

How the Year of Elections is Turning Out

By: Hung Dao

In early 2024, politicians all around the world published proclamations that this year is the “Year of Elections.” Among those elections are the elections in the U.S. on Nov. 5 with the principal race being the presidential contest. As the future of American politics is being shaped in the next few weeks, perhaps it is time to look at some of the votes that have made 2024.

The first national election to be held in 2024 was the parliamentary election in Bangladesh which resulted in the reelection of the government of Sheikh Hasina. Hasina’s election celebrations were not meant to last, however, as over the summer, the youths of Bangladesh led protests against her autocratic government. The protests resulted in the ouster of Hasina, who has fled the country. Since then, the country has been led by an interim government headed by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus. The new government faces tremendous difficulties because it has to deal with the country’s economic woes that resulted in the protests and the political woes that resulted from the protests. As the government is only a few months old, the world is waiting to see how Bangladesh moves forward.

On Feb. 3, term-limited President Macky Sall of Senegal made a decree announcing that the presidential election due to be held on Feb. 25 was to be postponed indefinitely. Then, the National Assembly of Senegal, the national legislature, decided that the election would be pushed back until December. However, the Constitutional Council stepped in to order a presidential election as soon as possible, a decision that was upheld. Thus, on March 24, millions of Senegalese went to vote for their new president, and the results showed that Bassirou Diomaye Faye had defeated the ruling coalition’s candidate, Amadou Ba, in the first round of the election. In a region struggling with frequent coups d’états, the election in Senegal has been hailed domestically and internationally as a great opportunity for the people of Senegal.

Coinciding with the European Parliament elections held continent-wide on June 9, Bulgarians also headed to the polls to vote for their national parliament. There was little fanfare for the election which is a consequence of it being the sixth election in three years. Ever since anti-corruption protests toppled the then-incumbent government in 2021, Bulgaria has struggled

to form a stable government. The previous election in 2023 did manage to form a coalition government. However, after just nine months, the parties that made up the coalition fell out, precipitating the June election. With only about 30 percent of eligible voters participating, the election put the Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria party (GERB) in first place with the minority rights party, Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF), and reformist We Continue the Change (PP) achieving second and third place respectively. In the months since the election, attempts to form a government have failed, and a seventh snap election has been scheduled for Oct. 27. Even though snap elections are meant to resolve deadlocks, it is difficult to see how Bulgaria can maneuver out of its political instability.

So, even though the American presidential election this year has turmoil seldom seen in American politics—assassination attempts, withdrawal and more—it is only an unpredictable point in a year full of unpredictable politicking.

Sources: Al Jazeera, African Center for Strategic Studies, NPR and Reuters