

**DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL POLICIES**  
**POLICY DEPARTMENT**



**HOW THE EU  
CAN SUPPORT PEACEFUL  
POST-ELECTION  
TRANSITIONS OF POWER:  
LESSONS FROM AFRICA**

**AFET**



**DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL POLICIES OF THE UNION**

**DIRECTORATE B**

**POLICY DEPARTMENT**

**BRIEFING PAPER**

## **HOW THE EU CAN SUPPORT PEACEFUL POST-ELECTION TRANSITIONS OF POWER: LESSONS FROM AFRICA**

### **Abstract**

This paper examines violence round sub-Saharan African elections and how the EU can help reduce it. It presents eight case studies. It identifies factors that can increase or mitigate risks of violence and parts of an election that are vulnerable. It draws out patterns from diverse political contexts, including: (i) elections after civil conflict; (ii) competitive polls in unconsolidated democracies; (iii) votes under authoritarian rule; and (iv) those immediately after the departure of a long-serving leader. Some drivers of violence recur in different places: high stakes, the vast rewards of public office, elites' manipulation of cleavages, political or economic exclusion, weak or politicised rule of law and electoral institutions, and the proliferation of weapons and armed groups among them. But the precise mix of causes varies between countries and elections. So too do patterns of violence, often depending on the parity of force between groups, and whether violence results from political competition or is a tool to repress it. Given this diversity, conflict prevention strategies must be multilayered, tailored to context and based on careful analysis of what drives violence. National actors must lead, and this paper offers a set of options for each political context through which the EU could help them. It also suggests broader policy shifts for the EU (including better analysis; sustained engagement; greater focus on the rule of law; a more realistic approach towards its observation and technical assistance; and developing regional capacity) that could improve its support to elections in Africa.

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**AUTHOR:**

Richard ATWOOD

**ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBLE:**

Anete BANDONE  
Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union  
Policy Department  
WIB 06 M 85  
rue Wiertz 60  
B-1047 Brussels

Editorial Assistant: Sabine HOFFMANN

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## SUMMARY AND OPTIONS FOR THE EU

Although most elections in sub-Saharan Africa are reasonably peaceful, some see extreme violence. In Togo, the ruling party's crackdown after the 2005 polls forced tens of thousands to flee the country. Ethnic killing and cleansing after the 2007 elections took Kenya to the brink of civil war. Repression before Zimbabwe's 2008 presidential run-off sparked a political and humanitarian crisis. After Nigeria's polls last year, mobs emptied northern cities of their Christian minorities. This paper examines what causes this violence. It draws out patterns from diverse cases. Are polls hazardous in some conditions? What are the warning signs? How can violence be prevented? It pays particular attention to what the EU can do to help make transitions more peaceful – through better analysis; sustained engagement; a realistic and flexible approach to observation and conflict mitigation; linking assistance to diplomacy; more work with police and courts; and strengthening regional capability.

Troubled African elections reflect the continent's struggle with succession – itself a symptom of the vast rewards of public office. Incumbents' grip on power, resources and the levers of state can make them reluctant to step down and difficult to dislodge. Their opponents, meanwhile, often sit in dusty offices, with little to do and no money to do it with. This dynamic, which is especially treacherous where ethnicity or religion determines political allegiance, ups the stakes of political competition across the continent, and often drives violence. But it plays out differently in different places – shaped by the political context; underlying grievances; divisions in society; the inclusiveness of rules; the capability and legitimacy of state institutions; the contenders themselves; the parity of force between them; their access to fighters and weapons; and their readiness to kill, attack or bully rivals. A conceptual distinction can be drawn between violence round: (i) post-war elections; (ii) competitive polls in unconsolidated democracies; (iii) votes under authoritarian rule; and (iv) those after the departure of a long-serving ruler.

In Côte d'Ivoire in late 2010, for example, two heavily-armed and militarily balanced factions fought a high stakes zero-sum contest for the presidency. Neither was likely to accept defeat quietly. Sure enough, although the UN certified the results as credible, the losing candidate Laurent Gbagbo preferred to return to war than cede power. Deadly clashes and attacks also overshadowed the Democratic Republic of Congo's first vote after its civil conflict. But there, in contrast to Côte d'Ivoire, the loser, Jean-Pierre Bemba, stood down: partly due to clever mediation and – perhaps more crucially – because his loyalists were fewer and weaker than those of his rival. Post-war elections are often risky. Fear and insecurity can be pervasive, politics divisive, societal cleavages deep and votes mobilised along them. But a fight between two well-equipped and evenly-balanced forces for a powerful presidency – like the Ivorian race – is riskiest of all. Whoever loses has a strong incentive, and the means, to battle it out.

Politics can be militarised even in societies not emerging from war. Kenyans and Nigerians have suffered repeated violent elections since their return to multiparty politics. Polls are competitive – indeed campaigns are fierce, given the benefits of incumbency. But institutions, the rule of law, and the state's monopoly of force are all frail. Politicians habitually exploit identity and armed gangs to win votes. Guns are plentiful and a lack of jobs for young men means a steady supply of recruits. The Kenyan polls in 2007, again a winner-takes-all contest for a powerful presidency, saw a distrusted election commission's flawed results tally ignite inter-communal violence. Weak and politicised state institutions struggled to contain it. In fact the police themselves killed hundreds. Much of the violence was orchestrated by leaders, but it tapped anger at corruption and older, deeper disputes over land and resources. In Nigeria too, underlying grievances – especially rage at poverty and inequality – fed

upheaval in the north after the 2011 presidential vote. Nigeria's vast oil revenues, partly dispersed by state governors, also make for bruising sub-national contests.

Violence is frequently state-driven, notably where power or authoritarian elites are unsettled. During Zimbabwe's 2008 presidential elections, after a first round in which opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai won more votes than incumbent Robert Mugabe, the ruling party's brutal crackdown forced Tsvangirai out of the run-off. In Togo in 2005 the death of long-standing president Gnassingbé Eyadéma led the ruling military and political elite to rely, first, on suspending the constitution, and then on even heavier repression during elections to secure a win for his son. Violence usually costs a regime's legitimacy more than skewing the playing field or rigging. But when those fail, sending in elite guards or militias to curb opponents' campaigns, stop their supporters voting, steal their ballots or quash their protests can be an alternative gambit to keep power.

Across these diverse patterns one thing does not change: violence is always a political problem. International observation and technical assistance can be vital. But alone rarely are they enough. Occasionally they may even be the wrong tools. All measures to prevent violence must, of course, be tailored to context and based on careful analysis of what drives it. They might, however, include – over the long term – policies to reverse exclusion and inequality between groups; temper zero-sum competition; dilute executive power; strengthen or de-politicise rule of law institutions; reinforce checks and balances; demobilise armed groups; build broad political and public trust in the electoral management and dispute resolution bodies; set up early warning and citizen monitoring systems; and promote peace building. Just ahead of the vote, better procedures, codes of conduct, mediation by high-level panels or envoys, good offices, civil society observation, fair and timely dispute resolution, and diplomatic coherence can often help. Specific options for polls in different political contexts (post-war; unconsolidated democracy; authoritarian; or just after a long-serving ruler's death) are given throughout this paper.

National politicians, state institutions, civil servants and civil society lead in tackling violence. But the EU can, in places, help. General measures it could take include:

### **1. Identify countries at risk.**

- The EU should identify countries prone to violent or troubled elections. Its delegations, with country expertise, should usually lead, but can be supported by other European External Action Service (EEAS) divisions, or draw from analysis by civil society groups focused on conflict prevention or democracy analysis.
- The EEAS could develop a short guide on “warning signs” that signal risks of violence during elections. Staff in EU delegations and headquarters could be trained on preventing and responding to electoral violence, including on how to gather data that can help identify risks.

### **2. Regularly assess dangers.**

- The EU should integrate conflict sensitivity through all its activities, including political reporting and analysis.
- In countries at risk, two to three years before an election, it could deploy a team of electoral and conflict experts to assess the danger of violence and steps that national actors, the EU and wider international community can take to minimise it. Teams may draw from EU election observation missions' (EOM) and other observers' conclusions.
- These missions could be undertaken with other international or regional bodies. They should be followed by regular consultation between bodies to improve co-ordination and keep public and private messaging coherent.

- The assessment teams would map a strategy including (i) the risks and when they occur; (ii) different options for tackling them; and (iii) which national and international actors should do what and when.
- They could also consider whether an EU EOM would be useful and suggest benchmarks which, if not met, would mean conditions for a sending one were inadequate.
- Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) could accompany missions, or pay their own visits aimed at forging links – and pressing home the same messages -- with national politicians, especially members of parliament.
- Four to six months out, an assessment team should visit again. This mission could be combined with the exploratory mission (ExM) that determines whether an EOM is deployed. Or, alternatively, the EU could develop a methodology for ExMs that emphasises political risk analysis and add a political or conflict expert to the exploratory team.
- Whatever the format, the mission should also prepare recommendations for national actors, the EU and other to improve polls and limit violence in the time remaining before the vote.

### **3. Sustain engagement, invest sufficiently.**

- The EU's engagement must be sustained. In countries at risk the EU should keep elections on its radar all the time.
- Delegations, together with other diplomats and agencies, and drawing from the assessment missions described above, should constantly monitor and support efforts to reverse drivers of violence. They should focus as much on the risk of conflict as on technical improvements to elections.
- Given the EU's multi-year budget cycles, it must allocate sufficient funds for violence prevention, with contingencies for when delegations identify risks and entry points for the EU to help national actors tackle them.

### **4. Help EU observers.**

- International observers are not peacekeepers. Only in some conditions can they help prevent violence. Expectations of them should be realistic.
- The EU should take into account the political context of an election for refining the format of its observation missions. It might avoid deploying short-term observers where political space is closed and elections are non-competitive, for example. It might send longer and larger missions in moments of deep political uncertainty or for polls it identifies at risk in unconsolidated democracies.
- It should give missions greater flexibility in timing their preliminary statements, especially if results are contested. It should withdraw its observers from the field carefully and apply its observation methodology consistently by giving results tallying and dispute resolution sufficient scrutiny and reporting.
- It should redouble efforts to align statements with African observer missions, where those missions are credible, by seeking regular co-ordination meetings with other observers.
- Member states and EU delegations should support the conclusions of EU EOMs in their public and private statements.
- The EU should develop methodological guidelines on the role of observers in volatile situations, especially during a post-election results crisis. In advance of deployment, chief observers, their deputies and other core team members should be briefed on these guidelines and relate them to different potential scenarios the mission could face.

- Workshops in Brussels, perhaps externally-facilitated, with chief and deputy chief observers who have worked on missions in fragile and conflict-affected states should aim to regularly draw and – mostly importantly – document lessons from their experiences.
- Last, international observation is a tool not a policy. It can only be one component of the EU's strategy towards difficult elections and a country's democratic development.

## **5. Support citizen observers.**

The EU should continue to fund national observation efforts, which have a greater coverage across the country, in most places have improved dramatically over the past decade and should eventually supplant their international counterparts.

## **6. Tie assistance to diplomacy.**

- Building or reforming institutions to prevent violence is political work. Strengthening EMBs, for example, or rule of law institutions, requires space as well as training, away from politicians' meddling. The EU must usually tie assistance to a diplomatic strategy – involving political dialogue – to mobilise will for reform.
- Delegations should closely monitor key developments relevant to the conduct of elections, including changes to election legislation or the appointment of new election commissioners, especially the chief. Investing millions on an EMB then standing by as the president names a loyalist as commission chair makes no sense. The EU might even avoid providing significant support to EMBs that do not enjoy public and political confidence.
- The EU could also emphasise measures to improve dialogue between stakeholders, like EMBs, political parties, especially opposition leaders, and citizens. Consensus over rules and institutions can be as vital as the rules and institutions themselves.

## **7. Look beyond electoral assistance, especially to the rule of law.**

- Violence sparked by elections usually reflects deeper problems: authoritarianism, the high stakes of political competition, or institutions too weak to manage it. An exclusive focus on electoral triggers – one that overlooks structures, institutions and the wider political context – won't reduce bloodshed.
- The security forces and judiciaries are at least as important to containing electoral violence as EMBs. The EU could consider shifting its focus towards them, especially in areas of security planning and creating more effective dispute resolution mechanisms. It could also work with prosecutors: early action by them against perpetrators of violence could also deter future incidents. Stronger rule of law would also help dilute executive power and reduce the zero-sum nature of political competition.
- Similarly, human rights watchdogs, lawyers associations and policy think tanks have an important role on the broader context of issues relating to electoral violence, and should be seen as complementing the role of grassroots citizen observer groups.
- The EU must also support efforts to hold perpetrators accountable, usually through national judiciaries or commissions or inquiry, but if not – and for crimes of sufficient gravity – at the International Criminal Court.

