



**Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)
Johns Hopkins University
African Studies Program**

"Elections in Africa: Democratic Challenges and U.S. Response"

**Friday, April 4, 2008
Johns Hopkins University, SAIS
Kenney Auditorium
1740 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20036**

Today, democratic governments are seen across Africa, following decades of authoritarian rule. In dozens of countries, multi-party elections have become routine events. Yet elections vary widely in quality, along with their effects on emerging democratic politics. Founding elections may provide a confident beginning for a democratic regime, or they may tarnish the credibility of the new system. Subsequent elections can ratify democratic norms and bolster confidence in competitive democracy, or else they can spur crises and political violence among contending factions.

The U.S. government has set forth goals of promoting the emergence and development of democracy in Africa. However, governance often competes with other policy goals including security, trade, health, and economic reform. The rhetoric of democracy assistance has not always been matched by the reality of aid and political commitments. Non-governmental organizations continue to press for credible and peaceful elections throughout Africa.

This conference will look at recent elections in Africa in the context of U.S. policy in the region. Speakers will cover democratic trends in Africa and the changing elements of U.S. policy. Participants will also analyze the context of recent elections in Kenya, Nigeria, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe, covering positive experiences as well as more troubled cases.

AGENDA

- 8:30 – 9:00:** Sign-In and Coffee
- 9:00 – 9:15:** **Introductory Remarks & Welcome**
Peter Lewis, Johns Hopkins, SAIS
- 9:15 – 11:15:** **Panel I: Democratic Trends and U.S. Policy in Africa**
Peter Lewis, Moderator
Chris Fomunyoh, National Democratic Institute
Gayle Smith, Center for American Progress
Akwe Amosu, Open Society Institute/Open Society Policy Center
Dave Peterson, National Endowment for Democracy
- 11:15 – 11:30:** Coffee
- 11:30 – 12:30:** **Panel II: Showcase on Elections - Positive Cases**
David Throup, Moderator
Mauritania: **Bechir El Hassen**, Chair, Human Rights Committee,
Union des Forces Democratique in Mauritania
Sierra Leone: **Christian Hennemeyer**, IFES
- 12:30 – 1:15:** Lunch
- 1:15 – 2:45:** **Panel III: Showcase on Elections - Problem Cases**
Peter Lewis, Moderator
Nigeria: **Jibrin Ibrahim**, Center for Democratic
Development, Nigeria
Zimbabwe: **Scott Taylor**, Georgetown University
Kenya: **David Throup**, Johns Hopkins, SAIS
- 2:45 – 3:00:** Closing Remarks

Please RSVP to Shawnetta Jackson at the African Studies Program by email at smjackson@jhu.edu or by telephone at 202-663-5676. If you e-mail please put “RSVP April 4” in the subject line.