

BENIN

Date of Elections: 20 November 1979

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of the Parliament established by the 1977 Constitution*.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Benin, the National Revolutionary Assembly, consists of 336 members ("People's Commissioners") elected for 3 years.

Electoral System

All Beninese citizens who are at least 18 years of age and not insane or disqualified pursuant to court decision are entitled to vote and be elected to Parliament.

Electoral registers are compiled on the village and town ward level.

The parliamentarians represent socio-professional classes and mass organizations; all are members of the *Parti de la Revolution populaire du Benin* (PRPB). The electoral process is comprised of three stages: "democratic consultation" ("*consultation democratique*"), drawing up of the national list of candidates and the elections proper; the objective of the first (consultation) stage is the selection of candidates after extensive public debate. On polling day, the national list of the PRPB is submitted to the electorate for approval or rejection as a whole.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Following the 1970 general elections, a military Government was established in 1972, the National Assembly was dissolved and a National Council of the Revolution (CNR) was formed to carry out a progressive policy. In 1975, the *Parti de la Revolution populaire du Benin* (PRPB) was established as the highest expression of the political will of the people of Benin. Two years later, the CNR adopted a Basic Law* that aimed at a "popular democratic revolution"; it provided, *inter alia*, for a National Revolutionary Assembly as the supreme organ of the State.

The November election date was fixed in August 1979, at the ninth session of the Central Committee of the PRPB. There were three stages leading to selection of the Deputies. At the first, would-be contestants were screened and those who were suspected

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, pp. 8-9.

of corruption or "counter-revolutionary" leanings were cast aside. The next stage was marked by questioning of the candidates by the people at all levels—village, district and higher. Finally, on 20 November, the 336 nominees of the single PRPB list—which was drawn up by the Party's Central Committee—were overwhelmingly approved by the electorate. As planned, the new members represent socio-professional classes, not geographical constituencies.

In accordance with the Constitution, the CNR was dissolved on 4 February 1980 and replaced by the newly-elected Assembly. Two days later, Colonel Mathieu Kerekou was elected first President of the People's Republic of Benin by the members of the Assembly. During the Assembly's first session, a National Executive Council (Government) of 28 members was established.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the National Revolutionary Assembly

Number of registered electors.	1,582,910	
Voters.	1,275,461	(80.58%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	5,410	
Valid votes.	1,270,051	
<i>Votes in favour of the Parti de la Revolution popu-</i> <i>late du Benin.</i>	1,243,286	(97.9%)

2. Distribution of Deputies according to Professional Category

Civil servants.	105
Peasants and craftsmen.	84
Party officials.	67
Military.	33
Workers.	33
Representatives of the middle class.	8
Clergy.	6

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