

WANEP PRESS RELEASE

WANEP JOINS PARTNERS IN THE AFRICA ALLIANCE FOR PEACEBUILDING (AfAP) TO OBSERVE POLITICAL INTOLERANCE AND VIOLENCE IN KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTIONS

Background

Political violence in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) has claimed the lives of as many as 20,000 people since 1984. More than half of these deaths occurred after 1990; that is after the unbanning of liberation movements. The three month period that preceded the first democratic election in 1994 saw the death of 1,000 people and between 1994 and 2000 a further 2,000 people were killed.¹ Indeed, the 1994 provincial elections in KwaZulu-Natal were described as, “the most serious instance of political obstruction of free electioneering.”² Election campaigning in 1999, although recording less violence, was still plagued by the advent of party strongholds and no-go areas affecting free and fair campaigning. The 2004 provincial election did not present significant challenges to free electioneering but still recorded various hot spots for election related violence and intimidation.

The AfAP Observer Mission

Arising out of a special sitting of the KZN Legislature on 24th February 2009, to examine the issue of political intolerance in the province, which was supported by all parties represented in the legislature, as well as those who are not represented in the legislature, ACCORD based in South Africa-KZN and a Partner of WANEP in AfAP undertook to contribute towards creating a climate for peaceful, free and fair elections. As a result, ACCORD in collaboration with its AfAP partners, the Nairobi Peace Initiative-Africa (NPI-Africa) and the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), have deployed an international team of African Observers drawn from across the continent to observe the elections in KwaZulu Natal. The observer mission is staffed by delegates from the African continent who are experts in the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Mandate

The AfAP Election Observer Mission is observing and recording levels of political intolerance and violence in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, over the period 18-24 April 2009. Observation and monitoring has been taking place at voting districts of the province historically plagued by violence and currently identified as ‘hot spots’ for potential violence.

¹ Mottiar, S, “The turnover of power in KwaZulu-Natal: a growing commitment to and engagement with the democratic process”, *Journal of African Elections*, 3, 2, 2004.

² Lodge, T, 1999. *Consolidating democracy; South Africa’s second popular election*, Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg.



WANEP Staff in KwaZulu-Natal Province: From left to right; Pamela Cole, National Coordinator - The Gambia, Emmanuel Bombande - WANEP Executive Director, Claudine Ahianyo, National Coordinator - Togo, Constant Gnacadja - WANEP Zonal Bureau Coordinator - Cotonou and Emeka Eze Chukwuemeka, National Coordinator - Nigeria

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