the support of half of the 18-member parliament. Speaker Valdon Dowiyogo resigned and was succeeded by Mr. Riddell Akua.

On 17 March 2008, opposition members, led by former president Rene Harris, attempted to oust President Stephen through a no-confidence vote for what they termed as "lack of concern for pollution and dust generated by the processing and loading of phosphate", following public protests on this issue. Their move was hampered by the resignation of Speaker Akua. After three nominees turned down the position, on 20 March President Stephen appointed Mr. Adeang as the new Speaker of Parliament. It was widely believed that the decision was taken with a view to reducing the number of

opposition votes in parliament, since the Speaker only votes in the event of a tie.

Mr. Adeang subsequently announced a parliamentary recess until after the Easter holidays. He argued that parliament should be dissolved with a view to new elections. During the Easter weekend, he convened a secret parliamentary session without pro-government members in order to amend the Citizenship Act. The amendments were intended to prevent members of parliament from holding dual citizenship. President Stephen holds dual citizenship (Nauru and Samoa), while Foreign Affairs Minister Kieren Keke and Commerce Minister Frederick Pitcher also hold Australian citizenship.

On 22 March, Speaker Adeang suspended Mr. Keke and Mr. Pitcher from parliament based on their dual citizenship. The government called for an urgent Supreme Court review, which overturned the decision on the grounds that the parliament had lacked the requisite quorum when it amended the Citizenship Act. On 11 April, Mr. Adeang suspended all nine pro-government members, including President Stephen, from parliament for what he termed as "unruly and shameful behaviour", including personal insults directed at him during his statement to the Supreme Court. President Stephen subsequently dissolved the parliament on 18 April, paving the way for fresh elections.

In all, 65 candidates, including three women, ran for the 2008 elections down from 79 in the 2007 elections, due mainly to the nomination period of only three days.

President Stephen urged voters to support the government, arguing that Speaker Adeang and his supporters were threatening investment in Nauru and blocking the advancement of important projects. He pledged to work for the good of the people of Nauru. Mr. Adeang criticized President Stephen for calling elections only eight days after parliament was dissolved. President Stephen insisted that the country needed a new parliament in order to pass the budget bill as soon as possible.

The Pacific Islands Forum monitored the polls. It declared that the electoral process was "credible" although it expressed concern over the "very short timeframe for the preparation and campaign" for the elections.

All nine pro-government members retained their seats. Former president Harris and two other opposition members lost theirs. The three members who were elected in lieu of these opposition members

subsequently moved over to the government side. The government led by Mr. Stephen was thus returned with 12 out of the 18 seats.

The new parliament held its first session on 29 April and elected former Speaker Mr. Akua as its Speaker. Mr. Stephen was re-elected as the country's President.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	5,235	
Voters	4,607	88.00%

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	18	
Women	0	0.00%
Total	18	

NEPAL

Constituent Assembly

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Sansad / Parliament
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	601 members - 575 directly elected - 26 appointed by the Prime Minister from minority groups who do not win representation in the elections.
Term of House	2 years
Date of elections	10 April 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the directly elected seats in the Constituent Assembly.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

- 240 single-member constituencies
- One nation-wide constituency for 335 seats

▶ **Voting system: Mixed**

Mixed system: 240 members are elected by the First Past the Post System (FPTP), while the 335 others are elected under the proportional representation (PR) system using the party list. Candidates contesting in the constituencies are not allowed to run under the PR system. Voters cast one ballot for each system.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- Nepalese citizenship
 - Age: 18 years
 - Permanent residence in the constituency
- Disqualifications: insanity, bankruptcy, criminal conviction

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- Nepalese citizenship

- Age: 25 years

Disqualifications: insanity, bankruptcy, criminal conviction

Background and Outcome of the Elections

Elections to the 601-member Constituent Assembly had been due before mid-June 2007, but were postponed twice, due mainly to disagreement between the main political forces over the electoral system and the future status of the King. The immediate abolition of the monarchy was the key demand of Nepalese Maoists who had led ten years of rebellions, in which over 13,000 people died. The Constituent Assembly was established on 27 May 2008 with the task of adopting the country's new Constitution within two years.

The country had last held parliamentary elections in May 1999. The centrist Nepali Congress Party (NC) of the then Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala won 111 seats of the 205 seats in the House of Representatives, the lower chamber of the bi-cameral Parliament. Its coalition partner, the Nepali Communist Party (Unified Marxist-Leninist, UML) won 71 seats. After the elections, Mr. Koirala's rival, Mr. Krishna Prasad Bhattarai (NC) became Prime Minister. Mr. Bhattarai resigned in March 2000 and was succeeded by Mr. Koirala. Following the Royal Palace massacre in June 2001 (in which Prince Dipendra killed King Birendra, the Queen, and seven other royals before killing himself), Prince Regent Gyanendra ascended the throne. Mr. Koirala resigned as prime minister and Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba succeeded him. The latter subsequently formed a new faction, the Nepali Congress (Democratic), (NCD).

The House of Representatives was dissolved on 22 May 2002 in order to hold early parliamentary elections. Following Maoist rebels' threat to disrupt the elections, Prime Minister Deuba asked the King to defer the polls by a year. The King then dismissed the government and subsequently postponed the elections indefinitely. On 1 February 2005, King Gyanendra assumed absolute direct power over the kingdom, accusing the government of failing to make arrangements for parliamentary elections. Many members of the NC and the UML - including the UML leader Mr. Amrit Kumar Bohara and general secretary Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal - were placed under house arrest. Parliament was unable to meet since the Constitution stipulated that the National Assembly (the upper chamber) could not be convened without the House of Representatives.

On 24 April 2006, following a wave of street protests calling for elections as

soon as possible, King Gyanendra agreed to reinstate the House of Representatives. The reinstated House of Representatives held its first sitting on 28 April 2006. Mr. Koirala was elected Prime Minister.

After numerous postponements, an interim constitution was promulgated by the House of Representatives on 15 January 2007, following the peace agreement of 8 November 2006 between the major political parties and Maoist rebels. The House of Representatives then dissolved itself in favour of a unicameral 330-member interim legislature, called the Legislative Parliament. This interim legislature comprised all members of the previous parliament (with the exception of three members who had been appointed by the King), 83 Maoists and representatives of the major political parties. These parties formed a ruling alliance that included the NC, the UML, the NCD and nine other small parties. In September 2007, the NCD and the NC merged under the leadership of Prime Minister Koirala.

On 23 December 2007, the signature of a 23-point understanding paved the way for elections to the 601-member Constituent Assembly under a mixed electoral system. The agreement foresees that 335 members are elected through the proportional representation system while 240 others are chosen through the first-past-the-post system (F.P.T.P). The remaining 26 members are nominated by the Prime Minister from minority groups who do not win representation in the elections. On 29 December, the interim Legislative Parliament adopted a third amendment to the interim constitution, declaring Nepal a federal democratic republic. The decision to abolish the 240-year monarchy would come into force after endorsement at the first sitting of the Constituent Assembly.

In all, 3,937 candidates, including 368 women, were vying for the seats in the Constituent Assembly. Over 3,000 candidates were from 70 political parties while some 800 candidates stood as independents.

The main protagonists all pledged to establish a strong and prosperous multi-party federal democratic republic. The media focused on whether the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) led by Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal (better known as "Prachanda") would gain enough seats to stay in the democratic process. The Maoists campaigned on a less radical manifesto than in the past. For example they did not call for the nationalization of assets, and pledged to invite foreign investment for economic development.

Former prime minister Kamal Thapa of the National Democratic Party

(Rastriya Prajatantra) campaigned in support of the monarchy. The National People's Power (Rastriya Janashakti) Party and four other royalist parties formed the United Inclusive Front (Samyukta Samabeshi Morcha, see note) in February 2008, which pledged to work with everyone committed to democracy.

During the election campaign period, nearly 30 people were killed. Nevertheless, voting took place in relative peace on election day. Over 63 per cent of the country's 17 million registered voters turned out for the elections.

Over 800 international observers monitored the polls. The Election Observation Mission (EOM) of the European Union (EU) praised the level of turnout and concluded that the elections were generally successful.

The final results gave victory to the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists), which won a total of 220 seats. The NC and CPN-UML took 110 and 103 seats respectively. In all, 25 parties won representation in the Constituent Assembly.

A total of 191 women were elected (29 under the majority system and 162 under the proportional representation system).

On 27 May, the Constituent Assembly held its first session. The following day, it voted to abolish the monarchy, declaring Nepal a Federal Democratic Republic.

Disputes over the composition of the new government, as well as the demand by the Madhesi People's Rights Forum Nepal (MPRF) for the 'autonomous Madhes province', delayed the election of a new Speaker of the Constituent Assembly.

On 8 July, Maoists, the NC, the UML and the MPRF agreed to add a provision to article 138 of the interim constitution, referring to Nepal as a federal democratic country with various autonomous states.

593 candidates took part in the first ever presidential elections on 19 July. In the run-off elections held on 21 July, Mr. Ram Baran Yadav, General Secretary of the NC, defeated the Maoist candidate Ram Raja Prasad Singh. On 23 July, Mr. Koirala officially tendered his resignation as Prime Minister.

On 24 July, Mr. Subas Nembang (UML), who had served as Speaker of the Legislative Parliament, was elected unopposed as the Speaker of the Constituent Assembly.

On 15 August, the Constituent Assembly elected Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Maoists) as Prime Minister. He was sworn in on 18 August. He subsequently formed a six-party coalition government comprising his Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists), the UML, the MPRF, the Communist Party of Nepal (United), the Nepal Goodwill Party (Sadhvawana) and the People's Front Nepal (Janamorcha). His 23-member cabinet, including four women, was sworn in on 22 August.

Note:

The United Inclusive Front comprises the following parties and seats:

National People's Power (Rastriya Janashakti): 3

Rastriya Janamukti Party: 2

Dalit Janajati Party: 1

Nepal Rastriya Janabhawana Party: 0

Rastriya Jana Ekata Party: 0

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

	PR		Majority	
Number of registered electors	17,611,832		17,611,832	
Voters	11,146,540	63.29%	10,866,131	61.70%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	407,462		560,011	
Valid votes	10,739,078		10,306,120	

► **Distribution of seats according to political group**

	PR	Majority	Total seats
Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists)	100	120	220
Nepali Congress (NC)	73	37	110
Communist Party of Nepal (UML)	70	33	103
Madhesi People's Rights Forum Nepal	22	30	52
Tarai Madhes Loktantrik Party	11	9	20
Nepal Goodwill Party (Sadhvawana)	5	4	9
Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist Leninist)	8	0	8
National Democratic Party (Rastriya Prajatantra, RPP)	8	0	8
People's Front Nepal (Janamorcha)	5	2	7
Communist Party of Nepal (Samyukta)	5	0	5
National Democratic Party Nepal (Rastriya Prajatantra, RPP-N)	4	0	4
National People's Front (Rastriya Janamorcha)	3	1	4
Nepal Workers and Peasants Party	2	2	4
Independents	0	2	2
Others	19	0	19
Total	335	240	575

Note:

"Others" include the following parties.

Rastriya Janshakti Party: 3

Rastriya Janamukti Party: 2

Communist Party of Nepal (United): 2

Nepal Sadhvawana Party (Anandidevi): 2

Nepali Janata Dal: 2

Sanghiya Loktantrik Rastriya Manch: 2

Samajwadi Prajatantrik Janata Party: 1

Dalit Janajati Party: 1

Nepal Pariwar Dal: 1

Nepa: Rastriya Party: 1

Nepal Lokatantrik Samajbadi Dal: 1

Chure Bhawar Rastriya Ekata Party: 1

► Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	404	
Women	197	32.78%
Total	601	

Note:

191 women were directly elected while six others were nominated by the Prime Minister.

NEW ZEALAND

House of Representatives

Parliament name (generic / translated)	House of Representatives / -
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	120 members - 120 directly elected - 2 overhang seats
Term of House	3 years
Date of elections	8 November 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the House of Representatives on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

- 63 single-member general electoral districts
- 7 single-member Maori electoral districts
- a further 50 members are elected from party-lists

▶ **Voting system: Mixed**

Mixed-member proportional system. Voters have two votes, known as a "party vote" and an "electorate vote".

- simple majority vote for 63 members elected from single-member General electoral districts and for seven members elected from single-member Maori electoral districts

- the remaining 50 members are elected from nationwide party lists, according to each party's share of all the party votes. A party must get at least five percent of all the party votes or win an electorate seat to get a share of the list seats in the House of Representatives.

Under the New Zealand electoral system, seats are first allocated to candidates winning electorate seats. Parties will then get a share of seats in Parliament close to their share of "party votes". If parties win more electorate seats than their share of seats determined by the party vote then they can keep the extra seats, called "overhang seats".

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections (for electorate members) or by the next available candidate on the same party-list (for list members).

Voting is not compulsory but enrolment is.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years
- New Zealand citizenship or a lawful permanent resident of New Zealand
- continuous residence in the country for at least one year
- continuous residence in electoral district for at least one month, or current residence therein
- Maoris may register and vote either in the General electoral district in which they reside or in the appropriate Maori electoral district
- disqualifications: citizens and permanent residents abroad who fail to meet certain residence requirements, various forms of insanity or mental disorder, conviction for corrupt electoral practices within the preceding three years, undergoing a prison sentence of three years or more

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: 18 years
- New Zealand citizenship

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- civil servant (placed on leave of absence until after the election and, if elected, vacates office)

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

Electorate candidates must:

- be nominated by at least two electors registered in the electoral district for which the candidate seeks election
- be nominated in the period between writ day and noon on nomination day
- pay a deposit of NZ\$300 (US\$ 150), reimbursed if the candidate wins five percent or more of all the electorate votes cast in the electoral district in which he or she stands for election

List candidates must:

- be on a list that is submitted by noon on the nomination day to the Chief Electoral Officer by a party registered by the Electoral Commission; no monetary deposit is required.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 12 September, Prime Minister Helen Clark announced that the House of

Representatives would be dissolved on 3 October and that elections would be held on 8 November.

In the previous elections held in September 2005, Prime Minister Clark's Labour Party remained the biggest party by securing 50 seats in the 120 member parliament, making her the first Labour leader to win three consecutive terms since World War II. The opposition National Party substantially increased its seats to 48 from 27 in the previous elections. The following month, Ms. Clark announced a minority coalition with Jim Anderton's Progressive Party (one seat). She also secured the agreement of New Zealand First (seven seats) and the United Future (three seats) to extend confidence and support to her government. The Green Party (six seats) signed a cooperation agreement with the Labour led government promising not to oppose the government in confidence votes. The newly formed Maori Party (four seats) announced it would not support the new government.

The 2008 elections once again saw a duel between the Labour Party and the National Party. Prior to the elections, the economic slowdown and scandals involving the Foreign Minister reportedly gave the opposition National Party the lead in opinion polls.

On 29 August, Foreign Minister and the leader of New Zealand First, Mr. Winston Peters, agreed to step aside while investigations were being conducted into alleged malpractice involving donations made to his party. Prime Minister Clark took over his portfolio. The National Party leader, Mr. John Key, accused the Prime Minister of taking too long to deal with the crisis.

In late September, the national statistics office announced that the country's economy had fallen into recession for the first time since 1998. The global financial crisis reportedly worsened the situation in the run-up to the elections.

In the meantime, on 11 September, the Reserve Bank (central bank) announced an interest rate cut, allowing major banks to lower mortgage rates. On 1 October, the personal tax cuts for all workers announced in May 2008 took effect. The government said that the measures would help pull the economy out of recession.

Prime Minister Clark argued that only the Labour Party could make tough

choices for the country. She promised to use at least 3.4 per cent of biofuels in all transport fuels by 2012. She further pledged a deposit guarantee scheme to protect investments, expanded training opportunities for youth, and a universal student allowance by abolishing parental income testing.

National Party leader John Key argued that the country needed change. He pledged to protect businesses from financial losses. His party's policies included income tax cuts and more spending on key infrastructure projects such as roads, schools and a broadband network. It promised to promptly execute dam projects on the West Coast, opposed by the Labour government. Mr. Key also promised to reduce the adverse effects on the economy of the September 2008 Climate Change (Emissions Trading and Renewable Preference) Bill that established the framework for the Emissions Trading Scheme for New Zealand. Emissions trading is a one of the primary tools of international cooperation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Kyoto Protocol.

Both the Labour and National parties pledged to maintain New Zealand's troops in Afghanistan but not to deploy them in Iraq. Moreover, they both endorsed the ban on nuclear weapons and nuclear-powered or nuclear-armed ships in New Zealand.

The Green Party, led jointly by Ms. Jeanette Fitzsimons and Mr. Russel Norman, promised to reduce the country's dependence on oil and its CO₂ emissions. It argued that a strong Green presence in Parliament would bring about change in government.

Mr. Peter Dunne's United Future Party and the Maori Party, led jointly by Mr. Pita Sharples and Ms. Tariana Turia, aligned themselves with the National Party. The ACT New Zealand, led by Mr. Rodney Hide, indicated that it would support the National Party.

In all, 79.46 per cent of the 2.9 million registered voters turned out at the polls.

The final results gave 58 seats to the National Party and 43 to the Labour Party. The Greens won nine seats, followed by the ACT and the Maori Party, which took five seats each. The Progressive Party and the United Future won one seat each. New Zealand First failed to win any parliamentary representation. In all, 41 women were elected to a new 122 member parliament (including two overhang seats, see note), up from 39 women out of 121 members elected in 2005.

On 19 November, Mr. Key was sworn in as Prime Minister by the Governor General Anand Satyanand together with 27 ministers.

The newly elected Parliament held its first session on 8 December and elected Mr. Alexander Lockwood Smith of the National Party as its new Speaker.

Note:

In cases where parties win more electoral seats than their share of seats determined by the party vote, they may keep the extra seats, the so called "overhang seats". In the 2008 elections, the Maori Party won two overhang seats.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	2,990,759	
Voters	2,376,480	79.46%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	31,914	
Valid votes	2,344,566	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Votes	% votes	Majority	PR	Total seats
National Party	1,053,398	44.93	41	17	58
Labour Party	796,880	33.99	21	22	43
Green Party	157,613	6.72	0	9	9
ACT New Zealand	85,496	3.65	1	4	5
Maori Party	55,980	2.39	5	0	5
Jim Anderton's Progressive Party	21,241	0.91	1	0	1
United Future	20,497	0.87	1	0	1
Total			70	52	122

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	81	
Women	41	33.61%
Total	122	

► **Distribution of seats according to profession**

	Seats
Civil service and local authority administration	23
Finance, management or business	19
Legal profession	18
Education profession	17
Agriculture/farming	10
Trade union official	6
International civil servant	5
Journalism, broadcasting, media	4
Physician, dentist	4
Research/sciences	3
Architect, surveyor, engineer	3
Social worker	2
Nursing	2
Clerical, secretarial, administration	1
Civil society activity	1
Entrepreneur	1
Economist	1
Other	2
Total	122

► **Distribution of seats according to age**

21 to 30 years	2
31 to 40 years	21
41 to 50 years	30
51 to 60 years	45
61 to 70 years	19
Over 70 years	2
Unknown	3
Total	122

PAKISTAN

National Assembly

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Majlis-E-Shoora / Parliament
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	National Assembly
Number of members	342 directly elected (including 60 seats reserved for women and 10 seats for non-Muslim minorities)
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	17 February 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the National Assembly following the dissolution of this body on 15 November 2007.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

272 single-member constituencies

Breakdown of the number of seats by provinces:

Punjab (148 seats); Sindh (61 seats), the North West Frontier Province (NWFP, 35 seats), Balochistan (14 seats), the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA, 12 seats), and the Federal Capital (2 seats).

