

UNITED REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Date of Elections: 29 May 1983

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Cameroon, the National Assembly, comprises 120 members elected for 5 years.

Electoral System

All citizens of Cameroon who have reached the age of 21 and have not been disqualified by law are entitled to vote. The name of each citizen who is permanently domiciled, or has lived for at least six months, in a particular constituency may be entered on the electoral list of that same constituency. Members of the armed forces are registered where based notwithstanding the residence requirement.

Disqualified from voting are convicted criminals, certain persons under personal restraint, persons under warrant for arrest, undischarged bankrupts, persons convicted of offences against the security of the State and the insane.

Electoral lists are revised annually. Voting is not compulsory.

All registered electors at least 23 years old by the date of the elections, who are able to read and write English or French, may be candidates for the National Assembly. Membership of the National Assembly is incompatible with the office of Minister, Vice-Minister, member of the Economic and Social Council, or senior officer of a national firm, unless a Deputy is named to this last post as member of the board of directors of a public enterprise.

Lists of candidates must be submitted at least 15 days prior to election day, accompanied by a deposit of Francs CFA 50,000, reimbursable if the list obtains at least 25% of the valid votes cast.

For election purposes, the country as a whole constitutes one constituency. The amount of candidates comprising the list of each legally-existing political party must equal the number of seats to be filled at the national level. Deputies are elected by simple majority, without preferential or limited voting or vote-splitting.

When at least two vacancies occur between general elections, by-elections are held within 12 months following the latter vacancy. No such elections are held when vacancies arise less than one year before the end of the National Assembly's term.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The election date was set on 22 March 1983. At the outset, there were a total of 2600 candidates for the 120 National Assembly seats; all were members of the *Union nationale camerounaise* (UNC), the country's sole political party. On 10 May, a final list of 120 candidates was drawn up and made public.

On polling day, the UNC candidates obtained more than 99% of the votes cast. Of these, 42 were elected for the first time. Mr. Bello Bouba Maigari remained Prime Minister.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections

Number of registered electors	3,657,995
Voters	3,628,579(99.19%)
Blank or void ballot papers110
Votes in favour of the <i>Union nationale camerounaise</i>	3,628,469

2. Distribution of Deputies according to Professional Category

Administrative professions.	46
Teachers.	41
Farmers16
Businessmen.13
Liberal professions.	3
Other.1
	120

3. Distribution of Deputies according to Sex

Men	103
Women	17
	120

4. Distribution of Deputies according to Age Group

23-32 years	4
33-39	16
40-49	45
50-59	41
60-72	14
	120

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Date of Elections: 2 November 1982

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats of the House of Representatives and one-third (33) of those of the Senate on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of the United States of America, the Congress, consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The Senate is composed of 100 members elected for 6 years on the basis of two for each of the country's 50 States, a third of whom are chosen every two years in such manner that, in each State, both Senators are not normally standing for election at the same time.

The House of Representatives is composed of members elected for 2 years in the 50 States in such manner that each Representative represents roughly the same number of citizens, provided that each State has at least one Representative. Within the constitutional limitation that "the number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand" inhabitants, the Congress itself has the power to determine the size of the House of Representatives. Under the law currently in force, the membership from the 50 States is fixed at 435. In addition to these Representatives, there are Delegates from the District of Columbia, Guam, the Virgin Islands and American Samoa, who are elected for 2 years, and a Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico, elected for 4 years; these five officers may take part in the debate of the House, but have no right to vote except in committees.

Electoral System

The Constitution of the United States lays down that all citizens who, "in each State, shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State legislature", are entitled to vote in elections for Congress; it prescribes, furthermore, that the right of citizens to vote shall not be denied or abridged on account of race, colour or sex, or by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.

Within these limitations, the determination of who may vote falls under the jurisdiction of each State, with the proviso that no violation be made of the factors of discrimination proscribed by the Constitution. In all States, electors are required to be United States citizens and not less than 18 years of age. In elections other than presidential, the United States Supreme Court has held that a maximum period of 30 days' residence in a State is what will be constitutionally permissible. Most States have conformed their durational residence requirements to meet this Supreme Court standard.

With the passage of the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1970, the States ceased to have the right to impose literacy tests or similar devices as a condition for voting; the 1975 Amendments to the Voting Rights Act made permanent the ban on such tests or devices.

The insane and persons convicted of a crime which carries the penalty of disfranchisement are disqualified from voting in many States. Other grounds for disqualification found in some States include conviction for an electoral offence, duelling, and imprisonment.

Electors must have their names appear on the registers as eligible voters in virtually all the States. In these cases, persons must take the initiative in order to become registered to vote. Once on the register, voters generally need take no initiative other than to continue to vote regularly, provided that they do not change their names or addresses. The registers - which are mostly drawn up at the county level - are revised almost continuously, and particularly before State-wide elections. The Overseas Voting Rights Act of 1975 requires States to adopt uniform absentee registration and voting procedures covering overseas citizens in federal elections.

