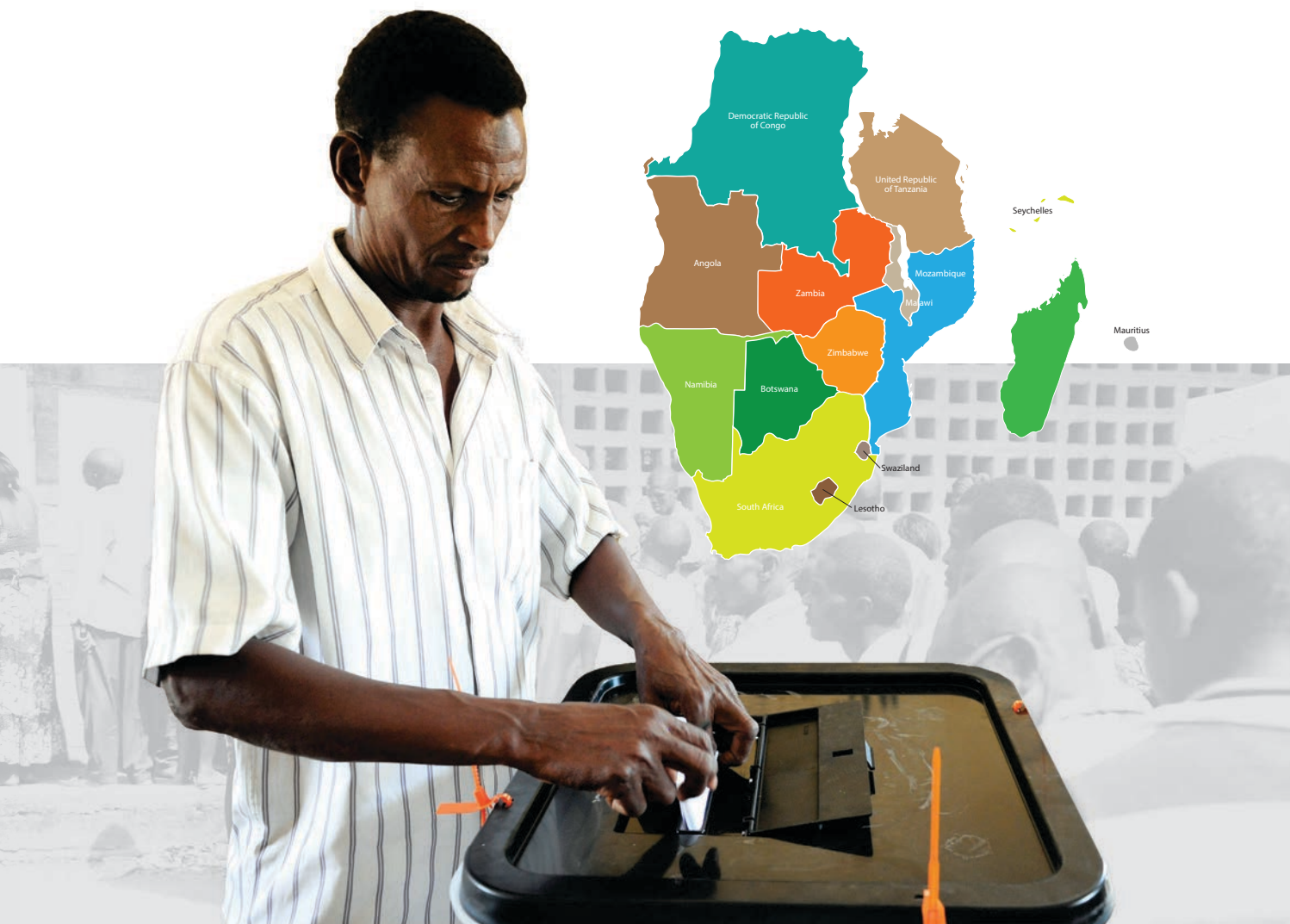# THE POTENTIAL OF EU FUNDED ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE PREVENTION OF ELECTION RELATED CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE:

LESSONS FROM THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION

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EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR ELECTORAL SUPPORT

SADC-ESN
SADC ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK

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Executive Summary

This paper was first developed as a contribution to the discussions of the symposium organized on 16th of November 2016 at the European Parliament by the European Parliament's Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group in cooperation with the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Washington DC-based U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), the European Institute of Peace (EIP) and the European Peace-building Liaison Office (EPLO). The symposium was entirely dedicated to the issue of preventing electoral conflict and violence, entitled: "Electing Peace – What Works in Preventing Election Violence?"

This paper gradually came to include lessons from seminars and workshops on the same subject, organised and held in the region of the Southern African Development Community on December 2016. The contents of the paper has therefore also benefitted from the discussions that took pace during two high-level conferences where ECES was invited to participate. The first one was the 13th International Electoral Affairs Symposiums and Annual International Electoral Awards ceremony organised by the International Centre for Parliamentary Studies (ICPS) in Maputo[1] and the other one a closed SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) workshop in order to elaborate on a new mediation strategy for the SEAC held in Cape Town.

ECES was privileged to be part of both events and to contribute to the many enriching discussions that took place also informing this paper that sums up some of the ECES most valuable lessons learned and experiences from the implementation of a regional project in SADC region for close to four years. Since March 2013, ECES implemented a European Union (EU) funded project in the SADC countries to contribute to the prevention of electoral conflict and violence. The PEV-SADC project, short for Preventing Electoral Conflict in the SADC region, is one of the largest ongoing EU funded election conflict prevention initiatives in the SADC region. This project, which is set to run until August 2017, is funded both by the EU (75%) and ECES (25%).

The project is implemented in collaboration mainly with the Electoral Support Network of Southern Africa. The ESN-SA (formerly SADC-ESN) is a network of sixteen election-based civil society organizations in Southern Africa. These organizations are united by a common recognition of the inextricable link between elections as the foundation of any functional democracy, and the centrality of monitoring human rights throughout the electoral cycle; particularly given the record of human rights abuses in the region.

The ESN-SA seeks to coordinate, with the support of the PEV-SADC project, the election observation efforts carried out by citizen observer groups in the SADC region. It also aims to enhance channels of communication between regional national observer groups with a common focus on assessing the conduct of elections according to international human rights standards, and the dissemination of information to the wider public.

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1   The International Centre for Parliamentary Studies has held International Electoral Affairs Symposiums and International Electoral Awards ceremonies in several countries over the world since seven years now. This year it was held in Maputo, Mozambique, in cooperation with Mozambique Electoral Commission (CNE) with participants hailing from over 30 different countries representing 38 electoral management bodies. The Symposium brought together international election management bodies, NGOs, donor agencies and other relevant stakeholders to share their experiences, discuss the ongoing challenges in election management and strengthen international relations. This event recognises the work of key individuals and organisations for their contributions and achievements in electoral affairs. https://www.electoralnetwork.org/index.php/home/index

ECES' lessons learnt and recommendations in the area of electoral conflict prevention stem from having closely followed nearly an entire electoral cycle in all SADC countries. The PEV-SADCs vast platform of civil society partners and electoral management bodies has contributed to build many partnerships in the region. These bonds have opened up further avenues to prevent election related conflict with increased efficacy and durability: all through sub-regional mechanisms that the PEV-SADC project has supported to establish or invigorate. More than an early warning mechanism, this network –structured around the Election Conflict and Violence Observatory- is generating extremely relevant knowledge and research.

The Observatory's recommendations to the international community on how to improve support to key electoral stakeholders in the quest to prevent, mitigate and manage electoral conflict and violence are shared within this paper and will be further recorded with greater details in an Handbook that will be published in the course of 2017.

Recent elections across the SADC region have reignited generalised feelings of mistrust by broad sections of the public towards electoral management bodies. This growing chasm between the public and those who administer elections is also fed by a perceived lack of independence by electoral administrators at all levels, challenged voters' registers, state involvement in campaign funding and obstacles to observation. The SADC with its 15 Member States is perhaps the most diverse regional body in Africa. It unites advanced democracies with a history of peaceful elections, such as Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa; formerly war torn nations with continuing governance issues, such as Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and countries that continue to struggle with political and electoral triggered atrocities. Taken together, the lessons from this ever-changing political and electoral landscape is what has informed this paper and ECES continued work in the region, bridging European values in democracy support with the realities on the ground made up by several narratives and not one single story by working with all electoral stakeholders with a vested interest in the electoral process.

List of Acronyms

CASA-CE	Broad Convergence for the Salvation of Angola – Electoral Coalition
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EBC	Elections and Boundaries Commission
ECES	European Centre for Electoral Support
ECF-SADC	Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIP	European Institute of Peace
EMB	Electoral Management Bodies
EPD	European Partnership for Democracy
EPEA	Electoral Political Economy Analysis
EPLO	European Peace-building Liaison Office
ESN-SA	Electoral Support Network- Southern Africa
EU	European Union
EU EOM	European Union Election Observation Mission
EURECS	European Response to Electoral Cycle Support
FLS	Frontline States
FPTP	First-Past-the-Post
FRELIMO	Mozambique Liberation Front
HoR	House of Representatives
HRVP	High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
ISDC	Inter-State Defence and Security Committee
LEAD	Leadership and Conflict Management Skills for Electoral Stakeholders
LTOs	Long Term Observers
MCO	Ministerial Committee of the Organ
MEC	Malawi Electoral Commission
MMP	Mixed Member Proportional
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
MRG	Mediation Reference Group
PEV-SADC	Preventing Electoral Violence in the Southern African Development Community
PRS	Social Renewal Party
REWC	Regional Early Warning Centre
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADC-OSPDC	SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation
SADCC	Southern African Coordination Conference
SARPCCO	Southern Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organizations
SCAD	Social Conflict in Africa Data base
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEAC	SADC Electoral Advisory Council

SIPO	Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organization
RENAMO	Mozambican National Resistance
TOR	Terms of reference
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
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The empirical material presented in this paper is a sample of a much broader research exercise carried out by ECES in partnership with the Election Support Network of Southern Africa (ESN-SA). The research took place in the frame of the regional EU funded project for the prevention of election related violence in the SADC to which ECES contributes with 25% of the funding.

Notably, not only the researchers took part of this unique occasion to delve deeper into the social fabrics of the SADC countries, but key electoral stakeholders such as the civil society, EMBs, political parties, media and the judiciary to name a few were involved as active sounding boards along the process. The research is not only useful as a more complex context analysis. It teaches us that although root causes to electoral conflict may have a similar origin albeit the various mechanisms built to curb election related violence are vast and innovative and varies greatly across the SADC.

ECES mission has been, both within and beyond the confines of the regional conflict prevention project (entitled PEV SADC) to revive, empower and capacitate already existing conflict prevention structures. There are a number of noteworthy peace infrastructures in the Southern part of Africa, stemming from the liberation struggle all the way through the end of the apartheid era that, naturally, laid a new socio-political foundation not only for South Africa but for the entire SADC region. In light of this development and consolidation of multi-party politics in this vibrant part of the African continent, there are still firmly anchored patronage systems, unequal distribution of wealth and inequalities across near-all SADC countries in one way of the other.

The political economy of the SADC, by which we refer to the way politics and access to resources are inextricably linked and can therefore be used as a predictor for the motives behind trying to manipulate election results, voting behaviour and political attitudes, performance of local governments and more, is perhaps the most visible around election time. Canvassing in the Southern parts of Africa, as well as in other parts of the continent, is usually an activity that brings vast masses out of their homes either to attend rallies or to listen to candidates giving passionate speeches. Voter turn out is however still a challenge and contrary to what the campaigning period would indicate in terms of mass mobilisation. Many people still do not find the incitement to vote.

The reason behind voter apathy in the SADC, as suggested by the research you are about to take part of, stems from the notion that not much is likely to change, either that the incumbent government will find a way to remain in power or that a new government would fail to correct the shortcomings of its predecessor. It is true that many of the political parties in the SADC started out as part of the liberation army, turned political party and hence the people and the political party that brought freedom are linked in some sort of a reciprocal contract. Several countries have however displayed recently that the electorate, civil societies, media and other electoral stakeholders places higher demands on the leading elite, even challenging their motives to serve the best interest of its people. Governments are not able to hijack political processes in vast parts of the SADC, without outspoken protests from the grassroots. The over 250 registered political parties in both South Africa and Lesotho – one of the largest respectively smallest countries in the SADC is perhaps an indication of a divided society rather than a healthy multi-party political landscape.