## **8. Help raise the profile of the opposition.**

- Giving the political opposition a more prominent role may also help reduce zero-sum competition. MEPs and diplomats could develop ties with, and pay more attention to,



opposition politicians. Even small gestures such as visiting their offices or inviting them to speak to European politicians can help.

## **9. Strengthen regional capability.**

- African observation of African elections will only grow in prominence. So too will African mediation of African crises. The nascent ties between the EU and AU observation units should be developed and similar efforts made with ECOWAS and SADC.
- African experts should be invited regularly to participate in EU observer teams, perhaps outside the continent.
- The EU should also continue to support the AU and sub-regional organisations as they enhance their mediation capability. It should back, where appropriate provide technical advice to, and if necessary fund, regional mediation of election-related crises.
- It should do everything possible to deepen democratic norms through regional instruments like the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and ECOWAS's Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, as well as global treaty bodies.

## **10. Work with others.**

Although the EU's scope for action varies between countries, it often works behind-the-scenes. Its critical funding for peace-building work may not be publicised. Rarely do its diplomats lead mediation, which should be deferred to Africans under a UN, AU or sub-regional mandate. Its role may only be partially acknowledged even when it foots most of the bill for an election.

But the EU's quiet work with or through others can be its most effective. Its support can be a lifeline to state institutions and civil society groups. Its own experience with democracy holds valuable lessons. It can help forge diplomatic consensus and develop – especially if its risk analysis is shared – an international and regional strategy that can help save closely-fought polls. It can, in association with UN, AU or others, call planning meetings well in advance of risky elections to forge a co-ordinated strategy to avert trouble. At key moments delegations or parliamentarians can nudge national leaders, or identify others best-positioned to do so. When storm clouds gather, they can raise the alarm and press for more dogged action. The EU can do much to assist peaceful African transitions, even if its officials are not always centre stage.

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND EIGHT RECENT CASES

This paper examines election-related violence in sub-Saharan Africa and asks how the European Union (EU) can help peaceful transitions there. Multiparty politics has spread dramatically in Africa over the past two decades. The entrenchment of democratic norms, with voting now deciding who holds power in the vast majority of countries, is among many positive trends and reasons for optimism on the continent.

But political pluralism has not always brought peace. Competition for power and resources can still be deadly. Succession remains a challenge – few countries regularly see power transfer peacefully from one political party to another.<sup>1</sup> Violence round elections – which reflects Africa's succession troubles – has, over recent years, killed thousands and displaced more than a million.<sup>2</sup> One recent study estimated that one in five African elections suffers grave violence and only about 40 per cent are entirely violence-free.<sup>3</sup>

Where violence occurs, its dynamics vary considerably between countries, even between different polls in the same country. As Table 1 shows, it blights those emerging from civil war (like Côte d'Ivoire or the Democratic Republic of Congo); where democracy is unconsolidated (like Kenya or Nigeria); where political space is narrow (like Ethiopia or Zimbabwe); and others in periods of deep political uncertainty (like Togo in 2005 or Guinea in 2010). Nor are fair elections always peaceful – witness Côte d'Ivoire -- which suggests that conflict prevention measures need to go beyond simply trying to improve how elections are run.

Electoral violence can exact enormous costs on societies. It is also at odds with the EU's promotion of peace and security and its core values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The EU and its members spend more on African elections than any other foreign actor, plus many millions more in wider democracy and development aid, whose effectiveness electoral violence undermines. The EU regularly sends election observation missions (EOM) to Africa – of 24 EOMs since the beginning of 2010 fifteen have been in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>4</sup> The scale and scope of the EU's involvement may offer it opportunities, at least in some places, to help reduce risks. Preventing violence is far less costly than managing it or dealing with its consequences.

This paper proceeds as follows. To shape the subsequent analysis, Table 1 on the next pages looks at violence related to eight recent African elections. Section two asks why some elections are violent and others peaceful. Section three identifies some dangerous scenarios, offering in each a set of options for the EU to help assist peaceful transitions.

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<sup>1</sup> Only fourteen of 51 states have seen power transferred between political parties since 2000 (Benin 2006, Cabo Verde 2011, Comoros 2006, Ghana 2008, Liberia 2005, Malawi 2012, Mali 2002, Mauritania 2007, Mauritius 2000 and 2005, Sao Tome and Principe 2001, Senegal 2012, Sierra Leone 2007, Zambia 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Violence in Côte d'Ivoire alone may have displaced as many as a million; the Kenyan post-election turmoil kills 1,300 and displaced some 350,000; in Nigeria more than 1,000 died over the 2011 polls.

<sup>3</sup> Strauss and Taylor, "Democratization and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1990-2007", 2009. Serious violence is either violent repression ("high-level arrests of party leaders, the consistent use of violent intimidation, limited use of murders and assassinations, and torture") or a highly violent campaign (with "repeated, coordinated physical attacks leading to 20 or more deaths"). Another study estimates that as many as a quarter of elections in Africa kill at least one person. Dorina Bekoe, "Trends in Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa," Peace Brief 13, United States Institute for Peace, March 2010.

<sup>4</sup> European External Action Service (EEAS) website [http://eeas.europa.eu/eueom/missions/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/eueom/missions/index_en.htm)

**Table 1: Recent examples of election-related violence****Post-conflict elections and the legacies of war****Côte d'Ivoire**

The first round of long-delayed Ivorian presidential elections, part of a peace process after the country's civil conflict, passed off reasonably peacefully. The campaign heated up, however, with divisive rhetoric and clashes between rival factions, ahead of a run-off that pitted President Laurent Gbagbo against Alassane Ouattara – a contest that basically saw the two previously warring factions, both still heavily armed, contest for a powerful presidency. Gbagbo lost the vote, which was certified as credible by the United Nations, and his refusal to cede power plunged the country into an extended crisis. Initially Gbagbo strongholds including the capital Abidjan saw violence – including assassinations, burning alive, rapes and lynching – by troops, elite guards, militias and youth groups loyal to Gbagbo against real and perceived Ouattara supporters. This campaign of targeted violence morphed into an armed conflict waged along political, ethnic and religious lines in which both sides' forces committed grave crimes. Only after five months did Ouattara's troops, backed by international forces, oust Gbagbo. The violence, which marked the culmination of a decade of impunity for serious crimes in Cote d'Ivoire, killed some 3,000, displaced more than a million, and deepened divides in Ivorian society and politics.<sup>5</sup>

**Democratic Republic of Congo**

The 2006 Congolese elections, the first since the formal end of a long and brutal civil war, were freer and more peaceful than expected, given the difficult conditions in which they were held. The polls still, however, saw significant violence, especially in the west. After provisional results of the presidential run-off showed a win for Joseph Kabila, supporters of his opponent, Jean-Pierre Bemba, attacked and burnt the Supreme Court as it considered a complaint against those results. Eventually mediation by a UN and AU-endorsed Comité International des Sages helped persuade Bemba to cede defeat, although he later refused to integrate his militia into the army, leading to a street battle between it and soldiers which killed hundreds.<sup>6</sup> Subsequently the army, the republican guard and other state security forces carried out targeted killings of Bemba supporters.

Observers called the next Congolese elections, in late 2011, seriously flawed, partly due to irregularities with polling and counting, and partly to President Kabila's appointment of loyalists to the oversight bodies. Those polls also saw violence: notably arrests, intimidation and killing of opposition candidates and supporters by state security forces and militias loyal to the president. Opposition protests against rigging after the vote met, in places, a heavy handed police and paramilitary response. The election period also saw an escalation in militia violence in the Kivus.

**Inter-communal violence and militarised politics in fragile democracies****Kenya**

Ahead of the 2007 general elections, the president's appointment of election commissioners perceived as loyal to him deepened distrust in the EMB and between factions. A mismanaged results tally and suspicions of fraud around the presidential ballot then sparked horrific inter-communal violence. Its patterns varied across the country – in some areas spontaneous but often a "result of planning and organisation...often with the involvement of politicians and business leaders".<sup>7</sup> Violence included riots, planned and systematic attacks that led to mass displacement, violence meted out by the police, and retaliatory violence by communities. It was almost all identity-based, and quickly tapped into older grievances related to land and resources. 1,100 were killed (about 400 of which by the police) and 350,000 displaced. The crisis brought a nation viewed as one of East Africa's most stable to the brink of civil war and shattered the economy. It was ended by regional mediation, led by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and a power-sharing deal between incumbent President Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga. Four Kenyans, including two leading politicians, face charges at the International Criminal Court for organising violence.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, International Crisis Group, "Cote d'Ivoire: Is War the Only Option?" 3 March 2011.

<sup>6</sup> See "Elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo", by Eugenia Zorbas and Vincent Tohbi, in "Elections in Dangerous Places", David Gilles, ed.

<sup>7</sup> The Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence in Kenya, or Waki Commission, "Final Report", October 2008

Previous Kenyan elections – especially in 1992 and 1997 – also suffered violence. Most, however, took place before the vote and aimed to influence outcomes, often through intimidation and chasing out some groups to shift demographics of constituencies. Those areas that bore the brunt of violence in 2007/8 (Rift Valley, Coast and Western provinces, and Nairobi) had tended to see violence during earlier polls.

## Nigeria

The 2011 general elections in Nigeria were arguably the country's freest ever, mostly due to the President Goodluck Jonathan's surprise appointment of a highly-respected election commission chair. The build-up to the vote still, however, saw 165 killed in violence related to the campaign and voter registration. After the elections, protests over the results turned violent in several northern cities, tapping into socioeconomic discontent. Violence was not quickly condemned by losing candidate Muhammadu Buhari. Attacks by gangs predominantly against the Christian minority, although also in some instances against traditional leaders, left perhaps as many as 1,400 dead and 65,000 displaced. Many churches were burnt. Parts of southern Nigeria and the middle belt saw retaliatory attacks against Muslims. The violence deepened the country's principal political fault line between north and south.

Political competition in Nigeria since the return of multiparty politics in 1999 has often been violent. Many politicians enjoy ties to armed groups and mobilise violence deliberately, although violence can also tap grievances related to inequality and competition for resources between "indigenes" and "non-indigenes". In November 2008, claims of local election rigging in Jos triggered riots and clashes between supporters of rival parties killed at least 700, most beaten to death by armed mobs. National elections in 2003 and 2007 also saw widespread violence, especially round elections for powerful state governorships.

## State-driven repression after a strong opposition performance

## Ethiopia

In 2005, a reasonably free campaign after significant international engagement led to major opposition gains in parliament – according to some estimates an increase from twelve to 172 seats – and in regional councils.<sup>8</sup> Perceptions of rigging during the results tallying and later during repeat elections in some constituencies, together with critical statements from international observers, led to opposition protests, which involved incidents of rock-throwing and looting. Police, army and militia units responded with force, including by indiscriminately firing into large crowds of protesters. Scores of protesters were killed and thousands put in jail, where some allegedly faced beatings and torture. The regime also targeted citizen observers. Talks aimed at establishing a unity government broke down and parts of the opposition boycotted the parliament. The following elections, in 2010, saw the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front win 99.6 per cent of parliamentary seats due to opposition splits and continued closure of political space and repression. They also saw violence, but on a smaller scale and before election day – mostly targeted violence against opposition politicians, press and civil society.<sup>9</sup>

## Zimbabwe

In the first round of presidential elections in March 2008, opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai won a plurality of some 49 per cent of votes – more than incumbent president Robert Mugabe but not enough to avoid a run-off. Tsvangirai's party also performed well in legislative polls held at the same time. Ahead of the second round, a brutal crackdown by security forces and militias loyal to the ruling party Zanu-PF involved at least 180 killings, thousands of abductions and cases of beating and torture of opposition activists, journalists, polling agents, public servants, civil leaders and citizens suspected of voting for Tsvangirai.<sup>10</sup> The campaign was centrally-directed, despite local initiatives, and used an infrastructure for violence established earlier. It targeted some opposition areas, but also Zanu-PF areas which in the first round had not returned as many votes as expected for Mugabe. The violence led Tsvangirai to withdraw from the run-off and sparked a political and humanitarian

<sup>8</sup> For an account of the 2006 elections see, for example, Cedric Barnes, "Ethiopia: A Sociopolitical Assessment", May 2006.