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Direct election with simple-majority vote.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 21 years

- Pakistani citizenship

- residence in the constituency

- disqualifications: insanity

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters

- age: 25 years

- Pakistani citizenship
 - good moral reputation
 - if Muslims, fulfilment of certain conditions relating to Islam
- Ineligibilities: conviction of crime involving moral turpitude or giving false evidence, personal action against the integrity of the country, undischarged bankruptcy, imprisonment for a term of not less than five years, government contractors

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- membership of the armed forces
- public office
- office of profit in the service of Pakistan

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- candidatures proposed and seconded by electors of the same constituency
- deposit of Rs. 4,000 (US\$ 50) reimbursed if the candidate polls more than 1/8 of the total votes cast in the constituency

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The February 2008 elections to the National Assembly took place in a very tense atmosphere, following the assassination on 27 December 2007 of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto.

Parliament's re-election of President Pervez Musharraf for a third term in October 2007 was boycotted by opposition parties. Over 80 opposition members tendered their resignation in protest. President Musharraf had come to power in October 1999 in a military coup. He resigned as army chief on 28 November 2007, one day before assuming his third term as President.

In the previous elections held in October 2002, the Pakistan Muslim League-Qaid-i-Azam (PML-Q), which supported President Musharraf's government, became the largest party with 77 seats, but fell short of a majority. The Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), which supported Ms. Bhutto, came in second with 63 seats. An alliance of six Islamist parties, the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA - United Council for Action), took 45 seats. The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) of exiled former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who was ousted in the 1999 coup, took 14 seats.

In March 2007, President Musharraf dismissed the Supreme Court Chief

Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry for alleged corruption. His dismissal triggered widespread demonstrations by attorneys and opponents of the President. They argued that the decision was aimed at avoiding any constitutional challenges to Mr. Musharraf's third presidential bid. In July, the Supreme Court reinstated Mr. Chaudhry as Chief Justice.

In October and November, two exiled former prime ministers - Ms. Bhutto and Mr. Sharif - returned to Pakistan to participate in the electoral campaign. On 3 November, President Musharraf declared a state of emergency, postponing parliamentary elections indefinitely. He also suspended the Constitution and once again sacked Chief Justice Chaudhry. On 11 November, he announced that the National Assembly would be dissolved on 15 November, promising parliamentary elections before 9 January 2008.

Following mounting international pressure, on 16 December, President Musharraf lifted the state of emergency, reinstated the country's Constitution, and advanced the date of elections to 8 January.

The assassination of Ms. Bhutto on 27 December provoked street protests that turned into violence. The elections were subsequently postponed to 18 February.

In all, 2,252 candidates, including 64 women, were vying for the 272 single-member constituencies. A total of 482 candidates stood for the 60 seats reserved for women, while 132 contested the 10 reserved seats for non-Muslim minorities. PML-N leader Mr. Sharif was barred from running due to criminal convictions following the 1999 coup. Elections in four constituencies, including the one that would have been contested by Ms. Bhutto, were postponed.

Pre-election polls indicated a strong lead for the opposition PPPP and the PML-N. Ms. Bhutto's widower, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari had taken over as leader of the PPPP. The PPPP said that it would work with President Musharraf if the elections were free and fair, while the PML-N called for President Musharraf's immediate resignation. Both parties pledged to restore democracy and improve the economy. They criticized the government for failing to take sufficient measures against rising prices, flour shortages and frequent power cuts.

The PML-Q called on voters' support for the government's achievements

over the past five years, notably improvements to the education and welfare system. It called the PPPP a "party without leadership", and argued that such a party would not be able to provide meaningful policies.

Other contenders included the Awami National Party from North West Frontier Province and the Jamiat Ulema-I-Islam (JUI-F) of the Islamic cleric, Maulana Fazlur Rahman. Only one major political force, the opposition All Parties Democratic Movement (APDM), boycotted the elections.

Violence was rife during the election campaign. Two days before the polling day, a suicide bomber killed 37 people and injured over 90 at the PPPP rally. At least 20 people were killed in election-day violence, of whom 15 were reportedly PPPP members.

44 per cent of nearly 80 million registered voters turned out at the polls.

Final results for the 272 directly elected seats gave 98 seats to the PPPP (including seven independent candidates who joined the PPPP after the elections), followed by the PML-N with 71 seats (including four independents). Presidential allies, the PML-Q and the MQM (Muttahida Qaumi Movement), took 41 and 19 seats respectively.

On 19 March, the newly-elected National Assembly held its first session. Ms. Fahmida Mirza (PPPP) became the first woman to assume the post of National Assembly Speaker in Pakistan.

In the meantime, on 21 February, the PPPP and the PML-N announced that they would form a "government of national consensus". Both parties subsequently agreed to reinstate the judges who had been sacked by President Musharraf in November 2007.

On 24 March, the National Assembly elected former Speaker and top aide to Ms. Bhutto, Mr. Yousaf Raza Gilani (PPPP), as Prime Minister. His 24-member cabinet was sworn in on 31 March. It comprised the PPPP, the PML-N, the Awami National Party, the JUI-F as well as one member from the Federally Administered Tribal Area.

On 12 August, the coalition government announced its intention to submit an impeachment motion against the President the following week, accusing him of corruption, economic mismanagement and violating the Constitution. On 18 August, President Musharraf announced his resignation, while strongly

denying the accusations. On the same day, the National Assembly officially accepted his resignation with immediate effect. Senate President Muhammadmian Soomro became acting President.

On 6 September, the electoral college comprising the National Assembly, the Senate and the provincial assemblies elected Mr. Zardari (PPPP) as the country's new President. He was sworn in on 9 September.

Note on the by-elections held on 26 June:

The PML-N took three seats, while the PPPP took two. PML-N leader Mr. Sharif was once again barred from running. The court had ordered postponement of the election in his constituency, leaving it vacant as of 11 December.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	79,928,055	
Voters	35,170,435	44.00%
Valid votes	34,301,612	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Directly elected	Reserved (non-Muslim)	Reserved (women)	Total seats
Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP)	98	4	23	125
Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)	71	3	17	91
Pakistan Muslim League	41	2	10	53
Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM)	19	1	5	25
Awami National Party (ANP)	10	0	3	13
Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA)	6	0	1	7
Pakistan Muslim League (Functional)	4	0	1	5
Balochistan National Party (Awami)	1	0	0	1
National Peoples Party (NPP)	1	0	0	1
Pakistan People's Party (Sherpao)	1	0	0	1
Independents	18	0	0	18
Total	270	10	60	340

Note:

After the elections, seven of them joined the PPPP and four joined the PML-N. As at 31 January 2009, two of the directly elected seats remained undecided for various reasons.

► **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	264	
Women	76	22.35%
Total	340	

Note:

Sixteen women were directly elected.

PALAU

House of Delegates

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Olbilil Era Kelulau / National Congress
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	House of Delegates
Number of members	16 directly elected
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	4 November 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the House of Delegates on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

- 16 single-member constituencies corresponding to the country's states

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Majority system

Single-Member Plurality Systems ("first past the post")

The candidate who receives the highest number of votes in the constituency concerned is declared elected.

By-elections are held to fill vacancies which arise between general elections unless fewer than 180 days remain in the parliamentary term.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years

- Palau citizenship

- residence in country

- disqualifications: imprisonment, insanity, persons serving sentence for a felony

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters

- age: 25 years

- Palau citizenship

- residence in country for at least five years immediately preceding the

elections

- residence in district where running for at least one year immediately preceding the elections

▶ **Incompatibilities**

Employees of the national government covered under the National Public Service System Act, or of the state governments, or their agencies. The Act does not apply to political appointees, such as ministers.

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- a petition of declaration to run in an election for a delegate seat must be filed with the National Election Office prior to election

- twenty-five signatures from eligible voters of one's state must be secured before candidacy is certified.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The November 2008 parliamentary elections were held jointly with the presidential elections, as well as a referendum on proposed constitutional amendments. Palau became independent in 1994, upon the entry into force of a Compact of Free Association with the US. The US, which had administered Palau until 1978 under a UN trusteeship (Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands), continues to provide financial assistance and remains in charge of the country's defence.

In the previous elections held in November 2004, Palauans also approved several constitutional amendments, including a three-term limit for parliamentarians and the election of a presidential ticket composed of a President and Vice-President. Based on the recommendation of the Reapportionment Committee of July 2005, the statutory number of members of the Senate increased from nine to 13 starting from the 2008 elections.

Prior to the 2008 elections, the Supreme Court rejected a challenge by four members of the House of Delegates, including House Speaker Antonio Bells, to the three-term limit for parliamentarians. The Supreme Court ruled that the 2004 amendments applied to the terms served before 2004, with the exception that no legislators elected in 2004 would be unseated until their term ended. Three long-serving senators who were barred from standing for re-election in 2008 ran for President and Vice-President.

In the end, 43 candidates, including a record seven women, ran for the

Senate. Another 44 candidates, including three women, stood for the elections to the 16-member House of Delegates. There were no women in either chamber of the outgoing parliament. As there are no political parties in Palau, all candidates stood as independents.

The media focused on the senatorial elections in which candidates are elected from a nationwide constituency. President Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., who was constitutionally barred from running for a third presidential term, stood for election to the Senate. In early October, Mr. Surangel Whipps Jr., son of the Senate President, announced his intention to run for the Senate. Due to this last-minute decision, his name did not appear on the election ballot. He launched a website calling for voters to write down his name in full on the ballot paper.

According to the official results, Mr. Whipps Jr. received the most votes in the Senate race. Outgoing President Remengesau was elected in 11th position. Ms. Kathy Kesolei and Ms. Regina Mesebeluu became the first women Senators in Palau. No women were elected to the House of Delegates.

Mr. Johnson Toribiong won the closest presidential elections in Palau's history with 5,040 votes, only 212 more than Mr. Elias Camsek Chin. Both candidates had pledged to maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Mr. Toribiong is due to be sworn in as President on 15 January 2009.

In the referendum on 22 constitutional amendments jointly held with the 2008 elections, Palauans approved a proposal to elect the President and Vice President separately.

On 15 January 2009, the newly elected National Congress held its first session. The House of Delegates elected Mr. Noah Idechong as its new Speaker, while the Senate elected Mr. Mlib Tmetuchl as its new President.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	14,289	
Voters	6,096	42.66%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	243	
Valid votes	5,853	

▶ **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	16	
Women	0	0.00%
Total	16	

PALAU

Senate

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Oibilil Era Kelulau / National Congress
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Senate
Number of members	13 directly elected Note: The Reapportionment Commission is constituted every eight years to publish a reapportionment or redistricting plan for the Senate, which becomes law upon publication. The statutory number of members of the Senate has increased from nine to 13, starting from the 2008 elections, based on the Commission's recommendations of June 2007.
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	4 November 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the Senate on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

One nationwide constituency for 13 seats.

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Block Vote (Plurality-at-large voting)

Each voter may choose as many candidates as the number of members to be elected (currently 13) on a single ballot paper.

The 13 candidates who receive the most votes nationwide are declared elected.

By-elections are held to fill vacancies which arise between general elections unless fewer than 180 days remain in the parliamentary term.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years

- Palau citizenship

- minimum period of residence in country
- disqualifications: imprisonment, insanity, persons serving sentence for a felony

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: 25 years
- Palau citizenship
- residence in country for at least five years immediately preceding the elections
- residence in district where running for at least one year immediately preceding the elections

▶ **Incompatibilities**

Employees of the national government covered under the National Public Service System Act, or of the state governments, or their agencies. The Act does not apply to political appointees, such as ministers.

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- Nomination by at least 50 voters
- Non-reimbursable deposit of US\$ 50 per candidate
- Candidatures may be submitted by individuals or legally registered political parties with at least 50 members (currently there are no political parties).
- Candidatures must be submitted at least 90 days prior to elections.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The November 2008 parliamentary elections were held jointly with the presidential elections, as well as a referendum on proposed constitutional amendments. Palau became independent in 1994, upon the entry into force of a Compact of Free Association with the US. The US, which had administered Palau until 1978 under a UN trusteeship (Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands), continues to provide financial assistance and remains in charge of the country's defence.

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In the end, 43 candidates, including a record seven women, ran for the Senate. Another 44 candidates, including three women, stood for the elections to the 16-member House of Delegates. There were no women in either chamber of the outgoing parliament. As there are no political parties in Palau, all candidates stood as independents.

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Speaker, while the Senate elected Mr. Mllib Tmetuchl as its new President.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	14,289	
Voters	10,469	73.27%
Valid votes	121,994	

Note :

Each voter may cast as many votes as the number of senators elected (currently 13). Thus the total number of valid votes exceeds the number of registered voters. In the 2008 elections, the total number of the votes cast was 131,372 and 9,378 were blank or invalid ballot papers.

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	11	
Women	2	15.38%
Total	13	

▶ Distribution of seats according to profession

	Seats
Entrepreneur	3
Finance, management or business	3
Architect, surveyor, engineer	2
Journalism, broadcasting, media	1
Legal profession	1
Research/sciences	1
Education profession	1
Other	1
Total	13

▶ Distribution of seats according to age

31 to 40 years	2
41 to 50 years	3
51 to 60 years	4
61 to 70 years	4
Total	13

PARAGUAY

Chamber of Deputies

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Congreso / Congress
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Cámara de Diputados / Chamber of Deputies
Number of members	80 directly elected
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	20 April 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all seats in the Chamber of Deputies on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

18 multi-member constituencies corresponding to the country's 17 administrative divisions plus the capital

▶ **Voting system: Proportional**

Closed party-list proportional representation system.

Each political party or movement presents a list of candidates with as many names as the number of seats to be filled.

The votes received by each list are divided by one, two, three, four and so on up to the number of seats to be filled. The quotients are ranked from the largest to the smallest. Seats are then allocated to the lists with the highest averages.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled by substitutes elected at the same time as titular members.

Voting is not compulsory but considered a duty.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years
- Paraguayan citizenship
- residence in the country

Disqualifications: mental and physical incapacity declared by a court, deaf-mutes who cannot express themselves in writing, detention

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: 25 years
- Paraguayan citizenship

Ineligibilities: conviction depriving of freedom or of right to hold public office, electoral offences

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- magistrates
- Attorney-General and members of his office
- Prosecutor
- owners of the media-related organizations
- Comptroller General and Deputy Comptroller General
- members of the electoral authority
- members of the clergy
- representatives or agents of enterprises, corporations or bodies which have obtained a concession from the Government to operate a public service
- members of the armed or police forces on active duty
- candidates for President and Vice-President of the Republic

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- candidature by a registered political party or movement which has the backing of 100 electors

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The April 2008 parliamentary elections were held jointly with presidential polls. At stake were 80 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 45 in the Senate.

The National Republican Association-Colorado Party (ANR) had been the largest party since 1947, including during the dictatorship of General Alfred Stroessner from 1954 to 1989. In the previous elections held in April 2003, the ANR obtained its worst results since the country returned to democracy in 1989. Although its leader, Nicanor Duarte Frutos, was elected as the country's President, the ANR failed to win a majority in either chamber, taking 37 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 16 in the Senate.

The main opposition Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA) took 21 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 12 in the Senate. Another opposition party - the National Union of Ethical Citizens (UNACE) - founded by the exiled former army chief Lino Cesar Oviedo in 2000 - won ten and seven seats

respectively. The remainder went to small parties. Mr. Oviedo returned to Paraguay in 2004 and was jailed for his alleged involvement in an earlier military uprising until September 2007, when a military court ordered his release. In October, the Supreme Court exonerated him of all charges. In January 2008, he was nominated as the UNACE's candidate for the presidential elections.

President Duarte Frutos initially announced that he would seek to amend the Constitution to be able to run for the presidency again. Finally, he endorsed the then Education Minister, Ms. Blanca Ovelar. In December, Ms. Ovelar won the ANR's nomination, becoming the first-ever woman presidential candidate in the country. Her rival, the then Vice-President Luis Castiglioni, alleged fraud and insisted that his faction (Vanguardia Colorado) was the real ANR. The internal split reportedly weakened the ANR prior to the 2008 elections.

In December 2007, the opposition centre-left Patriotic Alliance for Change (APC) endorsed former Roman Catholic bishop, Fernando Lugo, as its presidential candidate. The APC comprised the PLRA, the Progressive Democratic Party (PDP), the Party for a Country of Solidarity (PPS), Mr. Lugo's Tekojoja (Equality) Popular Movement (MPT), several other small leftist parties as well as civil society organizations, trade unions and small farmers' associations. Most APC candidates ran under the banner of individual parties within the alliance.

Mr. Lugo, known as the "bishop of the poor", pledged to tackle corruption and poverty. He also promised land reforms and stated his intention to renegotiate contracts for the Itaipu hydroelectric dam on the border between Brazil and Paraguay, in order to develop Paraguay's economy. On 20 March 2008, former Paraguayan football star José Luis Chilavert announced that he would support Mr. Lugo, arguing that he was the only candidate who could bring the change that the country needed.

Many analysts argued that the election of Ms. Ovelar would allow President Duarte Frutos to maintain control over the country's politics. Ms. Ovelar warned that Mr. Lugo would implement leftist policies similar to those in Bolivia and Venezuela.

Mr. Oviedo's UNACE advocated conservative policies on social issues. Like the APC, it pledged to work for the poor in the country. About 60 per cent of the 6.6 million inhabitants reportedly live in poverty.

Thousands of Paraguayans living in Argentina returned to the country to vote. Many of them were reportedly supporters of Mr. Lugo's alliance. Over 65 per cent of the 2.9 million eligible voters turned out at the polls.

The elections went off in relative peace, although some irregularities - such as late opening of some polling stations and claims of multiple voting - were reported.

International observers, including a delegation from the Organization of American States (OAS), monitored the polls. The OAS praised the high turnout and declared that the polls were conducted in a climate of "total normality".

Though the ANR remained the largest party in both chambers, its margin was significantly reduced. It took 30 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 15 seats in the Senate. The parties in the APC won a total of 31 and 17 seats respectively. The UNACE took 15 and nine seats respectively. In all, ten women were elected to the Chamber of Deputies, and seven to the Senate.

In the presidential elections, Mr. Lugo (APC) was elected with over 42 per cent of the valid votes, ending more than six decades of ANR rule.

On 1 July, the newly elected Congress held its first session. The Chamber of Deputies elected Mr. Enrique Buzarquis Cáceres (PLRA) as its new Speaker, while the Senate chose Mr. Enrique González Quintana (UNACE) as its new President.

On 15 August, Mr. Lugo was sworn in as the country's President.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	2,861,940	
Voters	1,874,127	65.48%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	27,818	
Valid votes	1,846,309	

▶ **Distribution of seats according to political group**

	Seats
Patriotic Alliance for Change (APC)	31
<i>Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA)</i>	27
<i>Patriotic Alliance for Change (APC)</i>	2
<i>Democratic Progressive Party (PDP)</i>	1
<i>Tekojaja Popular Movement (MPT)</i>	1
National Republican Association/Colorado Party (ANR)	30
National Union of Ethical Citizens (UNACE)	15
Beloved Fatherland Movement ("Patria Querida", PPQ)	3
Departmental Alliance Boquerón (ADB)	1
Total	80

▶ **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	70	
Women	10	12.50%
Total	80	

PARAGUAY

Senate

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Congreso / Congress
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Cámara de Senadores / Senate
Number of members	45 directly elected
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	20 April 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all seats in the Senate on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

1 multi-member (45 seats) nation-wide constituency.