There are two distinct on-going parallel processes in many SADC countries that in literature are almost seen as dichotomous, namely social progress and growth on the one end and a revive of political intolerance and political killings on the other.

Interestingly, and also paradoxal, conflict and violence tends to both scare people away from taking part in political processes but in some cases, it has shown to be instrumental in shedding light on the stakes involved in politics and election. Through conflict and violence, people become more aware of how their lives are shaped by policies and politics resulting in an increased engagement. Several studies especially in post-conflict contexts suggest that conflict and violence evokes post-traumatic stress but in some cases, in fact more common amongst women than men, transforms into post-traumatic growth which in turn, may lead to political activism amongst some individuals. This stands in contrast to the often depiction of victims of political or electoral violence as the most disempowered amongst electoral stakeholders. By no means do we mean that all victims of conflict are eventually turning into political activists but it serves the purpose to nuance common wisdoms and enrich what we know about political and electoral conflict with new research that generates more multi-facetted knowledge of the topic.

In order to ensure that the findings are being disseminated and can continuously be a source of discussion, case studies have been developed out of all fourteen research-papers and fed into ECES innovative training curriculum entitled Leadership and Conflict Management for Electoral Stakeholders (LEAD). As such, the research forms part of capacity enhancing programmes delivered all over the SADC region in order to incite debates amongst those who holds the potential to change the rules of the game both at national and regional level.

Lastly, it has been a privilege to having followed not only the research process but the entire PEV SADC project for nearly four years. A second phase is currently being developed in order to capitalize on the work done and the vast networks across the entire region that ECES and ESN-SA has cultivated. The research will ultimately culminate into a handbook that is to be launched during the first quarter of 2017. This paper serves therefore as a pre-launch of what is yet to come.

Monica Frassoni

President

European Centre for Electoral Support

SADC is nowadays considered as a relative stable region in terms of election related violence. Indeed, emerging from a background of oppression, racism and conflict, and faced with the challenges of globalisation, the region's leaders envisioned a shared future driven by political, economic and developmental integration of their economies and founded upon common democratic values and institutions. In this perspective, multiple efforts have been undertaken by its member countries to foster an environment of peace, security and stability over the last decades. Different institutions and protocols have been created to reinforce regional cooperation and sharing of experiences. Although these institutional arrangements broadly deal with social conflict, the notion that electoral-related violence specifically threatens regional peace and stability was placed in sharper relief in 2004 with the endorsement by the SADC Heads of State Summit of the first set of SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. The instrument formally allowed the observation of all electoral processes in the region as a means of sharing best practice and forestalling undemocratic outcomes which tend toward political violence and instability. In 2015, after 10 years of varied experiences with successful and, sometimes, disputed electoral processes in the region, the SADC reviewed and developed a more comprehensive set of Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, which encapsulated civil society inputs for the first time, and was informed by the changing technological, security and legal environment surrounding democratic elections on the continent and globally.
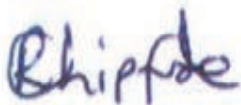
It is in this general environment that the SADC-Electoral Support Network was established in January 1998 with the main focus to observe the elections in SADC member states through enhanced collaboration between the existing national observation networks. In order to distinguish the network from intergovernmental bodies and to confirm its identity as the only non-partisan, non-governmental network of national observer groups, the network changed its name in January 2015 and became the Electoral Support Network of Southern Africa. In the quest to reinforce capacities of its members to be better prepared to involve in all phases of the electoral cycle and to be an active player in the peaceful conduct of electoral and democratic processes, the network welcomed the high potential in terms of capacity-building, peer exchange, research and concrete action that was offered through its partnership with mainly the European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES) in the Preventing Electoral Conflict in the SADC region Project that was launched in February 2013 and that is still ongoing generously funded by the EU.

During the lifetime of this project, together with our partner, we observed rising concerns about the escalation of electoral related violence in periods before, during and after elections, which has led to instability in countries such as Lesotho, Madagascar and Zimbabwe in the recent past, uprooting fragile coalitions, generating low level conflict, triggering forced migration and displacement of peoples and generally posing a threat to a sustainable peace and stability in the region as a whole. As such electoral events in the SADC region show that there is a need for continuous vigilance and deeper understanding of all dimensions and actors that could potentially generate conflict and/or violence related to electoral processes.

To respond to this need, the PEV-SADC project offered the possibility to set up a regional Observatory of very articulated researchers and analysists, closely linked to the ESN-SA to

not only look at the root causes of past and more recent election-related conflicts but more importantly to give insights and recommendations on how to prevent them and detect them at an early stage as a way to prevent them from escalating.

As host director of the ESN SA and Executive Director of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) I belief in the important potential of the Observatory as a way to sensitize the key-players in our electoral processes on how to consolidate our democratic processes and one way to do this is to communicate and share the results of the research and analysis provided over the last years. This article is an important step in making sure that a maximum of actors are informed about the initiative and its results in terms of lessons learnt, in depth insights and well-founded recommendations. However, according to me, it is a first step that should be followed by others that go in the direction of promoting peaceful electoral processes as a necessary condition to consolidate democracy in our region. As a privileged partner of ECES, ESN SA beliefs that our joint efforts will be able to further enhance positive dynamics in that direction and will allow to further attract other key-stakeholders such as electoral commissions, political actors, media, security forces, traditional and religious leaders to go in the same direction.

Rindai Chipfunde Vava

Host Director of the Electoral Support Network of Southern Africa

Director of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network

1. Political and Electoral Context and Background of the SADC

All actions in support of political and electoral processes in the SADC region are timely as they coincide with **rising concerns about the escalation of electoral-related violence** in periods before, during and after elections. This situation has led to instability in countries such as Lesotho, Madagascar and Zimbabwe in the recent past, uprooting fragile coalitions, generating low-level conflict, triggering forced migrations and displacement of peoples and generally posing a threat to sustainable peace and stability in the region as a whole. In this regard, it is noteworthy that governments in the region have invested a considerable amount of resources in fostering an environment of peace, security and stability since the transformation of the Southern African Coordination Conference (SADCC), created in 1980, into the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 1992 with mixed results and fluctuating political will.

Historically, this vision was encapsulated in the ambitions of the Frontline States (FLS) – originally constituting Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia, before integrating other liberated nations into the fold. The FLS' specific aims were to liberate the region and resist the devastating effects of colonization and apartheid (SADC, 2010). Emerging from a background of oppression, racism and conflict, and faced with the challenges of globalization, the region's leaders envisioned a shared future driven by the political, economic and developmental integration of their economies and founded upon common democratic values and institutions. The signing of the SADC Treaty in Windhoek, Namibia, in 1992, followed by the establishment in 1996, of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (OSPDC) in Gaborone, Botswana, reinforced these initial ambitions.

SADC took a number of related steps to operationalize this vision, including restructuring its institutions in 1999, signing the SADC Protocol on Defence and Security Cooperation in 2001 and developing the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO) to ensure regular monitoring and evaluation of its programs in all sectors. Similarly by ratifying a Mutual Defence Pact; integrating the Southern Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organizations (SARPCCO) into the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDC); and creating units with complementary roles in the Regional Early Warning Centre (REWC), the Mediation Reference Group (MRG) and the Panel of Elders (ibid) it further enhanced this process.

Although these institutional arrangements are broadly designed to deal with conflict, the notion that election-related violence specifically threatens regional peace and stability was placed in sharper relief in 2004 with the endorsement by the SADC Heads of State Summit of the first set of SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. This regional instrument allowed for the reciprocal observation of all electoral processes in the region as a means of sharing best practice. It also provided the opportunity to map and forestall undemocratic outcomes, which could veer toward political violence and instability. SADC followed this up by creating a mechanism, the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) to ensure the 'scrupulous implementation' of this new normative framework for elections whose terms of reference (TORs) included advising the Organ on conflict prevention, elections and good governance.

In 2015, after 10 years of varied experiences including successful and, sometimes, disputed electoral processes in the region, the SADC developed a more comprehensive and updated set of Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections[2]. These

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2   SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections available at : http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/compilation_democracy/sadcprinc.htm

new principles incorporated civil society inputs for the first time and were informed by the changing technological, security and legal environment surrounding democratic elections on the continent and globally. Adopted by the Ministerial Committee of the Organ (MCO) on 20 July 2015, the new normative framework introduces a Long Term Election Observation methodology to enable the expert assessment of the entire electoral cycle, serving as a bridge between electoral observation, electoral assistance and conflict prevention.

This should enable the various SADC units dealing with conflict prevention to benefit from systematic data collection and strategy formulation. The extent to which these institutions have been able to map and forestall political violence and electoral violence in particular, is under-explored, largely due to the sensitivities surrounding access to supranational institutions. Similarly, research on electoral-related violence has tended to focus on conflict-prone nations, excluding more stable states. However, states with a history of peace and stability are likely to have relevant lessons to share. In addition, they may have dormant yet very real vulnerabilities, which might require short or long-term interventions.

The structure and organizational culture of the SADC is built upon a series of apparent contradictions. Regional politics may have more leverage –and legitimacy- to influence political and electoral processes in neighbouring countries, yet they are often seen as taking a passive position as a result of fraternal politics and solidarities entrenched in the struggle for liberation. This state of affairs is eroding the political will that is necessary to promote compliance with international standards for electoral processes. Furthermore, it is limiting the potential to engage in fruitful political dialogue with their main donor countries and allies on an international scale.

It should also be noted that collaboration and continued relationships with these regional bodies holds great potential for the harmonization of electoral standards and the effective development of joint efforts to prevent, mitigate and manage election-related conflict and violence. In parallel, it is important to address these issues at the national level and seek to collaborate with key stakeholders at all stages, including at the grassroots level. These key stakeholders include both formal and informal power holders in addition to a broad spectrum of relevant figures including religious leaders, local authorities and women's groups amongst others.

2. ECES Research and the Electoral Conflict Observatory

ECES launched the research component of the Preventing Electoral Violence in the Southern African Development Community (PEV-SADC) in 14[3] countries in September 2014. The research was aimed at systematically gathering data on electoral-related conflict and providing empirically grounded insights into the root causes and trends in violent episodes during electoral processes. ECES' ultimate goal was to establish a regional Electoral Observatory designed to monitor electoral cycles in the SADC region and which could serve as a form of early warning mechanism.

Research was conducted by ECES in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania/Zanzibar, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. ECES also commissioned a combined report on SADC/Botswana,

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[3] At the time the project was being developed, the Seychelles was not a SADC member and had therefore to be left out from the actual implementation regrettably.

which examined the manner in which regional normative frameworks interacted with national jurisdictions to forestall electoral-related violence. ECES assembled a carefully selected group of country-based researchers with proven research credentials and substantive knowledge of the electoral process and conflict in their countries and the region. The research efforts were punctuated by regular peer review processes and concluded with a technical Leadership and Conflict Management for Electoral Stakeholders (LEAD) workshop held in Gaborone, Botswana, in December 2015. A follow-up seminar for final validation and the official presentation of the 14 research contributions, compiled into one handbook, will be organized during the first quarter of 2017 in South Africa.

The key focus of the research was:

- Understanding the key drivers of electoral-related violence in the SADC region;
- Mapping trends of electoral-related violence in the region;
- Identifying the key factors in preventing electoral-related violence.

Researchers were encouraged to adopt mixed methods in exploring this under-studied phenomenon and to propose tangible steps for dealing with it nationally and regionally. They frequently experienced difficulties in gathering data on violence for a variety of reasons –the main ones being the paucity of current information in state and non-state repositories.

In several cases, neither the electoral management bodies nor the security forces had a specific pool of information dedicated to electoral-related violence. Indeed, this type of violence was generally deemed to fall under the penal code and classified within crime typology databases. Therefore, most data was collected and checked through various different written sources including libraries, government documents, newspapers, electronic sources. Data was also collected through key informant interviews, discussions and observations. Qualitative data was complemented by quantitative data from the Afrobarometer, in order to illustrate public perceptions of electoral-related violence; its drivers and causes. The regional report on SADC utilized the Social Conflict in Africa Database (SCAD), in addition to relevant Afrobarometer data.