<sup>9</sup> See Human Rights Watch, "One Hundred Ways of Putting Pressure: Violations of Freedom of Expression and Association in Ethiopia", March 2010.

<sup>10</sup> See International Crisis Group, "Negotiating Zimbabwe's Transition", May 2008 and Report of the Special Rapporteur, "Election-related violence and killings", or Allston Report, 21 May 2010.

crisis, ended only after four months by sub-regional mediation and power-sharing. Previous Zimbabwean elections also suffered organised violence by regime loyalists against political rivals, and during ZANU-PF primaries between party factions.

### Unsettled power after the death of a long-standing ruler

#### Togo

Following the death of long-serving Togolese President Gnassingbé Eyadéma in 2005, the military and political elite suspended the constitution and pledged allegiance to his son Faure Gnassingbe in an attempt to keep power within the minority Kabiye elite.<sup>11</sup> The AU declared the imposition of Faure a coup and the ruling Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais (RPT) went to the polls only after significant regional pressure. The build-up to presidential elections saw street violence and targeted killings, especially in southern opposition strongholds. During election day and its aftermath state security forces, backed by militias tied to the ruling party, attacked polling stations, including by firing live rounds into some, and steal ballot boxes. As Faure emerged as the winner, opposition supporters took to the streets. Their leaders, having expected change, rejected regional mediation – which further aggravated repression.<sup>12</sup> Clashes between opposition groups and security forces in Lomé, repression in opposition areas and attacks by both sides' armed youth gangs killed more than 500 and forced 40,000 to flee the country.<sup>13</sup> The 2007 legislative and 2010 presidential polls were less violent and hailed by observers as reasonably clean, but in 2010 the opposition contested the results and marched in the capital in protest.

#### Guinea

A coup, led by Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, followed President Lansana Conté's death in 2009. In response to signs that the increasingly unpopular Camara might renege on his promise not to contest the presidency in a vote set, under international and regional pressure, for early 2010, tens of thousands of opposition supporters gathered in a Conakry stadium to protest military rule. In an attack known as "Bloody Monday", the presidential security battalion led an assault on protesters in the stadium, during which, according to a UN inquiry, at least 150 were shot, stabbed or beaten to death, and hundreds more raped or beaten. International and regional actors condemned the massacre, imposing sanctions on the regime. The presidential vote was finally held in mid-2010 under the stewardship of an interim president, Camara having left office after an assassination attempt. Long-time opposition leader Alpha Condé won the run-off in a vote hailed as legitimate by observers, and losing candidate Cellou Diallo eventually accepted defeat. Ethnic tension ran high, however, and violence in Guinea's eastern region resulted in the displacement of thousands of ethnic Peul supporters of Diallo.<sup>14</sup> Since the polls the salience of ethnicity in Guinea's politics has deepened, as legislative elections have been repeated postponed.

<sup>11</sup> See Adewale Banjo, "Constitutional and Succession Crisis in West Africa: the Case of Togo", *African Journal of Legal Studies*, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Banjo, "Constitutional and Succession Crisis", op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> Allston, op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> International Crisis Group, "Putting the Transition Back on Track", 23 September 2011.

## 2. WHY SOME ELECTIONS ARE VIOLENT AND OTHERS PEACEFUL

Electoral violence, as the examples in table 1 show, is a form of political violence.<sup>15</sup> It is about power – holding it, winning it or protesting how it has been won.<sup>16</sup> But beyond that, no single factor or pattern can explain all electoral violence across Africa's diverse societies. In some places genuine grievances, especially socioeconomic or political exclusion, drive conflict; in others it is politicians' manipulation of those grievances; and in others greed for power and resources.

That said, factors that increase or mitigate risks do reoccur across contexts. Identifying them can help assess those states or votes in danger. The list below, drawn from work by scholars and practitioners, covers: (a) root, or structural, causes of conflict; (b) formal rules (c) electoral management bodies and rule of law institutions; (d) parliaments and political parties; (e) electoral triggers; (f) peace building and civil society work (g) international observation and UN certification; (h) regional and international mediation and diplomacy; and (i) international justice.<sup>17</sup> Throughout it examines how factors impact the stakes of political competition and the incentives that inform politicians' behaviour.

### 2.1 Root causes, violent pasts

Most studies recognise that elections can spark violence but are rarely its underlying cause. Instead the competition for power taps structural vulnerabilities. These can include socioeconomic inequality, marginalisation, resource competition or deep divisions in society – usually they work together and reinforce each other.

Poverty or inequality between groups, for example, can create grievances which, especially when exploited by politicians, deepen animosity between them and increase the likelihood of bloodshed. Violence in northern Nigerian cities after the 2011 vote drew from rage at the perceived marginalisation and underdevelopment there, especially compared to the south; as did violence in parts of Kenya after the 2007 polls.<sup>18</sup> Moreover in low-income level countries economic opportunity is often concentrated in public office, which raises the stakes of elections.<sup>19</sup> Unemployment, especially among young urban men, may make them more willing to join gangs or militias. One study even suggests a per-capita figure below which democracy, and especially electoral competition, is dangerous.<sup>20</sup> Competition for resources, notably local land disputes, has also contributed to and shaped electoral violence in a number of countries.<sup>21</sup> Some work suggests that campaigns are especially dangerous when local competition for land maps onto national politics.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>15</sup> This paper adopts a definition of electoral violence based on that of Philip Allston, the former UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial killings and summary executions: "Physical violence or intimidation against people or objects aimed at: (a) designed to influence, or to prevent attempts to influence, an election outcome; (b) that arise in the context of election processes; or (c) that seek to promote or hinder election-related activity." Allston Report, op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> Violence round an election may also be aimed at disrupting it or preventing it taking place (such as violence by insurgents – as in Afghanistan – or terrorists) but this type of violence is less prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa. Even in Nigeria's Delta region, for example, violence perpetrated by the insurgent Movement for the Emancipation of the Delta and the Islamist sect Boko Haram appears mostly aimed at influencing outcomes rather than preventing polls taking place.

<sup>17</sup> For useful studies see the USAID "Electoral Security Framework: Technical Guidance for Democracy and Governance Officers", July 2010, by Jeff Fischer and others, or the UNDP guide, primarily by Tim Sisk, "Elections and Conflict Prevention: A Guide to Analysis, Planning and Programming", 2008. Also useful are Jendayi E. Frazer and E. Gyimah-Boadi, "Preventing Electoral Violence in Africa", Carnegie Mellon University Press, Pittsburgh 2011 and "Election-Related Disputes and Political Violence: Report of the Africa Panel of the Wise", July 2010, International Peace Institute.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, International Crisis Group, "Learning from Nigeria's Elections", 15 September 2011. Bekoe identifies similar patterns in Kenya's Coast province (Bekoe, op. cit.); attacks on Kikuyu property and business in Luo majority areas also draw from anger at inequality.

<sup>19</sup> Some studies also argue that the low tax returns in poor states weaken their capacity to manage violence. See Strauss and Taylor, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup> Paul Collier, "Wars, Guns and Votes", Random House, 2009. His figure of per capita income below which democracy is dangerous is \$2,700.

<sup>21</sup> Bekoe, op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> Strauss and Taylor, op. cit.



Societal divisions, in Africa mostly ethnic or religious cleavages, can also increase risks.<sup>23</sup> As political space opens in divided societies, politicians may use exclusionary appeals to win support – a feature of campaigning across most of the cases in Table 1.<sup>24</sup> Negative campaigning along ethnic or religious lines can be easier and more effective in mustering support than appeals for tolerance. Stressing identity also allows ruling elites to distract from the chasm between their wealth and voters' poverty, which is, perhaps, a more obvious cleavage but which could pose a graver threat to their rule. Societal divisions are likely to be especially salient after war. Identity-based grievances are usually more severe when groups are permanently shut out.

Root causes of violence are intractable, often resistant even to long-term aid, and certainly well beyond the scope of electoral support.<sup>25</sup> In many African states the EU or its member states have programs aimed at tackling poverty or inequality – ideally these should avoid deepening authoritarianism or exclusion.<sup>26</sup> Land ownership is contentious in many countries, and space for outside involvement narrow, even where politicians are willing to enact reforms. However, where opportunities do exist before particularly dangerous elections to address some grievances, especially at local level between communities, the EU could look for ways to support those efforts.

Perhaps the clearest predictor of violence lies in the country's history. Almost all the countries in Table 1 have suffered repeated cycles of electoral violence, suggesting a repeated inability to tackle its causes. Elections fought along the same cleavages which have marked violence before, as in many post-war situations, are particularly risky. The histories of the main political contenders may also signal hazards. Have they used violence to compete for power before? How have they responded in the past to defeat at the ballot box?

## **2.2 Formal rules<sup>27</sup>**

The strong presidencies of many African states, with power and control of resources and appointments concentrated in the executive, tend to make presidential elections high-stakes, zero-sum contests, especially when fought along ethnic or religious lines. Capturing the presidency carries immense rewards for leaders, their supporters and communities. Losing it entails enormous costs: financial loss, longer-term exclusion, perhaps even physical danger. All the eight countries in Table 1 have or had strong presidencies bar Ethiopia, and even there the executive dominates a largely pliant legislature. The limited role opposition politicians play in many countries, and the limited status they enjoy,

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<sup>23</sup> Kenyan and Guinean campaigns are almost exclusively identity-based. Nigerian campaigns, especially for local office, often have an ethnic or religious colour, despite the big-tent nature of the ruling People's Democratic Party. Political competition in Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo also has an ethnic dimension.

<sup>24</sup> Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies go to War", 2005 Harvard University. One study of African elections found that the largest number of election-related deaths occurred in countries where ethnicity was politicised (Bekoe, op. cit.) Some recent work suggests, however, that the number of different groups and their respective sizes, rather than diversity itself, determines a society's propensity for political violence.

<sup>25</sup> EU policy since at least 1996 has been to aspire to tackle the root causes of conflict (see the EU Communication of 1996 on Conflict in Africa later formalised in 2001 EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflict). A 2011 "Thematic Evaluation of European Commission Support to Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Programmes" suggests that the 7.7 billion spent has had a "key role in mitigating the root causes of conflict" in some countries and a positive impact in many others.

<sup>26</sup> Channelling all funds through an authoritarian government's ministries, for example, can reinforce its hold on power and the exclusion of its rivals.

<sup>27</sup> Many studies examine the way that formal rules, in constitutions and laws, divide power, impact the stakes of electoral competition and shape the preferences of political leaders. Scholars tend to distinguish between systems which centralise power to those which share or divide it, in particular contrasting: presidential to parliamentary governance systems; centralised states to those with power devolved; and majoritarian to proportional legislative electoral systems. Preferential electoral system, like the alternative and single transferable vote systems, are used nowhere in Africa.

aggravates the winner-takes-all nature of political competition. So too do patronage or corruption, which may mean resources are distributed only within the ruling party and its allies.<sup>28</sup>

A central plank of Kenya's recent reform process, for example, has been to dilute the power vested in the presidency, reinforce checks and balances, and thus aim to reduce both the stakes of the elections and the opportunities for executive influence over them.<sup>29</sup> Giving the political opposition a more prominent role may also take some of the sting from defeat. Increasing its leader's profile in public life, providing it proper resources, allowing its legislators to chair committees that oversee budgets or appointing its politicians to the cabinet can all help – and can be secured through political agreements ahead of polls if constitutional reform is not feasible. In some conditions "soft landings" for losing presidential candidates or pre-election pacts on, for example, control over resources like oil might also reduce the stakes of national elections. So too can the devolution of power – another key Kenyan reform – although in some countries, like Nigeria, it has simply shifted violence down, as competition for resources controlled at sub-national level becomes fiercer.<sup>30</sup>

Experts disagree as to how different legislative electoral systems impact societies' vulnerability to violence.<sup>31</sup> Some point to the dangers majoritarian systems – especially first-past-the-post (FPTP) but also the two-round system – pose fragile states.<sup>32</sup> Their winner-takes-all nature can make competition fiercer and, worse still, permanently exclude minorities – although the extent to which FPTP excludes groups depends largely on their geographic dispersal.<sup>33</sup> Although alternative systems, like proportional representation (PR), may have reduced violence elsewhere, Africa's limited experience with PR makes it difficult to assess how its adoption there would impact conflict dynamics – even were political elites willing to enact such reforms.<sup>34</sup> What seems clearer is that an electoral system shapes where violence takes place and its nature. Some studies suggest that closely-fought single-member (or "swing") constituencies are more vulnerable.<sup>35</sup>

Last, consensus over rules is perhaps as important as the rules themselves. Disagreement over constitutional provisions or laws, or denying groups a voice in reform, can be dangerous.<sup>36</sup> In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the amendment by the ruling coalition of key electoral provisions which favoured President Kabila ahead of the 2011 presidential elections contributed to tension there.<sup>37</sup> An inclusive reform process, on the other hand, involving opposition politicians and civil society, is usually more likely to inspire broader confidence in elections.

