

# Djibouti



**Type of Government:** Republic

**Head of State:** Ismail Omar Guelleh (since 1999)

**Election Day:** 8 April 2016

## Opposition Parties<sup>1</sup>:

*Union pour le salut national* (USN)/National Salvation Unit; a group of 8 opposition parties established after the post-election crisis of 2013.

The candidates are:

- Omar Elmi Kaireh
- Mohamed Daoud Chehem

Independent Candidates:

- Hasan Idriss Ahmed
- Mohamed Moussa Tourtour
- Jamaa Abdouramane Jamaa

**Ruling Party:** People's Rally for Progress/*Rassemblement populaire pour le Progrès* (RPP) led by Ismail Omar Guelleh

## Overview:

Going into his fourth mandate, current president Ismail Omar Guelleh, is likely to continue his 16 year rule. The previous presidential elections in 2005 and 2011, were boycotted by the opposition and highly criticized by the international media.

Although there has been an increase of wealth in the strategically well-positioned country, its people suffer from poverty, children are malnourished and the majority do not have access to electricity.

<sup>1</sup> Louarn.J. *Djibouti: Présidentielle - Ismail Omar Guelleh dans un fauteuil*. All Africa. 2016.  
Available at: <http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/201603100466.html> [Accessed on March 31, 2016]

**Press Freedom:**

Independent media is non-existent in Djibouti, as the state owns all news agencies within the country. There are a few opposition friendly media outlets operating outside of the country, however these are highly controlled and occasionally blocked by the government. Additionally access to internet is beyond the budget of many.

**Participation in Elections:**

The average percentage of voters in the last two elections: namely, the presidential (2011) and the parliamentary (2013) stood at 26%<sup>2</sup>.

**Legitimacy of Election:**

Following a controversial constitutional amendment in 2010, Guelleh was allowed to stand for more than two terms. His predecessor was in office for 22 years, making the RPP the only ruling party since the country's independence in 1977.

Despite an agreement between the ruling party and the main opposition party USN, which included: amnesty for opposition members, rapid reform of the Electoral Commission, and an immediate halt to “all acts that could lead to tense situations between public authorities and opposition activists”<sup>3</sup>; arrests, detentions and kidnappings are still being reported.

**Comments on the Election:**

MRD (*Mouvement pour le renouveau démocratique*, which is part of the USN) leader Daher Ahmed Farah: “Our party has decided not to participate in the [presidential] election because we consider it to be a sham election, the minimum requirements of transparency are not guaranteed”<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). 2013. Voter Turnout Data for Djibouti. Available at: <http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?id=62> [Accessed on March 31, 2016]

<sup>3</sup> Ibrahim, M. African Arguments, 2015. Available at: <http://africanarguments.org/2015/09/28/djiboutis-strongman-president-faces-strongest-cross-examination-of-his-career/>. [Accessed on March 30, 2016]

<sup>4</sup> The Citizen. *Djibouti's Guelleh eyes fourth term win in presidential race*. 2016. Available at: [http://www.looklocal.co.za/article/djibouti's\\_guelleh\\_eyes\\_fourth\\_term\\_win\\_in\\_presidential\\_vote.html](http://www.looklocal.co.za/article/djibouti's_guelleh_eyes_fourth_term_win_in_presidential_vote.html) [Accessed on April 1, 2016]

## Chad



**Type of Government:** Semi-Presidential System

**Head of State:** Idriss Deby

**Date of Election:** 10 April 2016

### Opposition Parties<sup>5</sup>:

- *L'Union nationale pour le développement et le renouveau* (UNDR) led by Saleh Kebzabo
- *Cadre d'action populaire pour la solidarité et l'unité de la République* (CAP-SUR) led by Joseph Djimrangar Dadnadj
- *National Rally for Development and Progress*(VIVA-RNDP) led by Nouradine Delwa Kassiré Koumakoye
- *Convention Tchadienne pour la Paix et le Développement*(CTPD) led by M. Louakéin Kourayo Mbaïhérem
- *Convention pour le Changement et l'Alternance Démocratique* (CAD) led by M. Julien Béassemnda Djébare
- *Convention Tchadienne pour la Paix et le Développement* (CTPD) led by Laoukein Kourayo Medard

**Ruling Party:** *Patriotic Salvation Movement* (MPS) led by Idriss Deby

### Overview:

Chad's current president Idriss Deby has been in power for 26, having ousted former president Hissène Habré in 1990. After a constitutional amendment abolished term limits in 2005, he will be able to run for his fifth term in this year's elections.

There are more than 70 opposition parties in Chad, some of whom were created by the government to divide the opposition, including a total of 13 presidential candidates. The three most promising candidates include; Kebzabo, Dadnadj and Koumakoye - all have served under President Deby at some point in their political careers. That said, the ruling MPS party holds a significant reign over the political landscape, suggesting that President Idriss Deby is expected to continue his rule.

Nevertheless, the country is rife with protests and demonstrations challenging the current leadership. Deby does however have strong continental and international

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Le Progrès. 2016. *Campagne présidentielle 2016 : les candidats, au contact des électeurs*. Available at: <http://tchadinfos.com/politique/campagne-presidentielle-2016-les-candidats-au-contact-des-electeurs/> [Accessed on April 4, 2016]

support, mostly due to the Chadian National Army (ANT), who are important allies in the fight against Islamic militants in Mali, Libya and Nigeria.

With the country relying heavily on oil revenues, the global surge in oil prices foresees a looming economic challenge for Deby should he be re-elected.

### **Press Freedom:**

Although Chad's constitution grants freedom of press and expression, they are highly restricted and self-censorship is common. Radio content is controlled and government dissent and demonstrations are frequently banned.

Five political activists have already been arrested this year during a peaceful protest rallying for democratic transition of power. Indignation against the political elite, and open citizen protests have increased immensely since the reveal of a video-tape depicting the gang rape of a presidential candidate's daughter by the sons of leading officials<sup>6</sup>.

### **Legitimacy of Elections:**

Chad has never undergone a transfer of power through elections, and is rated 163 of 175 countries in Transparency International's 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index<sup>7</sup>. There have been irregularities during past elections, stirring up accusations of fraud and causing opposition members to repeatedly boycott the elections.

### **Participation in Elections:**

The average participation rate for the last presidential and parliamentary elections (2011) stood at 56%<sup>8</sup>.

### **Comments on the Upcoming Election:**

- On presidential candidates: "It's always the same old people who cannot keep up with social change"- Roland Marchal, Senior Research fellow at the Centre for International Research at Sciences Po in Paris<sup>9</sup>.
- Comment on the governments reaction to recent protest: "This state of affairs confirms the government's desire to snuff out democratic values in Chad"- Bertrand Sohoh Ngandjel, Protest movement *Ça Suffit (That's Enough)*<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> News24. 2016. *Chad arrests a fifth key activist ahead of polls*. News24 Online. Available at: <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/chad-arrests-a-fifth-key-activist-ahead-of-polls-20160404> [Accessed on April 5, 2016]

<sup>7</sup> Freedom House. 2015. *Freedom in the World: Chad 2015*. Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/chad> [Accessed on April 4, 2016]

<sup>8</sup> Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). 2011. *Voter Turnout Data for Chad*. Available at: <http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?id=213> [Accessed on April 5, 2016]

<sup>9</sup> Hicks. C. March 2016. *Could President Idriss Deby face a shock in Chad's elections?* African Arguments. Available at: <http://africanarguments.org/2016/03/24/could-president-idriss-deby-face-a-shock-in-chads-elections/> [Accessed on April 5, 2016]

<sup>10</sup> n.6

