



ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN
ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES
ASSOCIATION DES AUTORITÉS
ÉLECTORALES AFRICAINES

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY to JUNE 2026

ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES (AAEA) WELCOME!

The AAEA e-newsletter provides you with updates, news, views and insights on elections and elections management in countries across Africa. In this latest edition, we bring you an overview of election news from the 1st quarter and 2nd quarter of 2026.



5th Day of the AAEA Executive Peer Learning Mission hosted at Luiss Guido Carli University.

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THE GENERAL ELECTIONS IN UGANDA

On 15th January 2026, General elections were held in Uganda in order to elect a President and the Member of Parliament for this country. Yoweri Museveni was proclaimed as the winner of the presidential election, with 71.65% of the vote. In spite of violent and potentially disruptive incidents, the elections were successfully organised.

Opposition candidate: Bobi Wine 24.72%



THE GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO

On 15th March 2026, Presidential elections were held in the Republic of Congo, with President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Congolese Party of Labour being declared as President of the country. Nguesso won 95% of the vote.

Mavoungou Zinga Mabio, leading the Alliance for Democratic Alternation, was Nguesso's greatest political opponent. Zinga received 1.5% of the vote.

Other opponents were :

Joseph Kignoumbi Kia Mboungou who obtained 0.96%

Destin Gabet who got 0.87%

Vivien Romain Manangou with a 0.60%

Nganguia Engambé Anguios who obtained 0.55% of the votes

THE GENERAL ELECTIONS IN DJIBOUTI: AN OVERVIEW



On the 10th of April 2026, the Republic of Djibouti held its third presidential elections. Djiboutians went to the polls to elect President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh. Out of approximately 243,000–256,000 registered voters – sources vary between official electoral and observer figure of 15,393 valid ballots counted between 80.3% and 88.6% depending on the stage/source (Ministry preliminary figures vs IFES/Constitutional Council figures).

The official list of cleared presidential candidates was as follows:

- **Number of contestants:** 2 candidates
- **Winner:** Ismaïl Omar Guelleh
- **Main opposition candidate:** Mohamed Farah Samatar

- **Winner's percentage — Official final results:** 97.01% (preliminary results announced 97.8%)

Opposition percentage: Final certified result, 2.99% (preliminary result around 2.2%)

No comprehensive official figure for rejected or invalid ballots was publicly highlighted in the main international reporting reviewed.

Generally, the elections progressed peacefully and fairly, with electoral process been effectively administered by the Ministry of Interior and with oversight from the ad hoc CENI and certification by the Constitutional Council.



Promoting free, fair, transparent, and professionally managed elections throughout Africa



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Voting Day, Polling Station, Djibouti



PROMOTING AFRICAN SOLIDARITY: THE AAEA PEER LEARNING MISSION TO DJIBOUTI

From 6th to 13th April 2026, the AAEA organized a Peer Learning Mission to Djibouti, in anticipation of this country's Presidential Elections, held on the 10th April 2026. The mission was supported by the European Centre for Electoral Support via the Pro-Electoral Integrity Project funded by the Italian ministry of foreign affairs implemented with the African Union Commission.

The Mission further afforded members the opportunity to meet and interact with a variety of important stakeholders including the Ministry of Interior, National Communications Commission, international partners, civil

society and other Parties during the election period and offer advice where necessary.

Key activities undertaken by the mission included engaging with these stakeholders, attending the Debriefing of the AU Observer Mission and building the capacity of the EMB leaders as well as electoral professionals through the ECES LEAD-AI Training Programme on Leadership Skills and Artificial Intelligence for Electoral Stakeholders.

On Voting Day, visiting members visited different polling stations across Djibouti city. Polling stations were generally well-organised with sufficient electoral materials. Ballot boxes and voting booths were present in the vast majority of locations visited. The secrecy of the vote was upheld, with the proper application of indelible ink as a safeguard against multiple voting. Defence and Security Forces were visible at polling stations in a professional and non-intrusive manner, maintaining order and non-interference in the voting process. Media coverage of polling day was commendably professional.