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<sup>28</sup> Some studies, however, suggest that clientelism and corruption can actually help mitigate violence in that for authoritarian governments paying for votes is a lower cost strategy than using violence. See Sarah Birch, "Carrot or Stick: Political Economics of Electoral Malpractice", paper presented to the Workshop on Challenges of Electoral Integrity, Madrid, 7 July 2012. Also Leonardo R. Arriola and Chelsea Johnson, "Election Violence in Democratizing Societies", unpublished manuscript.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR) Monitoring Project, "Reforms and Preparedness for Elections, Review Report May 2012.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, International Crisis Group, "Nigeria's Elections: Reversing the Degeneration", February 2011.

<sup>31</sup> Note, however, that few studies examine specifically the link between electoral systems (like FPTP or PR) and electoral violence; most scholars instead apply lessons from the more extensive literature on electoral system type and society's proneness to civil conflict, assuming that a society more vulnerable to civil war is also more likely to suffer electoral violence.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, Andrew Reynolds, "Designing Democracy in a Dangerous World", Oxford 2011.

<sup>33</sup> Single-member-constituency systems, like FPTP and the two-round system, tend to benefit groups with geographically concentrated support, like many in Africa. A group with support dispersed across the country will perform less well.

<sup>34</sup> See Reynolds "Designing Democracy", op. cit. Some other scholars, however, point to dangers of PR in divided societies, particularly that it may cement the saliency of ethnic or identity based divisions. It can also lead to intense and protracted instability after elections, as in Iraq, as factions squabble over government formation.

<sup>35</sup> In Zimbabwe, for example, violence by security forces and armed groups loyal to the ruling ZANU-PF appear, after the first round of presidential elections, to have targeted areas which were traditionally ZANU-PF but had voted for opposition candidate Morgan Tsvangirai in the first round, and those where the opposition MDC enjoyed support but not overwhelming support.

<sup>36</sup> See "UNDP guide" op. cit., for examples.

<sup>37</sup> The ruling party coalition in parliament shifted from a two-round system for the presidency to a single round plurality system. See, for example, International Crisis Group, "Congo: The Electoral Dilemma", 5 May 2011.



### 2.3 Election commissions and rule of law institutions

The capability and legitimacy of state institutions can also shape violence. The electoral management bodies (EMB) is vital, rule of law institutions even more so. Most studies concur that an EMB beholden to the incumbent, weak or distrusted by the opposition heightens risks, especially where elections are genuinely competitive. In contrast, an honest EMB may be able to protect a vote even in difficult conditions. Particularly critical is the level of confidence the EMB enjoys from politicians, and thus its transparency and communication. Working openly and consulting regularly with main political contenders, especially on contentious decisions, can build trust and ensure their buy-in for key policies. If factions trust the EMB they may be more likely to accept the inevitable flaws that accompany polls in fragile environments.

Recent experience suggests that the chief election commissioner can play a central role – for good or ill – and diplomats must watch carefully that appointment.<sup>38</sup> Ahead of a contentious vote the president's appointment of a loyalist as chief is a clear sign of storms ahead and, in one blow, can undo the years and often vast sums invested in improving an EMB's technical prowess. The EU should be wary of supporting elections where there is a grave lack of trust in the EMB or its head. Conversely, in Guinea, just before a tense presidential run-off and after a series of scandals and, finally, the chief commissioner's death, the appointment of a Malian general as replacement appears to have increased confidence in results and contributed to their eventual acceptance by losing candidate Cellou Diallo.<sup>39</sup> Finding a respected figure from elsewhere in the region could be a model worth exploring where factions cannot agree on a national appointment.

Electoral assistance, included EU-funded work, can be pivotal to building capable EMBs, especially for post-war elections or others where capacity is weak. It is more effective when tailored to the specific context, and based on analysis of what underlies problems. Do technical flaws stem from weak capability or political interference? In fragile environments, advisers may want to emphasise transparency, inclusion and dispute resolution as much as they do operational proficiency. Where political space is constricted, the usefulness of assistance hinges on its link to a diplomatic strategy to mobilise will for reform. Indeed in most of the eight studies in Table 1 – and certainly those with authoritarian rulers – it appears unlikely that international advisers alone would have significantly cut violence. Strengthening an election commission requires training, but also space away from politicians' meddling. Electoral reform requires political support: parties have to back, and legislators make, changes to laws.

Weak or partisan courts increase risks.<sup>40</sup> The judiciary is crucial to many African elections, either certifying results or resolving disputes. Yet few electoral assistance programs focus on building the capability of judges, lawyers and courts to fulfil their electoral roles -- the EU could look to establish and fund such activities. Distrust in courts or other dispute resolution bodies can – as in Kenya, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo -- encourage losers to take their grievances into the streets rather than seeking their peaceful redress.<sup>41</sup> Impunity resulting from frail institutions can also create incentives

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<sup>38</sup> Recent examples include Kwadwo Afari-Gyan for three Ghanaian elections in 2000, 2004 and 2008; Christiana Thorpe in Sierra Leone in 2007; and in Zambia Irene C. Mambilima, all of whom oversaw polls which saw power transferred from one party to another. Attahiru Jega in Nigeria could not prevent violence but played an instrument role in improving elections. In some countries a powerful chief executive office in the EMB, or head of the secretariat, may be an equally important appointment.

<sup>39</sup> See the UN Secretary-General Biennial Report, op.cit.

<sup>40</sup> See the Report of the Global Commission Report for Elections, Democracy and Security, "Deepening Democracy :A Strategy for Improving the Integrity of Elections Worldwide", September 2012 for recommendations on the rule of law, among other factors.

<sup>41</sup> See the "Kriegler report", op.cit., for the role of the judiciary in the Kenyan violence. In Nigeria opposition candidate Muhammadu Buhari reportedly said he would not petition results in the courts because his previous attempts to do so did not yield meaningful results.

for politicians to use violence. Weak rule of law may reinforce the centralisation of political power, as checks and balances are undercut and informal power accrued in the executive.

The state security forces' prominence in each of the eight cases in Table 1 suggests that, of all institutions, their role in shaping or containing violence is paramount. In at least seven of the eight they were its main, or one of its main, perpetrators, responsible for hundreds of killings in each.<sup>42</sup> In some countries partisan security forces (often elite units or presidential guards loyal to a leader or with a politicised command structure) are key tools of authoritarian repression, enabling the ruling elite to hold onto power. In others, violence by police can result from inadequate training, especially on how to contain protests lawfully and non-lethally.

Assessing whether weaknesses stem from incapacity or politicisation should be the starting point for improving the security forces' performance. If the former, reform and training can help, though should be conducted in a manner that does not reinforce imbalances of power. The EU might consider programs that help security forces identify hotspots and plan and deploy troops accordingly.<sup>43</sup> Codes of conduct can govern their role during elections. Reducing politically-motivated violence like that in Ethiopia, Guinea, Togo and Zimbabwe depends, however (to quote a recent report by a UN special rapporteur), "almost entirely on whether external or internal actors...can successfully influence the political will of leaders in the short term (to inhibit their violent deployment of government forces) and long term (to institute reforms to depoliticise them)...it is very unlikely in these cases that training or technical reforms will, without significantly more, effectively reduce abuses."<sup>44</sup> The EU and other international actors may, however, press the government to review violations or even, as in Guinea, support a UN commission.<sup>45</sup>

The capability of security forces also determines the state's monopoly of force. In Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe informal armed groups – youth or criminal gangs, veterans or militias – with ties to politicians attack rivals, intimidating their supporters and "capture" polling stations. Similarly, some studies examining the timing of post-conflict elections warn of the dangers of holding polls before the state or peacekeeping forces are capable of providing security and factions have disarmed.<sup>46</sup> Conversely, measures to demobilise fighters and demilitarise politics will usually help reduce risks, although after conflict political leaders are often reluctant to send home their militias before power is settled and they are confident in its new configuration.

The 2011 World Development Report on conflict, security and development argues that "legitimate and capable" institutions can navigate conflict's root causes, like inequality or resource scarcity.<sup>47</sup> This interaction between institutions and underlying causes, which appears partly borne out by a number of recent African elections, may apply too to electoral violence. Given the intractability of most root causes, the report's conclusions suggest that, where possible, measures by the EU to strengthen and increase confidence in rule and law institutions would be a wise mid-term strategy in societies prone to violence round elections.

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<sup>42</sup> Of the eight cases, only in Nigeria in 2011 were security forces not responsible for a large proportion of deaths, and even in that case they were crucial in containing violence. Moreover in many other cases of electoral violence since 1999 Nigerian security forces have been responsible.

<sup>43</sup> An innovative IFES program in Lebanon identified districts particularly prone to violence, and shared analysis with the security forces and other stakeholders, which then fed into their planning and response. See International Foundation for Electoral Systems, "Background on the Lebanon Election Violence Risk Assessment Project", May 2010

<sup>44</sup> Alston Report, op. cit.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> See Dawn Brancati and Jack Snyder, "Time to Kill: The Impact of Election Timing on Post-Conflict Stability", unpublished manuscript February 2011.

<sup>47</sup> The World Bank, "World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development".

## 2.4 Parliaments and political parties

Parliaments are vital to democracy but often receive inadequate attention. Indeed in places chambers elected in polls on which donors have spent hundreds of millions are then neglected by those same donors. Legislative work can provide a useful venue for diverse groups to work together. Overall, as described above, enhancing the opposition's role and parliament's oversight of the executive can reduce stakes of competition for the presidency. MEPs, especially those involved in observation missions, may be able to forge ties with influential MPs. Regular visits to the country can keep reform alive. If an election breaks down, phone calls may help encourage politicians to use peaceful means to resolve grievances.

Political parties, like their leaders, can either deepen or bridge divides. Across much of the continent parties are still developing, often beholden to their leaders, identity-based and with little party loyalty or coherence. In many countries they are too weak to check the behaviour of their leaders, or even their members. Strengthening political parties is long and arduous work, but legislating requirements for diverse membership, or representation across the country, may reduce incentives for politicians to campaign divisively.<sup>48</sup> Some countries, for example, prohibit identity-based political parties altogether.<sup>49</sup> Enhancing parties' internal democracy and encouraging fairer leadership selection may also help. In places, intra-party competition is itself conflictive. Primaries in Zimbabwe, Kenya and Nigeria have all suffered violence – competition for the party ticket in "safe" seats may be particularly fierce.<sup>50</sup>

Measures for inter-party dialogue, and dialogue between the EMB, parties and other stakeholders like civil society and the security forces, often through a forum established by the EMB at national and local level, can offer an avenue to resolve disputes and identify risks.<sup>51</sup> According to one report, the Ghanaian Inter-Party Advisory Committee was "the most important mechanism for managing distrust among political parties" ahead of the peaceful 2008 polls.<sup>52</sup> A similar party liaison body may have helped in Sierra Leone in 2007.

Codes of conduct, well publicised, publicly signed and endorsed by leaders at national and sub-national level, may encourage them to reduce hate speech and other incendiary rhetoric and pursue resolution of any electoral disputes legally. Codes should ideally include provisions for monitoring, often by civil society, and credible enforcement mechanisms by the EMB, a party commission or courts.<sup>53</sup> Training party agents on their role as agents, and on how to document and quickly communicate incidents, can address a potential source of conflict in polling stations. Training parties how to accurately collate results from their agents, ascertain their accuracy, use responsibly internal tallies, and seek redress from dispute resolution bodies, can reduce tension in the capital. Inter-party committees, codes of conduct and training for agents are more likely to help reduce violence outside authoritarian contexts.

