

GUINEA-BISSAU

Date of Elections: January 1977

Purpose of Elections

Elections were **held** for the members of Parliament for the first time since independence was attained by the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Guinea-Bissau, the National People's Assembly, comprises 150 deputies elected for 3 years by the country's regional councils.

Electoral System

All citizens over 15 years of age who are not otherwise disqualified are entitled to vote for the country's representative institutions.

Members of the National People's Assembly are chosen by the country's regional councils, whose members are for their part popularly elected.

Within each of the country's 37 sectors, candidates appear on lists drawn up by an electoral commission and approved by the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), the Republic's sole political organization. Electors have the choice of approving or rejecting the PAIGC's list as a whole. At least 50% of the voters of each sector must cast ballots for the poll to be valid.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The National People's Assembly was previously established in 1972, prior to independence achieved in 1974.

The poll reflected the Government's policy of decentralization of administration. From December 19, 1976 on, nation-wide elections took place for the members of the councils of the country's eight regions. This voting was due to close on December 29, but was later extended until mid-January 1977. The newly-elected regional councillors in turn chose deputies to the National Assembly.

The single official list of candidates was presented by the ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC). It was

approved by an average of 80% of the voters, but in certain areas electors cast votes in favour of unofficial candidates.

The new National Assembly convened on March 13, 1977, to choose the President of the Republic and, from among its number, the 15-member Council of State (Executive). On March 18, the Council of State confirmed the Chief Commissioner (Prime Minister), Major Francisco Mendes, in the post which he has held since 1973.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections

Voters.169,940
<i>Votes in favour of the PAIOC.</i>136,022