

IN THIS ISSUE

Southern Africa is in a phase of elections. People in Angola and Lesotho (2012), Zimbabwe, Swaziland, and Madagascar (2013 to early 2014) cast their votes not too long ago. This year the electorate in South Africa does so on 7 May, when this issue of the *Strategic Review* is in print. The people in Malawi follow suit on 20 May, while Botswana and Mozambique will hold general elections on 15 October. Namibians will vote most likely, as every five years since independence, during November. It is certainly no coincidence that the sub-region scores regularly by far the best on aggregate in the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance. The days when civil wars and military destabilisation undermined peace and security dramatically in many Southern African Development Community (SADC) states, are to a large extent history. But the much appraised peace dividends are often distributed disturbingly unequally both within the region as well as inside these countries.

Elections can be an indicator if and to what extent the legitimacy of those in political power is recognised. But elections are often also abused as mere tokenism or as cleverly orchestrated exercises to demonstrate a representation of the majority of people, which in actual fact would not exist if there would indeed be an even playing field, common rules of the game and a climate of free and fair decision-making without intimidation or fear of reprisals. This does not mean, however, that nothing changes and that elections are useless. Zimbabwe now is by most standards different from Zimbabwe a year ago, though maybe not as expected or hoped for by some. Madagascar is certainly different in terms of political governance from what it was until the end of 2013 and is now able to resume its full membership status in SADC again. South Africa's domestic policies and public discourse might be modified (though almost certainly not fundamentally different) as from mid-year — depending to which degree the new party landscape is reflected in the composition of the new parliament.

The content of this issue of the *Strategic Review* partly documents aspects of the election period summarised above. Elections of 26 May 2012 in *Lesotho* resulted in a change of government there. Hardly noticed, the mountain kingdom has gradually returned to a fragile but largely intact democracy during the last decade. Despite concerns over factionalism, elections have again become an important institution to allow citizens to participate by casting their votes. While the stability of the coalition government remains of concern, the restoration of basic principles of the rule of

law elevated Lesotho with rank nine into the top ten of the Ibrahim Index of African Governance for 2013. In an analysis, *Francis K Makoa* revisits the election results and their impact on current political governance in this issue's report section. He warns of too many expectations and stresses the massive socio-economic challenges the reform government of the party alliance faces. Recalling the late 1990s, this is nevertheless a welcome improvement, which contributes to more regional stability.

This issue also follows up on the analysis of the elections in *Zimbabwe* by Roger Southall, published in No 2/13, and the contributions in No 1/13 by Arrigo Pallotti and Steve Kibble. In his research article *David Moore* offers us a further analysis of the impact and lessons from the elections after the dust has settled. *Tinashe Nyamunda* adds a focus on "the invention of tradition" as utilised for re-writing national history since the second *chimurenga* by summarising the historical narratives emerging after Independence. A summary report emphasising the new Zimbabwean constitution's socio-economic essentials by *Theophilus Chiviru* complements the focus. It will be of interest to see to which extent the successful restoration of formal ZANU-PF dominance in the socio-political spheres of Zimbabwe has a lasting impact leading the country and its people out of international isolation and a return to better living conditions for the majority of citizens, both in terms of their basic material situation, as well as civilian rights and liberties.

In the first research article of this issue, *Martin Welz* summarises insights on the security architecture emerging within the *African Union*. This analysis links to the earlier report in No 2/13 by Oluwaseun Bamidele on the challenges of peacekeeping. Welz diagnoses a reluctant attitude among member states to engage truly in a further deepening of regional integration. He calls this phenomenon a "culture of conservatism", referring to an unwillingness to change the status quo in fear of surrendering sovereignty. This can of course not only be witnessed on a continental level, but is applicable also to SADC as regional body when its member states discuss, but hardly implement, further steps towards meaningful regional integration.

Ethnicity and citizenship have been at the core of articles by Moritz Schuberth on Rwanda and by Sadiki Koko on the Democratic Republic of the Congo in issue No 1/13. Related factors also featured in the guest edited special issue (No 2/13) for the Francophone Central and West African region in turmoil. These are by no means phenomena confined to any specific part of the continent. We return to these contested notions with a focus on nation building, citizenship and reconciliation with a re-

search article by *Cori Wielenga*. She presents an analysis of government institutions that facilitate reconciliation in Rwanda, Burundi and South Africa. By examining the role of governments in post-conflict recovery processes, she reveals the difficult relationship between different actors. This relates at the same time to the narratives cultivated in Zimbabwe as a thematic focus presented by *Tinashe Nyamunda*. But it also touches upon the core aspects of the historical case study presented by *Alfred Tembo* with regard to the role of the *Rhodes-Livingstone Institute* in Northern Rhodesia and its impact on early post-colonial nation building and accumulation of locally created and partly owned knowledge in Zambia.

Interventions into military conflicts with the aim to reduce harm for the ordinary people often pose challenges for mediators in their efforts to build peace — or at least to end wars. Civilians in most cases are the worst affected victims and exposed to atrocities and crimes against humanity taking organised forms, such as rape as a weapon of war. Negotiation processes seeking an end to conflicts face difficult, often all too painful, choices how best to prevent further indiscriminate mass violence of all forms. In a recent opinion article in the *New York Times*, Thabo Mbeki and Mahmood Mamdani argued for compromises which would trade justice for bringing an end to further violence, since courts cannot bring an end to civil wars. *Alex Obote-Odora*, previously with the office of the chief prosecutor in the Arusha-based Rwanda Tribunal, challenges this view. He maintains in his comment that *decriminalisation of perpetrators in civil wars* is not an alternative. This raises a fundamental, moral and ethical issue beyond *Realpolitik*, and we welcome further engagements with related notions and contributions to such a debate.

Once again we complete the issue by presenting some reviews, which we trust give the deserved recognition to several recently published books considered as relevant for enhancing a wider perspective on or within the region. Last but not least, this issue also documents our commitment to local capacity building. We have deliberately and consciously offered several younger scholars a forum for their further steps into academic analysis and discourse. The *Strategic Review* in this sense is strategic in more than only one meaning and dimension and thereby hopefully justifies our efforts and our existence even more. The journal's next issue will join the many other efforts currently undertaken with a special focus on taking stock after twenty years of democracy in South Africa.

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