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<sup>48</sup> See, for example, Thomas Carothers, "Confronting the Weakest Link", Carnegie Endowment for Peace, 2006

<sup>49</sup> Ghana's 1992 Constitution, for example, requires that political parties "not be based on ethnic, religious, regional or other sectional divisions".

<sup>50</sup> See Crisis Group, "Reversing the Degeneration", op. cit.

<sup>51</sup> The respected chairman of the Ghanaian EMB, Afari-Gyan, noted that its Inter-Party Advisory Committee was a "very useful organ".

<sup>52</sup> Lucas Issacharoff, "Keeping the Peace in a Tense Election, Ghana 2008", Princeton 2010 p.5.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

## 2.5 Electoral triggers

Certain parts of an electoral process appear more susceptible to violence – though again patterns vary between different countries and elections.<sup>54</sup> Violence before or during voting, which is usually aimed at influencing outcomes, is distinct from violence afterwards, often in protest at results, or, in turn, at suppressing those protests. Some studies suggest that violence afterwards runs a greater risk of escalating, as the incentives for losing politicians to pull back are weaker.<sup>55</sup>

Delimitation (defining constituency boundaries) has recently been contentious in some countries. Kenya, in particular, has seen violence aimed at moving rival supporters out of constituencies to shift demographics – gerrymandering through violence.<sup>56</sup> Voter registration can suffer violence that aims to prevent groups participating. A flawed registration can also lead to disenfranchisement and exclusion, which may increase the likelihood of violence later. Similarly, perceptions of inflated registration figures can diminish confidence and ratchet up tension, or give politicians a pretext for rejecting results. EMBs and donors like the EU should, however, take care that new technologies adopted to prevent registration fraud – like biometric technology – do not themselves lead to citizens' disenfranchisement.<sup>57</sup> Any erosion in the EMB's integrity through its procurement of costly equipment will increase risks of conflict and outweigh any of technology's potential benefits.

Electoral campaigns are especially susceptible to violence, notably attacks against rival candidates, their supporters or their rallies; assassinations; clashes between rival supporters; and the creation of "no-go zones" in which opponents cannot campaign.<sup>58</sup> The nature of the campaign, particularly leaders' use of negative ethnic or religious campaigning, can impact levels of violence both during and after it. The media play an important role throughout an election, and during the campaign can either inflame or cool friction. Local radio stations' incitement of violence in Kenya is well documented; similar patterns were reported during the Côte d'Ivoire post-election violence.<sup>59</sup> In contrast, the UN radio's promotion of a peaceful vote in Liberia appears to have helped discourage divisive rhetoric and encourage a calm atmosphere for the campaign and vote. The media can also provide a platform for debates between candidates.

Election days can see violence aimed at capturing polling stations, destroying election materials or intimidating rival supporters – though election days are often surprisingly peaceful.<sup>60</sup> The immediate aftermath of elections, as results are tallied and disputes resolved, can be particularly violence-prone – unsurprisingly given that it is then that people learn who has won or lost. A repeated pattern sees opposition street protests against perceived rigging and their unlawful suppression by security forces or

<sup>54</sup> Many of the practitioner guides to election violence focus on phases of the electoral cycle which are violence-prone. See, for example, Fischer, "USAID guide", op. cit. the UNDP Guide, op. cit., and Tim Sisk, "Elections in Fragile States: Between Voice and Violence", Draft 7 March 2008. A new tool has been designed by International IDEA to help election commissions, civil society and other willing actors identify parts of the election process that are prone to violence. See <http://www.idea.int/elections/conflict.cfm>

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, Strauss and Taylor, op. cit.

<sup>56</sup> This pattern was especially evident in 1992 and 1997. See, for example, Peter Mwangi Kagwanja, "Politics of Marionettes: Extra-Legal Violence and the 1997 Elections in Kenya" in Marcel Rutten, Alamin Mazrui and Francois Grignon, "Out for the Count: the 1997 General Elections and Prospects for Democracy in Kenya", Fountain 2001.

<sup>57</sup> For example, due to the cost of biometric kits, countries may purchase fewer and rotate them round the country, which can reduce the time available for communities to vote and may increase the distance they have to travel to do so. Note also that biometrics – if they work -- only resolve multiple registration. They can't resolve issues of identity.

<sup>58</sup> UNDP, op. cit.

<sup>59</sup> See Crisis Group, "Is War the Only Option?" op. cit.

<sup>60</sup> Sisk, op. cit., UNDP, op. cit. One study, however, suggests that overall in Africa, the months just before elections and those just afterwards are more violent than election day itself, but that election days are the single most violent days. (Bekoe, op. cit.). Violence during voting may be more common where elections are genuinely competitive but security forces struggle to contain informal armed groups.

loyal militias. Property may be trashed, the police attacked, or even – in rare cases – an armed resistance movement emerge.<sup>61</sup>

Close or upset results may increase risks, as might flaws in results tabulation or perceptions of rigging. A transparent and quick tally, on the other hand, can reduce them. Party agents should receive official tally sheets in each polling station. National results should be public, broken down by polling station, and ideally available online and the data accessible for an extended period to allow analysis by parties and observers.<sup>62</sup> EU and other international and citizen observers' attention to tabulation, especially where polls are competitive but the EMB distrusted or weak, can also help. As described above, fair and prompt dispute resolution plays a vital role in giving losers a peaceful and legal avenue to pursue their grievances.

Although many studies assert that free and fair elections are less prone to violence, the relationship between fraud and violence is not straightforward.<sup>63</sup> In Kenya rigging sparked violence; and a peaceful transition there next year almost certainly hinges on a reasonably clean vote. In Guinea too mutual accusations of fraud fed tension.<sup>64</sup> In other countries – the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Togo and Nigeria – fraud or perceptions of unfairness have set off post-election opposition protests, which escalated and sparked repression: a pattern which cuts across different contexts. Overall, and especially where elections are competitive, a clean vote is usually more likely to be peaceful. In any case, the EU and its partners must always press for free and fair elections – for many reasons beyond conflict prevention.

Donors should, however, be cautious in assuming that trying to stop fraud alone will reduce violence across the continent. Often who wins, who loses and what is at stake shapes levels of violence at least as much as rigging. Clean elections that threaten a powerful incumbent's rule can be more violent than dirty ones that do not. In Côte d'Ivoire, President Gbagbo rejected results despite the UN having certified them as credible. In some fragile democracies, where the rule of law is weak, politicians enjoy ties to gangs, and guns are plentiful, political competition before the vote is violent irrespective of fraud. Moreover targeted violence ahead of polls is itself a type of cheating aimed at skewing outcomes – in which case tackling violence reduces fraud more than tackling fraud reduces violence. Even where rigging does ignite clashes, as in Kenya, it is often a symptom of the same structural or institutional weaknesses that underlie violence, so much deeper reform must accompany measures to stop fraud.

## **2.6 Peace committees, civil society violence and election monitoring**

Peace committees at national and sub-national level can bring rival factions together and help resolve peacefully disagreements between communities. The Ghanaian National Peace Council included religious leaders, traditional authorities, professors, and respected politicians, and led the work of sub-national advisory councils in resolving disputes and grievances between communities ahead of the 2008 elections.<sup>65</sup> Kenya has recently established its own National Cohesion and Integration Commission, and a web of peace committees across the country, though whether they can check the powerful forces driving violence there remains to be seen. Drawing influential business leaders into conflict prevention

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<sup>61</sup> See Fischer, "USAID guide", op. cit.

<sup>62</sup> See the section on post-conflict elections below for when this might not be appropriate.

<sup>63</sup> The UNDP guide, for example, notes that "Those elections considered free, fair and transparent are less likely to experience violence than those where...deliberate cheating is prevalent" (UNDP guides, op. cit.). Liisa Laakso, however, notes "Interestingly the elections declared free and fair by observers were no less violent than those declared not free and fair." Liisa Laakso, "Insights into Electoral Violence in Africa", in Matthias Basedau, Gero Erdmann, Andreas Mehler, eds. "Votes, Money and Violence: Political Parties and Elections in Sub-Saharan Africa", Nordiska Afrikainstitutet 2007.

<sup>64</sup> See International Crisis Group, "Guinea: Putting the Transition Back on Track", 23 September 2011.

<sup>65</sup> Issacharoff, p.6, op. cit. The Committee is supported by the UN Development Programme.

may also have some bearing on the behaviour of political elites. The EU and others could do more to harness their influence. Business elites might even be willing to invest in conflict prevention as violence, if it breaks out, can cut profits.<sup>66</sup>

National imminent persons groups may be able to discourage violence or help mediate between factions afterwards. Religious or traditional leaders can help calm their communities. Where the church or Islamic establishment is influential, EU delegations and other donors can encourage and support their efforts to build relations between communities over time and, immediately before a vote, discourage violence. Some analysis of violence in different Nigerian states suggested those with respected leaders who played a peace-making role were less susceptible to bloodshed during the 2007 elections, although four years later, in 2011, mobs attacks traditional leaders perceived as too close to the national ruling elite.<sup>67</sup> Delays by such leaders in condemning attacks, or even their own use of inflammatory rhetoric, can, on the other hand, fan tension.

Civil society groups must be involved in violence prevention. One study identifies the Ghanaian election commission's partnership with three respected civil society groups, who shared responsibility for public outreach, and also monitored elections, as a contributor to the peaceful 2008 elections.<sup>68</sup> In Nigeria in 2011 the EMB also worked closely with civil society, which improved the polls but did not constrain violence. Civil society monitoring of violent incidents is also now common. Where political will to prevent violence exists, their early warning can be linked to quick response by the security forces. Crowd-sourcing programs like Kenya's Ushahidi track violence by allowing citizens to call hot-lines to warn of incidents. Work by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and the Electoral Institute of South Africa (EISA) involves training monitors to make their reports more reliable. EISA's work with conflict management panels combines monitoring, mediation and alternative dispute resolution.<sup>69</sup>

Credible civil society observation, a vital component of civic engagement in elections, can, if well run, build public and political confidence. The EU should continue its aid to citizen observers who cover the country far more comprehensively than international missions and have vastly improved over the last decade. Parallel vote tabulation (PVT) by civil society groups – often supported by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) – has positively impacted some recent polls, acting as an incentive for EMBs to announce results honestly and a check against politicians trying to fiddle them. PVT can also reinforce official results and ease pressure on the EMB.<sup>70</sup> It may have played a pivotal role in the recent Zambian elections.<sup>71</sup> If conducted poorly, however, or by organisations perceived as bias, or parallel results announced too early, PVT can throw even deeper uncertainty over volatile post-election days. The EU and other partners can support credible, non-partisan efforts to develop the capability of civil society groups to run PVT and stress to election commissions its value. They can also caution against parallel tabulations organised with insufficient rigour.

## **2.7 EU observation and UN certification**

Although international observers' principle goal is to assess whether elections meet a country's domestic laws and international and regional commitments, they may in some conditions help prevent violence. Where losing candidates contest results that are credible, an authoritative statement by international observers can encourage them to back down, or at least pursue disputes peacefully.

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<sup>66</sup> Although some business leaders share responsibility for the violence after Kenya's 2007 polls. See the Waki Report, op. cit.

<sup>67</sup> See, for example, Crisis Group, "Learning from Nigeria's Elections", op. cit.

<sup>68</sup> Issacharoff, op. cit.

<sup>69</sup> For EISA's work, see for example, Zorbas and Tohbi, "Elections in the DRC", op. cit.

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Nigerian commissioner.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with elections expert involved.



Observers may be able to draw the attention of political leaders, the election commission or security forces to risks ahead of polls, and press them to take action that cools tension. They can listen to the complaints of aggrieved candidates, parties or voters and press for their legal redress.

Ahead of the Senegalese elections earlier this year, for example, the scrutiny by EU observers of the electoral authorities' procedures as candidates registered may have led those authorities to respect rules during voting and counting.<sup>72</sup> The coherence and support of all European diplomatic missions in Senegal made the mission's work easier and its presence more forceful. The cleaner elections, and President Wade's departure, avoided violent opposition protests and potentially crack-downs by state security forces. In the end, however, and despite earlier attempts to extend his tenure, Wade was willing to cede power -- observers can't always bank on incumbents elsewhere to do the same.