▶ **Voting system: Proportional**

Closed party-list proportional representation system.

Each political party or movement presents a list of candidates with as many names as the number of seats to be filled.

The votes received by each list are divided by one, two, three, four and so on up to the number of seats to be filled. The quotients are ranked from the largest to the smallest. Seats are then allocated to the lists with the highest averages.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled by substitutes elected at the same time as titular members.

Voting is not compulsory but considered a duty.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years
- Paraguayan citizenship
- residency in the country

Disqualifications: mental and physical incapacity declared by a court, deaf-mutes who cannot express themselves in writing, conscripts and soldiers of the armed forces and police, military and police cadets, detention

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: 40 years
- Paraguayan citizenship

Ineligibilities: conviction depriving of freedom or of right to hold public office, electoral offences

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- magistrates
- Attorney-General and members of his office
- Prosecutor
- owners or partners of the media-related organizations
- Comptroller General and Deputy Comptroller General
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- members of the clergy
- representatives or agents of enterprises, corporations or bodies which have obtained a concession from the Government to operate a public service
- members of the armed or police forces on active duty
- candidates for President and Vice-President of the Republic

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- candidature are by a registered party or political movement which has the backing of 100 electors

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The April 2008 parliamentary elections were held jointly with presidential polls. At stake were 80 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 45 in the Senate.

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On 15 August, Mr. Lugo was sworn in as the country's President.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	2,861,940	
Voters	1,990,817	69.56%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	118,257	
Valid votes	1,872,560	

► **Distribution of seats according to political group**

	Seats
Patriotic Alliance for Change (APC)	17
<i>Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA)</i>	14
<i>Democratic Progressive Party (PDP)</i>	1
<i>Party for a Country of Solidarity (PPS)</i>	1
<i>Tekojoja Popular Movement (MPT)</i>	1
National Republican Association (ANR)-Colorado Party	15
National Union of Ethical Citizens (UNACE)	9
Beloved Fatherland Movement ("Patria Querida", PPQ)	4
Total	45

► **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	38	
Women	7	15.56%
Total	45	

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

National Assembly

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Kuk Hoe / National Assembly
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	299 directly elected
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	9 April 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

- 245 single-member district constituencies
- 1 multi-member (54 seats) national constituency

▶ **Voting system: Mixed**

- simple majority direct vote in the 245 single-member constituencies.
- proportional representation for 54 seats. These seats are divided proportionately among the political parties based upon their votes obtained in the districts, on condition that they have obtained at least 3% of the total valid votes cast or secured five district constituency seats or more.

Vacancies of district constituency seats arising between general elections are filled through by-elections, on condition that there remains at least one year in the term of the Assembly member to be replaced. Vacancies of proportional representation seats are filled by the "next-in-line" candidates of the political party concerned.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 20 years
- Republic of Korea citizenship

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: 25 years

- Republic of Korea citizenship

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- State and local public servants (except those who are legally allowed to take part in political activities)
- President of the Republic, members of local legislatures, adjudicators of the Constitution Court, members of National Election Commission
- employees and senior managers of government invested companies
- employees and senior managers of the National Agricultural Co-operative Federation and the National Federation of Fisheries Co-operatives
- teachers are not allowed to join political parties (others shall temporarily drop the title and return to schools when the term is over).

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- support of 300 to 500 voters in the constituency
- monetary deposit of 15 million won (US\$ 9,700), which is reimbursed in full if a district constituency candidate obtains at least 15% of the valid votes cast. Only half the amount is reimbursed if he/she receives over 10% but less than 15% of the votes. Deposits can be reimbursed to candidates running for proportional representation seats if his/her party obtains at least one seat.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The April 2008 elections were the first to be held under the country's new President Lee Myung-bak of the Grand National Party (GNP). After serving as Mayor of Seoul and a top executive at Hyundai, he was elected in December 2007 and pledged to make the economy his top priority.

In the previous parliamentary elections held in April 2004, the Uri Party of the then President Roh had won 152 of the 299 seats. The GNP had followed with 121 seats. The Democratic Labour Party (DLP) had taken ten seats. The former ruling Millennium Democratic Party (DP, members of which had formed the Uri Party in October 2003) and the right-wing United Liberal Democrats, had taken nine and four seats respectively.

Prior to the 2008 elections, many new parties were formed.

In August 2007, the Uri Party disbanded itself. Most of its parliamentarians joined the newly-created United New Democratic Party (UNDP), along with five former DP members. In October, other former Uri Party members formed

the Renewal of Korea Party. After the 2007 presidential elections, the UNDP merged with the DP and renamed itself the "United Democratic Party" (UDP), led by Mr. Son Hak-gyu, while the Liberty Forward Party (LFP) merged with the People First Party (PFP). The GNP criticized the merger, calling LFP members "migrating-bird politicians", who switched political affiliation frequently.

In late March, Ms. Park Geun-hye - daughter of former president Park Chung-hee and former GNP chairwoman - complained of the elimination of many of her supporters in the GNP's selection of parliamentary candidates. She had been defeated by Mr. Lee for the GNP presidential nomination. Many of her loyalists left the GNP to form a new party, Park's Party, while Ms. Park herself remained in the GNP.

The economy and employment figured prominently in the campaign. The UDP promised to create more jobs through economic growth. It pledged to work towards affording greater protection to the country's low- and middle-income families. The GNP leader, Kang Jae-sup, called on voters' to retrieve "the 10 years the country lost under incompetent liberal governments". Its manifesto included university reforms that would give more autonomy to universities.

Pre-election opinion polls predicted a resounding victory for the GNP due mainly to President Lee's popularity. They also predicted a low turnout. On 7 April, the election commission announced an incentive to boost turnout; persons who voted in the election would receive a certificate allowing them to obtain discounts on entrance fees at national museums, parks and other public cultural facilities across the country.

Nevertheless, only 46 per cent of the 37.8 million eligible voters turned out at the polls, down from the 60 per cent recorded in the 2004 elections.

The GNP won 153 seats, securing a majority in the National Assembly for the first time since 1998. The UDP took 81. The LFP came in third with 18 seats, followed by the Park's Party, which took 14 seats. Around 30 elected GNP candidates were reportedly loyal to Ms. Park. The DLP took five seats while the NPP failed to win any. The Renewal of Korea Party won three seats.

The newly-elected National Assembly held its first session on 30 May.

However, the National Assembly was unable to elect a new Speaker due to

a boycott by opposition parties in protest at the decision to resume beef imports from the United States. On 10 July, the National Assembly was finally reconvened after the GNP accepted to revise the law on livestock diseases and investigate the Seoul-Washington beef deal.

Mr. Kim Hyong-O (GNP) was elected as the new Speaker.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	37,796,035	
Voters	17,389,206	46.01%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	205,497	
Valid votes	17,183,709	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Majority	PR	Seats
Grand National Party (GNP)	131	22	153
United Democratic Party (UDP)	66	15	81
Liberty Forward Party (LFP)	14	4	18
Park's Party	6	8	14
Democratic Labour Party (DLP)	2	3	5
Renewal of Korea Party	1	2	3
Independents	25	0	25
Total	245	54	299

Note:

The United Democratic Party (UDP) changed its name to the Democratic Party (DP) after the 2008 elections.

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	258	
Women	41	13.71%
Total	299	

ROMANIA

Chamber of Deputies

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Parlamentul României / Parliament of Romania
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Camera Deputaţilor / Chamber of Deputies
Number of members	334 members - 315 directly elected - 18 members representing ethnic minorities - one overhang seat
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	30 November 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the Chamber of Deputies on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

315 single-member constituencies; there is one Deputy for every 70,000 inhabitants.

▶ **Voting system: Mixed**

Mixed system (mixed-member proportional - MMP)

Each voter votes for one candidate.

Majority system:

Candidates who obtain over 50 per cent of the votes are elected.

Proportional system:

Votes for unelected candidates are tallied nationally. The remaining seats are distributed among political parties in proportion to their share of the vote. If parties win more electorate seats than their share of seats determined by the party vote then they can keep the extra seats, called "overhang seats".

The threshold for winning parliamentary representation is 5 per cent for political parties running on their own ticket. Parties which do not surpass the threshold may still obtain parliamentary representation if they win at least six constituencies in the elections to the Chamber of Deputies or three in the elections to the Senate.

The threshold for political alliance varies from 8 to 10 per cent

depending on the number of parties comprising the alliance: 8 per cent for two-party political alliances, 9 per cent for three-party alliances, and 10 per cent for four-party (or more) alliances.

Reserved seats for ethnic minorities:

Organizations of citizens belonging to a national minority, which are legally established and do not win parliamentary representation in either chamber, are entitled to one seat each in the Chamber of Deputies on condition that the organization obtains at least 10 per cent of the average number of valid votes cast for an elected Deputy. There is no upper limit on the number of seats reserved for minority organizations.

Vacancies for members elected under the proportional representation system are filled by unsuccessful candidates declared as substitutes on the corresponding party-list. By-elections are held if seats occupied by members elected from single-seat-constituencies become vacant.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years
- Romanian citizenship

Disqualifications: mentally deficient or alienated persons laid under interdiction and those disenfranchised pursuant to final court decision

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: 23 years
- Romanian citizenship
- residence in Romania

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- public officers (except members of the Government)
- prefects, sub-prefects, heads of public services and other governmental authorities of territorial administrative units (in constituencies where exercising functions)
- judges of the Constitutional Court
- advocates of the people
- magistrates
- members of the armed forces on active duty
- policemen
- other categories of civil servants established by organic law, who may not join political parties.

▶ Candidacy requirements

- Candidatures must be submitted at least 40 days prior to elections.
- Candidatures may be submitted by political parties, political alliances, individuals and legally founded organizations of citizens belonging to national minorities represented in the Council of National Minorities
- Candidatures submitted by organizations representing national minorities must be accompanied by a members list comprising at least 15 per cent of the total number of citizens who have identified themselves as member of these minority groups in the most recent census.
- Candidatures submitted by independent candidates must be accompanied by the supporting signatures of at least 4 per cent of the total number of the registered voters in the constituency concerned and backed by a minimum of 2,000 voters.
- Each nominated candidate must pay a financial deposit of equivalent to five gross minimum wages (approximately 750 euros).

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The November 2008 elections were the first to be held following the country's accession to the European Union (EU) in January 2007.

In the previous elections held in November 2004 in parallel with presidential elections, the Social Democratic Party (PSD)-Humanist Party of Romania (PUR) Alliance became the largest party in both chambers, winning 132 seats in the 332-member Chamber of Deputies and 57 seats in the 137-member Senate. The Justice and Truth Alliance, comprising the National Liberal Party (PNL) and the Democratic Party (PD), came in second, with 112 seats for the PNL and 49 for the PD. The Party of Greater Romania (PRM) took 48 seats in the lower house and 21 in the upper house. The Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (UDMR) took the remainder.

In the run-off presidential elections held in December 2004, Bucharest Mayor Traian Basescu (PD) defeated the outgoing Prime Minister Adrian Nastase (PSD). Mr. Basescu resigned as PD leader upon assuming the post of President. He nominated Mr. Calin Popescu-Tariceanu (PNL) as Prime Minister. The new government comprising the PNL, the PD, the PUR and the UDMR was approved by the parliament in late December. The PUR renamed itself the Conservative Party (PC) in May 2005 and left the coalition in December 2006.

Both the President and the Prime Minister advocated free-market policies in

view of the country's accession to the European Union (EU). Prime Minister Tariceanu implemented a series of reforms, in particular aimed at combating corruption. The annual inflation rate dropped to 7 per cent following a decade of double-digit rates. The economic growth rate surpassed 8 per cent, following the introduction of a flat rate of 16 per cent for income and corporate tax in January 2005. The country's economy was further boosted by the flow of remittances (totalling US\$ 8.95 billion in 2007) from an estimated two million Romanians working abroad.

However, the relationship between the President and the Prime Minister steadily worsened. In February 2007, the PSD and the PRM called for the President's suspension for unconstitutional conduct. In early April, Prime Minister Tariceanu dismissed PD ministers and formed a minority government, arguing that the country needed a coherent government. The new government comprised the PNL and the UDMR, and enjoyed the conditional support of the PSD. President Basescu called for early elections (the President does not have the power to dissolve parliament and call elections unless parliament fails to approve the cabinet). Later the same month, parliament voted to suspend President Basescu, paving the way for a referendum to impeach him. In May, Romanians rejected the impeachment proposal by over 74 per cent of the vote. President Basescu was subsequently reinstated by the Constitutional Court.

In January 2008, some PNL members joined the PD and formed the Democratic-Liberal Party (PD-L) under the leadership of Mr. Emil Boc. The power struggle between the Prime Minister and the President continued until the 2008 elections.

Prior to the 2008 elections, the country was experiencing an economic slowdown due to the global financial crisis. On 27 August, the government set the election date for 30 November, and announced that it would increase pensions by 20 per cent starting from 1 November. On 29 September, however, the Chamber of Deputies passed a bill increasing teachers' salaries and pension grants by 50 per cent. Prime Minister Tariceanu challenged the bill before the Constitutional Court, arguing that the government had insufficient funds to implement such drastic measures. The government postponed the pay rise for teachers by six months. On 27 October, President Basescu signed the bill on the pay rise into law. On 29 October, the PD-L filed a no-confidence motion against the government, challenging the government's decision to postpone the pay increase.

The election campaign officially started on 31 October. In all 2,965 candidates (2,070 for the Chamber of Deputies and 895 for the Senate) were vying for seats in parliament in the 2008 elections. Following the revision of the electoral system in March 2008, citizens voted for individual candidates in single member constituencies instead of for political party lists.

The main contenders were the PD-L, the PSD-PC alliance, and the PNL. Other contenders included the PRM, led by Mr. Corneliu Vadim Tudor, the UDMR of Mr. Marko Bela and the New Generation Party-Christian Democratic (PNGCD), led by a wealthy businessman, Mr. George Becali.

The PD-L, which has close ties with President Basescu, enjoyed support among young urban Romanians. It promised to accelerate privatization; finalize the restitution of property confiscated under the communist regime within two years; maintain the flat tax rate; introduce the euro in 2014; and bring the average wage up to 900 euros. The PD-L also advocated a unicameral parliament of 300 members, arguing that Romania should use the European Parliament as a model.

The PSD was led by Mr. Mircea-Dan Geoana, former foreign minister and a former Romanian ambassador to Washington. Mr. Geoana criticized the government for exposing the country to financial disaster. He called for more spending on welfare. The PSD promised to consider lowering income taxes for the poorest, while keeping the flat tax rate at 16 per cent for the rest of the population. It also promised to raise the minimum salary to 1,000 lei (about 280 euros); lower energy costs for the lowest-income earners; reduce the VAT on food to 5 per cent; and provide more free and compensated prescription medicine.

Prime Minister Tariceanu's PNL called for voters' continuing support for the economic and judicial reforms. The PNL had been known for its pro-business policies, but had promoted more social protection policies during the minority government, which relied on the support of left-wing parties. In the 2008 elections, however, the PNL once again campaigned on a pro-business platform, promising to revive the country's economy. It also pledged to introduce the euro by 2014.

In all, 39.20 per cent of the 18.4 million registered voters turned out at the polls.

The PD-L became the largest party in both chambers, winning 115 seats in

the Chamber of Deputies and 51 seats in the Senate. The PSD-PC alliance followed closely with 114 and 49 seats respectively. The PNL won 65 and 28 seats each, while the UDMR took 22 and nine seats.

The newly elected parliament held its first session on 15 December. On 19 December 2008, the Chamber of Deputies elected Ms. Roberta Alma Anastase (PD-L) as its new Speaker, while the Senate elected Mr. Mircea-Dan Geoana (PSD) as its new President.

Negotiations began over the formation of a coalition government. President Basescu first nominated former senior World Bank official and deputy leader of PD-L, Mr. Theodor Stolojan, as Prime Minister. The latter subsequently withdrew apparently because of poor health but also because he thought a new generation should lead the new government. President Basescu then nominated the 42 year-old PD-L leader, Mr. Boc. On 22 December, Parliament endorsed Mr. Boc's coalition government comprising the PD-L and the PSD. It was the first government involving the two major political parties since the anti-communist uprising of December 1989.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	18,464,274	
Voters	7,238,871	39.20%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	350,133	
Valid votes	6,886,794	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Votes	% votes	Seats
Democratic-Liberal Party (PD-L)	2,228,860	32.36	115
Political Alliance Social Democratic Party (PSD) - Conservative Party (PC)	2,279,449	33.10	114
National Liberal Party (PNL)	1,279,063	18.57	65
Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (UDMR)	425,008	6.17	22
Members representing ethnic minorities			18
Total			334

Note:

In cases where parties win more electoral seats than their share of seats determined by the party vote, they may keep the extra seats, the so called

"overhang seats". In the 2008 elections, the Democratic-Liberal Party (PD-L) won one overhang seat.

The following 18 organizations representing minorities in Romania, which failed to obtain a sufficient number of votes to win parliamentary representation, were given one seat each:

1. Democratic Forum of the Germans of Romania
2. Democratic Union of the Slovaks and Czechs of Romania
3. Union of the Polish of Romania
4. Bulgarian Union of Banat -Romania
5. Community of the Lipovan Russians of Romania
6. "Pro-Europe" Roma Party
7. Democratic Union of Turkish-Muslim Tatars of Romania
8. Federation of Jewish Communities of Romania
9. Union of Croats of Romania
10. Union of Serbs of Romania
11. Union of Ukrainians of Romania
12. Turkish Democratic Union of Romania
13. Association of Macedonians of Romania
14. Association of Italians of Romania - RO.AS.IT.
15. Union of Armenians of Romania
16. Cultural Union of Ruthenians of Romania
17. Association Albanians' League of Romania
18. Hellenic Union of Romania

► **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	296	
Women	38	11.38%
Total	334	

► **Distribution of seats according to profession**

	Seats
Architect, surveyor, engineer	96
Economist	66
Legal profession	58
Education profession	35
Physician, dentist	18
Finance, management or business	17
Agriculture/farming	16
Research/sciences	8
IT/technology	6
Armed services/Police	4
Writer, literary, artist	3
Civil service and local authority administration	3
Clerical, secretarial, administration	3
Trade union official	1
Total	334

► **Distribution of seats according to age**

21 to 30 years	17
31 to 40 years	89
41 to 50 years	107
51 to 60 years	94
61 to 70 years	24
Over 70 years	3
Total	334

ROMANIA

Senate

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Parlamentul României / Parliament of Romania
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Senatul / Senate
Number of members	137 directly elected
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	30 November 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the Senate on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

137 single-member constituencies; there is one Senator for every 160,000 inhabitants.

▶ **Voting system: Mixed**

Mixed system (mixed-member proportional - MMP)

Each voter votes for a candidate.

Majority system:

The threshold to win parliamentary representation is 160,000 votes.

Candidates who obtain over 50 per cent of the votes are elected.

Proportional system:

Votes for unelected candidates are tallied nationally. The remaining seats are distributed among political parties in proportion of their share of the vote.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled by unsuccessful candidates declared substitutes on the corresponding party-list.

