

■ EDITORIAL

Elections: A Vehicle for Triggering or Tempering Conflict?

Elections are divisive in nature. Indeed, one of the key functions of democratic elections is to clarify where the dividing lines between competing political forces lie. When conflict erupts during an electoral campaign or in the aftermath of elections, it is easy to believe that the elections were at the root of the conflict.



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By Vidar Helgesen, Secretary-General

■ FOCUS: Elections and Conflict

Kenya Bleeds: The Post-election Crisis

Posted: February 4, 2008

Following the hotly contested 2007 General Elections, an unprecedented wave of violence has hit Kenya. The announcement by the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) chairman declaring Mwai Kibaki of the Party of National Unity (PNU) the winner and therefore the President of Kenya plunged the country into a state of chaos and anarchy.

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Illustration: © Thomas Lindroth

Pakistan: Elections and Violence

Posted: February 6, 2008

The assassination of Benazir Bhutto on 27 December 2007 resulted in the rescheduling of parliamentary elections from 4 January to 18 February 2008. With the continuation of violence, some fear that the elections will be postponed yet again, or even worse that the army will interfere and cancel them.

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Interviews:

- **Winluck Wahu** (Kenya), International IDEA, talks about the current crisis in Kenya.
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- **Apollinaire Malumalu** (Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC), Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission of the DRC, talks to International IDEA's Bénédicte Walter about the role of electoral commissions in preparing for elections.
» [Listen to the interview](#) (Phone interview in French, 1 February 2008)

Related International IDEA material to "elections and conflict"

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■ OTHER NEWS

Bolivians share constitutional reform experiences with Ecuadoran counterparts

Posted: January 29, 2008

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New publication highlights the role of traditional justice in dealing with the legacy of conflict in Africa

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Bolivian political representatives attending the inauguration of the Ecuadoran Constituent Assembly in the coastal cities of Manta and Montecristo announced that they saw "great chances" for the assembly's success.

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Armenia and the South Caucasus: International IDEA out, RBI in

Posted: February 4, 2008

International IDEA has been operating in Armenia and the South Caucasus since 2002 and is now about to close the office in Yerevan and hand over to its partner - the non profit organization Resource Building Institute in Democracy, Governance and Elections (RBI).

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■ NEW RELEASES

Traditional Justice and Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: Learning from African Experiences

Examines the role played by traditional justice mechanisms in dealing with the legacy of violent conflict in Rwanda, Mozambique, Uganda, Sierra Leone, and Burundi. The case studies are used as the basis for outlining conclusions and options for future policy in the related areas of post-conflict reconstruction, democracy building and development.

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Electoral Management Design - The International IDEA Handbook (Arabic)

Now available in Arabic. Shares best practices and expertise from around the world on financing, structuring and evaluation of Electoral Management Bodies. In its Arabic translation, the Handbook responds to increasing demands from the Arab World for high-quality knowledge tools in the electoral field.

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Effective Party Assistance: Stronger Parties for Better Democracy (Spanish and French)

Now available in Spanish and French. Calls for the party assistance community to develop joint principles for project needs assessment, monitoring of implementation and impact evaluation.

[» Spanish](#)
[» French](#)

Designing for Equality: Best-fit, medium-fit and non-favourable combinations of electoral systems and gender quotas (Arabic)

Now available in Arabic. Assesses how increased women's representation can be achieved under different combinations of electoral systems and quotas.

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