

SWAZILAND

Date of Elections: 29 October 1983

Purpose of Elections

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

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Swaziland consists of the House of Assembly and the Senate.

The House of Assembly comprises 50 members: 40 of these are elected by an Electoral College of tribal community delegates and 10 are appointed by the King. The Attorney-General is also a member but has no vote. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker, elected by the House, may be chosen either from its own members (other than the Attorney-General, Ministers or Deputy Ministers) or from among persons who are not members but are qualified to be such.

The Senate consists of 20 members. Ten are elected by the House of Assembly and 10 are appointed by the King. The President and Deputy President of the Senate are chosen either from among the Senators who are not Ministers or Deputy Ministers or from among persons who are not Senators.

The term of office of all members is 5 years.

Electoral System

All citizens who are at least 18 years of age are entitled to vote for members of the Electoral College in the tribal community (*tinkhundla*) where they ordinarily reside or work. Employers are obliged to release their employees so that they may exercise this right. The insane, persons owing allegiance to a foreign State, and those under sentence of death or imprisonment exceeding six months may not vote or be eligible for nomination as a delegate to the Electoral College.

Each *tinkhundla* nominates from two to four candidates for the Electoral College, each of whom must have received the support of at least five persons. Two of these candidates are then elected as delegates.

At the first meeting of the Electoral College, nomination of candidates for election to the House of Assembly takes place. The two delegates of each *tinkhundla* nominate not more than two candidates; no nomination is valid unless it is supported by five other members of the College.

Election of Assembly members is held within five days of completion of nominations. If not more than 40 persons have altogether been nominated, the Chief Electoral Officer declares them as duly elected members of the House of Assembly. When there are more

than 40 nominations, but only 40 candidates have received an absolute majority of College votes over all the candidates, they are for their part declared elected. If more than 40 candidates receive a majority of votes, such candidates who have an absolute majority over all the votes are declared elected; if the number of successful candidates so declared is less than 40, a fresh election for the remaining vacancies is held.

Disqualified or ineligible for election are persons under allegiance to a foreign State, holders of public office, members of the Electoral College, undischarged bankrupts, the insane, persons under sentence of death or imprisonment exceeding six months, and certain persons who have previously been imprisoned.

Senators are elected through majority vote of House of Assembly members present and voting.

Both Assembly and Senate vacancies are filled through by-elections.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

With a view to the October 1983 general elections, Parliament was dissolved on 18 August 1983. The polling date was set on 27 August.

Under Swaziland's unique electoral system, the first stage of the process (the selection of the Electoral College by *tinkhundla*, or tribal assemblies) was completed on 28 October. The Electoral College in turn chose 40 members of the House of Assembly. Party political activity has been in abeyance since April 1973.

Subsequent to the elections, Queen Regent Ntombi (King Sobhuza II having died in August 1982) appointed 10 members to the House of Assembly on 17 November. These members were sworn in on 18 November before electing 10 Senators, who were joined by another 10 appointed by Queen Ntombi.

On 20 November, Queen Ntombi reappointed Prince Bhekimpi Dlamini as Prime Minister and the next day announced the formation of an almost entirely new 13-member Cabinet.

Statistics

1. *Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex*

Men.	64
Women.	6
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	70