

SOUTH AFRICA AFTER THE ELECTIONS—BUSINESS AS USUAL?

By George F. Ward

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South African president Jacob Zuma speaks at his second inaugural in Pretoria, South Africa, Saturday, May 24, 2014. (Source: AP Photo/Siphiwe Sibeko, Pool.)

Ambassador George F. Ward is editor of IDA's Africa Watch and a Research Staff Member at the Institute for Defense Analyses. He is a former U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Namibia.

TURNING A NEW LEAF IN MADAGASCAR?

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On April 12, 2014, Madagascar's newly elected president, Hery Rajaonarimampianina, [named](#) Kolo Roger as his prime minister, defying former transitional President Andry Rajoelina, who [preferred](#) the appointment of another candidate, one he considered more aligned with his political camp. Rajaonarimampianina was formerly the minister of finance under Rajoelina, and with his backing he came to power after [winning](#) 53.5 percent in the second round of presidential elections held on December 20, 2013. The long-delayed elections ended a four-year political crisis brought about by a military-backed coup d'état in 2009 that installed Rajoelina in office. The runner-up, Jean Louis Robinson, who was a proxy candidate for exiled former president Marc Ravalomanana, captured 46.5 percent of the vote. Rajaonarimampianina's choice of an independent candidate for prime minister suggests that he is distancing himself from Rajoelina, a promising sign for the country's recovery. [more...](#)



Then-presidential candidate Hery Rajaonarimampianina, left, acknowledges the crowd with his wife Lalao, right, at his rally in the city of Antananarivo, Madagascar, Wednesday, Oct. 23, 2013. (Source: AP Photo/Schalk van Zuydam)

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The Institute for Defense Analyses is a non-profit corporation operating in the public interest.

IDA's three federally-funded research and development centers provide objective analyses of national security issues and related national challenges, particularly those requiring scientific and technical expertise.

IDA's Africa team focuses on issues related to political, economic, and social stability and security on the continent.

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Analyzing the Election Results

As shown in the table, the changes in the share of the vote for National Assembly seats garnered by the three strongest parties in the 2014 elections showed significant but not earthshaking changes from the 2009 polling. The ANC's share of votes cast declined about 5.7 percent. The DA's share of the vote and seats increased by one-third, and the new EFF will have 25 seats in the National Assembly. Note that most of the net gain by the DA and EFF came at the expense of smaller parties that lost support from 2009 to 2014.

South African National Assembly Election Results
Seats won (percentage of vote)

Party	2009	2014
ANC	264 (65.9%)	249 (62.15%)
DA	67 (16.70%)	89 (22.23%)
EFF	0 (0.00%)	25 (6.35%)

Sources: <http://electionresources.org/za/provinces.php?election=2009>

<http://www.elections.org.za/resultsnpe2014/default.aspx>

Looking more deeply into the election results, [Collette Shulz-Herzenberg and Jonathan Faull](#), two South African political analysts, have teased out some potentially larger implications. Focusing on trends in [electoral participation and party support](#) in South Africa's democratic elections beginning in 1994, Shulz-Herzenberg noted that a steady decline in voter turnout has continued. Using more recent census figures than those used by the Independent Electoral Commission, she highlights the fact that 8 million of 33 million potential voters failed to register. Voters as a percentage of the voting age population fell from 86 percent in 1994 to 57 percent this year. Thus, the ANC has failed to keep its share of voters within an overall scenario of declining electoral participation.

Jonathan Faull's [analysis](#) supported the point made by Shulz-Herzenberg. He looked also in detail at voting at the provincial level, [concluding](#) that the 2014 results "disguise significant challenges and disquiet within the ANC and its support base." He highlighted the importance to the ANC of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), a key province in which the ANC was able to increase its share of the vote. The rate of increase in support for the ANC in KZN dropped from 2009 to 2014, however, and is likely to decrease further in the future when native son Jacob Zuma is no longer President. Without its strength in KZN, the ANC's national result would have been considerably weaker. Faull also pointed out that the ANC is more adept at delivering votes in rural areas than in cities. As South Africa becomes ever more urban, this is a potential disadvantage for the ruling party.

The New Cabinet—Business as Usual

There are no indications that President Zuma interpreted the election results as anything other than an affirmation of the ANC and his leadership. His brief [inaugural speech](#) on May 24, 2014, touted the completion of South Africa's "first phase of transformation." The address was calibrated to provide something for each of the disparate constituencies represented within the ANC, but contained no new concrete initiatives. Zuma failed to mention the labor unrest that is limiting the growth of the South African economy, and he stressed the role of state-owned enterprises as the "engines of development."

Zuma moved quickly to organize his second-term government, announcing the new cabinet just a day after the inaugural speech. Like the speech, the new cabinet has a bit of something for everyone in the party. The cabinet has good [gender balance](#), with 20 men and 15 women as full ministers. As expected, Cyril Ramaphosa, a trade unionist turned billionaire businessman and deputy president of the ANC, was named deputy national president. Pravin Gordhan, the powerful finance minister who was viewed by some as insufficiently sympathetic to lobbying by black empowerment interests, was moved to the Cooperative Governance portfolio. The new finance minister, Nhlanhla Nene, who had been Gordhan's deputy, may lack the political clout needed to lead Zuma's diverse economic team but may be more pliant politically. Two other key economic posts, Trade and Industry and Economic Development, will be in the hands of left-leaning party stalwarts.

