

Introduction

The October 1995 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Tanzania were the first multi-party elections held in the country since 1961. The Commonwealth's involvement in Tanzania's return to multi-party democracy followed an invitation issued on 11 April 1995 by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to the Commonwealth Secretary-General to send an observer mission to the general election scheduled for 29 October 1995. The Secretary-General also received a request from the Zanzibar Government for the Commonwealth to observe the elections for the Zanzibar Presidency and House of Representatives scheduled for 22 October 1995.

In accordance with established practice, the Secretary-General sent a three-member Planning Mission to Tanzania between 31 July and 9 August 1995 to meet with the National Electoral Commission (NEC), representatives of political parties and other interested groups and associations. The Planning Mission reported to the Secretary-General that there was broad support for a Commonwealth presence throughout the electoral process and recommended assisting preparations for the elections, especially in establishing a level playing field for all the political parties.

On the strength of the Planning Mission's report, the Deputy Secretary-General (Political) led a second planning visit to Tanzania between 27 August and 2 September 1995. This mission conveyed to the President of Tanzania the Secretary-General's formal acceptance of the Government's invitation to constitute an observer mission for the elections and discussed with the NEC ways in which the Commonwealth Secretariat could offer practical assistance to the electoral process. This offer of technical assistance was not taken up in full.

Composition of the Group and its Terms of Reference

Our Observer Group to Tanzania was the sixteenth such mission to be constituted since the 1989 Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, declared that one of the Commonwealth's contributions to strengthening democracy might be to support member countries in their electoral and constitutional processes by mounting observer missions comprising Commonwealth citizens with relevant experience, at the request of member governments. This view was reaffirmed by Heads of Government in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration of 1991.

It was against this background that the Secretary-General invited our Group of 21 Observers from 18 Commonwealth countries, supported by 10 officers from the Commonwealth Secretariat, to observe the elections in Tanzania. Among our Group were 10 elected Members of Parliament, including four women, and three Electoral Commissioners. The full composition of the Group is set out at *Annex I*.

The Terms of Reference for our Group were incorporated in the Secretary-General's letter inviting each of us to participate in the mission and were as follows:

The Group is established by the Commonwealth Secretary-General at the request of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and supported by the political parties. It is to observe relevant aspects of the organisation and conduct of the elections in accordance with the law of Tanzania. It is to consider the various factors impinging on the credibility of the electoral process as a whole and to determine in its own judgment whether the conditions exist for a free expression of will by the electors and if the results of the elections reflect the wishes of the people.

The Group is to act impartially and independently. It has no executive role; its function is not to supervise but to observe the process as a whole and to form a judgment accordingly. It would also be free to propose to the authorities concerned such action on institutional, procedural and other matters as would assist the holding of the elections.

The Group will submit its report to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, who will forward it to the Government of Tanzania, to the leadership of the political parties taking part in the elections and thereafter to Commonwealth governments.

The Secretary-General's announcement of our mission on 19 October 1995 is at *Annex II*.

Method of Work

The Observers assigned to the Presidency and House of Representatives elections in Zanzibar were briefed by the Secretary-General in London on Monday 16 October 1995 and were deployed to Zanzibar on Wednesday 18 October 1995 after a brief stay in Dar es Salaam. A copy of their report is at *Annex III*. (These colleagues rejoined the main Group in Dar es Salaam on Monday 23 October 1995.)

The remainder of our Group assembled in London for a briefing by the Secretary-General on 20 October 1995. On arrival at Dar es Salaam on 21 October 1995, the Chairperson of our Group, Mr Rashleigh Jackson, issued an Arrival Statement (*Annex IV*) at a Press Conference. We established our base headquarters at the Hotel Kilimanjaro and immediately began a series of meetings.

Our first meeting was with the Vice-Chairman of the NEC, Justice Brigadier-General Augustino Ramadhani and a number of his colleagues. Thereafter, and until our deployment to the various regions on 25 October 1995, we met with representatives of the main political parties contesting the elections, non-governmental organisations, local election monitoring bodies, and media organisations.

The Chairperson and four other members of our Group later met with the Chairman and Commissioners of the NEC to convey a number of concerns arising from our early meetings, including the state of the Commission's logistical preparedness. During this consultation, we were informed that preparations for the elections were in order and on schedule. A full timetable of our engagements is at *Annex V*.

On Wednesday 25 October 1995, we broke into 13 teams of two persons each and deployed to 13 regions, including Zanzibar (*Annex VI*). Our Chairperson, accompanied by two Secretariat officers, visited the heavily-populated Mwanza region on Lake Victoria between 25 and 27 October to obtain a first-hand impression of the general state of preparedness for the elections. On their return to Dar es Salaam, they observed the last days of the campaign, studied preparations for polling, and monitored reports from the deployed teams around the country. During polling day, the Chairperson and Secretariat officers observed the voting in the city of Dar es Salaam.

In the four days before polling began on 29 October 1995, our observer teams travelled extensively throughout their designated regions. During this time, they met with local political representatives, election officers, and other observer groups, and assessed the state of preparedness for the poll. We were also able to witness the last days of the campaign and familiarise ourselves with local conditions. Each team reported regularly to the headquarters in Dar es Salaam and we were guided throughout our deployment by Observation Notes and Check Lists which had been provided by the Secretariat (see *Annex VII*).

We worked in close co-operation with local election monitoring groups such as the Tanzania Election Monitoring Committee (TEMCO) and the Zanzibar Elections Monitor and Observer Group (ZEMOG), and with international observer groups operating under the umbrella of the United Nations, which had been designated by the authorities in Tanzania as co-ordinator of international observers. Prior to deployment, we were briefed by a team of UN co-ordinators, and on deployment most of our teams made contact with the UN regional co-ordinators to establish the basis for effective co-operation.

The delays in the count, the subsequent recount, and the late declaration of election results for the Zanzibar Presidency and House of Representatives, led to suspicions of fraud, and heightened interest in the conduct of the Union elections. The spill-over effect of the Zanzibar elections was evident in the political atmosphere during the last week of campaigning for the Union elections: voters became more aware of the competitive nature of the contest and the need for transparency during the poll and the count. The Secretary-General of the Civic United

Front Party (CUF) (who was also the losing Presidential candidate in the Zanzibar elections) threatened a boycott of the Union elections on 29 October 1995 as a protest against alleged manipulation of the poll. However, CUF did finally participate in the Union poll.

The conduct of the polls across the country on 29 October was varied, but in most constituencies they proceeded satisfactorily. Delays in the opening of polling stations and shortages of ballot papers resulted in a certain amount of confusion in different areas of Tanzania. The NEC extended the polling period by four hours to allow time for election officers to rectify some of these problems. Nevertheless, polling day ended with many thousands of voters across the country unable to vote. This was most notable in Dar es Salaam's seven constituencies, where subsequently the NEC nullified the polling and announced a re-poll.