The different studies are not informed by any single theory of electoral-related violence. Indeed, they generally acknowledge that no specific theory can explain the complex nature of the problem. Instead, they follow various approaches of theoretical testing, inevitably converging around consensus-based definitions of electoral-related conflict and violence. The PEV-SADC research underlines the notion that electoral-violence –a subtype of political violence– falls within three broad analytical categories: the metaphysical (micro-analytical level), structural (macro-analytical levels), and cultural explanations to violence. Proponents of metaphysical explanations posit that violence occurs as a result of individual pathologies. Micro-analytical explanations for violence focus on the psychological characteristics of perpetrators, driven by social disaffection -the feelings of relative deprivation and frustration. The structural explanation assesses environmental factors, the socio-economic conditions that bring about those frustrations and disaffections. Most researchers approached the problem from the prism of a structural theory to violence, looking into the social conditions under which violence is triggered.

- Firstly, it is critical to note that regional and national research show that electoral-related violence is generally a symptom of much deeper social and demographic root causes, which need to be comprehensively researched and understood for the design of short and long-term mitigation strategies.

- Secondly, while each country has experienced various forms of electoral-related violence; these appear to be sporadic or episodic– and quite often a result of political engineering.

- Thirdly, from a regional perspective, the Southern African region has been, relatively, the most peaceful geographical area on the continent. Its most violent episodes occurred during transitional elections in the early and mid-1990s. The analysis of data on conflict from the Social Conflict in Africa Database (SCAD) shows that only three of the 15 SADC countries feature in the 'Top ten most violent elections' held between 1990 and 2010, i.e. elections where there were fatalities. These are South Africa in 1994 [239 deaths]; Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) [42 deaths] in 2006; and Zimbabwe [114 deaths] in 2008. However, data from country researchers does show a much wider perspective, particularly in the case of Zimbabwe, where non-governmental organizations invested in independent documentation processes on violence since the early 2000. Since the dawn of the 21ˢᵗ century, the region has seen unprecedented levels of violent conflict in Lesotho, Madagascar and Zimbabwe, which required protracted negotiations and facilitated consociational arrangements by SADC.

Eventually, this led to relative calm and restoration of democratic processes; or a re-modelling of electoral laws and constitutional frameworks. Concerns about the tenuous environment in Mozambique, where two former liberation movements-turned-political parties [Frelimo and Renamo] appear to be on the brink of an armed conflict, are presented as well, underlining the delicate nature of conflict management measures deployed in that country. More broadly, several of these studies recognize that the foundations of political violence (and implicitly its sub-type, electoral-related violence) are manifold and rooted in historical, structural and cultural contexts. Further, the underlying causes exist at various levels, including informal patronage systems, the distribution of wealth, rights, privilege and power elicited by exclusionary politics. Ethno-religious tensions, socio-economic exclusion and inequality are also identified as catalysts.

These studies underline that the early 1990s were the most violent period, when many African countries were experiencing transitions to multiparty democracies; particularly in 1992/1993; and later in the 2000 and 2005 periods. Furthermore, and supported by extensive literature reviews, the studies note that:

- Countries with a history of civil war or civil discord will exhibit the highest levels of electoral conflict;

- There is a wide range of causes of electoral-related violence, including: high youth unemployment, land disputes, ethno-religious tensions; nepotism; cronyism; patronage; partisan politics; competition over access to resources and horizontal inequality (Small, 2015; AU/IPI, 2015; PSC, 2015);

- Institutional weakness; attempts at unconstitutionally extending presidential term limits; politicization of state and security institutions; unequal access to state resources by political parties; inequality; social exclusion and lack of autonomy of electoral management bodies are additional root causes.

3. Snapshot of the country case studies

This section provides a snapshot of the electoral state of play relating to electoral conflict from the 14 country case studies. A final comprehensive report for each country will be complied in the forthcoming handbook that will become one of PEV-SADCs most valuable and lasting outputs. A short resume of each of the country case studies is included herein below.

3.1 Angola

Angola has maintained political stability since the end of the civil war in 2002. The 2010 Constitution established a presidential parliamentary system whereby the President is no longer elected by direct popular vote; the head of the party winning the most seats in Parliament accedes to the presidency. The Constitution also sets a limit of two, five-year presidential terms. Parliamentary elections, under the 2010 Constitution, were held in August 2012. The ruling party (MPLA, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) won 173 out of 220 seats, receiving 72% of the votes. As a result, the incumbent José Eduardo dos Santos was sworn in as President. UNITA (the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) is the main opposition party with 32 Parliamentary seats, while CASA-CE (The Broad Convergence for the Salvation of Angola – Electoral Coalition) established six months before the elections and the PRS (Social Renewal Party) won eight and three seats respectively.

The next General Elections are scheduled to take place in 2017. It is expected that the MPLA will take advantage of its solid financial base, strong business connections and dominion of the media to win another majority and retain its hegemonic grip on all aspects of power in the country. In parallel with national politics, in which large-scale popular discontent is becoming visible, Angola is internationally becoming more assertive and has been demonstrating a steadfast commitment to peace and stability in Africa, in particular in the Region of the Great Lakes. In October 2014, Angola together with Malaysia, New Zealand, Spain and Venezuela, were elected by the United Nations General Assembly to serve as non-permanent members of the Security Council for a two-year term, starting on 1 January 2015 until 31 December 2016. In March 2016, Angola assumed the rotating presidency of the United Nations Security Council for the month of March. This may, to some extent, conceal the potential pressure existing at the national level. The dynamics at the internal level should be followed-up closely as conflict may arise "from nowhere" as Angola has multiple identities that are diametrically opposed when it comes to politics at home or abroad.

The Angolan government started the voter registration process on 25 August 25 2016 in-line with provisions in the Angolan Constitution. The first phase of voters registration runs until 20 December 20 2016, while the second phase runs from 5 January to 31 March 2017. Potential for civil uprising cannot be excluded around this process, which merits close attention given the importance of this phase in the preparation of the upcoming elections.

3.2 Botswana

A founding Member of the Frontline States (FLS), SADCC and SADC, Botswana, where the regional body is presently headquartered, is well-established as the longest enduring continuous multiparty democracy on the continent. The country has not experienced any serious validated cases of electoral violence in its history. Despite consistently employing the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) electoral system, which some political commentators have adjudged as contributing to unfair outcomes leading to conflict[4].

However, the exceptionality of Botswana is challenged in regards to its unremitting dominant party structure, which purportedly limits representation. In addition, the FPTP and the persistence of patriarchal structures also constrain the representation of women in political governance in the country. Perhaps even more distinctly, Botswana is one of few countries in SADC that have not ratified the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (2008) which calls for 50% representation of women by 2015. Because of this, there have been suggestions that the country should embrace a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) System, which could enhance the goals of gender balance and equality consistent with the aforementioned SADC Protocol.

Furthermore, unequal access to state resources, including communication resources, has emerged as an important factor as elections become more competitive (Phirinyane, 2013). Others posit that a dual identity complex also portends danger, as non-Tswana ethnic groups are expected to be assimilated into Tswana culture and to suppress their own identities. This supposed hierarchy of tribal administration elevates the eight (8) Tswana Tribal Chiefs to permanent membership in the House of Chiefs supposedly relegating north-easterners to 'sub-chiefs' (Molomo, 2005; 2010). Botswana's population of 2,024,787 persons is composed of Tswana (79%), Kalanga (11%), Basarwa (3%), Kgaladi (3%) and white Africans (1%).

Setswana is the dominant language, as it is spoken by 79% of the population (ibid). So far, indicative evidence suggests that ethnic diversity has not influenced the character of political competition or voting patterns (ECES, 2014: 25-26). Overall, although Botswana has enjoyed an unprecedented 49 years of peace and good governance, there are indications that multiple-levels of dialogue and possible reform debates may be necessary to avoid the build-up of political contestation over power and resources which could degenerate into political or electoral-related violence in the future.

3.3 Democratic Republic of the Congo

The history of electoral conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has illustrated several of the distinctive challenges related to the conduct of elections in post-conflict contexts. The research in the context of the PEV-SADC project has shown how the conflict dynamics of first-generation

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4   Chirambo, 2008; Chirambo & Steyn, 2009), research suggests this has so far not been the case in Botswana (Molomo, 2005; 2010.

elections differ from those of second-generation elections. The DRC's first-generation elections in 2006 faced enormous security challenges, which are characteristic of immediate post-conflict contexts where transforming armed factions into civilian political actors is a daunting task. The research has also shown that unresolved conflict dynamics in first-generation elections tend to be exported into the next electoral cycle, which makes the arena for contestations for political extremely volatile.

This volatility was compounded by the issue-based nature of electoral politics characteristic of second-generation elections, where a high premium is placed on the quest for peace dividends that include social and economic returns for the new political order. In contrast, while greater emphasis was –understandably- placed on the first-generation elections in 2006, in order to prevent the disintegration of the delicate peace process; the second-generation elections in 2011 reversed these gains in a context of limited international support. The logic of ballots as a substitute for bullets has been deconstructed by the logic of ballots and bullets as strategic complements in instances of electoral violence both in 2006 and in 2011.

Future research should attempt to focus on increasing understanding on how political actors such as political parties in post-conflict electoral processes mutate to become guerrilla actors and how this process can be mitigated sustainably through institutional development. Attempts should also be made to generate new knowledge on the use of in violence elections as a strategic complement in post-conflict contexts, in order to develop appropriate mitigation and transformational mechanisms. Second-generation elections remain as critical as first-generation elections in post-conflict contexts and therefore require a similar level of attention from the international community. Lastly, long term institutional capacity building of EMBs and other actors in the electoral process is crucial for peaceful and sustainable electoral processes.

3.4 Lesotho

The study carried out in the context of the PEV-SADC project has revealed that every election in Lesotho has been followed by disputes, which have driven the country into a context of instability and violence. In Lesotho, as elsewhere in the SADC region, heightened electoral competition between political parties has led to cases of electoral-related conflicts. The use of security agencies by political elites, as highlighted in the research, has led to the constricting of democratic space for citizen participation, as well as to the infringement on fundamental freedoms. This state of affairs partly explains the SADC's multiple political interventions in Lesotho. In other terms, electoral competition in Lesotho has become increasingly virulent, highlighting the deep-rooted deficiencies identified within the research.

While electoral democracy is expected to contribute to durable peace and social stability, which are prerequisites for sustainable human development, elections have regrettably not added any real value to Lesotho's democratisation project. Instead, given the multiple conflicts that have arisen, they have proven costly to the nation. Lesotho celebrates 50 years of political independence at the end of 2016 but, because of the challenges raised by the research, the liabilities regarding elections, democracy and governance seem to outweigh their assets, so far. As noted in the research, it is important for Lesotho to accept that elections are not per se a panacea to the socio-economic and political ailments that characterize the country.

Elections are just one aspect and there is much that lies beyond them. The respondents to the research article were unanimous that more work is needed in addressing these problems. These other areas require further research in order to visualise the way forward and future activities. Out of the 32 recommendations that were produced, the three main fields that require attention with a view to the possible February 2017 elections are: i) Effective and strategic voter education targeting the youth is of cardinal importance in the fight against electoral conflicts; ii) Politicized army, police and intelligence services have consistently taken sides in political contests and acted as vectors through which violence is used for political battles. This should be mitigated through security and public sector reform; iii) Lesotho should create, transform and democratize institutions of governance capable of driving socio-economic development in a stable political environment.

3.5 Madagascar

Five presidential elections[5] and five legislative elections[6] were held in Madagascar following the third wave of democratization. Political crisis followed the 2001 election, but did not bring the electoral process to an end. The consolidation of democracy was brusquely halted by a coup d'état in March 2009, followed by a protracted transitional period until the holding of elections in 2013. Madagascar's 2013 elections could be seen as a democratic 'makeover' election (a process by which coup leaders and external actors transform illegally-obtained power into internationally legitimated rule[7]), aimed at legitimizing the country's 2009 coup.

