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Chad

Deceptive elections in Chad

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The presidential election campaign has begun in Chad. Everything is being done to ensure that Déby wins despite the worsening difficulties faced by the population.

Ten candidates are standing for the presidential election in Chad, to be held on 6 May. The election will take place at the end of a three-year transition period, which was initially scheduled to last 18 months. This transition, which was the result of a coup d'état, is headed by Mahamat Déby, who succeeded his father, himself a coup plotter.

Neutralizing the opposition

Of course, when he became president of the transition, Déby pledged not to be a candidate in the presidential election. Obviously, this promise was not kept. His three years in power have mirrored his father's thirty years. A mixture of ferocious repression, with dozens of deaths and hundreds of imprisonments during demonstrations, and co-optations of opponents into the government and various institutions. As a result, the main opposition figure Succès Masra has found himself, from exile, in the prime ministership.

The ten candidates thus include Déby and his current Prime Minister Succès Masra. Many Chadians suspect that there is a deal between the two to ensure that they remain in power. Another candidate is former prime minister Albert Pahimi Padacké, and others whose sole function is to act as stooges in a highly undemocratic election.

Preparing the ground

Indeed, every measure has been taken to ensure that Déby wins. State resources have been made available for his election campaign. The National Election Management Agency, which is organizing the ballot, is headed by a member of the presidential party, the MPS. The Constitutional Council, which is supposed to monitor the electoral process, is chaired by Jean-Bernard Padaré, a former MPS spokesman. Radical opposition candidates are excluded from the campaign. The most dangerous opponent for Déby, Yaya Dillo, was assassinated in February.

Déby has also taken precautions internationally to ensure that his dynastic seizure of power is not condemned. His meeting with Putin in Russia was a clear signal to France that its three outposts with its thousand soldiers would not last forever. This message was well received, as Jean-Marie Bockel, Macron's special envoy to Africa for military matters, expressed, a week after Dillo's murder, France's "admiration for the process" that Déby had initiated. In addition, the Chadian authorities asked the US defence attaché "to immediately halt US activities at the Koseï air base". A warning to the United States, which has already been forced to dismantle its drone base in Niger.

Social and economic crisis

During the transition period, while rights and freedoms have deteriorated, the social and economic situation of Chadians has also worsened. Fuel prices rose by almost 40%, causing inflation on all basic necessities. This has been compounded by more frequent and longer power cuts, putting a brake on economic activity. Exasperated,

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public sector workers at various general assemblies pushed the trade unions to call a general strike at the end of February. All the more so since many people are wondering what happened to the oil money that Chad has been extracting for the last twenty years. Chad is ranked 187th out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI).

At the end of the social conflict, which lasted nearly three weeks, the government undertook to pay wage arrears for 2023 and to increase the monthly cost-of-living allowance in remote areas of the country, but it remained adamant about raising fuel prices.

It is not certain that the electoral manoeuvres taking place in a deteriorating social and political climate will bring about the stability in Chad so desired by the Western powers.

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Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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