By-elections can be held in exceptional situations.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- minimum age: 18 years

- Romanian citizenship

Disqualifications: persons with mental deficiencies, placed under interdiction and persons disenfranchised pursuant to a final court

decision

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- minimum age: 33 years
- Romanian citizenship
- domicile in Romania

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- Deputies
- holders of public offices (except the members of the Government)
- prefects, sub-prefects, heads of public services and other governmental authorities of territorial administrative units (in constituencies where exercising functions)
- managers of trading companies, including banks, of publicly owned enterprises and of national companies
- public offices entrusted by a foreign State, excepting those stipulated in the international agreements and conventions Romania is a party to
- judges of the Constitutional Court
- the Advocate of the People and his/her deputies
- magistrates
- members of the armed forces on active duty
- policemen
- other categories of civil servants established by organic law, who are not allowed to join political parties

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- candidatures proposed on separate list submitted only by legally constituted political parties and political alliances, as well as by electoral alliances
- support by at least 5% of the total number of voters from the constituency, for independent candidates
- nominations submitted no later than 30 days prior to the polling

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The November 2008 elections were the first to be held following the country's accession to the European Union (EU) in January 2007.

In the previous elections held in November 2004 in parallel with presidential elections, the Social Democratic Party (PSD)-Humanist Party of Romania (PUR) Alliance became the largest party in both chambers, winning 132

seats in the 332-member Chamber of Deputies and 57 seats in the 137-member Senate. The Justice and Truth Alliance, comprising the National Liberal Party (PNL) and the Democratic Party (PD), came in second, with 112 seats for the PNL and 49 for the PD. The Party of Greater Romania (PRM) took 48 seats in the lower house and 21 in the upper house. The Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (UDMR) took the remainder.

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Both the President and the Prime Minister advocated free-market policies in view of the country's accession to the European Union (EU). Prime Minister Tariceanu implemented a series of reforms, in particular aimed at combating corruption. The annual inflation rate dropped to 7 per cent following a decade of double-digit rates. The economic growth rate surpassed 8 per cent, following the introduction of a flat rate of 16 per cent for income and corporate tax in January 2005. The country's economy was further boosted by the flow of remittances (totalling US\$ 8.95 billion in 2007) from an estimated two million Romanians working abroad.

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for the poorest, while keeping the flat tax rate at 16 per cent for the rest of the population. It also promised to raise the minimum salary to 1,000 lei (about 280 euros); lower energy costs for the lowest-income earners; reduce the VAT on food to 5 per cent; and provide more free and compensated prescription medicine.

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In all, 39.20 per cent of the 18.4 million registered voters turned out at the polls.

The PD-L became the largest party in both chambers, winning 115 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 51 seats in the Senate. The PSD-PC alliance followed closely with 114 and 49 seats respectively. The PNL won 65 and 28 seats each, while the UDMR took 22 and nine seats.

The newly elected parliament held its first session on 15 December. On 19 December 2008, the Chamber of Deputies elected Ms. Roberta Alma Anastase (PD-L) as its new Speaker, while the Senate elected Mr. Mircea-Dan Geoana (PSD) as its new President.

Negotiations began over the formation of a coalition government. President Basescu first nominated former senior World Bank official and deputy leader of PD-L, Mr. Theodor Stolojan, as Prime Minister. The latter subsequently withdrew apparently because of poor health but also because he thought a new generation should lead the new government. President Basescu then nominated the 42 year-old PD-L leader, Mr. Boc. On 22 December, Parliament endorsed Mr. Boc's coalition government comprising the PD-L and the PSD. It was the first government involving the two major political parties since the anti-communist uprising of December 1989.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	18,464,274	
Voters	7,238,871	39.20%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	349,101	
Valid votes	6,888,055	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Votes	% votes	Seats
Democratic-Liberal Party (PD-L)	2,312,358	33.57	51
Political Alliance Social Democratic Party (PSD) - Conservative Party (PC)	2,352,968	34.16	49
National Liberal Party (PNL)	1,291,029	18.74	28
Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (UDMR)	440,449	6.39	9
Total			137

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	129	
Women	8	5.84%
Total	137	

▶ Distribution of seats according to profession

	Seats
Architect, surveyor, engineer	43
Economist	25
Legal profession	23
Education profession	19
Physician, dentist	11
Agriculture/farming	9
Writer, literary, artist	3
Armed services/Police	2
Social worker	1
Journalism, broadcasting, media	1
Total	137

▶ **Distribution of seats according to age**

31 to 40 years	13
41 to 50 years	41
51 to 60 years	66
61 to 70 years	15
Over 70 years	2
Total	137

RWANDA

Chamber of Deputies

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Parliament / Parlement
Structure of Parliament Chamber	Bicameral Chambre des Députés / Chamber of Deputies
Number of members	80 members - 53 directly elected - 27 indirectly elected These include: a) 24 women by electoral colleges from each Province and the City of Kigali; b) Two members elected by the National Youth Council; c) One member elected by the Federation of the Associations of the Disabled.
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	15 - 18 September 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all seats in the Chamber of Deputies on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

One nationwide constituency for 53 directly elected members.

Number of women's seats following the 2006 territorial administrative reforms which abolished previous constituencies:

- Eastern, Southern, Western provinces: 6 each
- Northern Province: 4
- Kigali City: 2

▶ **Voting system: Proportional**

The proportional representation system using closed party lists (for the 53 directly elected members):

Seats are allocated according to the system of the largest remainder to parties and independent candidates who obtain at least 5 per cent of the total votes cast.

In cases where there is only one seat to fill and the lists obtain the same

number of votes using the largest remainder formula, the seat is awarded to the list that receives the largest number of actual votes.

Vacancies for members elected under the proportional representation system are filled by the "next-in-line" candidate of the same party in cases where the remainder of their term exceeds one year. By-elections are held if seats occupied by independent candidates become vacant.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- Age: 18 years old on election day
- Rwandan nationality
- Registration on the voters' list

Rwandans abroad, who are not refugees, are entitled to register to be placed on the voters' list at their country's embassies.

Disqualifications:

- Persons who have been stripped of the right to vote by competent courts of law and have not been absolved or granted amnesty in accordance with the law;
- Persons who have been convicted of the crime of genocide and crimes against humanity, as provided for under paragraphs 1 and 2 of Article 51 of organic law no. 16/2004 of 19/6/2004 establishing the organization, competence and functioning of Gacaca courts entrusted with prosecuting and trying the perpetrators of the crime of genocide and other crimes against humanity committed between 1 October 1990 and 31 December 1994, as amended and supplemented to date;
- Persons who have confessed to the crime of genocide and crimes against humanity;
- Refugees;
- Detainees.

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- Age: 21 years old on election day
- Rwandan nationality
- Persons of integrity (i.e. persons who have not been proven guilty of the crime of genocide or divisionism or genocide ideology; persons who have not been convicted and sentenced to a prison term of more than or equal to six months and without being rehabilitated; and persons who have not been dismissed from the civil service)

Ineligibilities:

- Persons who are legal wards;
 - Persons found to be responsible by judicial decision for the bankruptcy of companies and establishments which they used to manage as long as they have not been rehabilitated;
 - Persons with a mental handicap as certified by a State-accredited physician;
- Judges;**
- Members of the Rwanda Defence Forces, the National Police or the National Security Service.

▶ Incompatibilities

- Head of State
- Ministers of State
- Members of the Senate
- Members of the District or City of Kigali Councils
- Member of the Sector Council
- Member of the "Cellule" (the smallest administrative unit) or Village Council
- Employee of the District or the City of Kigali
- Judges
- Prosecutors
- Civil servants or employees of a public institution
- Persons employed under a job contract
- Members of the National Electoral Commission
- Members of the Rwanda Defence Forces, the National Police or the National Security Service

With the exception of judges and members of the Rwanda Defence Forces, the National Police or the National Security Service, the exercise of functions incompatible with the office of a member of parliament (deputy) does not deprive the above-mentioned persons of the right to be elected. However, immediately upon their election, they are required to resign from these positions.

▶ Candidacy requirements

- Submission of candidatures by a political party or by independent candidates at least 35 days prior to election day.
- Each party list may contain up to 80 candidates.
- Independent candidates must submit a list of signatures of at least six hundred (600) registered Rwandan voters, including at least twelve (12) domiciled in each district.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 14 August 2008, President Paul Kagame dissolved the Chamber of Deputies, paving the way for elections from 15 to 18 September. They were the second to be held after the 1994 genocide, in which over 800,000 people were killed, the equivalent of one seventh of the country's population.

Elections are held over four days in Rwanda. On the first day, Rwandans directly elect 53 representatives among political parties and independents. On the following days, the Electoral Colleges for women, for youth and for the disabled elect 24, two and one representatives respectively.

In the previous elections held in September and October 2003, President Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR) and its allies (see note 1) won a total of 40 of the 53 directly elected seats. The Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the Liberal Party (PL) took seven and six seats respectively. Although these two parties consider themselves to be opposition parties, they had supported Mr. Kagame in the 2003 presidential elections. Women occupied 39 of the 80 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, or 48.75 per cent of membership: the highest percentage in the world among parliaments comprising directly elected members.

In 2008, the FPR formed a coalition with six small parties (see note 2). As in the 2003 election the main opposition, including the Unified Democratic Forces (FDU) - a coalition of three parties exiled in Belgium and the Netherlands since the genocide - was not allowed to compete.

The FPR list comprised 80 candidates (including 14 from its coalition partners), of whom 35 were women. The PSD backed 32 women among its 64 candidates. In all, 356 candidates, including 196 women, were vying for the 53 directly elected seats. In addition, 113 candidates ran for the 24 reserved seats for women, while 83 ran for the seats reserved for the youth and the disabled.

The FPR, locally referred to as "Inkotanyi" (the invincible), was expected to win a clear majority in the new legislature. President Kagame argued that multiparty democracy was key to the country's development. PSD Secretary General and Health Minister, Mr. Jean Damascene Ntawukuriryayo, also underscored the importance of working with other political parties. The PL, led by Youth Minister Protais Mitali, added that such cooperation among parties would help the PL to implement its political agenda of ushering in

justice, development and respect for the human rights of all Rwandans.

The media focused on whether the number of women would increase in the new legislature.

According to the Election Commission, 98.5 per cent of the 4,769,228 registered voters turned out for the elections for the 53 seats, up from 96.48 per cent announced for the 2003 elections. Voting took place peacefully.

The European Union Electoral Observer Mission, which sent more than 60 observers, praised the country for its well-prepared, orderly and successful elections.

The FPR and its allies won 42 of the 53 directly elected seats. The PSD and the PL won seven and four seats respectively.

In all, women won 20 of the 53 directly elected seats. Moreover, in addition to the 24 women elected by virtue of the reserved seats, a woman won one of the seats reserved for the youth. Rwanda thus broke its own record of the world's highest percentage of women parliamentarians, by returning 45 women, or 56.25 per cent, to the Chamber of Deputies.

The newly elected chamber held its first session on 6 October. Ms. Rose Mukantabana, an independent member elected to a reserved seat for women in Kigali, won the Speakership, becoming the first woman to assume the post in Rwanda.

Note 1:

The FPR's allies in the 2003 elections and number of seats won:

- Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR): 33
- Centrist Democratic Party (PDC): 3 seats
- Islamic Democratic Party (PDI): 2 seats
- Democratic Popular Union of Rwanda (UDPR): 1 seat
- Rwandan Socialist Party (PSR): 1 seat

Note 2:

The Party for Progress and Concord (PPC), the Rwandan Socialist Party (PSR), the Democratic Union of the Rwandan People (UDPR), the Prosperity and Solidarity Party (PSP), the Islamic Democratic Party (PDI) and the Christian Democratic Party (PDC)

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	4,769,228	
Voters	4,697,689	98.50%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	56,372	
Valid votes	4,641,317	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Votes	% votes	Seats
Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR) and its allies	3,655,956	78.77	42
Social Democratic Party (PSD)	609,327	13.13	7
Liberal Party (PL)	348,186	7.50	4
Total			53

Note:

The figures above reflect the results for the 53 directly elected seats.

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	35	
Women	45	56.25%
Total	80	

Note:

Twenty women were directly elected while 25 were indirectly elected.

SAN MARINO

Great and General Council

Parliament name	Consiglio grande e generale / Great and
(generic / translated)	General Council
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	60 directly elected
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	9 November 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all seats in the Great and General Council following the premature dissolution of this body on 5 August 2008. Elections had previously taken place in June 2006.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

33 single or multi-member constituencies.

▶ **Voting system: Proportional**

Party-list system with proportional representation of seats using the d'Hondt method.

Voters may either vote for an election coalition or one of the parties in the coalition.

Electoral coalitions must present the composition of their prospective government and programmes before polling day.

The threshold to win parliamentary representation is determined by multiplying the number of lists participating in the elections by '0.4' (for instance, if there are six lists, the threshold will be 2.4 per cent). The maximum threshold is fixed at 3.5 per cent of the valid votes regardless of the number of lists. In the event that no party or coalition surpasses the threshold, elections will be repeated the following week.

If the coalition with the highest number of votes fails to win 35 seats, it is given "bonus seats" to meet the 35-seat requirement.

In cases where a party wins more seats than its total number of candidates, the seats will be distributed to the other parties in the same coalition.

Seats which become vacant between general elections are filled by the "next-in-line" candidate of the same party list.

The Great and General Council is wholly renewed if it loses one half plus

one of its members.
Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years
- San Marino citizenship
- full possession of civil and political rights

Disqualifications: mental illness, deprivation of full legal capacity, conviction for electoral offences or crimes punished by detention of more than one year

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: 25 years
- San Marino citizenship
- literacy
- domicile in San Marino

Ineligibilities: persons holding ecclesiastical offices or titles

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- consuls and honorary consuls of foreign States
- members of the police or security forces
- spouses, parents and children of Deputies

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- candidature must be submitted by political parties

Background and Outcome of the Elections

Following the collapse of the coalition government in June 2008, the two Heads of State (Capitani Regenti, who also serve as Speakers of the Great and General Council), dissolved the parliament on 5 August and called early elections for 9 November.

In the previous elections held in June 2006, the Christian Democratic Party (PDCS) came in first with 21 seats. The Party of Socialists and Democrats (PSD), which had advocated stronger ties with the European Union, won 20 seats. The PSD, the Popular Alliance (AP, which won seven seats) and United Left (SU, five seats) subsequently formed a coalition government controlling 32 seats in the 60-member Great and General Council. In March 2006, several PDCS members formed the Centre Democrats (DdC). A new coalition government comprising the PSD, the AP, the SU and the DdC was

formed in November 2007.

In June 2008, the AP left the coalition government. The opposition of two PSD members blocked an attempt by the PSD to form a new coalition government with the SU and the San Marinese for Freedom (SpL, one seat). This political impasse triggered the dissolution of parliament and early elections.

In May 2007, an amendment to the electoral law introduced a threshold to win parliamentary representation (see note 1), which led some of the small parties to form coalitions in a bid to surpass the threshold. Further amendments to the electoral law in May 2008 obliged electoral coalitions to present the composition of their prospective government and programmes before polling day. Consequently, two new electoral coalitions were formed. The "Pact for San Marino" coalition comprised the PDCS-the Ael-the Euro-Populars for San Marino (EPS), the AP, the LDL and the USDM. The Coalition for "Reforms and Freedom" was composed of the PDS, the SU and DdC. In all, 300 candidates contested the 2008 elections.

The electoral law was again amended in August 2008 to give "bonus seats" to the coalition with the highest number of votes so that it would hold a minimum of 35 seats in the new legislature.

The "Pact for San Marino" coalition presented a programme entitled "The Republic that wants to change" and pledged to re-establish political stability and national cohesion. It promised to deepen relations with the European Union to further develop the country. It also promised to resolve double-taxation issues with Italy.

The Coalition for "Reforms and Freedom" pledged to provide "concrete and timely answers" to the problems that the country faced. It promised to come up with a new cooperation agreement with Italy on economic matters and cross-border workers. Its other programmes included tax cuts, benefits for the elderly and housewives, allocations for youth training and the promotion of equal opportunity for all citizens, including the disabled.

A total of 68.48 per cent of nearly 32,000 registered voters turned out at the polls.

The "Pact for San Marino" coalition won the elections, obtaining 35 seats in all, 22 of which went to the PDCS. The Coalition for "Reforms and Freedom" won the remainder, 18 of which went to the PDS. In all, nine women were

elected, up from seven in the 2006 elections.

The newly elected Great and General Council held its first session on 18 November (see note 2).

Note 1:

The threshold to win parliamentary representation is determined by multiplying the number of lists participating in the elections by '0.4' (for instance, if there are six lists, the threshold will be 2.4 per cent). The maximum threshold is fixed at 3.5 per cent of the valid votes regardless of the number of lists.

Note 2:

The mandate of the two Heads of State (Capitani Regenti) - Mr. Ernesto Benedettini and Ms. Assunta Meloni - is not affected by the general elections and thus continues until 1 April 2009.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	31,845	
Voters	21,806	68.48%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	834	
Valid votes	20,972	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Votes	% votes	Seats
"Pact for San Marino" coalition	73		35
Christian Democratic Party (PDCS) - Euro-Populars for San Marino (EPS) - Arengo and Freedom (Ael)	6,692	31.91	22
Popular Alliance (AP)	2,415	11.52	7
Freedom List (LDL)	1,317	6.28	4
Sammarinese Union of Moderates (USDM)	874	4.17	2
Coalition for "Reforms and Freedom"	65		25
Party of Socialists and Democrats (PSD)	6,702	31.96	18
United Left (SU)	1,797	8.57	5
Centre Democrats (DdC)	1,037	4.94	2
Total			60

Note:

Starting from the 2008 elections, voters may either vote for an election coalition or any party in the coalition. In all, 73 people voted for the "Pact for San Marino" coalition, while 65 people voted for the Coalition for "Reforms and Freedom".

► **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	51	
Women	9	15.00%
Total	60	

► **Distribution of seats according to age**

21 to 30 years		4
31 to 40 years		15
41 to 50 years		16
51 to 60 years		22
61 to 70 years		3
Total		60

SERBIA

National Assembly

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Narodna skupstina / National Assembly
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	250 directly elected
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	11 May 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the National Assembly following premature dissolution of this body on 13 March 2008. Elections had previously taken place on 21 January 2007.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

One nationwide constituency

▶ **Voting system: Proportional**

Members are elected by a single nationwide constituency using a list proportional representation system. The minimum threshold to win a seat is 5 per cent of the total number of votes. However, there is no minimum threshold for political parties representing coalitions of ethnic minorities. Parliamentary seats are allocated in proportion to the number of votes won by each list, using the highest quotient system (d'Hondt method). For allocation of the final seat, if the quotient calculated for two or more electoral lists is the same, the seat shall be allocated to the list having received the largest number of votes overall.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled by a candidate of the same party list.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- Nationality of the Republic of Serbia (including naturalized citizens)

- Age: at least 18 years old on election day

- Citizens overseas can vote under certain conditions:

Citizens of the Republic of Serbia who have permanent residence in Serbia and who are temporarily residing abroad may vote in diplomatic missions of the Republic of Serbia. They must be registered in the

electoral roll of their last place of residence (or in that of one of their parents) in the Republic of Serbia.

Disqualifications:

- Insanity/mental illness
- Holders of temporary entry permits
- Undocumented immigrants

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- Nationality of the Republic of Serbia (including naturalized citizens)
- Age: at least 18 years old on election day
- Residence in the Republic of Serbia
- Legal capacity
- Citizens who have a permanent residence in the Republic of Serbia overseas can run for elections.