When viewed against the wider backdrop of post-conflict elections on the African continent, Madagascar's 2013 elections were not all that surprising. Firstly, in-line with van de Walle's earlier findings[8], Madagascar's multiparty competitive elections procedurally satisfied donors, thus enhancing the government's external legitimacy without threatening the interests of the ruling elite. Secondly, they confirmed a general trend wherein there is an absence of alternation. Thirdly, regardless of the type of election, political power remains strongly personalized around the figure of the president. These elections where logically perceived by the Malagasy elite as rewarding a governance system based on strong presidentialism and big man clientelism.

Programmatic and ideological differences or debates about specific policy issues hardly played any role in this process. Although, in the eyes of the international donor community, elections are key components of state building, democratization and more accountable governance, Madagascar provides a useful reminder that a less ideological and more realistic view of elections is needed. Indeed, elections can be potentially advantageous or damaging to post-conflict stability and democratization. The case of Madagascar illustrates that although relative stability persists, the socio-economic conditions of people may continue to be eroded, developing fertile grounds for instability caused by political and social discontent[9]. This situation is accentuated

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5   1993, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2013.
6   1993, 1998, 2002, 2007, 2013.
7   B. Klaas, J. Ramasy, The Coup Makeover: Madagascar's 2013 Election and Legitimization of the 2009 Coup, 2015.
8   Van de Walle, N. 2003, "Presidentialism and clientelism in Africa's emerging party systems", Journal of Modern African Studies 41 (2), 297-321.
9   Reilly, B. 2008, "Post-war elections: uncertain turning points of transition", in A. Jarstad & T. Sisk, eds. From War to Democracy: dilemmas of peacebuilding, Cambridge University Press, pp. 157-81.

by the challenge of political reconciliation between the main actors of the 2009 political crisis. If not dealt with properly, this may affect the peaceful organization of elections expected in 2018.

3.6 Malawi

The practice of conflict prevention and mitigation in Malawi's electoral process identifies more with the conflict cycle approach than with any other frameworks[10]. This approach has four stages – identification of risks for electoral violence throughout the electoral cycle; deterrence or conflict prevention; detection of incidents of conflict and electoral violence; and mitigation[11]. However, the emphasis in Malawi is mostly on deterrence and mitigation rather than on conflict identification and mitigation. With regards to deterrence, the primary concern has been the securing of venues to hold political rallies, ensuring the personal security of high-profile politicians and electoral officials, securing polling stations and tallying centres as well as the safety of sensitive materials such as ballot papers. However, areas of improvement have been identified, notably at the level of the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC). This institution could even potentially play an important role as coordinator of a holistic conflict cycle approach that addresses electoral violence. There is no evidence of an institutionalized mechanism for sharing information about potential triggers of violence between the MEC and the Police. Such a mechanism could potentially provide more effective ways to deal with violence deterrence. With regards to mitigation, it has been observed that acts of open conflict and violence are left to the police, whose approach punishes perpetrators of violence but does not address the root causes of the violence.

With regards to identifying risks throughout the electoral cycle, it is observed that systematic risk assessments are hardly carried out. This could be due to the challenges of structuring collective action, by both the MEC and the Police, as these tend to consider the other responsible for these assessments, practically ruling out the possibility for a common approach. The MEC believes that such an activity should be undertaken by the security forces; while these are of the opinion that such assessments are an element of electoral administration, and therefore a job for the MEC[12]. Another reason could be that risk assessments of this nature require a more institutionalized and resourced collaborative mechanism involving the MEC and the security forces, whereas these resources are not necessarily available.

3.7 Mauritius

Unlike the upheavals in sugar plantations in the 1930s and 1940s when sugar laborers and small planters revolted against the ethnically stratified colonial order, political violence became ethnically-oriented after 1959 when the Good/Best Loser System as a consociational tool of ethnic proportionality was

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10 Bardall, Gabrielle (2010) A Conflict-Cycle Perspective on Electoral Violence (IFES); LEAD Facilitator Notes, 2015 ECES.
11 Darnolf, Staffan and Almami Cyllah (2014) Electoral Management Bodies and Electoral Violence' in Almami Cyllah (ed) Elections Worth Dying For? A Selection of Case Studies from Africa (Washington: IFES).
12 Interviews: Chief Elections Officer; Police Director of Research and Planning

enforced together with coalition politics favoring the accommodation of ethnic elites. Violence in post-consociational Mauritius began to be characterized by inter-ethnic confrontations and claims against the ethnic allocation of state resources. The riots which occurred in 1965, 1968 and 1999 therefore have their roots in the invisible coercion of a system of power-sharing among entrenched ethnic elites organized in coalitions. In such a system, communalism which has plagued Mauritian society as one of the main sources of inter-segmental conflict paradoxically appears as the regulator of the Mauritian consociational democracy, fostering elite dominance and population acquiescence.

The implementation of consociational democracy in Mauritius changed the nature of political violence. Whereas it was previously bottom-up as in the 1930s, it now became mainly inter-segmental, with cases of interethnic violence, political murders and acts of intimidation taking place during electoral campaigns. Society seems to self-inflict its wounds, directing its frustration and violence at the horizontal level, in order for its claims and frustrations to be heard and addressed by the political system, where politics of clientelism and ethnic favoritism prevail. The potential for conflict and violence in Mauritius is therefore not related to diversity management per se: "the right to pursue a culturally specific way of life has never been threatened in independent Mauritius" instead, the conflict can be traced to "certain practices in the public sphere related to socialization patterns, not to culture" (Eriksen 2004: 93). The implementation of consociation in Mauritius has entrenched communal divisions instead of resolving them, thus planting the seeds for potentially rampant conflict. This apparently justifies the criticism of authors according to whom consociational arrangements tend to freeze existing divisions and conflicts, reducing the art of accommodation to formulas that work only as long as processes of social, economic and political change do not upset them (Brass 1991: 342).

3.8 Mozambique

Mozambique is a relatively new democracy, which transitioned from a state of open conflict. The 2014 general elections marked 20 years since the completion of the first democratic multi-party elections in the country, and 22 years of peace. The country has completed five cycles of general elections and four cycles of local elections. This remains a remarkable achievement following a long period of one-party rule and protracted armed conflict. The transition to becoming a fully functioning, consolidated, democratic country is not easy, it requires solid institutions and norms, profound understanding of the context and its dynamics and a strong democratic culture. Mozambique is on a path to complete this task. In this sense, the increasing resort to violence, greater state control, and political opposition dissent voiced outside the political arena are worrying trends that have taken hold in the last few years.

Formally, Mozambique has a relatively well-established democratic system, built on the rule of law. However, an informal system exists in parallel that has an enormous incidence in the political system, the political arena, and the interplay between the main political parties. The ruling party, Frelimo, has been in power for over 40 years, initially within a one-party state system. The informal structures underlying that system persist within the new pluralist system, blurring the necessary separation between the ruling party and the state. The strong legacy of conflict between the two main parties can similarly not be underestimated, as it represents an often insurmountable obstacle to constructive collaboration within the formal political arena. Instead of acting as political opponents, these groups still tend to perceive the other as an

enemy and act accordingly.

Trust is a key concept in a functioning democratic political system. Trust between parties, trust in the institutions and the peoples' trust in public authority that acts in their best interests. Moreover, Mozambique is characterized by distrust at all levels, notably in the political sphere. The two main parties coexist in a permanent state of distrust, which easily pushes them towards violent confrontation rather than more limited forms of oppositional relationships.

Electoral violence has become a means to express dissent and means to contest election results. This has been a prevalent feature in every election, since the first elections in 1994. Renamo, the main opposition party, has repeatedly expressed its mistrust in the electoral process and its institutions, with claims that Frelimo has stolen every election in the country. The 1999 election was followed by violent outbursts, with numerous civilian deaths. The country has been in a state of constant political crisis since the October 2014 elections, with several violent clashes between government forces and Renamo armed factions, leading to deaths and population displacement. This is an ongoing crisis with frequent acts of violence and, as such, it is difficult to analyse comprehensively as there is a lack of verifiable and objective information. Indeed, the conflicting reports from the political contenders are indicative of the deeply entrenched roots of this conflict, the difficulties in making their voices heard and both parties disparate understanding of "the truth".

3.9 Namibia

Namibia enjoys a relatively well-earned reputation as a tranquil nation, wherein elections are usually regarded as peaceful affairs. However, the results of the Afrobarometer survey indicate that between a quarter and a third of the population fears becoming a victim of violence during election time. Indeed, although rare, violence is not uncommon in Namibia. This may be particularly so in times where Swapo's (South West Africa People's Organization) dominance appears to be challenged, with rising tension and more frequent clashes; notably in the party's heartland in the central north, where there has hardly ever been any real political competition.

In addition to a desk review of past elections and interviews with key informants, the research carried out within the context of the PEV-SADC project attempted to gauge Namibians' current thoughts and experience relating to electoral violence. To this end a survey was conducted on 136 respondents, adopting the analytical framework employed by G. Bardall in her study on gender and electoral violence. According to this typology, electoral violence is classified as being physical, economic, or social-psychological. In addition, the differences between women and men's experience of violence are also duly highlighted.

The results of the survey show that a minority of Namibians are concerned, or affected by electoral violence. Namibians expressed their fear of being victimized, and confirmed that certain areas were dangerous 'no-go zones' during electoral periods. Similarly, they reported that businesses could face boycotts based on political affiliation and reported feeling pressure from their families and partners when it came to making a choice about who to vote for. The findings of the survey should not be extrapolated to the Namibian population as a whole, as it was conducted using a convenience sample and not a representative one. Nevertheless, as reflected by other sources, the survey shows that while not a major source of concern for Namibians, electoral violence is not something they underestimate.

3.10 South Africa

Competitive elections have become the most critical events in the allocation of power in Southern Africa. South Africa is no exception. While it is generally reputed for peaceful elections, the country is regularly engulfed in persistent, low-key, election-related violence and disputes. Indeed, elections in South Africa have been conducted in tense political and social environments, although not marked by significant and protracted election-related violence. Instead, the stimulus of violence appears to be underlying in social, political and economic cleavages and tensions. In the 20 years since its first post-apartheid democratic elections, South Africa has worked at progress. The country's GDP has almost tripled; increasing numbers of public housing, schools, hospitals and clinics have been built; and more citizens have access to social infrastructures such as power, water and roads. However, South Africa still grapples with tenacious structural problems, including high unemployment, harsh inequality and poor labor relations, amidst the gloomy impact of now sluggish economic growth.

Widespread governance and management shortfalls also bedevil the delivery of essential economic and social services on which the country depends. These act as a significant constraint on growth and socioeconomic development and have put a dampener on the spirit of transformation. Strained political and economic times are thus contributing to growing citizen distrust in the ruling government as does political gridlock and drift. Public disillusionment and anxiety has grown in the last five years. This has heightened political intolerance, which also thrives on weak government responses to deal with a complex set of structural and governance issues that trigger violence throughout the country's electoral cycle. The research produced within the PEV-SADC project discusses the different manifestations of violence in the context of elections in South Africa in the last five years, highlighting conflict hotspots and the potential for violent confrontations in future elections.

3.11 Swaziland

Electoral conflict and violence in Swaziland are a symptom of an ailing and deeply entrenched political system. Lasting solutions to episodes of electoral violence require addressing the root causes of conflict rather than the symptoms. The position of the monarch is a key consideration in any envisioned political dispensation; followed by the re-alignment of the legislative framework, including the Constitution, and institutions that support the ideals of a "new Swaziland". Numerous election observation mission reports over the years have highlighted the skewed political field, raising particular concerns regarding the exclusion of political parties from participating in elections. Political parties themselves and other civic groups (i.e. labor unions) regularly advocate for some form of national political dialogue as a peaceful means to usher in democratic dispensation in Swaziland. These calls for dialogue have recently been met positively by the Commonwealth, who offered a facilitator in the persona of the former President of Malawi, H.E. Dr Bakili Muluzi.

For the proposed dialogue process, civic groups have positioned themselves, drawn from political parties and civil society organizations, with a fair representation of interests including women. Issues of mandate have been raised by proponents of the conservative camp. Resolving the question of the unity of the advocacy agenda amongst the representatives of civic groups

and their constituencies is another challenge. Although not implemented, time for consultation with constituencies should have been allocated to ensure that there were no clashing agendas on the negotiating table.