Fiercely-contested elections in divided societies can pose observers thorny choices. These may be especially acute where no UN mission is present and the statement of the EU, often the largest observation mission, is more influential in shaping perceptions. The experience of the EU mission to Kenya in 2007, generally seen as a success, exposes these dilemmas. The chief observer delayed the mission's preliminary statement for two days, thus avoiding an overly positive assessment that did not account for flaws in results tabulation. The mission also condemned escalating violence. An earlier media release, however, noted evidence of manipulation and identified where results collected by its observers in regional tally centres differed from official tallies in Nairobi.<sup>73</sup> This release may have reinforced the narrative (of a vote stolen by the election commission on behalf of President Kibaki) which was driving violence -- a narrative that more detailed statistical analysis in later official reports casts some doubt over.<sup>74</sup>

Even large observation missions function -- as in Kenya -- with a limited picture of what has happened across the country. Observers cover only a fraction of polling and rarely all tally centres.<sup>75</sup> Patterns from one place may not be representative of others. Moreover, as the Kenyan experience suggests, in extremely volatile environments any course of action -- a public statement, the absence of one, refusal to comment on the credibility of results -- all risk aggravating tensions. Observers must speak out honestly. But when and how they do so, and how they interpret the information they have, need careful handling.<sup>76</sup>

Although predicting how observers' choices will shape conflict is difficult, more political risk analysis and scenario planning ahead of their deployment could help. Meetings, perhaps externally-facilitated, each year or two between chief and deputy chief observers from EU missions to fragile and conflict-prone states could allow the EEAS and the European Parliament to draw lessons from their experiences and document them. Additional training for chief observers and their deputies on how to make honest public statements without inflaming post-election tension would also be helpful.

Member states and delegations must back EU observers' conclusions, and reflect them in all public and private statements. Ideally too international and regional observers will present a united front.<sup>77</sup> The EU

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<sup>72</sup> Interviews, EU officials, Brussels, September 2012.

<sup>73</sup> "Statement from Chief Observer on announcement of Presidential election results", 30 December 2007.

<sup>74</sup> The Kriegler report, with a more detailed statistic analysis, suggests that fraud and administrative errors were rampant across the country and some favoured opposition candidate Odinga (The Kriegler Report, op. cit.).

<sup>75</sup> Although observers may visit as many as 10 per cent of all polling stations, teams usually spend only half an hour or so in each, when polls are usually open for at least eight hours. The percentage of actual polling they witness is therefore tinier than the percentage of polling stations.

<sup>76</sup> One study even suggests that negative evaluations of flawed elections by observers can actually heighten the risk of post-election violence. Ursula E. Daxecker, "The Cost of Cheating: International Election Monitoring, fraud, and post-election violence in Africa", *Journal of Peace Research*, 10 July 2012

<sup>77</sup> This is also consistent with the Declaration of Principles for International Observers.

or another mission should, for example, convene regular meetings between observers to share analysis. After the Congolese elections in late 2011, mixed messages from, on the one hand, European and national, and on the other, African Union observers, eased pressure on President Kabila to review evidence of fraud, reach out to opposition leaders and cease repression of protests. Weaknesses in AU observation reflect its politics and reluctance to criticise members. Helping to strengthen the regional body's capability, improve its methodology and train its observers could, however, create momentum that helps overcome these obstacles. Supporting ECOWAS and SADC observation is vital too. African observation of African elections looks certain to play an ever more prominent role.

Last, international observation should never be viewed as a sole policy response to prevent violence. First, observation is a tool not a policy. Observers' assessments should only be one part of, and should inform, the EU's strategy towards a partner country. Second, as the rest of this section makes clear, the causes of violence run much deeper than electoral mechanics, and observers can seldom shape them. Third, observers are not peacekeepers. Their primary goal is to assess elections and, perhaps, deter particularly egregious abuses. For some polls this might reduce the risks of violence – as in Senegal. For others it could increase them – if, for example, observer statements reinforce perceptions of fraud or unfairness that drive violence. Observers are important but are not a panacea for troubled African elections. The EU should not expect too much of them.

Certification by the UN is a very different instrument, more intrusive and much rarer. But it can face similar challenges.<sup>78</sup> The UN's certification of the Ivorian elections in 2010, requested by the parties to the Pretoria Accord, played a constructive role.<sup>79</sup> It formed the basis for the UN Security Council's strong backing of the results and reasonably unified international and regional condemnation of their violent rejection by President Gbagbo, though perhaps greater effort beforehand to lock the AU into accepting the UN mission's conclusions would have meant even more coherence.<sup>80</sup>

In Côte d'Ivoire the margin of victory was clear, the vote reasonably clean and the Constitutional Court's disqualification of thousands of northern ballots obviously partisan. Laurent Gbagbo, who expected to win, had miscalculated. Many politicians in fragile states, however, have a better grasp of their support base and if necessary use violence or rig beforehand. Had this happened in Côte d'Ivoire – had margins been closer, fraud more prevalent and results murkier, as is often the case in post-war or other challenging polls – the UN would been in a much trickier position.<sup>81</sup> The success of certification in Côte d'Ivoire may not, therefore, be replicable elsewhere, even were national leaders to request it and the Security Council to mandate it – neither of which currently appears probable.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> The UN has only certified two elections: in Côte d'Ivoire and East Timor. Only in Côte d'Ivoire did the certification rely on teams deployed across the country to monitor polling (in East Timor small teams of senior experts certified without monitors).

<sup>79</sup> Certification of election day itself involved the deployment of about 700 staff from the UN mission to monitor the vote in a sample of polling stations. Results from those stations were compared against those from nineteen regional tabulation centres and, as a final check, UNOCI staff reviewed centrally results forms from across the country.

<sup>80</sup> The Secretary-General noted that the UN certification in Côte d'Ivoire "provided a consensus for diplomatic action, including by ECOWAS, to ensure the democratic will of the Ivorian people was respected". UN Secretary-General Report, "Strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization", 19 August 2011.

<sup>81</sup> For example, the methods the UN special representative used to disprove the Court's claims that Gbagbo had won worked only because Ouattara's margin of victory was so pronounced. Such methods probably would not have worked either in Kenya in 2007, Zimbabwe in 2008 or in DRC in 2011, given the messiness of all those polls. In any case, it is unthinkable that in any of those countries elites would allow the UN a certification mandate.

<sup>82</sup> Also, in Côte d'Ivoire, tension between the UN's certification mandate and the national legal framework, which mandates the Constitutional Court to sign off on results, complicated the UN's work. The same tension is likely to exist elsewhere certification is mandated.



## 2.8 Regional and international mediation and good offices

Regional mediation, now most commonly mandated by the African Union, can help prevent or end violence. The Panel of Eminent African Personalities, deployed by the AU during the Kenyan violence and chaired by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, mediated between President Kibaki and Raila Odinga to end the crisis. It benefited from the leadership and moral authority of Annan himself, his stewardship of the mediation, his assertion of authority over it – particularly insisting that all other diplomats support the Panel and speak with one voice – and from international and regional determination not to let Kenya slide into civil conflict.<sup>83</sup> Some analysts criticise the power-sharing deal for having rewarded those responsible for violence and creating incentives for politicians elsewhere to reject results.<sup>84</sup> But in Kenya little else would have stopped the killing. An inclusive government may also have been wise given that constitutional reform – which requires broad buy-in – was part of the peace deal.

In Zimbabwe mediation by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) secured the Global Political Agreement between President Robert Mugabe's ruling Zanu-PF and the two factions of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change. Talks on forming a government, however, stuttered on for almost a year afterwards, and as yet little progress has been made on some key provisions.<sup>85</sup> Mediation efforts by prominent statesmen from both the AU and ECOWAS met even less success in Côte d'Ivoire, though perhaps faced a stiffer challenge. A Kenya- or Zimbabwe-style unity government was off the table, so any mediator had to persuade President Gbagbo to give up power rather than share it.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2006, the three-member *Comité International des Sages* (CIS), led by former Mozambique President Joaquim Chissano, appears to have played a crucial role, albeit unpublicised due to its sensitivity, in persuading Jean-Pierre Bemba to accept results.<sup>86</sup> A similar UN panel, headed by former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa and reporting to the Secretary-General, stood by during the South Sudan referendum, though overwhelming support for independence and Khartoum's acquiescence meant its role was marginal.<sup>87</sup> An International Contact Group, chaired by the AU and ECOWAS, helped steer Guinea's transition.

For post-war elections, or other transitional polls amid intense political fluidity (such as those following the death of a long-standing ruler), the AU's or UN's establishment, well before voting, of a high-level mediation team appears a very sensible measure, and one EU diplomats should support and the EU fund.<sup>88</sup> Teams should comprise continental leaders who keep abreast of developments, have no agenda beyond a peaceful transition and are ready to step in if tensions escalate. Mediators should be independent of observation missions, though could perhaps draw on their analysis. UN needs assessments or AU (or ECOWAS or SADC) pre-electoral fact-finding missions could consider, in each case, whether such a team deploy. Outside post-war contexts, ruling elites' resistance to mediation will

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<sup>83</sup> See Elisabeth Lindemayer and Josie Lianna Kaye, "A Choice for Peace? The Story of Forty-One Days of Mediation in Kenya, International Peace Institute, August 2009.

<sup>84</sup> See, for example, Andrew Mehler, "Peace and Power Sharing in Africa: A Not-So Obvious Relationship", Oxford University Press, 2009.

<sup>85</sup> See, for example, International Crisis Group, "Resistance and Denial: Zimbabwe's Stalled Reform Agenda", 16 November 2011.

<sup>86</sup> The CIS consulted with all candidates, listened to their complaints and encouraged them to pursue disputes peacefully. It may have benefited from its neutrality, contrasting with the wider ambassador forum, some of whose members were perceived as close to Kabila. Chissano's status as a former rebel may also have made his advice more credible. According to the CIS secretariat, the language in Bemba's concession statement was "made in the conciliatory spirit of the advice given by the committee and not in the usual language used by Candidate Bemba... Many key stakeholders attributed the surprisingly peaceful end of the electoral process to the work of the Committee". See Zorbas and Tohbi, op. cit.

<sup>87</sup> The AU panel headed by Thabo Mbeki which mediated with President Bashir, however, played a critical role – together with the UN special representative and the U.S. Ambassador – in encouraging him to let the referendum happen take place without major problems.

<sup>88</sup> EU has already funded such initiatives through its support to the African Union.

be fiercer, but even there high-level panels can be useful for especially controversial polls if diplomatic efforts can overcome it.

UN peacekeeping or political missions can also use their good offices to help address the concerns of political factions or mediate between them, as can UN regional offices. The UN secretary-general's special representative for West Africa, who has played a constructive role during a number of electoral crises there, formed part of the International Contact Group for Guinea. A recent General Assembly resolution and Secretary-General's report recognised that, if requested by the member state or mandated by the Security Council, mediation and good offices work should complement its technical electoral assistance.<sup>89</sup>

## **2.9 International justice**

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has proceedings against a number of African leaders for their roles in electoral violence. Four Kenyan leaders will stand trial in the second quarter of next year. Laurent Gbagbo is now in The Hague facing four counts of crimes against humanity and the ICC prosecutor has promised proceedings against other Ivorian leaders.<sup>90</sup> The ICC also monitors the Guinean authorities' efforts to hold to account those responsible for the Conakry stadium massacre, after a UN commission of inquiry concluded that the security forces' actions may have constituted crimes against humanity.

The threat of prosecution by the ICC and the knowledge that international justice can reach in even where national institutions are weak should shift the strategic calculus of leaders away from the gravest crimes. This may be especially true where such crimes are not their only means of holding power.<sup>91</sup> Reversing impunity and injustice can also tackle a major grievance of victims, their communities and other citizens -- one that can itself drive violence.

Justice can, however, entail immediate risks. In Kenya the ICC cases are moulding national politics ahead of next year's elections. Two indictees, Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, both powerful national politicians, may even seek public office. The EU and others must, of course, fully back the ICC's pursuit of justice. But the particular dynamics of each case, and the impact each is likely to have on the behaviour of politicians, should nonetheless inform analysis of risks.

