



Gabon: TLP condemns a double electoral and military coup and calls for a return to constitutional order

While the 2000 Bamako Declaration on Democracy, Rights and Freedoms states that "*democracy is incompatible with any substantial modification of the electoral system, introduced arbitrarily or surreptitiously, and that a reasonable period should always separate the adoption of the modification from its entry into force*", the regime in power in Gabon hastily revised the Constitution and the electoral law less than six months before the 2023 general elections.

The election then took place on 26 August 2023, behind closed doors, with the internet cut off, borders closed and journalists and international observers banned. At 3am on Wednesday 30 August, the people of Gabon watched helplessly on national television as Mr Ali Bongo Ondimba was declared elected with 64.27% of the votes cast.

At around 5am, various police, gendarmerie and army corps came together to form the Transition and Institutional Restoration Committee [Comité de Transition et de Restauration des Institutions] in response to the electoral hold-up with a military coup d'état. Tournons La Page deplores these two serious attacks on democracy, which are detrimental to the country's stability and development.

After the cases of Guinea, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, the jubilation with which the Gabonese people welcome this military coup d'état should, once again, draw the attention of African sub-regional institutions, the African Union and the international community to the flagrant retreat of democracy in Africa, resulting in the radicalisation of young people, socio-political instability and worsening security crises.

Rather than waiting for the same scenarios where military coups follow constitutional coups perpetrated by the ruling elites without any condemnation from international institutions, Tournons La Page urges the African Union to take the necessary political measures to protect democracy, in particular by requiring States to apply and respect the international treaties ratified by the various countries.

While welcoming the annulment of the results of the 26 August election, which were the product of a fraudulent electoral process both at home and abroad, TLP calls for the establishment of an inclusive civil transition to restore constitutional order as soon as possible.

Thursday, 31 August 2023

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