A national referendum could be an alternative if the issue of political mandate or legitimacy of the dialogue representatives is raised against representative civic groups during the dialogue process. This referendum would serve to give shape to the "new Swaziland" as envisaged by the population. In this case, more time will be required to open spaces for political parties to mobilize the population; especially considering the fact that since the 1973 Decree came into effect they have never really had the freedom to mobilize freely. In a similar token, civil society organizations will need to roll out programs, such as conducting civic education initiatives on systems of government to contribute to level the ground for political plurality. In the meantime, the Electoral Commission Forum of the SADC (ECF SADC) needs to be assisted in strengthening its technical and operational capacity to heighten the integrity and perception of the institution, its personnel and of the election process itself.

3.12 Tanzania

The electoral system in Tanzania is predominantly First-Past-the–Post (FPTP). If a Presidential candidate is from one part of the United Republic, his/her running mate, who is a Vice-Presidential candidate, must be from the other part of the Union. Both are elected together based on the majority of votes cast for the Presidential election.

Tanzania also employs a system of proportional representation for the allocation of special seats for women in Parliament. These special seats for women represent thirty per cent of the total number of elected constituency seats, plus five members elected by the Zanzibar House of Representatives, the Attorney General of the United Public of Tanzania (ex-officio Member of the Parliament), the Speaker and ten presidential nominees. Regarding the election of Councillors, special seats for women are allocated through proportional representation, for no less than one third of the all elected Councillors and Members of Parliament in each Council. The special seats are apportioned according to the number of seats each political party has won in the council.

Similar to the system in mainland Tanzania, the President of Zanzibar is elected through direct popular vote. The House of Representatives is composed of 54 members directly elected through a FPTP system for a five-year term. Another 11 seats are filled by presidential appointees, including two from the opposition party and the Zanzibar Attorney General is ex-officio.

The winner takes all system in force in Tanzania has often created a discrepancy between votes and seats for the winning party. This has produced minority governments who exercise authority over a majority of citizens who did not elect them, as occurred after the 2005 general elections. Furthermore, the system has encouraged voters to focus on parties rather than on programs or the capacity of individual candidates. Voters have frequently rubber stamped party choices, without being to exercise a real choice, notably given that independent candidatures are not foreseen in Tanzanian law. In the Tanzanian context, FPTP has transformed elections into a zero-sum gamble wherein a small number of votes can determine whether one party emerges as an absolute victor or a total loser. This has not only sparked election-related conflict but also raised questions on the validity of the entire system and made elections appear as part of the broader problem, rather than an effective solution for the peaceful struggle for political power.

3.13 Zambia

In order to prevent and limit electoral violence, Zambia has undertaken a series of reforms including the use of electoral codes of conduct to govern competition among parties. It has also introduced transparent ballot boxes to allay allegations of ballot stuffing. In cases where political parties use violence and intimidation to promote sectarian ends, codes of conduct have helped to ensure that they respect a core set of civic principles and norms. This approach has worked to a certain extent although there are concerns regarding the persistent lack of enforcement of these codes.

Strengthening the role of the judicial system in the administration of electoral justice is also of crucial importance in order to prevent electoral violence. The largely negative perception of the population regarding the judicial system, seen as partial and subject to manipulation, is exacerbated by its structure and management, which have been unable to redress its image. Shortcomings in the legal framework for the management of electoral disputes have yet to be addressed and ambiguities regarding competent jurisdictions appear regularly in the settlement of such disputes.

As an early warning strategy, continuous exposure of political cadres to attitudinal change and economic independence will set the ground for preventing violence during elections. There is a clear need to enhance the scope of civic education and training for political leaders. The latter need to develop their sensitivity to diverse needs and interests and find the way to improve socio-economic conditions to ensure that political culture is redesigned to prevent lawlessness and promote orderly and informed political participation.

Two key elements are necessary for peaceful elections in Zambia. Firstly, a constitutional and legal framework that promotes and enhances rule of law in the conduct of elections. Secondly, a change of attitude and mind-sets, from seeing elections as a matter of life and death to an understanding that they are processes anchored on fundamental values that promote co-existence, tolerance, development and unity in society. Both elements must be implemented in the period between elections as they are crucial for deepening peace and stability. The fear of electoral violence in the 2016 elections demonstrated that this is still not the case. Reducing electoral violence and political intolerance requires a generalized consensus on the value of building institutions rather than merely relying on legal instruments or prevention and management mechanisms to respond to outbreaks of electoral violence. Although often cited as an example in the region, Zambia has still not completely dispelled the spectre of electoral violence and can benefit from targeted assistance in this field.

3.14 Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwean government has to be acknowledged for progressively reforming the country's electoral laws and taking heed of recommendations emanating from civil society, as well as local, regional and international observers. Zimbabwe now holds harmonized elections, where results are pinned outside polling stations, and where the process is managed by a legally established electoral commission, in a context where laws for conflict resolution have been promulgated. More still needs to be done and it is crucial

that stakeholders enforce the laws instead of applying them selectively. The establishment of other democratic institutions, such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission are also steps in the right direction. Moreover, the government must take further steps to ensure that these institutions are truly effective.

Electoral violence continues to challenge Zimbabwean elections. For example, in June 2015 Hurungwe West was turned into a war zone following the independent candidacy of a former legislator, against the interests of the ruling party. While scholars have rightly identified that severe incidents of electoral violence in Africa have only marred 20% of elections on the continent, we must not underestimate the effects of low-intensity violence which have brought upon untold suffering to citizens.

Zimbabwe has experienced incidents of electoral violence in all of its post-independence elections although it could be argued that the scope and profile of these incidents has differed and has been influenced by different factors from ethnic/language, identity, party politics, ideology and race. Electoral conflict and /or violence are also triggered by the selective manner in which the legal framework is interpreted. Stakeholders concur that while the legal framework can deliver free, fair, transparent and credible elections, implementation and the institutional framework remain sources of concern as they appear to be skewed in favour of the incumbent.

While most election observers were quick to give the 2013 elections a clean bill of health, the impact of harassment, intimidation and threats was never considered. It is a fact that violence in 2013 was nothing compared to the electoral violence experienced in 2008 and in previous electoral processes. The SADC congratulated Zimbabwe for holding "free and peaceful harmonized elections" in 2013, although they did not go as far as to say that the elections were fair. On the other hand, the African Union concluded "the voting was carried out in an atmosphere devoid of violence, harassment and disturbances". When electoral violence does not leave a physical mark on the victim it is rarely considered as violence. However, the psychological scars of violence should never be underestimated as they can have a profound impact on how victims exercise their right to vote.

With the 2018 elections lurking in the horizon, efforts to prevent electoral violence must be considered, such as early warning and response mechanisms. These will only have a chance to be effective if they are established in an adequate and timely manner. Stakeholders must start strategizing and planning their efforts and commitment to ensure that elections are held in a peaceful environment well in advance of election day.

4. Need for deeper analysis

Election conflict prevention initiatives are included within broader electoral assistance projects. Electoral assistance has been a feature of several established democracies' external policies since the 1960s. Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948)[13] and

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13   UDHR Article 21: "1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. 2) Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country. 3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures." UN Declaration of Human Rights is available at http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf

subsequently article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966)[14] initially provided the underpinnings, including the legal basis, for international support to the accession to independence of non-self-governing territories. After the end of the Cold War, the importance of supporting the establishment of functioning and transparent governance institutions was widely acknowledged as a priority for the creation of more stable, peaceful and economically sustainable democracies. From a system where elections were considered to be the internal prerogative of states, shielded from external scrutiny, a new paradigm emerged whereby countries could be invited to reform their electoral processes[15].

Electoral support activities have increased exponentially since the 1990s as countries in a number of regions, namely in Africa and within the former Soviet bloc, held their first multiparty elections. The enthusiasm for elections spread despite uncoordinated international assistance, which often promoted inappropriate or unsustainable solutions[16]. The gradual accumulation of experience in electoral support as well as the development of methodologies, contributed to a gradual shift away from narrow, election event based support interventions, towards more long term, cyclical and process-oriented support.

This new paradigm became known as the Electoral Cycle Approach, which by 2006 had become the methodology of reference for the programming of elections and electoral support allowing for a more targeted identification of needs and advanced planning and for improving the overall coherence and complementarity of the actions[17]

Electoral support is at the core of the EU's common foreign policy. It divides this support into election observation activities, through the deployment of EU Election Observation Missions (EU EOMs) and other electoral missions; and electoral assistance. The EU is one of the major donors in the field of electoral assistance. To date, more than 200 electoral assistance projects have been formulated and implemented with EU funding, contributing to electoral processes in over 100 countries worldwide. Since 2004, the EU is making available between €80 and €140 million a year for electoral assistance projects and most of the time these projects include components aiming at preventing electoral related conflicts and violence.

As recently mentioned in another paper published by of ECES with the other members of the European Partnership for Democracy, EU-funded electoral assistance has mostly, but not exclusively, been provided through and with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

"The Joint EC-UNDP Task Force on Electoral Assistance facilitates cooperation between the EU and the UNDP in electoral assistance and supports the implementation of EU-funded UNDP

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14   ICCPR, article 25: "Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions:

(a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives; (b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors; (c) To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country." The ICCPR is available at: http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx

15   The Electoral Cycle Approach: Effectiveness and Sustainability of Electoral Assistance, ISPI - Istituto di Studi di Politica Internazionale – Working Paper -, Fabio Bargiacchi, Ricardo Godinho Gomes and Mette Bakken, 2011. Available at: http://www.eces.eu/en/posts/-electoral-cycle-approach

16   ACE Focus on Effective Electoral Assistance, ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, Domenico Tuccinardi, Paul Guerin, Fabio Bargiacchi and Linda Maguire (2007). Available at: http://www.eces.eu/en/posts/electoral-assistance

17   The conceptualization of the "Electoral Cycle Approach" was consolidated through the following publications:"EC Methodological Guide on Electoral Assistance" (EC, October 2006); "Handbook on Electoral Management Design" (International IDEA, December 2006); UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide (United Nation Development Programme-UNDP, November 2007);

electoral assistance. Since 2004, most EU funds have been allocated through direct negotiation and via contribution agreements with the UNDP through to the EC-UNDP Partnership on Electoral Assistance. The EU is therefore the most important UNDP donor for electoral assistance followed by several EU Member States[18]. Since 1995, the EU has contributed to over 150 electoral assistance projects implemented by UNDP worth over one billion US dollars[19] with 23 projects worth €84 million for the period 1995-2003, 70 projects worth €618 million from 2004 to 2010 and the remainder from 2011 to 2016. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) was awarded several EU-funded contracts in relation to their expertise in out-of-country registration and voting, particularly in difficult contexts like Afghanistan and Iraq. Several other EU-funded projects have been implemented by International IDEA. The remaining projects have been awarded to European non-profit organizations specialized in delivering electoral assistance such as Democracy Reporting International, founded in 2006, and ECES, who started to operate in 2011".[20]

ECES as well has often included a component on the prevention of electoral violence in the more than 60 contracts it has signed to date to operate in over 35 countries. In this perspective, ECES together with the members of the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) have developed a strategy entitled "a European Response to Electoral Cycle Support" (EURECS) that is currently being implementing throughout their projects and programs.

As explained in more detail under section 11, the EURECS approach advocates for a stronger electoral assistance framework, more systematic evaluations of electoral assistance programs and a more robust multi-stakeholder approach -especially in activities meant to prevent, mitigate or manage election related conflict. Indeed, the EURECS approach is guided by the understanding that effectiveness and result-attainment in electoral assistance projects cannot be achieved without an in-depth understanding of the range of interconnected dynamics that are embedded in specific electoral processes.

The electoral cycle provides a solid common ground to develop capacities and research on election-related violence and conflict. Election-related conflict and violence may appear at any point of the electoral cycle, although the most intense period is usually in and around the campaign period, election-day and the results aggregation process (up to and beyond the announcement of results). However, conflict and violence cannot as a rule be pinned to any specific stage or phase of the cycle, they are not that easy to anticipate. Indeed, there is no formula for election conflict and violence. In fact, excessive focus from practitioners and donors on addressing violence at certain stages of the cycle prevents effective prevention, mitigation and management of the underlying causes of conflict in its various forms and in the phases where it is least expected.