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<sup>89</sup> See, for example, the UN Secretary-General Report, *op. cit.*

<sup>90</sup> See ICC statement, 30 November 2011 "Ivorian victims will see justice for massive crimes: Mr. Gbagbo is the first to be brought to account, there is more to come".

<sup>91</sup> The deterrence effect may be especially powerful where leaders view violence as the "lowest cost" option to hold power. Where their holding onto power hinges on the use of violence, the threat of prosecutions may be less salient, though even there may curb their worst excesses. See Nick Grono and Anna de Courcy Wheeler "The Deterrent Effect of the ICC on the Commission of Crimes by Government Leaders", 26 September 2012.

### 3. DIFFERENT CONTEXTS AND OPTIONS FOR EU RESPONSES

Some scenarios appear particularly dangerous for elections and may make them prone to specific patterns of violence. These include elections: (a) after civil conflict; (b) in unconsolidated democracies where the vote is competitive but the rule of law weak; (c) where ruling elites use repression to hold onto power; and (d) during intense political uncertainty, such as after the death of a long-standing ruler.<sup>92</sup>

#### 3.1 Post-conflict elections

Perhaps the riskiest scenario for any election is that of Côte d'Ivoire. Two factions, recently at war, heavily-armed and military and financially reasonably well-balanced fight a zero-sum contest for a powerful presidency. Neither is likely to readily accept defeat. Whoever loses can take the country back to war.

Such an extreme equation is, happily, quite rare.<sup>93</sup> But even in other post-war polls, like those of the Democratic Republic of Congo or Liberia, where losers can cause less trouble, they may still be reluctant to recognise defeat – understandably given it can mean decades in the opposition wilderness as their war-time foes entrench themselves in office.<sup>94</sup> Incentives for all politicians to use violence to influence outcomes before the vote, or for losers to resume fighting after it, are high. Dangers may be particularly acute where the country is territorially-divided into two ethnic or religious voting blocks, as in Sierra Leone and other parts of West Africa – even if sides are less heavily-armed than in Côte d'Ivoire.

In an ideal world, post-war elections would be held only after factions have disarmed, politics is demilitarised, security established across the country and political parties with diverse membership bridge divides. Some scholars, and even a recent World Bank report, argue that the international community should stop backing dangerous “premature” transitional polls. Instead they should concentrate first on building rule of law and other state institutions.<sup>95</sup>

Delaying elections is, however, tricky and can be unwise. An interim authority of whatever model – military, power-sharing, caretaker – without the legitimacy of a popular mandate cannot usually rule for long. Scope for outside influence on timing is often limited. Local politics more than international pressure drives election calendars. Any elite group believing that existing arrangements inadequately reflect their popular support will want an election, and just ahead of a vote, a politician expecting to win – like Gbagbo – will resist delays. Citizen's demand for elections plays a role too. Moreover developing capable and inclusive state institutions and political parties can take decades, way beyond feasible electoral timeframes. Nor do dynamics always change for the better if polls are delayed. Repeated postponements of the Ivorian vote did not shift the volatile equation there; ethnic tension is rising in Guinea as legislative elections are pushed back.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> No country or election slots tidily into one box, of course. The Kenyan and Nigerian states, despite their competitive elections, both often display characteristics of authoritarianism, for example. Patterns can shift between polls even in a single country. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, legacies of the conflict shaped clashes between Bemba's militias and troops loyal to President Kabila in 2006, whereas five years later state-driven repression against Kabila's rivals reflected the power now skewed towards the executive. Burundi witnessed a similar shift from factional violence during its first post-war polls in 2005 to state-driven repression in its second in 2010.

<sup>93</sup> Angola is another similar case. These cases are likely to remain rare given that the most predominant type of conflict on the continent appears to have shifted from all out wars between rebels and central governments to vicious, but low-intensity, protracted conflicts between non-state actors.

<sup>94</sup> Given how rare transfers of power between parties are on the continent, victory in the first post-war polls is likely to mean an extended tenure in office – as in Burundi, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and perhaps Guinea now too.

<sup>95</sup> See Brancati and Snyder, “Time to Kill”, op. cit. or the World Development Report 2011, op. cit.

<sup>96</sup> See International Crisis Group, “Guinea: Putting the Transition Back on Track”, 23 September 2011.

That said, elections are clearly no panacea after war. They can be extremely hazardous. International actors, including the EU, who help steer, support and pay for post-conflict polls should be wary of the dangers, prepare accordingly and not neglect other components of peace-building that can help reduce risks. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, diplomatic efforts tended to focus exclusively on moving politicians towards elections. True, before power was settled Ivorian leaders – like many others after war – were reluctant to cede the weapons and militias that would help them win it. But efforts to persuade them to do so, or tackle the resource and identity issues underlying the conflict, were overshadowed in the drive for a vote.<sup>97</sup> Worse still, international actors were caught out by the sudden escalation after the polls, despite clear signs that a rejection of results was on the cards. Gbagbo miscalculated, but they did too. Analysis was either weak or diplomats unwilling to heed it. The peace-keeping mission was not prepared to contain fighting.

Not all peace processes involve constitutional reform. Côte d'Ivoire and most other recent African cases have not. But where possible, spreading power around, dividing it between institutions, or at least reducing executive control over resources and appointments, might help reduce the stakes of presidential elections. National leaders will always drive reform, but after conflict the EU may be able to support the UN's or AU's stewardship of negotiations. It can also provide technical support to constitution-drafting. Where constitutional changes are not feasible, holding legislative polls before or with presidential elections might leave something for losers and lower stakes. So too might pre-election pacts on especially contentious issues, like resource control, or even "soft landings" for powerful losers.

Vital for post-conflict polls is that factions agree in advance to the core rules of the game, including the electoral system and membership of the EMB and whatever body resolves disputes. Regular consultations between the EMB and all the main contenders should aim for consensus, especially on contentious policies. Disputes arising from voter registration should ideally be dealt with before elections; registration itself must strike the right balance between inclusion and fraud prevention. Flaws in voter lists or missing ballots and other materials can create tension. EMBs and international advisers should also give careful thought to whether, or how, partial results are publicised – especially where they may not reflect final tallies. Criteria for disqualifying fraudulent ballots should also be clear. Ambassador or donor groups – often in post-conflict settings led by the UN rather than Europeans -- can help coordinate and leverage electoral assistance, and tie it to a diplomatic strategy. The presence of a UN peacekeeping or political mission, and large numbers of advisers, may open up opportunities for more intrusive engagement with an EMB. Expert advice to EMBs is perhaps most helpful after war.

If alarm bells ring as elections approach – as they should have done in Côte d'Ivoire given the militarised politics, the dangerous balance of force, and the clashes and inflammatory rhetoric ahead of the run-off – it might make sense to send more UN or AU peace keepers to help contain violence and protect civilians if it breaks out. The EU's most powerful members now rarely contribute troops to UN missions. But the effectiveness of European battalions in ousting Gbagbo, keeping the peace in 2006 in Kinshasa and against the Revolutionary United Front in Freetown suggests that well-equipped European forces can be useful. Integrating them under UN command might help counter sensitivity to their deployment.

EU diplomats can also help press for the establishment of a panel of respected African leaders like the *Comité International des Sages* in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which can stay abreast of events and forge ties with all contenders. Such a panel should be independent of observation efforts. It will be most effective when it does not have to compete with others -- national politicians should not be able to shop forums or play mediators off against each other. So, as in the DRC, European diplomats may

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<sup>97</sup> See, for example, Crisis Group, "Is War the Only Option?" op. cit.

prefer to defer to their African counterparts. The EU can work with others to set red lines for political leaders who threaten the peace or incite violence, press them to respect rules or codes of conduct, and perhaps reinforce those lines, rules and codes with threats of targeted, ideally UN, sanctions. Opportunities may also exist, if necessary with the Instrument for Stability, to fund grass roots peace-building efforts or civil society violence monitoring, like those of IFES or EISA. Messaging that promotes peace in the local media, as on the UN's Radio Liberia ahead of the 2005 polls, can counter inflammatory campaigning.

Post-war elections, with a large supporting cast of international advisers, present specific challenges to EU missions. Observers work in a crowded field: their presence can help, but it is rarely pivotal. Although the UN's Côte d'Ivoire certification mandate was rare, many national actors take their cue on the credibility of a vote from the head of a UN peacekeeping or political mission. The heavy international support given post-war polls can mean extra pressure on an EU mission to give them a clean bill of health. Diplomats and mediators usually don't want negative reports complicating their efforts to persuade losing candidates to accept defeat. At the same time, insecurity can inhibit the spread and scope of observers. Coordinating and achieving consensus with other observation missions may be hard.

Perhaps most important – for the EU and other donors – is that foreign attention does not wane after the first elections. The new government will now make or break peace. Its ministries and vital rule of law institutions should, if anything, receive more, not less, support. Particular care also needs to be given to ensuring newly-elected rulers don't monopolise power, close space and exclude the opposition. Unless broader peace and state building advance – inclusively and legitimately – between the first and second cycles of elections, the second vote after war may be more hazardous than the first.

### **3.2 Competitive elections, weak rule of law**

Also dangerous are competitive polls in unconsolidated democracies where the rule of law is weak. Some societies, even into their third or fourth cycle of elections since the return of multiparty politics, still regularly suffer political violence. Politicians enjoy ties to armed gangs. Weapons are plentiful. Institutions may be weak or partisan. Inter-communal tension over land or resources, horizontal inequalities or political and economic exclusion lie beneath a fragile peace. Here elections may see clashes between armed groups loyal to competing factions or politicians, attacks or intimidation of rivals and their supporters, and even cleansing of groups from areas. Outrage at electoral mishaps can quickly tap deeper grievances.

State gubernatorial and legislative polls in Nigeria repeatedly face this type of violence. So too do Kenyan polls, which appear particularly fraught because the state does not enjoy a monopoly of force. Politicians can mobilise, through informal armed groups, a significant level of violence which the security forces struggle to contain.<sup>98</sup> This may make the dynamics of the Kenyan elections in 2007, and maybe also next year, almost as unsettling as those in Côte d'Ivoire. Ghana faces, perhaps, a similar set of troubles, but in 2008 managed tensions, in part because the EMB and elites heeded warning signs and learnt from other stories on the continent, and maybe too because the forces driving conflict there are less potent, the rewards of holding office less vast, institutions stronger and leaders more sensible.<sup>99</sup>

Reform hinges mostly on elites' appetite for it, which can be greater when political space is open than in authoritarian contexts but is still far from sure.<sup>100</sup> Where they can be persuaded – usually through a

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<sup>98</sup> See also The Waki Report, op. cit.

<sup>99</sup> See, for example, Issacharoff, op. cit.

<sup>100</sup> In Nigeria repeatedly disastrous elections and numerous commissions of inquiry have, as yet, failed to persuade elites of the need to deep constitutional reform, despite enormous civil society pressure. In Kenya it took the spectre of civil war, though even now powerful

blend of civic activism, reformers and diplomacy – addressing long-standing grievances and building peace between communities in violence-prone areas will make elections safer. The EU funds many programs, often discretely, along these lines.<sup>101</sup> As after war, changing the zero-sum nature of political competition by spreading power around institutions and giving opposition politicians more of a role in managing resources (thus widening patronage circles) can also help – though may require changing the constitution.

Building rule of law institutions can take years too, but might nonetheless be easier than tackling stubborn root causes. Entry points for doing so will vary, but should be identified through EU's regular political and conflict analysis. In most places improving the state security forces' ability to lawfully contain violence, and to reverse any politicisation and broaden oversight, is paramount. Promoting independent and competent courts, or at least around elections protecting dispute resolution bodies, is also vital. In unconsolidated democracies the EU could consider upping its support to rule of law institutions.

Again the EMB, and a respected chief, may be particularly important where the rule of law is weak but elections are competitive. The scope for assistance varies considerably between countries, as do the parts of the election that are vulnerable. But the EMB and its advisers should usually prioritise transparency, and pay attention to voter registration, distribution of materials, well-run results tabulation, clear criteria for investigating complaints about fraud and quick and fair dispute resolution. Locking politicians into well-publicised, monitored and enforceable codes of conduct can help. So too can civil society's violence and election monitoring, competent and impartial parallel results tabulation and peace-building work – all of which the EU can fund. It could also support local media campaigns promoting a peaceful vote.