Ineligibilities:

- Insanity/mental illness
- Holders of temporary entry permits
- Undocumented immigrants

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- Holders of judicial offices (judges)
- Civil servants (national and international)
- Government advisors
- Executives of the Electoral Commission
- Officers of the Electoral Commission

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

Submission of the candidacy:

- Candidature must be submitted at least 15 days prior to elections
- Lists of candidates may be submitted by political parties, coalitions, other political organizations, or citizen groups supported by at least 10,000 voters.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 13 March 2008, President Boris Tadic dissolved the National Assembly and called early elections for 11 May, only 16 months after the previous elections were held in January 2007.

In the 2007 elections, the nationalist Serbian Radical Party (SRS) became the largest party in parliament, winning 81 of the 250 seats. However, it was not

able to form a government. In May, a coalition government was finally formed that comprised the Democratic Party (DS) of pro-European President Tadic, the moderate nationalist Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), the New Serbia (NS) party and the G17 Plus party. The coalition controlled 130 seats in all.

The coalition government was deeply divided over how to deal with Kosovo's declaration of independence on 17 February 2008. Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica (DSS) said that recognition of Kosovo by some European Union (EU) Member States - including Britain, France and Germany - was illegal. He urged the suspension of ties with the EU. President Tadic argued that Kosovo's independence should not be linked to EU accession. The Pro-Europe parties in the coalition - the DS and the G17 - insisted that Serbia should accelerate the accession process.

On 4 March, Prime Minister Kostunica and the NS leader Velimir Illic announced their intention to include a resolution in the parliamentary agenda of spring 2008 that would make EU recognition of the territorial integrity of Serbia the condition for the continuation of the talks on Serbia's association with the EU. 133 members supported the inclusion of the proposal in the agenda. However, Speaker Oliver Dulic (DS) adjourned the sitting during which the motion was being considered, on the grounds that he needed to seek the government's opinion on the proposal. On 8 March, Prime Minister Kostunica dissolved the government, claiming that he could no longer trust his coalition partners. The collapse of the coalition government triggered snap elections.

In all, 19 parties and coalitions contested the 2008 elections. President Tadic led the "For a European Serbia" alliance, comprising his DS, G17, the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina (LSV), and the Sandzak Democratic Party. As in 2007, Prime Minister Kostunica led the DSS-NS coalition. He and SRS Vice-President Tomislav Nikolic announced their intention to form a coalition government after the elections. Other major contenders included the Socialist Party of Serbia-Party of United Pensioners of Serbia-United Serbia (SPS-PUPS-JS) coalition and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

In April 2008, the Constitutional Court ruled that all parties must obtain the same number of signatures (10,000) to run in the elections. In 2007, the requirement for parties representing minorities had been set at 3,000. The main minority parties - the Hungarian Coalition, the Bosniac List for European

Sandzak, and the Coalition of Presevo Valley Albanians - were all able to meet the new requirement.

Kosovo's status and Serbia's relations with the EU were the main issues in the 2008 elections. Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic (DS) said the elections were a referendum on Serbia's accession to the EU. On 29 April, President Tadic concluded a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU. The SAA paves the way for closer trade ties and relaxed visa requirements with the EU Member States, but can only be ratified after Serbia successfully completes its cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. President Tadic emphasized that the SAA does not foresee Serbian recognition of Kosovo's independence.

Both the DSS and the SRS campaigned against Kosovo's independence. The DSS insisted that Serbia should not compromise on Kosovo in a bid to accelerate accession to the EU. Prime Minister Kostunica argued that "only Serbia with Kosovo" could join the EU. He pledged to annul the SAA, claiming that it provided for Kosovo's independence as a key condition for Serbia's EU bid. Unlike the previous elections, the SRS did not use anti-EU rhetoric.

The elections took place without any major incidents. Polling was also held in 38 countries for 51,000 Serbian citizens abroad. In all, 61.35 per cent of the 6.7 million registered voters turned out at the polls.

Observers from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) declared that the elections were "fair and open".

The "For a European Serbia" alliance became the largest force in the new parliament with 102 seats. The SRS followed with 78 seats. The DSS-NS took 30 seats, while the SPS-PUPS-JS won 20.

The newly elected National Assembly held its first session on 11 June. On 26 June, it elected Ms. Slavica Djukic - Dejanovic (SPS) as its new Speaker.

On 27 June, President Tadic asked outgoing finance minister, Mr. Mirko Cvetkovic (who was elected under the DS banner), to form a new government. On 7 July, Mr. Cvetkovic's government was approved by the National Assembly, with the support of all parties in the "For a European Serbia" alliance, the SPS-PUPS-JS, as well as the Hungarian Coalition and the

Bosniak List for European Sandzak.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	6,749,688	
Voters	4,141,176	61.35%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	89,940	
Valid votes	4,051,236	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Votes	% votes	Seats
"For a European Serbia" alliance	1,590,200	39.25	102
Serb Radical Party (SRS)	1,219,436	30.10	78
Democratic Party of Serbia - New Serbia (DSS-NS)	480,987	11.87	30
Socialist Party of Serbia - Party of United Pensioners of Serbia - United Serbia (SPS-PUPS-JS)	313,896	7.75	20
Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)	216,902	5.35	13
Hungarian Coalition	74,874	1.85	4
Bosniak List for European Sandzak	38,148	0.94	2
Coalition of Albanians of the Presevo Valley	16,801	0.41	1
Total			250

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	196	
Women	54	21.60%
Total	250	

SLOVENIA

National Assembly

Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Drzavni Zbor / National Assembly
Number of members	90 directly elected
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	21 September 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the National Assembly on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

- 8 electoral units each divided into 11 single-seat constituencies (88 seats in all)
- special constituencies for two members, respectively representing the Hungarian and Italian minorities

▶ **Voting system: Proportional**

Proportional representation using the simple quotient with a 4-per-cent threshold for 88 members (simple majority preferential vote for the two Deputies representing the Italian and Hungarian communities)

Regarding party lists, each sex must be represented by at least 35 per cent of the total number of candidates on the list (a temporary provision set a 25-per-cent quota applicable to both male and female candidates for the elections held in 2008). Lists containing only three candidates must have at least one male and one female candidate.

Each voter votes for a party-list or an individual candidate, indicating his/her choice from among the candidates.

Seats are distributed among the parties that surpass the 4-per-cent threshold as follows: first, at the constituency level by using the Droop quota (the total number of votes cast for all lists in a constituency is divided by the number of deputies elected in the constituency plus one); secondly, the remaining seats are distributed at the national level using the d'Hondt method, with Deputies being selected from those lists which have the highest remainders.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled by the candidate who would have been elected by the same party had the

original candidate not won. If no candidate can be identified in this manner or if a vacancy occurs within six months after the start of the term, a by-election is held. No by-election is held if the vacancy arises less than six months before the expiry of the term.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years
- Slovenian citizenship

Disqualifications: persons deprived of legal capacity due to mental disorder, retardation or disability or based on a court decision.

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- members the National Council

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- nomination by political parties or individual voters
- support of 3 Deputies, support of members of the party plus 50 electors, or support of 100 electors (for lists of candidates submitted by political parties)
- support of 100 electors (of the same constituency) for lists submitted by individual electors
- support of 30 voters of the Hungarian or Italian communities (for the candidates standing for the 2 seats reserved for these communities)

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 16 June 2008, President Danilo Türk signed a decree setting the date of elections to the National Assembly for 21 September.

In the previous elections held in October 2004, the conservative Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) and its partner, the New Slovenia - Christian People's Party (NSi), won a total of 38 seats, one more than the three parties in the outgoing centre-left coalition government. The latter comprised the then Prime Minister Anton Rop's Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS, which had governed since independence in 1991), the Social Democrats (SD) and the Democratic Pensioners' Party (DeSUS). The National Assembly subsequently elected Mr. Janez Jansa (SDS) as the new Prime Minister. He formed a coalition government comprising the SDS, the NSi, the Slovenian People's

Party (SLS) and the DeSUS.

The LDS experienced a series of splits after 2004. Prior to the 2007 presidential elections, some LDS members left to form the "For Real-New Politics" (ZARES) Party under the leadership of Mr. Janez Drnovsek. Former prime minister Rop, who resigned as LDS leader in 2005, joined the SD in 2007, along with other members. More members left the party following the election of Ms. Katarina Kresal as LDS leader.

In the run-off presidential elections held in November 2007, Mr. Türk was elected as the country's third President. He was supported by the opposition parties - the SD and ZARES - as well as the DeSUS.

The country introduced the euro in January 2007. It enjoys economic growth of 5.5 per cent, although inflation hit 6.9 per cent in summer 2008, the highest in six years.

Nearly 1,200 candidates from 19 parties were vying for 88 seats in the National Assembly, two others being reserved for ethnic minorities. For the first time, there were no independent candidates. The quota for women candidates introduced in 2006 was applied for the first time. A transitional provision set a 25 per cent quota for 2008, increasing to 35 per cent women candidates in 2012. Approximately one third of the registered candidates were women. Five candidates registered for the seat reserved for the Hungarian minority, while four ran for the one reserved for the Italian minority.

The SD and the SDS - in coalition with the NSi - were the major parties in the 2008 election campaign. The DeSUS, led by the Minister of Defence, Mr. Karl Erjavec, declared that it would align itself with whichever party won the election. Mr. Bojan Srot's SLS formed a coalition with the Youth Party of Slovenia (SMS), led by Mr. Darko Krajnc. The Slovenian National Party (SNS, six seats), led by Mr. Zmago Jelincic, stood alone.

The main election issues were taxes, housing and border issues with Croatia.

Prime Minister Jansa promised to cut corporate taxes as well as income tax. He emphasized that the latter concerned both low- and high-income citizens. The SD criticized the SDS-led government for failing to curb inflation. The SD leader promised to introduce tax relief for citizens earning the minimum wage, while applying a higher tax rate on luxury goods.

The SD and the SDS both pledged to create a fund to help young families interested in buying their first home. The SD promised to allocate 10 per cent of GDP to health care while reducing defence spending.

Slovenia and Croatia have had several disputes over their borders since they became independent States, in particular over the Bay of Piran (a small body of water in the northern Adriatic Sea some 20 square kilometers in size) which gives direct access to international waters. Prime Minister Jansa said his coalition would try to resolve the border issues before Croatia joined the European Union (EU). SD leader Pahor replied that border issues should not be a criterion for Croatia's accession and added that he would not seek a referendum on the issue.

The opinion polls in late August indicated strong support for the ruling coalition. In early September, however, the election campaign was rocked by allegations that the Prime Minister had received a share of a 21 million euro bribe from a Finnish firm over Slovenia's biggest defence contract in 2006. The Prime Minister denied these allegations calling them absurd.

A week before polling day, the SD, ZARES, and the LDS announced their intention to form a coalition government after the elections. Former president Milan Kucan endorsed the coalition plans.

63.1 per cent of 1.6 million registered voters turned out at the polls, up from 60.64 per cent recorded in 2004.

Seven parties surpassed the 4-per-cent threshold to win parliamentary representation. The final results gave the opposition SD-ZARES-LDS coalition a total of 43 seats. The SDS came in second with 28 seats, but its partner, the NSi, failed to win any parliamentary representation.

Despite the quota, the number of women members increased only by one, bringing the total to 12. Only 41 outgoing members were re-elected. Several veteran MPs, who had held their seats since the country gained independence in 1991, were voted out. Among the members of the outgoing government, only the Prime Minister and two ministers were returned to parliament.

On 15 October, the newly elected National Assembly held its first session and elected Mr. Pavel Gantar (ZARES) as its new Speaker.

On 3 November, President Türk nominated Mr. Pahor to become Prime Minister. On 7 November, the National Assembly elected Mr. Pahor as Prime Minister. Mr. Pahor's coalition government, comprising the SD, the ZARES, the LDS and the DeSUS, was sworn in on 21 November.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	1,696,437	
Voters	1,070,523	63.10%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	18,597	
Valid votes	1,051,827	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Votes	% votes	Seats
Social Democrats (SD)	320,248	30.45	29
Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS)	307,735	29.26	28
"For Real-New Politics" Party (ZARES)	98,526	9.37	9
Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (DeSUS)	78,353	7.45	7
Slovenian National Party (SNS)	56,832	5.40	5
Slovenian People's Party (SLS) - Youth Party of Slovenia (SMS)	54,809	5.21	5
Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS)	54,771	5.21	5
Representatives of ethnic minorities			2
Total			90

Note:

The "Representatives of ethnic minorities" refers to members representing Slovenia's Italian and Hungarian communities who are elected in separate elections.

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	78	
Women	12	13.33%
Total	90	

► Distribution of seats according to age

Under 30 years	1
30 to 39 years	12
40 to 49 years	27
50 to 59 years	34
60 to 69 years	14
Over 70 years	2
Total	90

SPAIN

Congress of Deputies

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Las Cortes Generales / The Cortes
Structure of Parliament Chamber	Bicameral Congreso de los Diputados / Congress of Deputies
Number of members	350 directly elected
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	9 March 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats in the Congress of Deputies following premature dissolution of this body on 14 January 2008. Elections to the Congress of Deputies had previously taken place on 14 March 2004.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

- 50 multi-member (2 seats minimum per province, the rest allotted according to population) constituencies corresponding to the country's provinces
- 2 single-member constituencies (North African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla)

▶ **Voting system: Mixed**

- multi-member constituencies: blocked party lists and the d'Hondt system of proportional representation; each voter chooses one list of those made available in the constituency (province)
 - single-member constituencies: simple majority vote
- Vacancies are filled by the "next-in-line" candidate on the list of the same party which held the seat in question (or by substitutes in Ceuta and Melilla).
- Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years
- Spanish citizenship
- full possession of political rights

▶ Eligibility

- qualified voters
- age: 18 years
- Spanish citizenship

▶ Incompatibilities

- certain high-ranking government, political and public posts
- members of the armed forces
- members of the assembly of an Autonomous Community
- members of an electoral committee (Junta)

▶ Candidacy requirements

- candidature by duly registered political associations and federations, coalitions of the same, or by at least 0.1% (and no fewer than 500) of the constituency's registered electorate

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 20 December 2007, Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero announced that parliamentary elections would be held on 9 March. The bicameral parliament was subsequently dissolved on 14 January 2008. At stake were all 350 seats in the Congress of Deputies and the 208 directly elected seats in the 264-member Senate.

The previous elections had been held on 14 March 2004, three days after the bombings of commuter trains and train stations which killed nearly 200 people and wounded more than 1,400. The then Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar of the People's Party (PP) initially blamed ETA (the Basque separatist group) for the attack. However, al Qaeda later claimed responsibility for the attack, linking the bombing to Mr. Aznar's policy towards Iraq. The incident reportedly boosted support for Mr. Zapatero's Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE). It became the largest party in the Congress of Deputies, taking 168 seats, 16 more than the PP led by Mr. Mariano Rajoy. The PP remained the largest party in the Senate winning 126 seats, while the PSOE took 96. Other seats went to small parties.

Mr. Zapatero was sworn in as Prime Minister in April 2004. He ordered the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq, who subsequently left Iraq on 28 April. Mr. Zapatero implemented numerous reforms. They included a gender equality law, the legalization of gay marriage, an amnesty for illegal immigrants in the country, as well as a historical memory law passed by the Parliament in October 2007. This stipulates that trials held under the Francisco

Franco regime, - which cost an estimated 500,000 lives between 1939 and 1975 -, would be ruled illegitimate and the victims of the regime recognized. The PP argued that the law unnecessarily stirred up the past. Human rights groups criticised the law for falling short of providing justice and called for measures to annul the trials in order to clear the victims' names.

As a result of the gender equality law, all parties had a 50-50 gender balance for the candidates contesting the 2008 elections. Once again, there was a duel between the PSOE and the PP. Due to the stagnating economy and a 12-year high inflation rate, Mr. Rajoy (PP) accused the socialist government of not taking enough measures to boost the economy. Prime Minister Zapatero rebutted that his government was willing to use a budget surplus to revive the economy. Both the PSOE and the PP promised tax cuts.

The PP also called for a "contract" for immigrants. It argued that immigrants should respect Spanish customs and values and should be expelled if they failed to find work within a year of their arrival. The proposal was reportedly aimed at African immigrants. Prime Minister Zapatero argued that the immigration issue must be treated comprehensively, through political and economic cooperation with African countries.

Two days before the polls, a former town councillor, Mr. Isaias Carrasco of the PSOE was shot dead in the Basque region. Police blamed ETA for the shooting, and the election campaign was briefly halted.

Voters cast separate ballots for each chamber. Turnout was recorded at 75.32 per cent for the Congress of Deputies, and 76.03 per cent for the Senate among nearly 39 million registered voters.

The PSOE remained the largest party in the Congress of Deputies with 169 seats, followed by the PP with 153. The PP took 101 seats of the 208 directly elected seats in the Senate, 12 more than the PSOE. In all, 127 women were elected to the Congress of Deputies, while 67 were elected to the Senate.

On 1 April, both chambers held their first sitting. Mr. José Bono Martínez (PSOE) was elected Speaker of the Congress of Deputies. Mr. Francisco Javier Rojo García (PSOE) was re-elected as Senate President.

On 11 April, Mr. Zapatero won the confidence of the Congress of Deputies, with 169 votes at the second round of voting. On the following day, he

appointed a 17-member cabinet, including nine women.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	33,875,268	
Voters	25,514,671	75.32%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	447,284	
Valid votes	25,067,387	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Votes	% votes	Seats
Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE)	11,064,524	44.14	169
People's Party (PP)	10,169,973	40.57	153
Convergence and Union (CiU)	774,317	3.09	11
Basque Nationalist Party (EAJ-PNV)	303,246	1.21	6
Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC)	296,473	1.18	3
United Left (IU)	963,040	3.84	2
Galician Nationalist Party (BNG)	209,042	0.83	2
Canarian Coalition - Canarian Nationalist Party (CC-PNC)	164,255	0.66	2
Union Progress and Democracy (UPyD)	303,535	1.21	1
Nafarroa Bai (Na-Bai)	62,073	0.25	1
Total			350

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	223	
Women	127	36.29%
Total	350	

SPAIN

Senate

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Las Cortes Generales / The Cortes
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Senado / Senate
Number of members	264 members - 208 directly elected - 56 indirectly elected by the 17 Autonomous Communities.
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	9 March 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the elective seats in the Senate following premature dissolution of this body on 14 January 2008. Elections to the Senate had previously taken place on 14 March 2004.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

- directly elected Senators: 52 multi-member constituencies corresponding to the country's provinces, plus Ceuta and Melilla. The provinces elect 4 Senators each. In the case of insular provinces, major islands elect 3 Senators each while small islands elect 1 Senator each. The autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla elect 2 Senators each.
- indirectly elected Senators: each of the 17 Autonomous Communities return one Senator, plus one more for each 1,000,000 inhabitants, chosen by the legislative assembly of each Community.

▶ **Voting system: Mixed**

Mixed system:

- directly elected Senators: simple majority vote. Lists compiled at provincial level.
 - indirectly elected Senators: elected by the legislative assemblies of the Autonomous Communities, according to their own rules of procedure, on proportional basis.
- Vacancies are filled by substitutes elected at the same time as titular members.
- Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years
- Spanish citizenship
- full possession of political rights

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: 18 years
- Spanish citizenship

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- certain high-ranking government, political and public posts
- membership of the armed forces
- membership of an electoral committee (junta)

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- directly elected Senators: candidatures submitted by duly registered political associations and federations, coalitions of the same, or by at least 0.1% (and no fewer than 500) of the constituency's registered electorate

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 20 December 2007, Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero announced that parliamentary elections would be held on 9 March. The bicameral parliament was subsequently dissolved on 14 January 2008. At stake were all 350 seats in the Congress of Deputies and the 208 directly elected seats in the 264-member Senate.

