

Angola 2017 Elections:

Forecast

EDITOR'S NOTE: This document is part of our series "Elections in Africa 2017", which for each country comprises of:

1. **A Short note** (2 pages, 3 months before the elections)
2. **Possible scenarios** (2 pages, 1 month before)
3. **Forecast** (1 page, 7 days before)



220 National Assembly seats will be up for grab when Angolan voters go to the polls on 23 August. The candidate of the party with the highest number of seats will become the next president. More notably, this year's election will mark the exit of long-time MPLA ruling party leader and current President, Jose Eduardo dos Santos, who is retiring after 38 years at the helm.

Five parties and one coalition will compete in the upcoming election. As the campaign period ends, only the main opposition party, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), appears capable of challenging the MPLA, in power since the country's independence in November 1975.

The MPLA remains the party to beat

A recent poll conducted by the Brazilian company Sensus Pesquisa e Consultoria, puts the MPLA in front with 38% of the vote, while UNITA and the Broad Convergence for the Salvation of Angola – Electoral Coalition (CASE-CE) is projected to garner 32% and 26% respectively¹.

If the afore-mentioned poll results are anything to go by, the ruling MPLA could be facing a serious challenge after its past successful performances (82% of the votes in 2008 and 72% in 2012). The poll results may reflect the tough economic conditions facing millions of Angolans, and could be an indication of the challenges awaiting President Dos Santos' successor, Defense Minister João Lourenço.

Yet poll results can be misleading.² And with better access to resources and stronger structures throughout the country, the MPLA is more likely to get a comfortable win in the upcoming election.

The police to suppress any protest attempts

The opposition has accused the MPLA of unfairness, while the government has rejected an EU observer mission over disagreements regarding access to polling stations, but instead allowed only a small team of four observers.

Unrest — although minor — could ensue if the opposition were to reject the election results. Yet, the security forces are more likely to violently suppress any attempts by opposition supporters to protest. The killing of a youth by the police last July, for burning the MPLA flag³, could be a strong message to the opposition.

¹ All Africa, 'Angola: Pre-Election Polls Shock Angola's Ruling Party', Available online at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201708130259.html> (Accessed on 14/8/2017)

² The upset regarding the UK "Brexit" poll results in the summer of 2016 and later the election of Donald Trump ahead of Hillary Clinton show that opinion polls cannot be trusted to correctly predict election winners.

³ DW, 'Angola: Election campaigns kicks off' Available online at <http://www.dw.com/en/angola-election-campaigns-kick-off/a-39825696> (Accessed on 14/08/2017)