Other, complementary tools must be developed to pick up the nuances of when, how and why both conflict (long- and mid-term) and violence (short-term) may arise throughout the electoral cycle in a given country or locality since the cycle itself, as a theoretical model, cannot make such predictions. The dynamics between the formal and informal components of an electoral process must be factored in when it comes to attempting to predict potential moments of conflict and violence, as it is precisely at the intersection between conflicting powers (i.e. people versus security apparatus) that conflict can emerge and escalate into violence.

Along the same lines, wherein lie the roots of conflict, therein also lie their solutions. Moreover,

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18 http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2016/04/15/-eu-and-undp-re-new-partnership-on-electoral-assistance.html

19 http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Electoral%20Systems%20and%20Processes/GPECS/gpecs%20JTF_VF.pdf

20 EURECS, A European Response to Electoral Cycle Support, ECES and EPD, September 2016

bringing electoral conflict and violence to a lasting end is very a complex multi-stakeholder endeavour. Electoral political economy analysis (EPEA) has proven to be a methodology that can provide a more complete multi-layered picture. Indeed, the unique EPEA methodology developed by ECES is designed for use in democracy support contexts at a country level. This form of analysis is referred to as EPEA as it blends an exclusively electoral focus into political economy methodology. EPEA provides an analytical framework to identify the underlying factors, frameworks (both formal and informal) and dynamics that shape stakeholder perceptions, motivations, values and ideas in relation to electoral processes. These relationships and underlying forces are largely understudied in the analysis of electoral processes. In the same way, electoral aspects are rarely addressed comprehensively in traditional political economy analysis.

The objective of EPEA is to suggest the most influential constraints and opportunities facing a defined question of concern with a view to promoting stability and democratic development, based on the fundamental political, economic, cultural and social pillars of any given society, its structures, institutions and individuals within an electoral framework. This approach heightens understanding of the complex dynamics and interactions between key electoral stakeholders.

5. When To Prevent, Mitigate And Manage?

Among the factors that could explain why some countries experience elections characterized by violent incidents and the specific challenges that this raises, we can highlight the absence of a democratic culture in a country and situations where the capacity of institutions to carry out credible electoral processes is either lacking or undermined. Electoral conflicts and political violence are often symptoms of underlying weaknesses in electoral governance and administration. Arguably this is not the case in all SADC countries.

South Africa can be seen as a clear exception. Successive elections have built and enhanced the country's democracy and consolidated its institutions. By and large, South Africa's electoral processes have not been characterized by fraud, mismanagement or political influence as demonstrated during the August 2016 local elections. On the whole, democratic norms and practices have taken root, electoral and constitutional rules are well entrenched and electoral contestations have not resulted in large-scale violence. There have been disputes related to the management of elections, which have fuelled violence. These situations have generally been due to perceptions of bias by the IEC and also in instances where contestants did not follow the rules or accept the outcome of an election.

The need for electoral assistance in the area of conflict prevention, mitigation and management is generally deemed less pressing in countries where the level of institutional stability and performance are high, as compared to countries displaying institutional weaknesses. However, as seen during the latest electoral cycles in SADC countries, election-related violence has sometimes surfaced where least expected. Although the community of electoral practitioners may have sufficient access and influence to improve electoral processes in any given country, donor priorities do not always match the needs identified by the former. For example, donors may advocate for actions to prevent violence in a context where conflict management at the institutional level might be more relevant. Conversely, donors may not pay sufficient attention to conflict management activities in contexts that have gone beyond prevention.

Prevention, mitigation and management should be integrated into any given initiative and be designed in a sufficiently dynamic manner so as to keep track and be reactive to developments and varying levels of escalation. In the past, there has been too much focus on the most visible manifestations, such as street violence. This is undoubtedly one of the most harmful forms that unresolved conflict may take for the bulk of the population, as seen in post-conflict countries in the SADC region with the exception of South Africa. Moreover, limiting the focus on these forms of violence may benefit the true instigators and perpetrators, who are not necessarily on the streets. Local political elites have often been linked to attempts to manipulate the masses for their own interests and have not shied from inciting violence, be it directly or indirectly. Electoral assistance projects should not be reductionist in their scope; they should be inclusive and address all electoral stakeholders and electoral phases, paying particular attention to the deeper causes of conflict and violence that are rooted in the structure of society and the existing power inequalities.

6. Linking existing tensions to the Electoral Arena

Elections promote peace and security when there is a culture of tolerance between communities. While political intolerance has generally been on the wane in the SADC region, political competition between ruling parties and opposition forces has triggered violent interactions, be they at the grassroots level or in the higher spheres. These incidents have been seen as either part of a more deeply-rooted dynamic or as sporadic and incidental eruptions occurring around election events.

Dialogue is a truly powerful tool to fight intolerance. Political dialogue should therefore be considered as a methodology, rather than an activity per se, that should be mainstreamed in all electoral assistance projects. Electoral assistance rarely considers reconciliation processes, no matter how crucial these may be to begin to address root causes that, if left unaddressed, can exacerbate existing and future tensions. For example, the 2013 elections in Madagascar were organised as a necessary condition to put an end to political crisis and restore the constitutional order. However, the underlying root causes behind this crisis have so far not been addressed, nor has any effective political reconciliation been achieved between the main political actors. This state of affairs is likely to cause serious problems in the run-up to the 2018 elections in the country and may contribute to the resurgence of violence.

Research reveals that it is precisely the underlying structural issues embedded within the broader SADC political economy that have stimulated most incidents of violence. These relate to dislocations in the broader structures of governance, including the equitable provision of socio-economic dividends, which often results in exclusion and inequality and may sow the seeds of future social tensions. Elections are therefore not the cause of violence in SADC countries. It is the processes of political competition that exacerbates existing tensions, exposing structural disparities and inequalities, which stimulate the escalation of these tensions into violence, particularly around the electoral period. This is particularly the case in post conflict countries where the level of vigilantism is higher and where informal avenues of political participation are more widely used; where people resort to uprisings instead of protest, violence instead of voting etc.

7. Violence - a symptom of a deeper societal ill

Violence in SADC countries may erupt at any point during the electoral cycle; and this violence is not necessarily connected to an electoral event. The spate of recent service delivery protests in the DRC, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia illustrate this point. The analysis of these events, points to the fact that protests take place before a backdrop of popular pressure in the most affected localities. It also runs concurrent with the economic conditions of the society at large (i.e. Zambia's financial crises which made the kwacha the worst performing currency in the world for a period of time were translated into greater tensions around the 2015 and 2016 elections). State responses to protests have largely been hostile and demonstrate a failure to respond to the service delivery needs of communities. This is an important consideration for electoral practitioners; highlighting the fact that electoral issues may actually originate well away from the electoral domain. A broader scope and cross-fertilization between programs could, to some extent, introduce more flexibility to intervene on the actual sources of conflict. A causal or temporal link to election events will always be required for it to remain within the conceptual definition of election related conflict and therefore within the scope of action of electoral assistance.

8. Effective conflict prevention relies on political will

Dealing with political violence and election related conflicts in the SADC region is a collective responsibility involving key national institutions. Central to this too is an understanding by governments that electoral democracy will be of little use if it is not accompanied by reforms, which should improve people's lives. The understanding by national governments in the SADC that electoral violence and violent protests may be manifestations of unresolved socio-economic and political issues is crucial. However, there may not be a willingness to do so. Member States may oppose the creation of sufficiently effective instruments; for fear that they may in the future be used against what they perceive to be their own national or partisan interests.

There is a need to promote a greater understanding at the national level that violence is a multifaceted symptom and not an isolated event. Actually taking action requires significant political will, a commodity which has not been bountiful in the SADC region of late. The lack of intervention by SADC following the annulment of election results in Zanzibar in October 2015 is an example among others. There is therefore, a need to move towards integrated approaches that focus on durable institutions of meaningful social and economic change without losing focus on the electoral process. Similarly, electoral assistance could be broadened to operate on other related sectors or domains, while ensuring and enhancing coordination.

Electoral assistance projects could, in principle, support government at all levels (national, provincial and local) to look into a number of practical ways to prevent electoral conflict. However, electoral assistance projects have traditionally striven to keep a safe distance from governments to avoid perceptions of partisanship. Underlining the potential link between political violence, service delivery protests, structural injustices and elections would be a critical first step. This greater and more comprehensive understanding will feed into conflict and violence mitigation strategies as the electoral process unfolds. In addition to governments, assistance projects must work together with other actors including civil society, the judiciary, the media, electoral management bodies, the security sector etc. Effective handling of conflict

prevention, mitigation and management requires the involvement of all stakeholders and ideally in a consensual, inclusive and coordinated manner, including governments and regional bodies with untapped political leverage.

9. Assessing conflict: narratives and counter narratives

The lack of effectiveness of any risk assessment pertaining to violent outbreaks during elections, home-grown or externally supported, relies on a number of factors but perhaps most importantly, the lack of exposure to a variety of narratives. The international community often shares the same risk assessments simply because the grounds upon which the analysis is based comes from the same sources. Narratives tend to spread around and eventually become truths. Alternatively, two very binary narratives may co-exist in the same country during election time; such as, "there will be mass-killings" or "this time around people want peace". Neither of these predictions is likely to be completely right or completely wrong, violence may occur despite the population's craving for peace and stability. The greater the exposure to various and varied narratives from different levels of society, the greater the possibility for a more precise prediction of violence. Certain tools, such as early warning mechanisms, are effective to a certain extent, but may not be able to predict all forms of violence. For example, it will be very difficult to predict the violence perpetrated by quickly assembled vigilante groups with no prior history of instigating violence, put together by political elites to strategically spread fear in a specific area during a specific period of time during the electoral process. Early warning is effective in detecting patterns and, as such, relies on the same logic as quantitative research. Thus, outliers may go undetected as they are more in-line with the very definition of election-related violence instigated from above, described as a "hit and run".

Longer-term conflict and violence prediction methodologies should take into account the importance of **understanding political party dynamics**. From the popular perception of SADC citizens, it is clear that while there is relatively firm support for the liberalization of the political space and the proliferation political parties, people also consider them as drivers of political violence (Afrobarometer, 2014). It is important for regional and national conflict prevention and early warning mechanisms to constantly evaluate diversity issues and representation at political party level: Are political parties broad-based? Are they inclusive of minorities, youth, and women? What motivates political parties to be formed along partisan, ethnic or religious lines? Is the electoral system able to influence the formation of policy-oriented political parties? Are codes of conduct for political parties enforceable so as to contribute to conflict prevention initiatives? How could political party messaging be harnessed during campaigns to enable peace building?

Early warning systems will benefit greatly from electoral political economy analysis, which will shine a light on the historical, structural, societal and cultural imperatives as they relate to the electoral process. In this regard, it is important to analyze the social and power relations governing access to resources and the distribution of rights and privileges. Horizontal and vertical inequalities are triggers for discord and can easily conspire to derail democratic processes, forming the basis of disaffection with government and impacting on the electoral process in many different ways.

10. Recommendations for the future

The recommendations, going forward, are as follows:

A. **International level**

- **Political dialogue** with EU partner countries on democracy, human rights and the rule of law is an essential tool to set jointly agreed goals. This approach is built into every financial instrument for development cooperation. Thus, elections became the cornerstone of this form of dialogue over the past 10 years, as electoral processes are broad and nearly all-encompassing. Support to the broad array of electoral stakeholders (electoral management bodies, justice sector institutions, parliaments, political parties, civil society organizations, media, security forces…) was ensured at specific moments of the electoral cycle. **Election support implementers have the unique potential to access various layers of a society's public and political life, which invariably include those who cause conflicts as well as those who may prevent or manage conflict**. Greater emphasis should be made on this aspect and donors, including the EU, EU Member States and others, should use EU-funded electoral assistance projects to a greater extent to inform policy documents, democracy action plans and more. EU Election Observation Missions debrief on a regular basis **with the relevant EU and EC services in Brussels. Electoral assistance projects should ideally follow the same pattern and include sessions with the European Parliament**.