The previous elections had been held on 14 March 2004, three days after the bombings of commuter trains and train stations which killed nearly 200 people and wounded more than 1,400. The then Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar of the People's Party (PP) initially blamed ETA (the Basque separatist group) for the attack. However, al Qaeda later claimed responsibility for the attack, linking the bombing to Mr. Aznar's policy towards Iraq. The incident reportedly boosted support for Mr. Zapatero's Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE). It became the largest party in the Congress of Deputies, taking 168 seats, 16 more than the PP led by Mr. Mariano Rajoy. The PP remained the largest party in the Senate winning 126 seats, while the PSOE took 96. Other seats went to small parties.

Mr. Zapatero was sworn in as Prime Minister in April 2004. He ordered the

withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq, who subsequently left Iraq on 28 April. Mr. Zapatero implemented numerous reforms. They included a gender equality law, the legalization of gay marriage, an amnesty for illegal immigrants in the country, as well as a historical memory law passed by the Parliament in October 2007. This stipulates that trials held under the Francisco Franco regime, - which cost an estimated 500,000 lives between 1939 and 1975 -, would be ruled illegitimate and the victims of the regime recognized. The PP argued that the law unnecessarily stirred up the past. Human rights groups criticised the law for falling short of providing justice and called for measures to annul the trials in order to clear the victims' names.

As a result of the gender equality law, all parties had a 50-50 gender balance for the candidates contesting the 2008 elections. Once again, there was a duel between the PSOE and the PP. Due to the stagnating economy and a 12-year high inflation rate, Mr. Rajoy (PP) accused the socialist government of not taking enough measures to boost the economy. Prime Minister Zapatero rebutted that his government was willing to use a budget surplus to revive the economy. Both the PSOE and the PP promised tax cuts.

The PP also called for a "contract" for immigrants. It argued that immigrants should respect Spanish customs and values and should be expelled if they failed to find work within a year of their arrival. The proposal was reportedly aimed at African immigrants. Prime Minister Zapatero argued that the immigration issue must be treated comprehensively, through political and economic cooperation with African countries.

Two days before the polls, a former town councillor, Mr. Isaias Carrasco of the PSOE was shot dead in the Basque region. Police blamed ETA for the shooting, and the election campaign was briefly halted.

Voters cast separate ballots for each chamber. Turnout was recorded at 75.32 per cent for the Congress of Deputies, and 76.03 per cent for the Senate among nearly 39 million registered voters.

The PSOE remained the largest party in the Congress of Deputies with 169 seats, followed by the PP with 153. The PP took 101 seats of the 208 directly elected seats in the Senate, 12 more than the PSOE. In all, 127 women were elected to the Congress of Deputies, while 67 were elected to the Senate.

On 1 April, both chambers held their first sitting. Mr. José Bono Martínez

(PSOE) was elected Speaker of the Congress of Deputies. Mr. Francisco Javier Rojo García (PSOE) was re-elected as Senate President.

On 11 April, Mr. Zapatero won the confidence of the Congress of Deputies, with 169 votes at the second round of voting. On the following day, he appointed a 17-member cabinet, including nine women.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	33,872,901	
Voters	25,752,839	76.03%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	1,109,398	
Valid votes	24,643,441	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Seats
People's Party (PP)	101
Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE)	89
PSC-ERC-ICV-EUIA Coalition	12
Convergence and Union (CiU)	4
Basque Nationalist Party (EAJ-PNV)	2
Total	208

Note:

The PRC-ERC-ICV-EUIA stands for Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSC) - Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) - Initiative for Catalonia-Greens (ICV) - United and Alternative Left (EUIA). The number of indirectly elected seats in the Senate has increased from 51 to 56.

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	184	
Women	79	30.04%
Total	263	

Note:

Sixty-seven women were directly elected, 12 others were indirectly elected.

SWAZILAND

House of Assembly

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Libandla / Parliament
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	House of Assembly
Number of members	65 members - 55 directly elected - 10 appointed by the Head of State
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	19 September 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all elective seats of the House of Assembly on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

55 single-member constituencies corresponding to the tinkhundlas (tribal communities).

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Three-stage simple majority system. On national nomination day, candidates are nominated at the level of each of the tinkhundlas. The candidates then go through a primary election. The first three successful candidates in each tinkhundla then proceed to the secondary election, where the candidate who wins the most votes is declared elected.

Vacancies of elective seats which arise between general elections are filled through by-elections.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years

- Swazi citizenship

- ordinarily residence or work in the tinkhundla where voting

Ineligibilities: insanity, allegiance to a foreign State, sentence of death or imprisonment exceeding six months

▶ Eligibility

- qualified voters
 - age: 18 years
 - Swazi citizenship
 - ordinary residence in the country
- Ineligibilities: undischarged bankruptcy

▶ Incompatibilities

- public or election-connected office
- government contractors
- members of the armed forces

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The September 2008 elections were the first to be held following the adoption of the country's new Constitution. The instrument was ratified by King Mswati III on 26 July 2005 and entered into force on 8 February 2006. Swaziland had been ruled by royal decree since 1973, when King Mswati's father, King Sobhuza II, banned political parties. Although the Constitution guarantees freedom of association, restrictions remain on political party activity. King Mswati III, who has ruled the country since 1985, retains the power to dissolve parliament and the cabinet.

The country's economy grew by about 3.5 per cent in 2007, but was reportedly slowing down due to high fuel and food prices. An estimated 69 per cent of Swazis live below the poverty line and 38 per cent of the population is reportedly infected by HIV.

A banned political party, the People's United Democratic Movement of Swaziland (PUDEMO), which went into self-imposed exile in the 1980s in Mozambique, now operates from South Africa. Its leader, Mr. Mario Masuku, launched a campaign promising the "total liberation" of Swaziland. In April 2008, the deputy leader of the PUDEMO, Mr. Gabriel Mkhumane, was shot dead. Mr. Masuku claimed that he had been assassinated by government operatives.

In the absence of political parties, trade unions led demands for democratic reform. During the election campaign, they organized several demonstrations. They participated in attempts to establish blockades on the border with South Africa, which they said were intended to protest against the non-inclusive and 'undemocratic' nature of the electoral process. Many of their members were arrested or barred from participating in these

blockades.

On 23 August, the local councils (chiefdoms) organized nominations involving 350 candidates. The three leading candidates in each constituency, who obtained at least 10 nominations, were allowed to stand for election.

At stake were 55 seats in the House of Assembly (the remaining 10 members being appointed by the King). Many candidates focused on local issues such as transportation.

Around 350,000 of an estimated 400,000 eligible voters were registered to vote in the elections.

The Pan-African Parliament observed the polls. It concluded that the elections were "peaceful, transparent and credible". However, it criticized the ban on political parties, declaring that it infringes citizens' right to participate in elections, and undermines the principles that underpin democratic elections.

On 21 September, the Election and Boundaries Commission (EBC) announced the final results. Only 15 of the 55 outgoing MPs were re-elected. Seven women were elected.

On 7 October, the EBC published the list of 10 members appointed by the King. Although the Constitution stipulates that half of the appointed members should be women, the list included only two women.

On 10 October, the House of Assembly held its first session and re-elected Prince Guduza Dlamini as its Speaker. It nominated 10 members to the Senate on the same day, while the King appointed the remaining 20 members on 17 October. On 21 October, the Senate re-elected Ms. Gelane Zwane as its President.

On 16 October, the King appointed Mr. Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini as the Prime Minister. He was sworn in on 23 October.

Election results and statistics▶ **Voter turnout**

Number of registered electors	350,000
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▶ **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	56	
Women	9	13.85%
Total	65	

Note:

Seven women were elected, while two others were appointed by the King.

THAILAND

Senate

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Rathasapha / National Assembly
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Wuthisapha / Senate
Number of members	150 members - 76 directly elected - 74 indirectly elected, selected by the Senate Selection Committee.
Term of House	6 years
Date of elections	2 March 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for the 76 directly elected seats of the 150-seat Senate. They were the first senatorial elections since the September 2006 coup.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

- 76 multi-member constituencies corresponding to the country's provinces

The number of seats in each constituency depends on the province's population.

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Single non-transferable vote (SNTV)

Each voter casts his/her ballot for one candidate. The candidate with the highest number of votes is elected.

There are no reserved seats for women, ethnic minorities or other categories.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections.

Voting is not compulsory. However, persons failing to vote without reasonable cause as specified in the electoral law lose their right to vote and to stand for election to the House of Representatives, the Senate or a local assembly.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years old on 1 January of the year of the election

- Thai citizenship (including naturalized citizens, who must have acquired citizenship at least five years prior to election day)
- residence in the constituency for a minimum of 90 days prior to election day
- citizens overseas can vote under certain conditions at a Thai embassy or consulate (postal votes are organized for countries where the embassy or consulates are hard to reach and those with less than 500 registered voters)

Disqualifications: mental illness, Buddhist priest, novice, monk or clergy, persons detained by a warrant of the Court or by a lawful order, persons whose right to vote has been suspended

▶ **Eligibility**

- age: 40 years old on election day
- Thai citizenship by birth
- there is no residence requirement
- holder of a BA degree

Ineligibilities:

- imprisonment
- persons serving sentences of two years or more
- conviction for treason, bribery or a criminal or electoral offence

The disqualifications above are valid for five years after they first take effect.

- insanity/mental illness
- persons under guardianship/wards
- holders of temporary entry permits
- undocumented immigrants
- executives of the Electoral Commission
- members of the Electoral Commission

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- Head of State
- ministers of State
- outgoing senators (no consecutive election is allowed)
- former members of the House of Representatives, unless their term of office ended more than one year before they entered the Senate election
- members of a political party
- national or local government officials
- holders of public posts
- holders of judicial offices (Judges)

- civil servants
- executives of the Electoral Commission
- members of the Electoral Commission
- executives of a public (State) corporation
- staff members of a public (State) corporation
- members of the armed forces
- members of the police forces
- clergymen

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- candidatures must be submitted by individuals within the period of application specified in the Government Gazette
- a non-reimbursable deposit of 10,000 Thai baths (US\$ 280)

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 2 March 2008, four days after former prime minister Shinawatra Thaksin returned to Thailand from a 17-month exile, elections were held to fill 76 directly elected seats in the new 150-member Senate. Elections to the House of Representatives had taken place in December 2007. Those elections had been won by the People's Power Party (PPP), a new party formed by supporters of Mr. Thaksin. It formed a six-party coalition controlling 315 of the 480 seats in the House. The newly elected House held its first session in January 2008 and elected PPP leader Samak Sundaravej as prime minister.

The last Senate elections (for 200 directly elected members) were held in April 2006, but the resulting Senate had actually never convened because of events that led to the dissolution of the House of Representatives in September 2006. The 1997 Constitution prohibited the Senate from meeting in the absence of a House of Representatives.

The new Constitution adopted in August 2007 reduced the statutory number of Senate members from 200 to 150, of whom 76 are directly elected (one from each of the 76 provinces). National and provincial committees comprising bureaucrats and judicial officials select the rest of the members.

The election of the 76 directly elected members was preceded by the selection of the 74 appointed senators which started on 2 January. On 19 February, the Election Commission announced the results of this selection process. The selected members include 14 retired soldiers or police generals and eight members of the outgoing interim legislature the National Legislative Assembly. The remainder represent various professions such as the

media, health care, business and agriculture. Prime Minister Sundaravej criticized the Senate selection process as undemocratic and pledged to amend the Constitution to restore a fully elected Senate.

Although the new Senate is a non-partisan body, many candidates for the 76 directly elected seats were reportedly backed by political parties. The voting took place in relative peace, except for a bomb blast near a polling station in the southern part of the country in which three soldiers were injured. Although voting is compulsory in Thailand, only 55.62 per cent of the 44.9 million eligible voters went to the polls. Outgoing National Legislative Assembly Speaker Meechai Ruchuphan attributed the low turnout to the failure to publicize the vote by the Election Commission and the candidates and to voter apathy for a ballot held just three months after the House elections. Twelve women were appointed and twelve were elected, bringing the total number of women to 24.

On 14 March, the new Senate held its first session, officially establishing the Thai National Assembly. It elected Mr. Prasobsook Boondech as its new President.

In the meantime, the Election Commission announced that it had received 34 complaints of electoral fraud, mostly related to alleged vote buying. In October, it asked the Supreme Court to annul the election of one senator for vote buying.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	44,911,254	
Voters	24,981,233	55.62%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	914,475	
Valid votes	24,066,758	

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	126	
Women	24	16.00%
Total	150	

Note:

Twelve women were elected and twelve others were appointed

► **Distribution of seats according to profession**

	Seats
Finance, management or business	48
Pensioner	48
Civil service and local authority administration	17
Education profession	11
Legal profession	6
Political party official	5
Journalism, broadcasting, media	3
Social worker	3
Agriculture/farming	2
Architect, surveyor, engineer	1
Other	6
Total	150

► **Distribution of seats according to age**

41 to 50 years	34
51 to 60 years	47
61 to 70 years	68
Over 70 years	1
Total	150

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Assembly of the Republic

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Sobranie / Assembly of the Republic
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	120 directly elected
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	1 & 29 June 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all seats in the Assembly following the premature dissolution of this body on 12 April 2008. Elections had previously been held on 5 July 2006.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

Six multi-member constituencies (20 seats each)

▶ **Voting system: Proportional**

All 120 members of the Sobranie are elected by party list proportional system, using closed lists for four-year terms. The country is divided into six election districts determined by law. Each district elects 20 members of parliament. Each voter votes for a list and seats are distributed on a proportional basis, according to the D'Hondt formula.

At least 30 per cent of the candidates on each list must be of different gender.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through the "next-in-line" candidates of the same party.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years

- FYR Macedonian citizenship (including naturalized citizens)

Disqualifications: civil incapacity (to perform legal acts), holders of temporary entry permits, undocumented immigrants

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters

- age: 18 years
 - FYR Macedonian citizenship (including naturalized citizens)
- Ineligibilities: any imprisonment, persons serving sentences, holders of temporary entry permits, undocumented immigrants, executives of the Electoral Commission, members of the Electoral Commission

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- President of the Republic
- Prime Minister
- Ministers
- Judges of the Constitutional Court
- Public prosecutor
- Ombudsman
- Mayor or member of a council in a municipality and the city of Skopje
- holders of other elective office
- holders of offices appointed by the Assembly or the Government
- persons in charge of administrative matters in state administration bodies

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- nomination by registered political parties, individually or two or more parties, which can jointly submit a party list of candidates
- nomination by a group of voters: at least 1,000 signatures of the voters of the constituency concerned, registered in the General Voters Register are required
- submission of candidatures at least 40 days prior to polling

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 11 April 2008, the Assembly of the Republic voted to dissolve itself, paving the way for early elections for the first time since the country gained independence in 1991. Speaker Ljubisha Georgievski subsequently called elections for 1 June, almost two years earlier than they were statutorily due.

In the previous elections held in July 2006, the 14-party coalition led by the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE, see note 1) won 45 of the 120 seats in the Assembly of the Republic. The "Together for Macedonia" coalition led by the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), took 32 seats, while the Albanian Democratic Union for Integration-Party for Democratic Prosperity Coalition (DUI-PDP) obtained 17 seats.

President Branko Crvenkovski (SDSM) subsequently designated the VMRO-DPMNE leader, Mr. Nikola Gruevski, as Prime Minister. He formed a coalition government comprising the VMRO-DPMNE, the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA, 11 seats), the New Social Democratic Party (NSDP - a breakaway from the SDSM, seven seats) and some non-partisan members.

Although the 2006 elections went off in relative peace in the ethnic Albanian community (which accounts for a quarter of the country's 2.1 million inhabitants), the rivalry between the DPA and the DUI was re-ignited following Prime Minister Gruevski's decision to include only the smaller DPA in the coalition government. The DUI led street protests in a bid to join the government. It boycotted the parliament for most of 2007, finally returning in late 2007 after the government agreed to pass several remaining laws that related to the Ohrid Framework Agreement (a peace deal signed by the government and the Albanian community in 2001).

Political turmoil continued in 2008. On 14 March, the DPA, which had been demanding six new rights for the Albanian community (see note 2), withdrew from the government for ten days in protest at the government's decision not to recognize Kosovo (which declared independence from Serbia in February). On 2 April, the country's bid to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) faced a veto by Greece due to a row over the use of the country's name. Prime Minister Gruevski had pledged to use the name "Republic of Macedonia", as written in the country's constitution. Greece, which has a northern province with the same name, had refused the name for fear of an eventual territorial claim and insisted that the name should be changed to "New Macedonia" or "Upper Macedonia".

On 8 April, the DUI leader Mr. Ali Ahmeti submitted a motion to dissolve the parliament for early elections. The DUI argued that the government had no capacity to negotiate the country's new name with Greece. Prime Minister Gruevski argued that he needed a stronger force in parliament to push forward the country's accession to NATO and the European Union (EU). The opposition SDSM criticized the call for early elections, arguing that greater priority should be given to implementing remaining reforms required to join those organizations and insisting that the VMRO-DPMNE was trying to use the anti-Hellenic mood to boost its support. President Crvenkovski emphasized that the country needed political stability and a consensus between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians. In the end, the motion was supported by 70 members from the DUI, the VMRO-DPMNE and the DPA, thus paving the way for the early elections. The SDSM and the

NSDP boycotted the vote.

Two major coalitions contested the 2008 elections. Prime Minister Gruevski's VMRO-DPMNE formed an electoral coalition "For a Better Macedonia" comprising 18 small parties (see note 3). It focused on the government's achievements, citing 5 per cent GDP growth in 2007, the highest since the country achieved independence. Prime Minister Gruevski claimed that his policy of combating organized crime had contributed to the country's economic development. He stressed that the country's future was in the EU and NATO. He also promised to cooperate with the party that won a majority of the vote in the Albanian community.

SDSM leader and former Deputy Prime Minister, Ms. Radmila Sekerinska, led the "Sun - Coalition for Europe", composed of the SDSM and seven parties (see note 4) including the NSDP. Ms. Sekerinska pledged to work for a quick resolution to the "name" row with Greece so as to enable the country's immediate accession to the NATO. She also promised to obtain a recommendation for EU accession talks within six months if the coalition won the elections.

On 14 April, DUI leader Ahmeti dismissed rumours that he intended to form an electoral coalition with his party's rival, the DPA. He argued that his party had stronger support among ethnic Albanians and therefore, such a coalition would not be beneficial. Finally, the DPA, led by Mr. Menduh Thaci, as well as another Albanian party, the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP, which had been in coalition with the DUI in the 2006 elections), fielded candidates separately.

Organizing peaceful elections was a key criterion for the country's bid for accession to the EU and NATO. However, violence was rife during the election campaign, mainly among the Albanian community. According to the Interior Ministry, on election day, gun battles between rival Albanian groups killed one person, while eight others were injured. Twenty-one people were arrested.

On 1 June, 57.06 per cent of the 1.7 million registered voters turned out at the polls. The voting at 22 polling stations was suspended due to acts of intimidation, and the results of almost all polling stations in three constituencies were invalidated. Prime Minister Gruevski blamed the DUI and the DPA for the violent incidents and claimed that such violence tarnished the country's reputation.