Challenges Left Unaddressed

The net effect of Zuma's moves so far has been to shore up his personal power as he begins his second and final presidential term. What Zuma has not done is provide indications of how he will deal with South Africa's most persistent problem: lackluster economic growth. With the operations of the world's three largest producers of platinum, a key South African export, disrupted by strikes since the beginning of 2014, it is unlikely that the country will achieve even the 2.7 percent growth that the government had projected for 2014. In fact, on June 8, 2014, Nhlanhla Nene told the [Financial Times](#) that the country would avoid recession, but would reach only "growth of around 2 percent." With economic decision-making dispersed among several ministries led by personalities with widely differing views, the outlook for jump-starting the South African economy does not appear bright.

Another problem area, the parlous state of the South African Defense Force (SADF), has also not been addressed so far. In February 2014, President Zuma announced his approval of a plan for the [support of the SADF](#), and promised action before the May elections. In the event, Zuma took no action, not even the modest steps that IDA's *Africa Watch* thought were [possible](#). The reappointment of Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula as minister of defense, while promising continuity, does not inspire optimism. As demands on the SADF for regional peace operations, border security, maritime patrol, and anti-poaching operations increase, the stresses on the force will become ever more serious.

The Future Is—Almost—Now

The ANC faces another test at the polls in the 2016 local government elections. Jonathan Faull, whose electoral analysis is cited above, [believes](#) that the dynamics of the 2016 elections may favor the DA, because that party does relatively better in urban areas, where governance issues are felt most acutely.

In addition, the contest to succeed Zuma as leader of the ANC will begin well in advance of the December 2017 party conference. At this stage, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa and Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the current African Union chairperson and a former wife of Zuma, appear to be [two of the leading candidates](#). Whether they remain the front-runners or others emerge, it is inevitable that members of the ANC's inner circle will begin taking sides. As this process unfolds, it is likely that President Zuma's power will begin to wane. Thus, if Zuma wishes to make an impact during his second term, he will need to begin the effort soon. His performance thus far has not been auspicious.

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Then-presidential candidate Hery Rajaonarimampianina, left, acknowledges the crowd with his wife Lalao, right, at his rally in the city of Antananarivo, Madagascar, Wednesday, Oct. 23, 2013. (Source: AP Photo/Schalk van Zuydam)

Robinson initially [contested](#) the results as fraudulent, but the presidential elections were deemed [credible](#) by international observers, and Rajaonarimampianina was sworn into office in January. He immediately [launched](#) a campaign to win back international support, asking to fully rejoin the international community and pushing international financial institutions to reinstate support cut off in the wake of the 2009 coup. Before the coup, donor assistance constituted nearly [70 percent](#) of the country's budget. Rajaonarimampianina's efforts have quickly paid dividends. On May 28, 2014, the United States—following the lead of the African Union, the European Union, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund—[resumed](#) regular relations and financial assistance to Madagascar. The United States also invited Rajaonarimampianina to the U.S.–Africa Leaders Summit planned for August.

In a further indication of his autonomy, Rajaonarimampianina has publicly asserted his independence and pledged to undertake a variety of much-needed reforms. Speaking at South African President Jacob Zuma's inauguration in May, Rajaonarimampianina [argued](#), “The new government, the new president, bring a new framework of authority. . . I have to set up the rule of law and justice and [vow] to fight corruption. This is important to set up a new democracy.” Rajaonarimampianina has already begun to carry out a few of his reform pledges, most impressively in the security sector.

As outlined in the August 1, 2013, [edition](#) of *Africa Watch*, Madagascar has an extended and violent history of military intervention in politics, with a highly factionalized security sector divided by residual allegiances to a number of past presidents. Although much more needs to be done to achieve civilian control of the military and professionalize the security forces, Rajaonarimampianina has already taken a notable step in the right direction by [disbanding](#) two irregular police formations that were loyal to Rajoelina and reportedly acting as his private militias. On the other hand, citing concerns that the military might [disapprove](#), he has proven reluctant to promote political reconciliation by offering amnesty to former president in exile Marc Ravalomanana and allowing him to return to Madagascar without onerous conditions.

Rajaonarimampianina surely is not a panacea for Madagascar's long-entrenched political rivalries, violent elections, economic struggles, and deeply [troubled](#) civil-military relations. That said, his recent pledges—and more important, his actions—suggest that contrary to expectations, he is not directly under the thumb of Rajoelina. This development hopefully heralds a shift away from the damaging Ravalomanana-Rajoelina divide that has dominated Madagascar's political landscape over the last five years. As [argued](#) by the International Crisis Group, however, more than cosmetic changes will be needed to institutionalize reforms and turn a new leaf in Madagascar.

Resolving the complex dilemmas of Ravalomanana's eventual return from exile and depoliticizing the country's divided security sector remain two of the most pressing political issues that Rajaonarimampianina must tackle. Given his

ostensible reluctance to act on the former, international and regional partners, namely the Southern African Development Community, would be wise to push the new president to move quickly regarding Ravalomanana's return. While there are no guarantees that Ravalomanana would remain outside the political sphere if he returned, a failure to expeditiously resolve the issue could renew old tensions by angering the Ravalomanana camp and his supporters, who, as evidenced by the 46.5 percent of the vote won by his proxy candidate, clearly remain significant.

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