- **Conflict during the electoral cycle is not necessarily cyclical or predictable**. Conflict mapping, tracing key actors and root causes can be of great value, but only if this analysis is constantly updated. Conventional context analysis conducted at the beginning of a given intervention is seldom updated or revised. Therefore one-time context analyses are unlikely to provide sufficient insights into potential causes and conflicts that may play out through the different stages of the electoral cycle. Context analysis should be successively replaced by political economy analysis wherever time and resources are available as this latter type of analysis seeks to shed light on **why conflict or political impasses emerge as opposed to how they play out**, and hence focuses more on causality and correlation. ECES has developed electoral political economy analysis methodology to address the shortcomings of conventional context analysis.

- Because of the multidimensional nature of electoral support, elections can be an entry point to working on crosscutting issues which are not directly related to elections as such (i.e. structural, social, economic and political inequalities between the different groups of a society). An example is that **flawed elections have allowed radical groups to gain a foothold in fragile state institutions**. The involvement of a wide range of formal and informal regional and national stakeholders would enhance the potential for positive and durable achievements and prevent elections from being used to undermine what they are meant to achieve.

  Conflict prevention and peacebuilding traditionally covers four broad areas of intervention: equitable socio-economic development, good governance, the reform of security and justice institutions and truth and reconciliation processes. **Electoral support, as one of**

several possible areas of intervention in conflict prevention, shares the overall goal of peacebuilding in the sense that it aims to avert the outbreak of violence. Electoral support and peace-building work both focus on reducing or ending violent conflict and/or promoting a culture of peace. Increased synergies between both may help to enhance durable positive results.

B. **SADC Level**

- **Integrated approaches to elections and conflict programming**: At the SADC level, the adoption of the electoral cycle approach in the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections provides an opportunity for collaboration between electoral experts and conflict specialists. Long Term Observation, through its analysis of the long term context (including political, social, economic and power relations) throughout the cycle, can help to identify potential root causes of conflict, which could be extremely useful if it is integrated into early warning systems and/or preventative diplomacy. SADC's various mechanisms may work within the broader institutional framework to achieve this. However, non-state actors working in these fields need to identify modalities to engage with these supranational processes. The revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections potentially provide a platform to engage directly with mechanisms such as SEAC on elections and conflict prevention. For PEV-SADC, the revised SADC framework also provides a basis to promote the domestication of key aspects of the instrument into national laws through sustained outreach programmes.

- **Identify platforms for peer learning and collaboration with regional bodies**. To ensure informed strategies, it is critical to engage the relevant regional mechanisms and stakeholders for the mutual purpose of promoting peace. Regional mechanisms where knowledge sharing in this regard may occur already exist. As stated above, SEAC is well placed to engage with this range of work and utilise data from the PEV-SADC Observatory to frame its advisories to the MCO of SADC. The Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries (ECF-SADC) is another forum where evidence-based peer learning and lessons-sharing processes could be promoted, thereby, engaging EMBs from SADC Member States.

- **Build capacity of religious leadership across the region**. Afrobarometer studies continuously demonstrate that citizens across the region have unwavering faith in the moral authority of the clergy. This picture is even more compelling when one considers the role of faith-based groups in Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia and Zanzibar during transitions and post-election periods. It is certain that they could play important roles at any stage of the conflict cycle. Providing them the requisite training and capacity is therefore a key imperative to preventing electoral-related violence.

- **Strengthen post-election adjudication mechanisms and diversity management**. The provisions of the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections emphasize the need for SADC Member States to institute Electoral Courts and legally enforceable codes of conduct and diversity management processes. These are critical, for example, for preventing post-election disputes of the type that have led to the nullification of results in Zanzibar after the 25 October 2015 elections. ECES through PEV-SADC is positioned to provide relevant technical support to EMBs and national governments

within the broader framework of conflict management initiatives. A comparative research project on existing mechanisms and their efficacy would be an important first step.

- **Monitor implementation of regional normative frameworks for elections**. In order to contribute to the prevention of electoral-related violence, it is also necessary to invest in the monitoring of Member State adherence to the SADC Treaty; the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation; the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. The PEV-SADC Observatory could document cases of non-compliance and violations of these obligations in as far as they may contribute to the emergence of electoral-related violence or other broader forms of conflict.

11. EURECS - European Response to Electoral Cycle Support
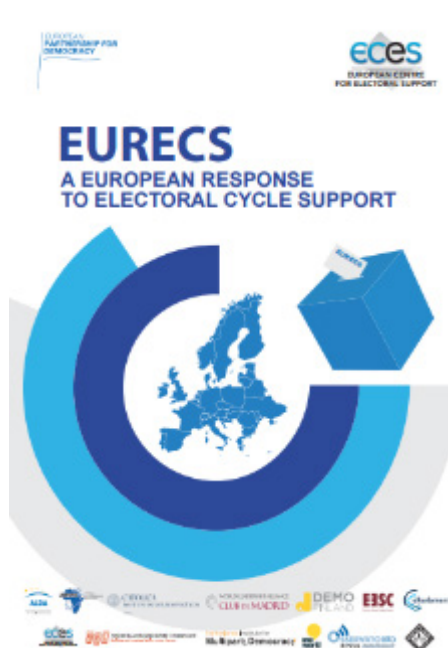
ECES together with the members of the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) have crafted a strategy entitled "a European Response to Electoral Cycle Support" that is currently being implementing throughout our projects and programs. The EURECS approach advocates for a stronger electoral assistance framework, more systematic evaluations of electoral assistance programs and a more robust multi-stakeholder approach especially in activities meant to prevent, mitigate or manage election related conflict.

The EPD is the only network of European civil and political society organization's working comprehensively on democracy assistance. It brings together different specializations from the democracy support field (elections, political parties, parliaments, executive leadership, local authorities and local democracy agencies, media etc.).[21] EPD facilitates the exchange of knowledge and best practices in democratic transformations around the world.

The joint experience of the EPD network ensures the knowledge and expertise required to implement a robust European response to electoral support activities geared at preventing, mitigating and managing electoral-related conflicts and works at different levels within society (**political leadership, elected representatives, civil society and grassroots community representatives**).

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21   EPD is composed of the following members: the European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA), the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA), CFI-French Development Media Agency, Club de Madrid, DEMO Finland, the Eastern European Studies Centre, Elbarlament, the European Centre for Electoral Support, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), the Netherlands Helsinki Committee, People in Need, Universidade Catolica Portugesa and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy. www.epd.eu

ECES and EPD first introduced EURECS during the 10th EU Development Days in June 2016 as a contribution towards a broader understanding of democracy, conflict prevention and electoral processes by demonstrating how seemingly diverse fields in democracy support are interconnected[22]. These fields include support to political parties, parliaments, security forces, civil society organizations, media, women, youth, religious groups and local authorities. Potential sources of conflict, or root causes that are left unaddressed are complex and difficult to tackle once they take the shape of civil unrest and violence. Since root causes of conflict are planted in the relationships between stakeholders, a holistic approach is best suited to effectively tackle their sources.

The discussions held during the EU Development Days in 2016 also aimed to raise awareness of the past, present and future of EU support, tailored to specific electoral cycles. As such, these debates constituted a forum to examine the multifaceted electoral field jointly and included several discussions organized by different EPD members. During this event, ECES and EPD were represented in the high-level panel[23] chaired by the High Representative and Vice-president of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini, with the participation of the Presidents of the Republic of Burkina Faso (Roch Marc Christian Kaboré) and of the Central African Republic (Faustin-Archange Toauderá) by Thijs Berman, a former Member of the European Parliament and Chief Observer for three EU EOMs, currently Team Leader of the EU-funded project implemented by ECES in support of the Electoral Commission in the Central African Republic.[24]

During this session, the EU-HRVP stated that the EU must work with third countries through long term, inclusive and holistic partnerships, that should aim to reach as many beneficiaries and interlocutors as possible with each project. Furthermore, Ms. Mogherini also reiterated the importance of working with partner countries at every level of their administration, starting with local authorities as actors whose actions directly affect the lives of citizens.

A specific paper introducing EURECS was officially presented during the International Day of Democracy celebrated at the European Parliament on 28 September 2016. This event was organised by the European Parliament in cooperation with the European External Action Service and in partnership with International IDEA, the European Network of Political Foundations, the European Endowment for Democracy, and the EPD. On this occasion, ECES President, Monica

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22   https://www.eudevdays.eu/sessions/european-response-electoral-cycle-support
23   https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg16
24   Mr. Berman's intervention during the High-level panel "Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals 2016 (SDG 16) in relation with the opportunities and challenges to the security and development nexus" is available at the following link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=px7LQqL-X3I&feature=youtu.be

Frassoni, introduced by the Vice President of the European Parliament, Ms. Ulrike Lunacek, was invited to deliver a presentation on EURECS, its main features and added value.

EURECS has three main objectives:

- To offer the EU, its Member States, other European donors and beneficiary countries an innovative delivery mechanism for electoral and democracy assistance to implement projects and programmes that are consistent with European values and EU policies.

- To include a wide range of actors from election management bodies, civil society, political parties, local authorities, parliaments, security forces and the media to ensure a truly comprehensive and sustainable approach.

- To enhance the prevention, mitigation and management of electoral-related conflicts, in line with international standards and obligations.

The EURECS approach is operationalized through specific sets of activities, carried out by ECES and EPD members depending on each member's complementary thematic and geographic experience to ensure the highest quality implementation of activities throughout the entire electoral cycle. ECES and EPD believe in the value of partnerships in order to be credible when implementing projects and programs within the democracy support framework.

In conjunction, the PEV-SADC project research findings and the EURECS provide solid foundations to develop potential activities that should be streamlined throughout the region in order to tackle election-related conflict in the most effective and sustainable manner:

- **Institutional Strengthening**

  - **Strengthening post-election adjudication processes** to promote the right to an effective remedy and facilitating the peaceful acceptance of results.

  - **Strengthening of multi-party liaison committees** to address concerns that may arise around the electoral process in order to identify shared solutions.

  - **National Elections Consultative Fora** to address key concerns that go beyond elections and affect the political life of a country.

  - **Enforceable codes of conduct** and the promotion of regional commitments (i.e. SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections).

  - **Platforms for consensus-based institutional reform** for the holding of inclusive meetings with key stakeholders on matters of legal and institutional reform.

- **Electoral Political Economy Analysis**

  The Electoral Political Economy Analysis (EPEA) methodology developed by ECES is designed for use in democracy support contexts at a country level. EPEA provides critical

insights on how to steer national reform initiatives and/or democracy support actions to better cater for the needs of a particular society at a given moment in time.

- **Conflict mapping and Early Warning Systems**

Each phase of the electoral cycle and its transition to the next cycle usually comes with its own set of conflict dynamics. The following approaches can prove to be extremely beneficial:

- **Early Warning Systems** to strengthen structural risk assessment/analysis and to develop early response mechanisms.
- The use of a **conflict typology database** to objectively identify and monitor diverse forms of conflict.
- **Integrated approaches to elections and conflict programming** for a comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach toward conflict prevention and mitigation.

- **Leadership and Conflict Management Skills for Electoral Stakeholders**

Among the different capacity-building programs that are specific to ECES and EPD members, ECES' bespoke flagship training in Leadership and Electoral Conflict Management for Electoral Stakeholders (LEAD), is an innovative tool to sustainably strengthen beneficiaries' capacities. Since 2012, ECES has delivered LEAD trainings in 25 different countries. LEAD trainings have been delivered in English, French, Malagasy, Portuguese, Spanish and Swahili.

- **Election Situation Room**

Civil society organizations engaged in national electoral observation are crucial stakeholders within the electoral cycle. Capacity-building activities for the benefit of national electoral observation platforms are an integral part of ECES' electoral support strategy for peaceful and credible electoral and political processes.

"Election Situation Rooms" are designed so that civil society efforts to ensure genuine elections are coordinated and as effective as possible. Civil society is arguably the best placed electoral actor to diagnose, anticipate, prepare for and propose effective actions to prevent or limit major fraud, or events capable of leading to violence. The Election Situation Room model aims to bring civil society groups together for the period of the election, sharing information and resources, anticipating problems, and responding rapidly when they occur[25].

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25 Open Society Initiative for West Africa, "Making elections count: a guide to setting up a civil society election situation room", April 2012.