Although voting is not compulsory, employers in many States are required to allow their employees to take time off to vote without loss of pay. Most States permit absentee voting, especially for members of the armed forces and their dependents and Government employees.

No person may be a Representative who has not attained the age of 25 years and been for seven years a citizen of the United States and an inhabitant of his State; for the Senate, the requirement is 30 years of age and nine years' citizenship and an inhabitant of his State. No Senator or Representative may hold any civil office under the authority of the United States during his term in Congress.

A person may run for Congress either as an independent or as a member of a political party; most candidates are, in practice, presented on the ballot paper under a party designation. Voters may "write in" the name of a candidate who does not appear on the printed ballot.

Nomination as a result of nominating, or primary, elections of parties is the practice in most States. It is regulated by State law. Usually, a person may become a candidate in the primary election by obtaining a petition subscribed by a designated number of voters of his political party. Voters then choose their party's candidate at the primary election. The number of voters whose support is necessary to qualify as a candidate in either a party's primary or in a general election, and the necessity or amount of an accompanying filing fee, vary according to State law.

The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended in 1974, 1976 and 1980, provides for the civil enforcement of the federal campaign financing laws; these laws provide for various overall contribution limitations for individuals and political committees. The United States Supreme Court has held expenditure limitations to be unconstitutional since they place substantial direct restrictions on political expression that are prohibited by the First Amendment; expenditure limitations, however, are valid in situations where candidates agree to adhere to them in order to receive public financing.

Each State is entitled to at least one Representative and all beyond this minimum number are apportioned among the States according to population, so that no congressional district is exactly the same geographical size. Districts must, however, be substantially the same size in terms of population. Representatives all come from single-member districts.

Each of the 50 States is entitled to two Senators, both of whom represent the State as a whole regardless of its population. Each elector therefore votes for two senatorial candidates, but not normally in the same election since their terms are staggered.

Members of Congress are all directly elected, generally on the basis of simple plurality of votes. The two exceptions are the State of Georgia and the District of Columbia, both of which provide for a run-off election in the event that no candidate obtains an absolute majority of the votes cast in the general election.

If a seat in the House of Representatives becomes vacant between general elections, a special election is held as soon as practicable. If a seat becomes vacant in the Senate, the Governor of the State concerned may, through a temporary appointment, fill it until a special election or the next general election is held in conformity with the laws of that State.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The Senate elections of 1982 did not reshape the Senate as did the landslide Republican victories of 1980; the five newly-elected Senators represented the smallest number of freshmen in 68 years. The two Houses of the Congress are still controlled by different parties, as the Democrats increased their majority in the House of Representatives by 26 members (269 to 166), and the Republicans maintained a 54 to 46 advantage in the Senate.

The principal campaign issues of these mid-term elections focused on the economy, rising unemployment and the fiscal policies of the Reagan Administration. Another issue was concern over the build-up of nuclear weapons; the nuclear freeze movement placed resolutions on eight state ballots and in dozens of communities.

With the convening of the 98th Congress on 3 January 1983, the House of Representatives had 57 freshman Democrats. The Senate, for its part, appeared to be more independent and moderate in composition.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections

Number of registered electors.	169,300,000 (approx.)
Voters.	64,172,541
Valid votes.	51,591,809 (Senate)
	63,852,938 (House of Representatives)

2. Distribution of Seats in the Senate

Political Group	Votes obtained		Number of Seats won at 1982 Elections	Total Number of Seats
Democratic Party.	28,041,116	54.4	20	54(=)
Republican Party.	22,692,919	44.0	13	46(=)
Others.	857,774	1.7		
			B	100

3. Distribution of Seats in the House of Representatives

Political Group	Votes obtained	o.	Number of Seats
Democratic Party	35,523,031	55.6	269 (+ 26)
Republican Party	27,354,388	42.9	166 (-26)
Others	975,517	<u>1.5</u>	—
			435

4. *Distribution of Senators according to Professional Category*

Lawyers.	58
Businessmen.	25
Farmers, ranchers.	5
Educators.	4
Journalists.	1
Astronauts.	1
Others.	6
	<hr/>
	100

5. *Distribution of Members of Congress according to Sex*

	”	House of Representatives
Men.	98	411
Women.	2	21
<u>Vacancies.</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	435

6. *Distribution of Senators according to Age Group*

30-40 years.10
41-50.36
51-60.35
61-70.14
<u>71-80.</u>	<u>.5</u>
	100

7. *Average Age of Members of Congress*

Senate.	53.8 years
House of Representatives.	45.5 years