CI-DESSOUS, D'AUTRES PHOTOS DES ACTIVITÉS DE L'AAEA À



JOUR DU SCRUTIN AU BUREAU DE VOTE, DJIBOUTI, AVRIL 2026

On the whole, the Elections were transparent, orderly and reasonably peaceful. The Mission noted that Djibouti's small geographic size, the relative familiarity amongst institutions and communities together with mediation in resolving dispute have contributed positively to its good governance and politically stable electoral environment.

Djibouti's success story is worthy of emulation by other African countries. The AAEA commends the Chairperson and his team for conducting successful elections.



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GENERAL ELECTIONS IN BENIN: AN OVERVIEW

On 12th April 2026, Ronauld Wadagni, former Minister of Economy and Finance, was elected President of Benin.

Wadagni, according to results from this country's Autonomous National Electoral Commission, reportedly won 94% of this country's vote. The opponent to this position: Mariam Chabi Talata Zimé Yerima who is the first elected Woman Vice-President of this country, will continue to hold this position.



A SHOW OF AFRICAN UNITY: THE AAEA PEER LEARNING MISSION AT THE BENINOIS ELECTIONS

An AAEA Solidarity Mission was held in Benin from 7th to 13th April 2026, ahead of the Presidential Election which was organized on 12th April 2026. The Mission was composed of Electoral Commission Presidents/Commissioners and Experts from AAEA member EMBs, representing Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Angola, Somalia, Lesotho and Senegal as well as the AAEA Secretariat. The mission was supported by the European Centre for Electoral Support via the Pro-Electoral Integrity Project funded by the Italian ministry of foreign affairs implemented with the African Union Commission.

The purpose of the Mission was to exchange, learn and demonstrate solidarity with the AAEA counterpart, Dr. Sacca Lafia, the Chairperson of Benin's National Autonomous Electoral Commission (CENA) during the election period and offer any advice needed that way.

Among the activities undertaken by the Mission where a series of constructive engagements with key electoral stakeholders including the General Director of Elections of CENA, the Constitutional Court of Benin and the Joint ECOWAS and African Union for all International Observer Groups as well as electoral professionals through the ECES LEAD-AI Training Programme on Leadership Skills and Artificial Intelligence for Electoral Stakeholders.

On election day, the AAEA visited the PCRESC-EPP Scolaire in Cadjehoun Polling Centre, Circonscription Scolaire de Cotonou in Gbgamey, Littoral Abokicodji Lagune ad CEG Zogbo, all located in the Beninois city of Cotonou.



The elections were generally transparent and reasonably peaceful. Benin's deliberate decision to set up polling stations with approximately 600 voters for a voting duration of 9 hours proved effective in preventing congestion. The visible presence of uniformed police at all polling stations contributed significantly to a secure and orderly environment. The election witnessed the massive participation of women and youth as voters and officials in the electoral process.

Photos des activités de l'AAEA au Bénin

EXECUTIVE PEER LEARNING MISSION, ROME

From 4th to 8th May 2026, the Association of African Electoral Authorities (AAEA) convened a high-level Executive Peer Learning Mission in co-operation with the African Union Commission and the European Centre for Electoral Support. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation supported this event via the Pro-Electoral Integrity Project.

The mission brought together Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) from countries participating in [Italy's Piano Mattei initiative](#), alongside representatives of continental and regional African electoral networks, for an intensive week of peer exchange and comparative dialogue on contemporary electoral challenges and democratic governance.

The programme focused on key themes shaping the future of electoral integrity and democratic resilience, including electoral governance and institutional frameworks, artificial intelligence in electoral processes, media integrity and disinformation, cybersecurity, and emerging threats to public trust in democratic institutions.

Throughout the week, participants engaged with leading Italian experts and electoral practitioners of on Italy's electoral system including the Ministry of Interior, Italian National Agency of Cybersecurity who illustrated the Italian electoral management framework, and contemporary challenges linked to digital transformation, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and democratic legitimacy in the digital era.

African experts also engaged in these interactive discussions. They provided comparative perspectives from Africa which could be useful in strengthening public confidence and safeguarding sound electoral processes.