- **Political Parties Support**

Political parties are key democratic and electoral stakeholders. EURECS' holistic approach supports the organizational, programmatic, campaigning and mobilization capacities of political parties, in a non-partisan manner, thereby enhancing their capacity to play a leading role in sustainable and peaceful democratic development. In this perspective, support to political parties takes into account the diversity of national political landscapes, adopting an inclusive approach. Training political parties on electoral procedures, especially electoral dispute mechanisms and their oversight role is another significant contribution. Encouraging political dialogue and agreements on codes of conduct as well as systematic information sharing by the electoral management body with all electoral stakeholders, notably political parties, are also part of EURECS' goals.

- **Parliamentary Support**

Parliaments are at the core of democratic systems and of sustainable democratic reforms. Therefore, EURECS' comprehensive approach puts great emphasis in empowering parliaments to exercise their functions and roles effectively while strengthening their relations with their constituents and civil society.

- **Media Monitoring**

Media monitoring and institutional communication for the benefit of all electoral stakeholders and elected institutions are key activities within EURECS. Media monitoring can contribute to designing tailored support to electoral management bodies' communication strategies. Media monitoring can also be very effective to identify and thus take action against incitement to violence through the media (i.e. hate speech and any other message that incites violence, discrimination, social and political tensions, etc.). Similarly, the respect of electoral campaign regulations (i.e. campaign spending, abuse of public resources and the use of any banned symbols during the campaign) can also be effectively monitored; as can political pluralism, to verify whether the press, primarily state-owned media, provides equitable coverage of all political actors.

- **Civic and Voter Education**

ECES has a solid and proven track-record in organizing voter education and awareness raising campaigns both by collaborating with electoral authorities as well as with civil society organizations, the media and religious groups with the ultimate aim of contributing to peaceful, credible and transparent electoral and political processes.

- **Local Authorities for Credible and Sustainable Electoral Processes**

The relevance of EURECS' commitment to working hand-in-hand with local and regional authorities is fully in-line with the EU's new intervention strategy, as recently presented by the EU-HRVP, Federica Mogherini. In her speech at the 2016 European Development Days high-level panel she stressed that, "Either we build peace and stability at the regional and local level or it will cease to exist as it is not anchored in the grassroots".

- **Integrity and Quality Management Systems in Electoral Processes**

The implementation of an ISO standard to elections (ISO/TS 17582:2014) adheres to and contributes to the aim of enhancing "**the role and capacity of, and public confidence in, Election Management Bodies to independently and effectively organize credible, inclusive and transparent elections, in particular through enhanced dedicated dialogue and long term support strategy with the objective to promote the integrity of the electoral processes**", as established in the EU Action Plan for Democracy 2015-2019. In this context, ECES is committed to proactively spread the knowledge of ISO technical specifications related to quality managements systems for electoral organization. Furthermore, it supports the related certification processes and capacity building activities with the aim of contributing to transparency and trust in the EMB among the electorate and stakeholders and to consolidate the reputation of certified EMBs.

- **Procurement of Electoral Material following EU procedures**

Procurement of electoral material and services represent one of the most important and costly parts of an election. As such, it merits particular attention given the consequences that any mischief or misperceptions may have on the credibility of an electoral and political process; which could contribute to violent incidents. Since 2011, **ECES has regularly demonstrated that through scrupulous respect of PRAG procedures it is possible to carry out effective procurement exercises for electoral material and services**.

- **Ballot paper design and Transmission of results**

The security and integrity of ballot papers and the transmission of election results are two of the most critical elements in any electoral process. These two aspects can have a huge impact with regards to the credibility and transparency of the process, and to the consequent peaceful acceptance of results.

Biography of the Authors

FABIO BARGIACCHI, ECES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Fabio Bargiacchi is the Executive Director of ECES and member of the ECES Management Board since August 2011. In this period, he led ECES into becoming an important actor in the field of electoral support, both at a European and a global level. He has a wealth of experience from many years active work in the field and in different senior positions, such as: Senior Election Operations Expert, Training/ Reporting Advisor and Coordinator of EU Election Observers and through long term assignments in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, Suriname, Tanzania, West Bank and Gaza, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Fabio has a deep understanding of project cycle management, particularly in Democratic Governance, through his long-standing experience working for the European Commission at the EU Delegation in Maputo (Mozambique) from 2001 to 2003 and at EU Headquarters (in EuropeAid) in Brussels between 2004 and 2006. From January 2007 to December 2010, Fabio contributed to the creation and served as Coordinator of the "Joint EC UNDP Task Force on Electoral Assistance" and as Senior Electoral Assistance Advisor at the UN/ UNDP Brussels Office.

During this period, he contributed to the establishment of the Joint Task Force and oversaw its activities regarding the identification, formulation and support for the implementation of all EC-UNDP electoral assistance projects. He was also at the forefront of the conception of the "electoral cycle approach" and delivery of all the Joint EC-UNDP-International IDEA effective electoral assistance trainings between September 2005 and February 2011. Fabio was, thus involved in more than 70 UNDP projects, for a value of €600 million in EU contributions to UNDP between 2004 and 2010. From January 2011 to February 2012, he worked as Chief Technical Advisor for the EU-funded "Project in Support of the Electoral cycles for the six Portuguese-Speaking Countries in Africa (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe) and Timor-Leste", implemented by UNDP (www.propalop-tl.org). PROPALOP was the first trans-national electoral assistance project that focused exclusively on capacity development.

Overall, with his experience for the EU, the OSCE and the UN, he has worked in the identification, formulation, implementation or evaluation of more than 100 electoral assistance projects in more than 50 countries since 1997. Fabio is a BRIDGE Accrediting training-facilitator and is one of the main authors of the training curriculum in "Leadership and Conflict Management for Electoral Stakeholders" (LEAD), conceived in conjunction with the Center for Creative Leadership. In the last 10 years he has authored, coordinated, co-authored and contributed to a series of key election-related publications and papers including the recent European Response on Electoral Cycle Support (EURECS). He is presently also Vice President of the Board of the European Partnership for Democracy.

VICTORIA FLORINDER, ECES ELECTION CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ADVISOR

Victoria joined ECES in November 2012 as Project Analyst after seven years of international work in the development sector, mostly in Africa and the Caribbean. Victoria's field of expertise is political psychology and election related conflict and violence. Given her background, Victoria is the lead team member of ECES' most geographically diverse project entitled Preventing Electoral Violence in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region (PEV-SADC) that Victoria supported from Madagascar during her first 18 months with ECES. Since 2014, Victoria holds the position of Election Conflict Management Advisor and is at the same time the Project Director of the Project in Support of a Peaceful and Inclusive Electoral Process in Zanzibar (PROPEL) that delivers mediation support and political dialogue in Zanzibar. Victoria is based partly in Brussels and in the SADC region. Victoria is an accredited BRIDGE trainer and a Leadership and Conflict Management for Electoral Stakeholders (LEAD) facilitator. Victoria's geographical experience ranges from West Africa, the Caribbean and the SADC region where she has worked for development cooperation programmes such as: SIDA, the Swedish Foreign Ministry, and the Norwegian Refugee Council before joining ECES. Victoria has a Master's degree in Development Studies from Uppsala University and a Bachelor's degree in International Collaboration and Crisis Management from the National College of Defence in Stockholm, Sweden.

EVA PALMANS, ECES HEAD OF PROGRAMMES

Eva Palmans is the Head of Programmes at ECES and has been working in the area of elections, democracy and governance for the last ten years. She has published several articles on political and electoral processes and on the role that media and civil society organizations play in these processes. Eva held several management and coordination positions in organizations that specialised in capacity building programmes for electoral stakeholders (including Electoral Management Bodies, political parties, civil society organizations and media). Between 2008 and 2010 she was the regional coordinator in Central-Africa (Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda) for a Belgian NGO (Coalition of the Flemish North South Movement – 11.11.11) managing projects with local organizations in the field of elections and democracy (civic education, election monitoring and observation). In collaboration with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), she provided capacity building programmes for electoral stakeholders, and contributed to the creation of the platform of national observation organizations in Burundi. In 2011, Eva worked as a political programme officer at EISA's Madagascar office where she was in charge of implementing the "Strengthening Electoral and Democratic Processes programme". She provided training and technical assistance in the areas of civic and voter education, election observation, electoral conflict management and political party strengthening and established a network with international and regional organizations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the EU, UNDP and OIF. She has extensive experience working in election observation missions with the European Union and EISA both as an observer (Mozambique 2009, Togo 2010, Ivory Coast 2010, Seychelles 2011, and Tunisia 2011) and as a political/country expert (Burundi 2010, Ivory Coast 2011). Eva is an accredited BRIDGE trainer

facilitator. She conducted several training programmes and provided technical assistance to national observers, electoral management bodies and political parties. She entered ECES as a Senior Election Advisor and was appointed Head of Programmes in September 2013.

VERA LOURENÇO, ECES SENIOR PROGRAMMES ADVISOR

Vera joined ECES Headquarters in 2016 in the role of Senior Programmes Advisor after collaborating with ECES projects in the field. Over the past nine years, Vera has participated in a number of election observation missions with the EU and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), including as a core team member, mainly in Africa (Algeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Togo and Tunisia). Within the context of these missions, she trained and coordinated all international observers deployed in country. More recently, Vera worked as Gender and Youth Analyst for NDI and as Political Analyst for the EU. Vera has also worked in electoral assistance missions in Guinea and Sierra Leone. Throughout these field experiences, she has accumulated significant expertise in analysing and reporting on election administration, legal frameworks, political parties and candidates, human rights, the media and civil society. Within the Project in Support of the Credibility and Transparency of Elections in Burkina Faso (PACTE-BF), Vera participated, in the role of LEAD facilitator, to implement an intensive training process in Leadership and Conflict Management that contributed to train more than 460 electoral stakeholders across the Burkinabe territory. Furthermore, she also contributes to the implementation of activities of the Project "PARTICIPE CV" in Cape Verde and in the Programmes in Support of the Credibility and Transparency of Elections in Guinea (PACTE-Guinea I and II) as Senior Electoral Expert. Vera has a B.A. in Political Science, and a Master's degree in Applied Political Science from the Institute of Political and Social Sciences of Lisbon University (Portugal).

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The European Centre for Electoral Support

ECES is a non-profit private foundation headquartered in Brussels with a global remit. ECES promotes sustainable democratic development through the provision of advisory services, operational support and management of projects and large basket funds in favor of electoral processes.

ECES works with all electoral stakeholders, including electoral management bodies, civil society organizations involved in civic and voter education and election observation, political parties and parliaments; dealing with electoral reforms, media, security forces and legal institutions confronted with electoral dispute resolution.

ECES has **long-standing experience in effective project management** ranging from implementing projects in hardship contexts, opening field offices at short notice, responding to urgent requests and adapting to changing political landscapes.

ECES is experienced in managing large multi-faceted projects in support of democratic and electoral processes with a strong South-South and national ownership-oriented approach following EU procedures from identification up to the audit of expenses. ECES has signed more than 60 contracts in support of electoral processes and the strengthening of democratic institutions in more than 35 countries mainly, but not exclusively, in Africa and the Middle East. In addition, ECES founders and personnel have acquired extensive field experience in many other countries and in conjunction, ECES can count on specific knowledge and well-established networks in over 70 countries around the world.

In the context of the EURECS (A European Response to Electoral Cycle Support) ECES, among the members of the "European Partnership for Demcoracy (EPD)" will be the prime managing partner for projects that fall within this framework given its significant past experience in the management of EU funds for electoral assistance. Moreover, EPD members, associates or strategic partners of EURECS may be selected to be in prime depending on the specific conditions, donors or partners.

Project management will hinge on the nature and scope of specific projects, reflecting the strategy's inherent flexibility. The joint pooling of resources beyond access to high-end expertise is incorporated into the strategy's management aspects. The partnership's combined resources, both human and in terms of assets (i.e. headquarters, field offices, partner networks, etc.) guarantees the provision of experienced project managers and high-level experts, both locally and centrally. This approach also ensures flexibility in the choice of headquarters, depending on the most strategic and suitable option, both for partners and donors, apart from the natural choice of Brussels for coordination and management related issues when it comes to EU and/or EU member states funding.

Acknowledgements

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