The State Election Commission (SEC) reviewed appeals by the DUI, the DPA, the PDP, the Sun Coalition, and other small parties, and ordered re-runs to be held on 15 June in 187 of the 2,976 polling stations. In addition, elections for six seats were repeated on 29 June. Turnout for the re-runs was recorded at 48.90 per cent and 41.30 per cent respectively.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) formed the International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The IEOM concluded that, while well-administered, the elections did not meet certain key commitments of the OSCE and the Council of Europe. It urged the State to take substantial measures to hold accountable those responsible for violence and election-related offences.

The final results gave Prime Minister's VMRO-DPMNE Coalition a majority in parliament with 63 seats. The Sun Coalition came in second with 27. The DUI won 18 seats, while the DPA took 11. In all, 34 women were elected.

On 21 June, the newly elected Assembly of the Republic held its first session and elected Mr. Trajko Veljanoski (VMRO-DPMNE) as its new Speaker.

On 23 June, President Crvenkovski requested outgoing Prime Minister Gruevski to form a new government.

Note 1:

The VMRO-DPMNE Coalition (in the 2006 elections) included the following parties:

- VMRO-DPMNE
- Liberal Party of Macedonia
- Socialist Party of Macedonia
- Democratic Union
- Party for Movement of Turks in Macedonia
- Union of Roma in Macedonia
- Party of Democratic Action of Macedonia - SDA
- Party of Vlachs of Macedonia
- European Party of Macedonia
- Green Party
- People's Movement of Macedonia
- Democratic Party of the Bosniaks
- Party of Democratic Forces of Roma in Macedonia

- Party for Roma Integration

Note 2:

The six new rights included larger quotas for Albanians in the State administration, placing the Albanian flag together with the national flag in front of State institutions, wider use of the Albanian language, and the rehabilitation of the former fighters of the Army for National Liberation that had staged a revolt in the northwest of the country in 2001.

Note 3:

The VMRO-DPMNE - "For a Better Macedonia" coalition included the following parties:

- VMRO-DPMNE
- Socialist Party of Macedonia
- Democratic Union
- Democratic Renewal of Macedonia
- Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia
- Democratic Party of Serbs in Macedonia
- Union of Roma in Macedonia
- VMRO - Macedonian
- United Party for Emancipation
- Party of Justice
- Party for Democratic Action in Macedonia
- Party of Vlachs in Macedonia
- Party for the Integration of Roma
- People's Movement for Macedonia
- Bosniacs' Democratic Party
- Party of Greens
- Democratic Union of Roma
- Party of Workers and Farmers of Macedonia
- Party for the Full Emancipation of Roma

Note 4:

The "Sun - Coalition for Europe" comprised the following parties:

- Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM)
- New Social Democratic Party (NSDP)
- Liberal Democratic Party
- Liberal Party of Macedonia
- New Alternative
- Green Party of Macedonia
- Party of Pensioners of the Republic of Macedonia

- Democratic Union of Vlachs in Macedonia

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	1,779,116	
Voters	1,015,164	57.06%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	28,173	
Valid votes	986,991	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Votes	% votes	Seats
VMRO-DPMNE - "For a Better Macedonia" Coalition	481,501	48.78	63
"Sun - Coalition for Europe"	233,284	23.64	27
Democratic Union for Integration (DUI)	126,522	12.82	18
Democratic Party of the Albanians (DPA)	81,557	8.26	11
Party for European Future (PEF)	14,477	1.47	1
Total			120

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	86	
Women	34	28.33%
Total	120	

Note:

Thirty-four women were elected in June 2008. However, after the formation of the new government in July, the total number of women parliamentarians increased to 38 (31.67 per cent).

▶ **Distribution of seats according to profession**

	Seats
Legal profession	29
Education profession	27
Economist	16
Architect, surveyor, engineer	15
Physician, dentist	14
Agriculture/farming	3
Armed services/Police	1
Journalism, broadcasting, media	1
Other	14
Total	120

▶ **Distribution of seats according to age**

21 to 30 years	11
31 to 40 years	33
41 to 50 years	49
51 to 60 years	18
61 to 70 years	7
Over 70 years	2
Total	120

TONGA

Legislative Assembly

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Fale Alea / Legislative Assembly
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	32 members - 9 directly elected ("commoners") - 9 indirectly elected (nobles) - 14 ex officio Cabinet members
Term of House	3 years
Date of elections	23 - 24 April 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the elective seats in Parliament on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

5 constituencies (for the 9 directly elected members).

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Simple majority vote applies to both elections.

All candidates stood as independents.

Candidates with the highest number of votes are declared elected.

Vacancies arising in seats held by representatives of nobles or the commoners are filled through by-elections.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 21 years

- Tonga citizenship

- literacy

Disqualifications: insanity, nobility (for male electors), persons under summons for debt

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters

- age: 21 years

- Tonga citizenship

- ineligibility: high debtors

- ▶ **Incompatibilities**

- all offices of emolument under the Crown except those of Minister and Governor

- ▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- For directly elected members:

- supported by 50 qualified voters of the district concerned
 - deposit of \$T 200 (US\$ 100), reimbursed if the candidate obtains 6.66% or 10% of the total votes polled, depending on the constituency

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The April 2008 elections were the first to be held since November 2006, when a pro-democracy rally urging the Government to speed up the pace of reform turned into a riot in which eight people were killed and the much of the business district of the capital, Nuku'alofa, was set on fire. The ensuing state of emergency was maintained until the 2008 elections.

Five pro-democracy members of the Legislative Assembly were charged with sedition and abetting a riot, including four from the Friendly Island Human Rights and Democracy Movement (FIHRDM), and one from the People's Democratic Party (PDP). The FIHRDM had been officially registered as a political party after the March 2005 elections. It split in April 2005, however, and the defectors formed the PDP under the leadership of Mr. Tesina Fuko.

The 32-member Legislative Assembly is composed of nine directly elected members (commoners), nine indirectly elected members (nobles), and 14 members appointed by the King. In the March 2005 elections, pro-democracy candidates won eight of the nine commoners' seats. After the elections, two commoners were appointed to the government for the first time in 130 years of constitutional monarchy. Ms. Lepolo Taunisila was elected in the by-election to fill one of those seats vacated by the two commoners, becoming the first woman to enter the Legislative Assembly since 1980.

Pro-democracy members called for political reform to be introduced in 2008, including the creation of single nationwide constituency. The Prime Minister promised to introduce reforms in 2010, when the majority of members in the Legislative Assembly were expected to become directly elected.

In all, 71 candidates, including the nine outgoing commoners and eight women, were vying for the nine commoner seats. As political parties are not allowed to submit candidates for the elections, all candidates stood as independents. Many of them nevertheless campaigned under the banner of their political party. Under the new campaign rules, candidates were not allowed to broadcast any election programme on the state-owned Tonga Broadcasting Corporation, prompting accusations of censorship.

On 24 April, 46.69 per cent of some 68,000 registered voters turned out for the elections.

Four FIHRDM and two PDP candidates were elected. The three remaining seats were won by independent candidates who were also reportedly close to the pro-democracy parties. Four of the outgoing members charged in connection with the 2006 riot were re-elected, including Mr. 'Akilisi Pohiva (FIHRDM) who won the highest number of votes (11,290).

In the indirect elections for noble representatives held the day before, all 29 eligible nobles cast their ballot. Outgoing Speaker Tu'ihanga'angana lost his seat. No women were elected.

On 2 May, King George Tupou V appointed Mr. Tu'ilakepa, a noble representative from Vava'u, as the new Speaker. The newly elected Legislative Assembly held its first session on 29 May.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	68,730	
Voters	32,091	46.69%

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	31	
Women	1	3.13%
Total	32	

Note:

No women were elected in 2008. One woman was appointed to the Cabinet. As cabinet ministers also sit in parliament, there is one woman out of a total of 32 members.

TURKMENISTAN

Assembly

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Mejlis / Assembly
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	125 directly elected
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	14 December 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all seats in the Assembly, one year before they were constitutionally due.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

125 single-member constituencies.

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Single-Member Plurality Systems ("first past the post")

A candidate is declared elected if he/she obtains at least 50 % of the votes cast in each constituency.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections held within three months, unless the vacancy occurs less than one year before the end of the legislature's term.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years

- Turkmen citizenship

- residence in district of registration

Disqualifications: insanity, imprisonment, preventive detention

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters

- age: 25 years

- Turkmen citizenship

Ineligibilities: imprisonment

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- membership of the Cabinet
- certain high public offices
- judge or public prosecutor

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- nominations 45 to 30 days before the elections
- candidatures submitted by legally registered political parties, public associations and organizations or by assemblies of citizens of at least 200 voters residing in the same constituency. Absolute majority backing required for each name to go forward.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 12 September 2008, President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov announced that the elections to the Assembly would be held on 14 December 2008. They were constitutionally due by December 2009.

In the previous elections held in December 2004 and January 2005, all candidates were reportedly "hand-picked" and personally approved by the then President Saparmurat Niyazov. The country's only legal party, the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan (DPT), took all the 50 seats at stake.

In February 2007, former deputy prime minister Berdimuhamedov (DPT) was elected President, succeeding Mr. Niyazov who had passed away in December 2006 after serving for 16 years. Mr. Berdimuhamedov was unanimously elected Chairman of the People's Council (Khalk Maslahaty), the 'supreme representative body of popular power' comprising over 2,000 top officials and elders.

The new President pledged to bring about a "new revival" in the country. He introduced a series of reforms including constitutional amendments, adopted by the People's Council on 26 September 2008, which then unanimously voted to dissolve itself and transfer its powers to the President and the Assembly.

The constitutional amendments allow individuals nominated from legally registered political parties and political movements, as well as "public associations" and assemblies of voters, to run for elections. In practice, the nomination process reportedly remains closely controlled by the government. The amendments also raised the statutory number of members of the Assembly to 125. The Assembly is once again vested with the power to

amend and adopt the Constitution - which had been removed in 2003 - and now has the power to call referenda and presidential and parliamentary elections, ratify international treaties and address issues of border delimitation.

No new parties had been formed before 14 November 2008, the deadline for nominations. Consequently, only the members of the DPT and other entities under the National Revival Movement were eligible. As was the case in the 2007 presidential elections, the Republican Party of Turkmenistan, the exiled opposition party, was not allowed to field any candidates. Also barred from the elections was Mr. Gurbandurdy Durdykuliev, who had been incarcerated in a psychiatric clinic between 2004 and 2006 after requesting permission to hold a political rally.

287 candidates contested the 2008 elections. Apart from small meetings held by the DPT, no visible election campaigns were reported. In late October, the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda (CCER) announced that Turkmen citizens living abroad would be allowed to vote in the elections.

On 14 December 2008, 93.87 per cent of the 2.7 million registered voters turned out at the polls.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) chose not to send a full-fledged observer mission, arguing that the country's political context did not provide for genuine competition. OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) sent five election experts but did not make an official assessment of the election day proceedings. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) declared that the elections were "competitive and transparent".

On 22 December 2008, a list of 123 elected candidates was published. It did not contain their party affiliation. Elected candidates included senior officials of the DPT, tax officials, teachers and other civil servants.

On 28 December 2008, a run-off election was held in one constituency where no candidate had secured the required majority. A by-election took place on 8 February 2009 in another constituency to replace a candidate who had not taken up his seat for family reasons.

The newly elected Assembly held its first session on 9 January 2009 and

re-elected Ms. Akja Tajiyewna Nurberdiyewa as its Speaker.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	2,763,993	
Voters	2,594,658	93.87%

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	104	
Women	21	16.80%
Total	125	

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

House of Representatives

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Congress / -
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	House of Representatives
Number of members	435 directly elected Note: Plus non-voting Delegates from the District of Columbia, US Virgin Islands, American Samoa and Guam and a non-voting Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico.
Term of House	2 years
Date of elections	4 November 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the seats of the House of Representatives on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

435 single-member constituencies

Each Representative represents roughly the same number of citizens, provided that each State has at least one Representative. Within the constitutional limitation that "the number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand" inhabitants, the Congress itself has the power to determine the size of the House of Representatives.

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Simple majority vote (first-past-the-post).

In the State of Georgia, a run-off is held if no candidate achieves an absolute majority.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections.

Voting is not compulsory.

Acts 2006, No. 560, which came into effect on 1 January 2007, abolished the requirement of an absolute majority in Louisiana. The candidate receiving the greatest number of votes cast is elected.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years
 - US citizens who "in each State, shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State legislature"
 - the determination of who may vote falls under the jurisdiction of each State
 - absentee registration and voting mandated by federal law for certain groups of citizens (e.g. armed forces and merchant marine personnel, their spouses and dependants, private citizens residing outside the United States and government employees)
- Disqualifications: convicted felons, the mentally incompetent (most States)

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: 25 years
- US citizenship for 7 years
- residence in the State where running

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- any civil office under the authority of the United States

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- nomination as a result of "nominating", or primary, elections of political parties is the practice in most States; it is regulated by state law
- number of voters whose support is necessary to qualify as a candidate in either a party's primary or in a general election, and the necessity or amount of an accompanying filing fee, vary according to state law

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The November 2008 congressional elections were held jointly with the presidential elections. At stake were all 435 seats in the House of Representatives and 35 seats in the Senate: one third of the 100 seats (33) up for renewal upon the normal expiry of members' term and two vacant seats (following the resignation and death of their incumbents).

In the mid-term elections held in November 2006, the Democrats regained control of both houses of the Congress for the first time since 1994. They won 233 seats in the House of Representatives. In the Senate, both Democrats and Republicans held a total of 49 seats in the Senate. The Democrats secured a narrow majority with the support of two independent Senators.

The 2008 elections were held against the backdrop of a financial crisis, the worst since the 1929 Great Depression. The budget deficit hit a record US\$ 455 billion in the fiscal year ending in September 2008. In October, the Congress approved a US\$ 700 billion bailout plan for the financial sector. As at 3 November, the national debt was recorded at US\$ 10.5 trillion, corresponding to 70 per cent of the GDP; the highest percentage in 50 years.

Both the Democrats and the Republicans focused on stabilizing the US economy. Other major issues included the deployment of US troops overseas and health care reform.

The Democrats accused President Bush (Republican) of failed economic policies and promised to boost the economy, reduce taxes for the middle class and roll back tax cuts for the rich. They also underscored the need to increase federal regulation of financial services. Many candidates called for trade reforms to keep and create jobs in the US. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (Democrat) proposed a US\$ 300 billion spending bill to stimulate the economy and a US\$ 150 billion cut in defence spending. Under the Bush Administration, defence spending had increased by 60 per cent. It will surpass US\$ 612 billion in the fiscal year 2009.

Senate Minority Leader, Mr. Mitch McConnell (Republican), called for measures to protect taxpayers and ensure strong oversight of the Treasury Department in a bid to stabilize the economy. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (Democrat) called for a commitment to change in order to "restore the American dream for middle-class families".

On foreign policy, the Democrats pledged to withdraw US troops from Iraq and redeploy many of them to Afghanistan. Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama pledged to withdraw combat troops from Iraq by mid-2010. His Republican rival, John McCain, refused to set a deadline for withdrawal.

On health care issues, both parties promised to negotiate lower prices for medicines. The Democrats pledged to allow generic versions of expensive biotechnology drugs and expand health care to uninsured Americans. Many Republican candidates argued that bureaucracy in Washington D.C. could not run the health care system properly and that the Democrats' plan would dramatically increase State spending.

The Democrats led a strategic campaign to win over 60 seats in the Senate in order to avoid filibustering (the use of procedural hurdles to obstruct the passage of legislation). By the end of October, the Democratic candidates had spent more than US\$ 67 million on campaigning, nearly double that of their rival Republicans, who had spent US\$ 33.7 million.

Pre-elections polls suggested that the Democrats would achieve historic gains in the congressional elections.

Turnout was reportedly high among the 169 million registered voters, due in part to wide media coverage of the presidential elections involving a first-ever African-American candidate, Mr. Obama. As many as 29 million voters cast their ballot in advance of polling day. The final turnout figures for the parliamentary elections were expected to be published in mid-2009.

In the elections to the House of Representatives, the Democrats won 257 seats, while Republicans took 178.

In the Senate elections, the Democrats won 20 seats, to hold 59 seats in all (including support from two independents), while Republicans took 15 (41 in all).

In the presidential elections, Mr. Obama secured 53 per cent of the popular vote (or 365 votes in the electoral college), becoming the first African American person to accede to the highest office in the USA.

The newly elected Congress was convened on 6 January 2009. The House re-elected Ms. Nancy Pelosi (Democrat) as its Speaker. Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (Democrat) became President of the Senate on 20 January. Mr. Robert C. Byrd (Democrat) continues to serve as the President pro tempore.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	About 169,000,000
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▶ **Distribution of seats according to political group**

	Seats
Democratic Party	257
Republican Party	178
Total	435

▶ **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	360	
Women	75	17.24%
Total	435	

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Senate

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Congress / -
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Senate
Number of members	100 directly elected
Term of House	6 years; one-third of the membership is renewed every 2 years
Date of elections	4 November 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for one-third of the seats of the Senate on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

50 multi-member constituencies (two seats each) corresponding to the country's 50 states

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Simple majority vote (first past the post). In the State of Georgia, a run-off is held if no candidate achieves an absolute majority. (Acts 2006, No. 560, which came into effect on 1 January 2007, abolished the requirement of an absolute majority in Louisiana. The candidate receiving the greatest number of votes cast is elected.)

Each elector votes for two senatorial candidates.

If a seat becomes vacant between general elections, the Governors in 49 of the 50 States may, through a temporary appointment, fill it either for the balance of the term, or until the next general election, when a special election is held, depending on State requirements. One State (Oregon) requires that Senate vacancies be filled only by special election.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: 18 years

- US citizens who "In each State, shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State legislature"

- the determination of who may vote falls under the jurisdiction of each State
 - absentee registration and voting mandated by federal law for certain groups of citizens (e.g. armed forces and merchant marine personnel, their spouses and dependants, private citizens residing outside the United States and government employees)
- Disqualifications: convicted felons, the mentally incompetent (most States)

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters
- age: 30 years
- citizenship for at least 9 years
- residence in the State where running

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- any civil office under the authority of the United States

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- nomination as a result of "nominating", or primary, elections of parties is the practice in most States; it is regulated by state law
- number of voters whose support is necessary to qualify as a candidate in either a party's primary or in a general election, and the necessity or amount of an accompanying filing fee, vary according to state law.

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The November 2008 congressional elections were held jointly with the presidential elections. At stake were all 435 seats in the House of Representatives and 35 seats in the Senate: one third of the 100 seats (33) up for renewal upon the normal expiry of members' term and two vacant seats (following the resignation and death of their incumbents).

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Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	About 169,000,000
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▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Seats 2008	Total seats
Democratic Party	20	57
Republican Party	15	41
Independents	0	2
Total	35	100

▶ **Distribution of seats according to sex**

	Seats 2008		Total seats	
Men	31		83	
Women	4	11,43%	17	17,00%
Total	35		100	

VANUATU

Parliament

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Parliament / -
Structure of Parliament	Unicameral
Number of members	52 directly elected
Term of House	4 years
Date of elections	2 September 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all seats in the Parliament on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Electoral system

- ▶ **Constituencies**
17 multi-member constituencies.
- ▶ **Voting system: Majority**
Simple majority vote.
Each elector casts a ballot for one candidate.
Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through by-elections.
- ▶ **Voter requirements**
 - age: 18 years
 - Vanuatu citizenship
 - ordinary residence in the constituency
 Disqualifications: detention in a mental institution
- ▶ **Eligibility**
 - qualified voters
 - age: 25 years
 - Vanuatu citizenship
 Ineligibilities: undischarged bankruptcy, insanity, imprisonment sentence
- ▶ **Incompatibilities**
 - President of the Republic
 - Judge or magistrate
 - public officer

- member of the police forces or of the National Council of Chiefs
- teachers

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- support by at least five electors of the constituency concerned
- deposit of 50,000 vatu, not reimbursed

Background and Outcome of the Elections

This South Pacific archipelago of 226,000 inhabitants held parliamentary elections on 2 September.