This Mission was an occasion to strengthen collaborative efforts amongst various stakeholders including African Electoral Management Bodies, Italian institutions, and international partners on rising constraints and opportunities affecting electoral integrity as well as democratic governance in the digital era.



DIALOGUE ON CITIZEN ELECTION OBSERVATION IN AFRICA, NAIROBI, KENYA

The workshop brought together participants from a range of citizen observer groups and Election Management Bodies (EMBs) across Africa, as well as representatives from the organizing partners. Observer groups represented included the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (Ghana), Yaiga Africa (Nigeria), Election Observation Group (Kenya), Zimbabwe Election Support Network (Zimbabwe), National Election Watch (Sierra Leone), and Malawi Election Support Network (Malawi).

EMBs present were the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC), Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC), Independent Electoral Commission of Nigeria (INEC), National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) of Kenya. Additional participants included representatives from NDI Washington, NDI Southern and Eastern Africa office, AAEA, and AFEONET.



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Key issues identified that require review include: The Use of photo badges; Late request for accreditation applications; Manual processing and production of accreditation badges; Payment for accreditation cards; and Requirement of a certificate of incorporation.

Participants agreed to implement certain major proposals such as producing generic accreditation cards with QR codes of all required information on the card, instead of photo badges. They further agreed to remove accreditation fees; call for applications as early as practicable; keep it close enough to accommodate substitutions; and set a requirement for only a voter ID card or a national ID card for ease of verification, instead of other documents that cannot be verified.

For the way forward, participants generally agreed that, given the cordiality of discussions, it is imperative to expand the conversation to cover more EMBs, especially in difficult countries where more challenges are faced by CEOGs. To effectively engage EMBs in challenging contexts, AAEA can consider targeted outreach programs such as personalized communications to EMB leaders, facilitating workshops and training sessions tailored to the unique contexts of these countries, and establishing bilateral dialogue platforms focused on practical problem-solving around accreditation. In addition, regional roundtables and peer learning exchanges can be organized to allow EMBs from less-challenging environments to share best practices with their counterparts.

Collaboration with regional organisations, leveraging local champions, and identifying EMBs open to reform as pilot partners can create momentum and model success for broader adoption. It is equally important to ensure a buy-in of these major proposals by other EMB and regional bodies so that it becomes a standard practice.

WEBINAR SERIES FOR WORKSHOP ON DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE FUTURE OF ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT

On 23rd June 2026, the AAEA, in collaboration with ECES, convened a Webinar Series on Digital Sovereignty, Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Electoral Management. The event brought together more than 200 participants including Chairpersons and Commissioners of Electoral Management Bodies; Chief Electoral Officers and Secretaries-General; and Directors of Electoral Operations.

The event was part of the continuing dialogue initiated during the Rome Executive Peer Learning Mission in May. It contributed to broader efforts by the AAEA, African Union Commission and ECES to strengthen electoral integrity, democratic resilience and institutional innovation across Africa.

Furthermore, this Executive Webinar aimed at providing all African EMBs with an opportunity to further explore critical issues and engage directly with leading African experts working at the intersection of elections, technology and governance.

Among the expected outcomes of this webinar were: an increased awareness of digital sovereignty challenges among African EMB leadership; a promotion of the exchange of experiences among Electoral Management Bodies; and reinforcement of the co-operation among African EMBs on emerging governance challenge



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

On 27th May 2026, the AAEA held a virtual meeting for members of its Executive Committee. Participants were Madam Jean Mensa, President, Executive Committee, AAEA; Mrs. Melatwork Hailu, Chairperson, National Elections Board of Ethiopia, Ethiopia; Mr. Mohamed Frikha, Vice President, Instance Supérieure Indépendante pour les Élections (ISIE), Tunisia; Mr. Dieudonné Tsiyoyo, Chief of Staff, Commission Électorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI), Congo DRC; and Prof. François Abiola, Member of the Electoral Council, Commission Électorale Nationale Autonome (CENA), Benin. In attendance were Mr. Fred Tetteh, Director, Research Division, EC; Dr. Yvonne Idun, Program Manager, AAEA; and Ms. Rebecca Teshome, Personal Assistant, National Elections Board, of Ethiopia, Ethiopia.