A number of recent elections have been shaped by a few key decisions (killed not by a thousand cuts but by a few well-timed and well-targeted blows). In Kenya the president's pushing loyalists onto the election commission led to subsequent flaws. In the DRC in 2011, it was the constitutional amendments, the new chief commissioner, the new justices on the Supreme Court and the voter registration. In Nigeria, in contrast, President Jonathan's surprise appointment of a respected chief commissioner led to much-improved polls. Key moments elsewhere might include the deployment or changes in command of elite security forces; the removal of independent judges; the rejection of a code of conduct; or decisions on registration or tabulation methods. The EU or its members often coordinate donor groups in fragile democracies. Forging a united front, identifying the key moments or decisions that can scupper or save an election, setting red lines, even conditioning support, or at the very least coordinating messaging with donors, international financial institutions and business leaders, may help persuade politicians to do the right thing.

EU observers can be vital for competitive elections in fragile democracies. Without a UN mission, their conclusions will be more influential in shaping national and international perceptions of the elections. It is here that a traditional mission, with long-term observers present across the country for the whole campaign, perhaps even for voter registration, along with short-term observers, can inspire confidence in results and perhaps even play some role in deterring violence. For particularly volatile elections the EU could consider longer missions. EU observers must always assess elections honestly. But, given their prominence, they should be cautious with all public statements, particularly if results are contested. They must also be careful not to draw broad conclusions from only a limited picture of what has happened.

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interests block the rolling out of key provisions in Kenya's new constitution. And even where will exists to change formal rules, those may change the behaviour of politicians only over time.



### 3.3 Authoritarian violence

A third scenario, perhaps the most common but least studied, is where an authoritarian government uses violence as a deliberate strategy to prolong its tenure. Loyal security forces, frequently elite guards, or militias repress opposition politicians and supporters – either ahead of polls or to quash protests over a vote perceived as unfair. This type of violence plagues polls not only in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, but also in Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Rwanda, Uganda, Sudan, and even in the DRC in 2011.

Two patterns are prevalent. The first sees targeted low-level repression ahead of elections, perhaps including assassinations or jailing of opposition leaders, journalists, civil society leaders or even judges. This may work together with other measures to narrow political space and skew results: media domination; banning opposition rallies; dividing opposition parties; refusing to register them; manipulating voter registration; or vote buying and intimidation. The second sees more severe violence, usually in a more desperate gambit to hold onto power. The Ethiopian government's repression of protests in 2005 is one example. ZANU-PF's brutal campaign ahead of the run-off in the 2008 Zimbabwean elections is another.

The use of large-scale violence is usually more costly to a government's international and domestic legitimacy than rigging or targeted violence.<sup>102</sup> In both Ethiopia and Zimbabwe it appears to have resulted from a miscalculation by the ruling party (not unlike President Gbagbo's in Côte d'Ivoire) after its usual means of ensuring victory at the polls fell short. In both cases international engagement ahead of the polls may have encouraged the ruling party to widen political space, which meant a freer campaign and a better-than-expected opposition tally. Neither incumbent, however, had any intention of ceding power. Both were ready to use violence to defend it.

Such violence – whatever its level – is a symptom of authoritarianism, and can only be tackled in that context. A stronger continental response might help. The gradual entrenchment of democratic norms through instruments like the AU's Charter of Democracy, Elections and Governance, which has recently come into force and ECOWAS's Supplemental Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, both binding on states that have ratified them, may yield fruit over time. The EU could encourage regional bodies to show the same determination against authoritarianism that they have against unconstitutional changes of government. The ties now being forged between the EEAS elections division and the AU observer cell could, over time, also help make regional observation a more meaningful tool.

Authoritarianism seldom guarantees long-term peace and stability. The EU should always back reformers. But loosening a regime's grip on power can entail short-term risks. In some cases pressing for more political openness ahead of an election, when the regime has no intention of leaving office and will use violence to hold it, can be dangerous. Both Ethiopia in 2005 and especially Zimbabwe in 2008 suggest that the high stakes of elections can make them a risky venue in which to try and reverse authoritarianism.

Options for the EU and its international partners vary depending on relations with the government and ruling elites. If the EU, and its international partners, for example, press a friendly government to allow for a freer campaign and a fairer vote, they should also press harder for a peaceful aftermath, by raising the costs of repression and making them clear to their allies in power. If, on the other hand, the EU prioritises goals other than democratisation, its aid should not entrench authoritarianism or, worst still, finance repression. It may choose to fund civil society rather than put money through state coffers.

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<sup>101</sup> Interview, EU officials, Brussels.

<sup>102</sup> For similar findings, also see Tavishi Bhasin and Jennifer Gandhi, "Government Repression in Non-Democratic Elections", paper prepared for the IPSA-ECP Workshop on Challenges of Electoral Integrity, Madrid, Spain, 7 July 2012.

Diplomats should avoid implying that elections can be free when political space is closed. Unless the creation of a public record is in itself important – it may be in some cases – observers should not be sent to watch largely meaningless votes. Consistency is vital for credibility elsewhere.

Regimes that are not allies require a different approach, depending on whatever space exists for engagement. Now in Zimbabwe, for example, the EU assists party committees comprising all of the GPA signatories down to district level. They monitor and report violent incidents, with the security forces ideally responding fast where they occur. Some officials suggest that the ruling ZANU-PF may wish to avoid a repeat of the extreme violence during the last elections – though this might be due to recent polling that suggests it may have a better shot of winning forthcoming elections without intimidation than previously thought. Whether these committees or the ruling ZANU-PF elite's desire to minimise violence would continue were its power threatened as elections approach is unclear.

For EU observers elections in closed political space are difficult. If they come at the end of a period of reform and potentially signal a threat to the ruling party's grip on power, their presence is important. But their conclusions may fortify opposition protests, which can then spark repression. The EU's 2005 mission to Ethiopia – in just such conditions -- proved one of its most controversial. Deploying a full mission may not make sense at all where authoritarian rule is stable and elections are uncompetitive – such as for all Ethiopia's polls after 2005. Rigging during voting is rare in such cases. The playing field has been skewed beforehand. A small expert team in the capital, perhaps complemented by a few experts deployed outside, can usually assess this type of manipulation without long- or short-term observers. Refusing to send a full mission can also be a more poignant signal.

### **3.4 Shifting power, transitional polls**

Violence during the 2005 Togolese polls, the first after the death of long-standing President Gnassingbe Eyadema, was also part of a deliberate strategy by the ruling elite, mostly from Eyadema's minority Kabiye ethnic group, to hold onto power. Togo even before Eyadema's death had a poor electoral track record. Each vote after the return of multiparty politics had seen repression. In 2005, though, with the grip of the ruling party's candidate, Eyadema's son Faure, weaker than his father's, it relied more heavily on violence. Its customary tactics of winning elections by closing space and low-level repression could not this time guarantee victory. As in Ethiopia that same year and Zimbabwe three years later, a regime that was weakened -- in Togo by the death of its leader rather than external pressure to open space -- instead resorted to graver violence.

The massacre in the stadium in Guinean capital Conakry is an outlier – at least in the eight cases examined here -- in that violence, although election-related, did not take place during the election itself. But like in Togo, it followed the passing of a long-standing leader and a subsequent coup – the military seized power shortly after President Conté's death.<sup>103</sup> It again resulted from the determination of the incumbent – in this case the junta leader – to hold onto power in the face of significant popular discontent and protests. The subsequent UN inquiry into the massacre concluded that coup leader Dadis Camara should be tried for crimes against humanity for his role orchestrating it.<sup>104</sup>

Often the true cost of authoritarian rule is most starkly exposed in its immediate aftermath. The Togolese and Guinean cases suggest that the first polls after an authoritarians' death or a coup can be especially troubled. Succession can pose challenges for the ruling party. Struggles within the party for

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<sup>103</sup> In Togo too the AU called the military elite's suspension of the constitution and imposition of Faure Gnassingbe a coup and ECOWAS called for the reintroduction of constitutional rule.

<sup>104</sup> See the "Letter dated 18 December 2009 addressed to the President of the Security Council by the Secretary-General", Annex "Report of the International Commission of Inquiry mandated to establish the facts and circumstances of the events of 28 September 2009 in Guinea".



power can turn violent. Uncertainty may raise prospects of a military take-over. Institutions have usually been too hollowed out to navigate succession peacefully and inclusively. Frustrated expectations of change can spark discontent and ever more ruthless repression by the ruling political and security elites. The salience of societal cleavages can deepen. The spectre of violence lurks when power is unsettled, ruling elites are insecure and militaries restless.

The death of a long-standing ruler usually sparks significant foreign attention, especially where constitutional rule is threatened. Options for regional and international actors, including the EU, will again vary considerably between countries – depending on leverage, relations with ruling elites or coup leaders and the specific dynamics of the transition. Shifts in power can open up entry points that were closed when the government was more stable. Regional mediation, with UN support, did not prevent the Conakry massacre but was vital in moving Guinea away from military rule. During the subsequent vote it also helped bring the sides along and afterwards persuade Diallo to accept defeat. Groups like the Guinean International Contact Group, or groups of friends, or other forums that can bring together the AU, sub-regional organisations and the governments of neighbouring states are often useful. Ideally envoys and foreign ministers regularly convene in the capital of the transitioning country.

Where possible, the interim president or transitional authorities who steward electoral preparations should pledge not to contest the presidency or support any other candidate. General Sékouba Konaté, who assumed power when Camara stood down after attempted assassination, promised quickly not to run for office – important given that Camara's reversal of his promise not to run sparked the protests which led to the stadium massacre. Reintroducing some certainty, in particular over rules and institutions that govern succession, is vital. All factions, including opposition politicians, should be included in decisions on those rules. Codes of conduct or political agreements can help calm divisive rhetoric and reduce polarisation. Last, where the ruling party controls loyal security forces, with histories of violence, efforts to prevent repression should complement any push towards elections.

Although elections after the death of a long-standing ruler can prove difficult for international observers, it is important they are there. Often the polls suffer more genuine competition for power than during authoritarian rule – which is why they may be prone to graver violence. Observers can increase political and public confidence in elections, show the EU's solidarity during a transition from military rule, and perhaps even discourage the worst excesses. Where the EU has not set aside money for a mission in budgets – leaders may, after all, die suddenly – it should find funds, perhaps if necessary through the Instrument for Stability.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Despite what can seem like endless headlines of violent African elections, most polls on the continent are reasonably peaceful. In many countries elections help defuse conflict, by giving societies a peaceful means to resolve their differences and, perhaps most important, to navigate succession. Nonetheless, elections still ignite violence too often.

Reducing this violence is not easy. Its causes are deeply rooted in the nature of states and their colonial and post-independence legacies. Solutions depend on the determined efforts of national leaders, who can face strong incentives to oppose reform. Even with their backing, building institutions capable of managing political competition can take decades. Structural reform, like the enormous efforts Kenyans have made in recent years, may only shape the behaviour of elites over time. The EU and its international partners, who support and encourage national actors, should do so with long-term commitments, and in a spirit of partnership and humility.

There is, however, plenty they can do. The options laid out at the start of this paper would help the EU better identify risks of conflict round elections and openings for measures to prevent it. The European Parliament's Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG) is an appropriate forum to discuss not only election observation, but also broader issues related to the EU's democracy support and its efforts to tackle structural and institutional causes of electoral violence. Particularly important is that the EU bases all its policy on contextual analysis of what drives violence. Its engagement should be sustained. Its observation and technical assistance should never substitute for diplomacy. It should not neglect rule of law institutions or opposition politicians and should continue its work with regional and sub-regional organisations. Nor should it view electoral violence in Africa as a single phenomenon. As this paper shows, its dynamics and patterns vary enormously. Kenya's experience, while holding useful lessons, is not the best lens to view violence everywhere. That perpetrated by authoritarians to stay in power – often less visible but still with devastating effects -- is common but often overlooked.

Electoral violence can wreak immense damage on societies, leave misery in its wake and contribute to state fragility. In countries worst affected elections are a source not of hope for citizens but of dread. Repeated cycles of troubled and violent elections eat away at what is still, according to most opinion polls, strong African support for democracy; an especially disturbing trend given that, as some of the cases in this paper show, the alternative, authoritarianism, rarely bodes well for longer term peace. Preventing violence round elections is vital for states based on democratic principles, whose leaders, with popular legitimacy, are far better able than autocrats to promote the stability and prosperity of the continent, its societies and its citizens.

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