

RWANDA

Date of Elections: 28 December 1981

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament as foreseen in the 1978 Constitution. Dissolution of the previous national legislature—elected in September 1969—followed the military coup d'Etat of 5 July 1973*.

Characteristics of Parliament

Under the 1978 Constitution and the August 1981 Electoral Law**, the unicameral Parliament of Rwanda, the National Development Council (*Conseil National de Developpement*), comprises 64 Deputies elected for 5 years. There is one Deputy for every 35,000 registered electors.

Electoral System

In accordance with the 1981 Electoral Law, all citizens at least 18 years of age are entitled to vote in the electoral district where they reside. Disqualified are persons who have been convicted of murder or assassination, those convicted of undermining the State's internal or external security and consequently sentenced to a term of imprisonment in excess of 12 months, and members of the armed forces convicted of desertion. The right of vote is suspended as regards prisoners, persons under the Government's care and the insane.

Electoral registers are compiled on the municipal level. Voting is compulsory.

Candidates for Parliament must be citizens at least 21 years of age of good character who have resided for at least six months in the constituency where running and who have obtained a diploma certifying four years' study in a secondary school or the equivalent. Ineligible are persons deprived of the right to vote, those having been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for 12 months to five years in the preceding 10 years, or to more than five years in the preceding 20 years, fraudulent bankrupts, persons legally incapacitated on a permanent basis, and those having shirked their military obligation through desertion. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with the office of President of the Republic, certain public functions at the national and local level, membership of the armed forces, and the post of salaried agent in the private sector.

Candidatures must be submitted from 118 to 104 days prior to the election date. The final list of candidates is compiled by the President of the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND), the country's sole political party; it contains twice as many names (128) as there are parliamentary seats. The country's prefectures are deemed to be its electoral

*See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections VIII (1973-1974)*, p. 7.

**See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 20.

constituencies. Within these, the 64 Deputies are elected by simple majority, seats being allocated to those candidates having obtained the greatest number of votes.

Substitutes elected at the same time as titular Deputies fill parliamentary vacancies which occur between general elections.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The National Assembly elected in September 1969 was dissolved following the military coup d'Etat of 5 July 1973. The normal legislative processes were held in abeyance and all political activity was banned until July 1975, when a new ruling party, the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND), was formed. Pursuant to a national referendum held in December 1978, a new Constitution providing, *inter alia*, for a popularly-elected Assembly to be known as the National Development Council, was approved*.

The third MRND party congress, held in December 1980, decided that legislative elections would take place in 1981. In accordance with the Electoral Law, the MRND selected twice the number of candidates—128—as there were parliamentary seats to be filled, and the election campaign lasted 30 days. On polling day, the MRND was overwhelmingly supported by more than 93% of the electorate. Major General Juvenal Habyarimana, who assumed power in 1973, continues to be President of the Republic as well as President of the 19-man Council of Ministers.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the National Development Council

Number of registered electors . . .	2,244,547	
Voters	2,165,275 (96.47%)	
Blank or void ballot papers	64,505	
Valid votes	2,100,770	
<i>Votes in favour of the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND)</i>	2,100,770	
Political Group	Number of Candidates	Number of Seats
National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND).	128	64

* See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments XIII (1978-1979)*, p. 24.

*2. Distribution of Deputies according
to Professional Category*

Public administration	62
Liberal professions	2
	~64~

3. Distribution of Deputies according to Sex

Men	60
Women	4
	~64~

4. Distribution of Deputies according to Age Group

21-30 years	1
31-40	37
41-50	24
Over 50.	2
	~64~