The purpose of this meeting was to provide a debriefing on Benin and Djibouti Peer Learning Missions of April 2026; deliberate on the forthcoming AU-EMB Forum and General Assembly of July 2026; and review other relevant matters.

The President of the Executive Committee mentioned that efforts were being made to keep the work of the AAEA Secretariat going. She emphasized that the AAEA had made some improvements in reviving its website with updates on recently organized initiatives over the past few months.

The President also then provided a debriefing on the Benin and Djibouti Missions of April 2026. The missions and elections were evidently successful, owing to the prevalent good governance systems in these countries.

Madam Hailu expressed NEBE's appreciation of the efforts of the AAEA to keep the work of NEBE going. Mr. Frikha, Prof. Abiola, Mr. Tsiyoyo and Madam Hailu reiterated the commitment of their EMBs to participating in the AU-EMB Forum and General Assembly in Egypt, scheduled to take place in July 2026.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN ETHIOPIA

On 1st June 2026, Ethiopia held its 7th General Election, to determine the composition of the House of Peoples' Representatives and all Regional State Councils throughout various parts of this country.

In the face of political strife in Tigray, Amhara, and Oromia which disrupted voting in these regions, elections progressed favourably on the whole.

There were 547 seats in the House of Peoples' Representatives, with 274 needed for a majority. More than 50.5 million voters participated.

There were more than 47 political parties, including:

- **Prosperity Party (PP)**, led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. He prioritised economic growth and stability.
- **National Movement of Amhara (NaMA)**, which focused on promoting regional rights and security in the Amhara.
- **Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (EZEMA)**, which advocates governance and reform.

Despite financial challenges as observed by NEBE, the election was peaceful and orderly. Voter participation was impressive with the involvement of women and the youth. The AU and IGAD observed that the elections were conducted in a free, transparent and fair manner.



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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

A follow-up online meeting for the Heads of The Executive Committee was held on the 25th of June 2026. The objectives of the Meeting included debriefing on the AI Workshop of 23rd June 2026 and preparing for the then-forthcoming AU-EMB Forum and General Assembly of July 2026.

OVERVIEW OF 3RD QUARTER ELECTIONS ACROSS AFRICA

Zambia – General Election General elections are to be held in Zambia on the 13th August 2026. This event aims to elect a President, members of the national assembly, councillors and council chairs.

The Gambia – Presidential Election Presidential elections are scheduled to be held in The Gambia on 5 December 2026, with current President Adama Barrow contesting with former Vice President of The Gambia Ousainou Darboe of the United Democratic Party and Bakary K. Badjie of the Independent Party as Barrow's political opponents.

South Sudan – General Election Following the independence of South Sudan on 9th July 2011, a series of events such as the outbreak of the Sudanese Civil War and the insufficient institutional mechanisms led to the postponement of presidential elections in this country.

With the resolution of these problems by various stakeholders, on 22nd December, 2026, the first presidential elections will be held in this country.

UPCOMING AAEA EVENTS

These include:

- Support to Zambia's General Elections, August 2026
- Support to The Presidential Elections, The Gambia, December 2026
- Support to South Sudan's General Elections, December 2026

FROM THE SECRETARIAT:

About the AAEA The Association of African Election Authorities is a peer-to-peer network of Heads of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of African countries. The Association was formed in 1996. It currently comprises 45 members. The AAEA Secretariat is hosted by the Electoral Commission of Ghana.

Vision The vision of the AAEA is of the African continent established as a beacon of democracy where national electoral processes preserve, provide for, and protect the right of citizens to free, fair, and peaceful elections. The AAEA therefore envisions itself as a platform of peers, where, through cross-learning, information dissemination, resource-sharing, and technical assistance, EMBs in Africa are supported, challenged, and resourced to administer elections in their countries professionally, fairly, and cost effectively.

Mission Statement The AAEA exists to foster cross-learning, information-dissemination, resource-sharing, and technical assistance across Elections Management Bodies (EMBs) in Africa; build capacities of member EMBs to administer free and fair elections in their respective countries; hold each other accountable to best practice in elections management; and wield an influential global voice on elections.