In the previous elections in 2004, the Vanua'aku Party (VP) and its new coalition partners - the National Unity Party (NUP) and the Greens - won a total of 21 seats in the 52-member parliament. The VP's former coalition partner, the Union of Moderate Parties (UMP), took nine. UMP leader Mr. Serge Vohor defeated NUP leader Mr. Ham Lini by 28 votes to 24 to become Prime Minister. He formed a 5-party coalition government that also included two VP members. Less than a month later, the Vanuatu Republican Party (VRP) withdrew from the coalition government. In September, Prime Minister Vohor formed a new coalition including the NUP, which he termed a "national unity government". He designated Mr. Lini (NUP) as his deputy.

This national unity government was shortlived. In November 2004, Prime Minister Vohor granted diplomatic recognition to Taiwan without Cabinet's approval. Five Ministers subsequently resigned and joined the opposition. Mr. Vohor was ousted by a vote of no-confidence in December and succeeded by Mr. Lini. The latter subsequently formed an 8-party coalition government.

Prime Minister Lini's government achieved a certain measure of political stability, allowing him to implement plans, among other things, to liberalize the telecommunications sector. Despite corruption scandals involving several ministers, the coalition government survived six no-confidence motions. In June 2007, to defeat a no-confidence motion brought by the UMP, the Prime Minister briefly included some UMP members in his cabinet - including Mr. Vohor as Minister of Public Utilities - but dismissed all of them two months later.

Three parties in the outgoing coalition government - the NUP, the VP and the VRP - were deemed to be key contenders in the 2008 elections. A record 334

candidates, compared to less than 100 in the 2004 elections, vied for seats. They included candidates from 25 parties and 80 independents, with nine women in all.

Prime Minister Lini argued that a stable government was key to economic growth and national unity. He pledged to create more jobs and improve living standards. VP leader Natapei urged voters to support young political leaders, arguing that "new blood" would be needed to lead the country.

In April, Mr. Ralph Regenvanu, the 37-year-old son of former deputy prime minister Sethy Regenvanu under the Walter Lini Government, announced that he would contest the 2008 elections as an independent candidate in the capital Port Vila instead of his home island of Malekula. He insisted on the need for change in politics and pledged to tackle corruption and promote indigenous Melanesians in business, rather than relying on foreign investment.

On 24 July, the Melanesian Progressive Party submitted a legal challenge to the 2007 amendments to the electoral law, which allow voters from other islands who live in Port Vila and Luganville to vote in their urban constituency of residence. It demanded the postponement of the elections until the issue was resolved. However, the Electoral Commission maintained the election date.

As a result of incidents in the 2004 elections involving the burning of ballot boxes, about 120 police officers were deployed to patrol polling stations.

To boost turnout, polling day was declared a public holiday. 70.38 per cent of the 150,000 registered voters turned out at the polls. Voting took place peacefully.

The VP came in first with 11 seats, while the NUP took eight. The VRP and UMP each won seven seats. The remaining seats went to 11 other parties and four independent candidates. Mr. Regenvanu was elected with a record 1,710 votes, the highest in Port Vila. The new legislature includes 20 first-time members.

On 7 September, VP leader Natapei and Prime Minister Lini of the NUP announced that these two parties would form a coalition government.

On 22 September, the newly elected parliament held its first session and

elected Mr. George Andre Wells (NUP) as its new Speaker and Mr. Natapei (VP) as the new Prime Minister. Mr. Natapei's coalition government included the NUP, the VP, the People's Action Party (PAP), Nagriamel (NAG), the Vanuatu Labour Party (VLP), the Melanesian Progressive Party (MPP) as well as three independents. Other parties as well as one independent member joined the opposition, led by Mr. Koman (VRP).

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	152,043	
Voters	107,002	70.38%
Blank or invalid ballot papers	1,505	
Valid votes	105,497	

▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Seats
Vanua'aku Pati (VP)	11
National United Party (NUP)	8
Union of Moderate Parties (UMP)	7
Vanuatu Republican Party (VRP)	7
People's Progress Party (PPP)	4
Green Confederation (GC)	2
Melanesian Progressive Party (MPP)	1
Nagriamel (NAG)	1
Namangi Aute (NA)	1
People's Action Party (PAP)	1
Shepherds Alliance	1
Vanuatu Family First Party (VFFP)	1
Vanuatu Labour Party (VLP)	1
Vanuatu National Party (VNP)	1
Vanuatu Progressive Republican Farmer Party (VPRFP)	1
Independents	4
Total	52

▶ Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	50	
Women	2	3.85%
Total	52	

ZIMBABWE

House of Assembly

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Parliament / -
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	House of Assembly
Number of members	210 directly elected
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	29 March 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all seats in the House of Assembly following the constitutional amendments in September 2007. Elections to the House of Assembly had previously taken place on 31 March 2005.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

210 single-member constituencies.

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Simple majority vote.

Vacancies are filled through by-elections held 14 to 28 days after the vacancy is officially recorded.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: at least 18 years old at the time of registration

- Zimbabwean citizenship

- registration within the constituency

- residence in an electoral constituency

Disqualifications: absence from voting constituency for more than one year, insanity or mental deficiency, incapacity to manage own affairs, conviction for electoral offence.

▶ **Eligibility**

- qualified voters

- age: 21 years old at the time of registration

- Zimbabwean citizenship

- residence in the country for at least 5 years in the 20 years preceding

the elections

▶ **Incompatibilities**

- public office (except for Ministers or Deputy Ministers)
- members of the defence forces or certain members of the reserve police force
- persons holding unpaid office (other than allowances)

▶ **Candidacy requirements**

- candidature submitted at least 21 days prior to elections
- deposit of Z\$2 million (US\$ 70), reimbursed if the candidate withdraws from the election prior to an election poll, or if he or she is elected or obtains at least 20 per cent of the number of votes cast for the successful candidate in the constituency
- support by 10 to 20 electors of the same constituency

Background and Outcome of the Elections

In September 2007, the House of Assembly and the Senate passed constitutional amendments proposed by President Robert Mugabe, paving the way for the holding of joint parliamentary and presidential elections in March 2008. The statutory number of members of the House of Assembly was increased from 150 to 210. The enlarged 93-member Senate comprises 60 directly-elected members, up from 50. 84-year-old President Mugabe, who has been in power since the country gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1980, had withdrawn his initial plan to include 30 presidential appointees in the House of Assembly. In response, the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party dropped its demands for a new constitution before the 2008 elections.

In the elections to the House of Assembly held in March 2005, the ruling ZANU-PF had won 78 of the 120 directly-elected seats. The MDC, established in 1999 and led by Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai, had taken 41 seats. The MDC had been divided over whether to participate in the Senate elections held in November 2005. MDC President Tsvangirai called for a boycott of the election, while its Secretary General, Mr. Welshman Ncube, decided to participate in the vote. The final results had given 43 of the 50 directly elected seats to the ZANU-PF and the remainder to the MDC. Following the elections, MDC members who had advocated participation in the election formed a new faction, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-AM), under the leadership of Mr. Arthur Mutambara.

In the 2008 elections, 12 political parties and 119 independent candidates were vying for the seats in parliament. There were 779 candidates, including 99 women, for the House elections, and 199 candidates, including some 60 women, for the Senate.

The poll was held against the backdrop of an economic catastrophe, with an annual inflation rate exceeding 100,000 per cent in February 2008. Only 20 per cent of adults reportedly had regular jobs. Widespread shortages of basic foodstuffs were a daily occurrence for Zimbabweans across the country. As many as 4 million of the country's 12 million inhabitants had reportedly fled the country.

President Mugabe promised to rebuild the country's economy by investing more in agriculture and increasing urban and rural district councils' control over the economy. He pledged to "defend" his country against the West.

The MDC campaigned on a platform of economic stabilization, restoration of law and order and constitutional changes. It pledged to tackle unemployment and boost the economy. MDC leader Tsvangirai criticized Mr. Mugabe's anti-Western rhetoric, accusing him of trying to divert people's attention from the country's real problems. Mr. Tsvangirai insisted that the voters' list for the 2008 election included thousands of ghost voters, thereby hampering free and fair elections.

In the presidential elections, President Mugabe was challenged by Mr. Tsvangirai and former finance minister, Simba Makoni, who stood as an independent candidate with the backing of the MDC-AM. Although the local media reported that Mr. Makoni's participation might split the ZANU-PF's votes, only former Interior Minister Dumiso Dabengwa announced his support for Mr. Makoni prior to the elections. On 10 March, General Constantine Chiwenga, Commander-in-Chief of Zimbabwe's Defence Forces, threatened to overturn the constitutional order if President Mugabe lost the elections.

Turnout was reportedly high among the 5.6 million registered voters.

Observers from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) expressed several concerns over the election process. The mission nevertheless concluded that the voting was a "peaceful and credible expression of the will of the people". However, two mission members from South Africa refused to sign the statement, insisting that the poll had been

"deeply flawed". Observers from the Pan-African Parliament said more than 8,000 non-existent voters were registered in one Harare constituency. The European Union, which had concluded that the 2002 presidential elections had been rigged, the Commonwealth, as well as other Western observers, were not allowed to observe the elections.

Tension mounted as the Zimbabwean Electoral Commission delayed the announcement of the final results.

The MDC became the largest party in the House, winning 99 of the 207 confirmed seats. The ZANU-PF, which took 97 seats, lost control of the House for the first time since independence. Seven incumbent ministers were voted out. The MDC-AM took ten seats. One independent candidate was elected. The ZANU-PF remained the largest party in the Senate with 30 seats. The MDC and the MDC-AM won 24 and six seats respectively.

Both President Mugabe and Mr. Tsvangirai claimed victory in the presidential elections. On 3 April, the MDC filed a High Court application to compel the Electoral Commission to release the final election results. On 14 April, the High Court rejected the MDC's appeal, upholding the Electoral Commission's explanation that it was investigating irregularities in some of the voting districts. The Court concluded that the Electoral Commission could therefore "justify the delay". The final results had not been published by 19 April, the constitutional deadline for holding a run-off vote for the presidential elections.

On 2 May, the presidential election results were finally announced. Neither candidate passed the 50 per cent threshold to be elected in the first round.

Violence was rife prior to the run-off presidential elections scheduled for 27 June. Mr. Tsvangirai said 86 MDC supporters had been killed and 200 000 displaced from their homes. On 22 June, Mr. Tsvangirai withdrew from the run-off blaming election related violence and fraud. The UN Security Council unanimously condemned the violence and intimidation against the MDC. The election commission nevertheless conducted the run-off elections and declared Mr. Mugabe's re-election. On 29 June, he was sworn in for a sixth term.

Elections to fill the three vacant seats in the House were held in parallel with the presidential run-off. The final results gave 100 seats to the MDC, 99 to the ZANU-PF, ten to the MDC-AM, and one to an independent.

On 21 July 2008, President Mugabe and opposition leaders Tsvangirai and Mutambara signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU), paving the way for talks to resolve the country's political impasse. The MOU stipulated that all parties should not take any decisions involving the convening of Parliament or the formation of a new government outside the established dialogue. However, on 19 August, President Mugabe announced that he would unilaterally convene the parliament the following week.

On 25 August, parliament held its first session, nearly six months after the elections. Two MDC members elected to the House of Assembly were arrested on their way to parliament. In the contest for the post of Speaker of the House of Assembly, MDC chairman Mr. Lovemore Moyo won 110 votes, while the candidate endorsed by the MDC-AM and backed by the ZANU-PF, Mr. Paul Themba-Nyathi, took 98 votes.

On 15 September, the ZANU-PF, the MDC and the MDC-AM signed a Power-Sharing Agreement under the mediation of the then South African President, Thabo Mbeki. Mr. Mugabe would remain President, while Mr. Tsvangirai would assume the newly-created post of Prime Minister. However, ZANU-PF and the MDC continued to disagree over key posts in the new government.

On 27 January 2009, ZANU-PF and MDC agreed that they would share the home affairs ministry, with each party nominating a minister. On 11 February, Mr. Tsvangirai was sworn in as Prime Minister. The government was finally formed on 13 February when the MDC ministers were sworn in to the new cabinet.

Election results and statistics

▶ Voter turnout

Number of registered electors	5,605,204
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▶ Distribution of seats according to political group

	Votes	Seats
Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)	1,036,696	100
ZANU-PF	1,110,649	99
Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-AM)	206,739	10
Independents		1
Total		210

► Distribution of seats according to sex

Men	178	
Women	32	15.24%
Total	210	

ZIMBABWE

Senate

Parliament name (generic / translated)	Parliament / -
Structure of Parliament	Bicameral
Chamber	Senate /
Number of members	93 members - 60 directly elected - 5 appointed by the President. - 10 provincial governors; - the President and Deputy President of Council of Chiefs; - 16 traditional chiefs.
Term of House	5 years
Date of elections	29 March 2008

Timing and scope of renewal

Elections were held for all the elective seats in the Senate following the constitutional amendments in September 2007. Elections to the Senate had previously taken place on 11 September 2005.

Electoral system

▶ **Constituencies**

60 single-member constituencies (6 each for the country's 10 provinces).

▶ **Voting system: Majority**

Simple majority vote.

Vacancies are filled in through by-elections.

Voting is not compulsory.

▶ **Voter requirements**

- age: at least 18 years old at the time of registration

- Zimbabwean citizenship

- registration within the constituency

Disqualifications: absence from constituency for more than one year, insanity or mental deficiency, incapacity to manage own affairs, conviction for electoral offence.

▶ Eligibility

- qualified voters
- age: 40 years old at the time of registration
- Zimbabwean citizenship
- residence in the country for at least 5 years in the 20 years preceding the elections

▶ Incompatibilities

- public office (except for Ministers or Deputy Ministers)
- members of the defence forces or certain members of the reserve police force
- persons holding unpaid office (other than allowances)

▶ Candidacy requirements

- candidature submitted at least 21 days prior to elections
- deposit of Z\$2 million (US\$ 70), reimbursed if the candidate withdraws from the election prior to an election poll, or if he or she is elected or obtains at least 20 per cent of the number of votes cast for the successful candidate in the constituency
- nomination by 10 to 20 electors of the same constituency at least 45 days prior to elections.

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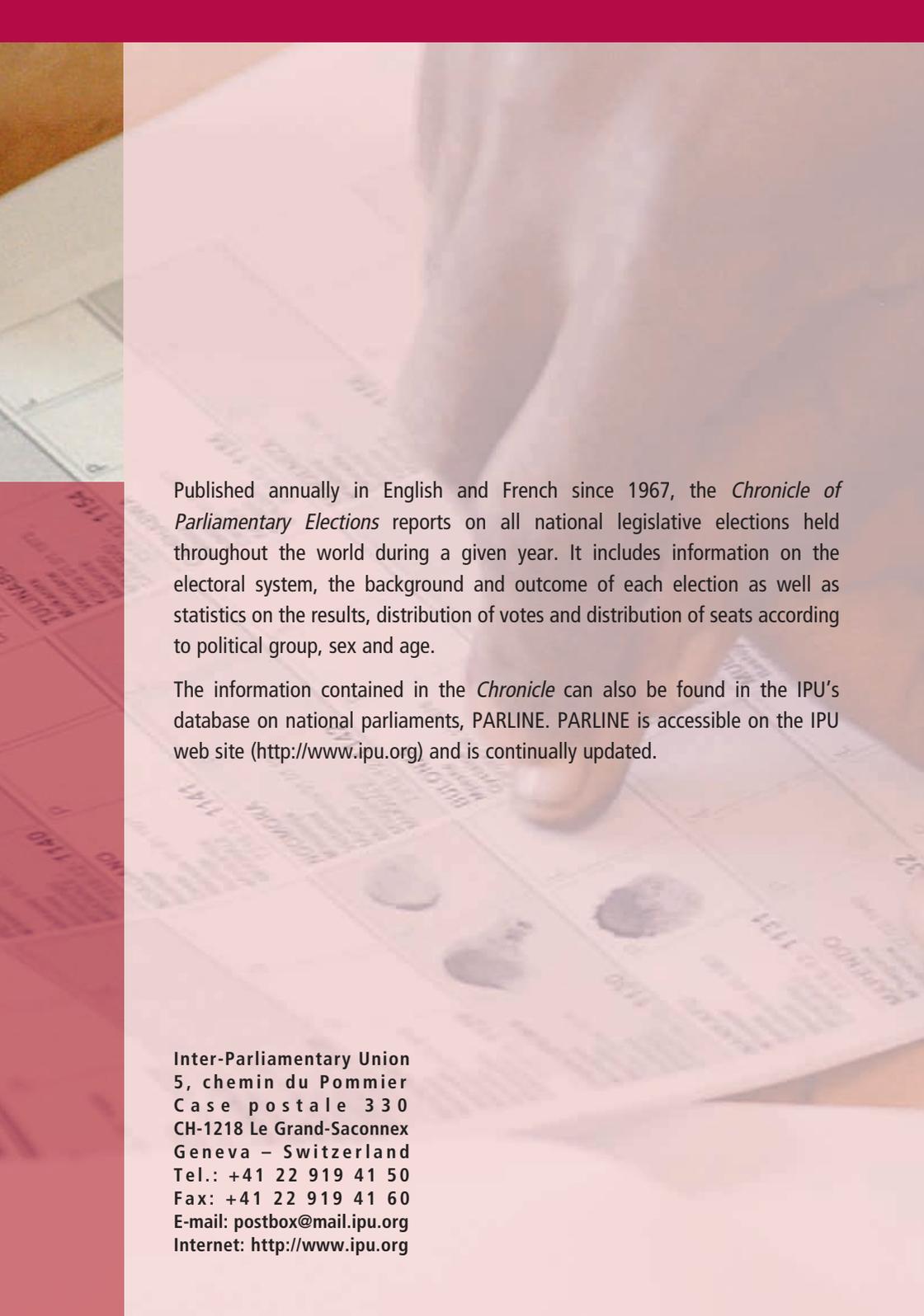
	Seats
ZANU-PF	30
Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)	24
Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-AM)	6
Total	60

▶ **Distribution of seats according to sex**

Men	70	
Women	23	24.73%
Total	93	

Note:

Twenty-one women were directly elected. In addition, there are two women among 10 provincial governors.



Published annually in English and French since 1967, the *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections* reports on all national legislative elections held throughout the world during a given year. It includes information on the electoral system, the background and outcome of each election as well as statistics on the results, distribution of votes and distribution of seats according to political group, sex and age.

The information contained in the *Chronicle* can also be found in the IPU's database on national parliaments, PARLINE. PARLINE is accessible on the IPU web site (<http://www.ipu.org>) and is continually updated.

Inter-Parliamentary Union
5, chemin du Pommier
Case postale 330
CH-1218 Le Grand-Saconnex
Geneva – Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 919 41 50
Fax: +41 22 919 41 60
E-mail: postbox@mail.ipu.org
Internet: <http://www.ipu.org>