

Congo

Rice

The Congo (also known as Congo (Brazzaville) to distinguish it from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or Congo (Kinshasa)) gained independence from France in 1960, and elected Fulbert Youlou, a former Catholic priest and a member of the Democratic Union for the Defense of African Interests (UDDIA) to be President). Youlou's government, classified as personalist by Geddes (with a special note that other parties were merged and repressed) was divided over ethnic tensions and political rivalry, and was overthrown in 1963 at the culmination of a three-day popular uprising led by labor unions and rival parties. The military then took over the government, and installed a civilian government led by Alphonse Massamba-Debat, a member of the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) (SOLS change). Originally, Massamba-Debat was a provisional leader, but was elected President under the new constitution ratified in 1963. His government, which is classified as being single-party/personalist, was in power until it was overthrown in a military coup in 1968. Debat ruled until 1968 when there was a military coup and Alfred Raoul (Mil) took power (MNR, Mil). Raoul's rule marks the beginning of a Military-Single-party-hybrid regime that would last until 1992.

After a period of consolidation, during which the Acting Head of State was Alfred Raoul, a member of the military, the leader of the coup, Captain Marien Ngouabi, assumed the presidency. This single party/military hybrid government (the single party being the Congolese Labor Party, or PCT) remained in power until 1991 (GWF). The switch from Debat to Raoul is a minor SOLS change because Debat's party was MNR and Ngouabi's is PCT, *but* it appears that this is actually the same party, and Ngouabi changed its name. Thus the leadership change is coded as minor SOLS change, rather than major SOLS change, and the switch from Raoul to Ngouabi is not marked with a SOLS change.

In 1977, Ngouabi was assassinated. He was replaced by an 'interim' Military Committee of the Party, led by Colonel Joachim Yhomby-Opango as President. In 1979, Yhomby-Opango (MIL/PCT) was removed from office on accusations of corruption and deviation from the party directive. He was replaced by his vice-president, Colonel Denis Sassou-Nguesso (MIL/PCT). There is one leadership change from Opango to Nguesso who served until August 31, 1992. Nguesso was a military general and he was named as interim president by the Central Committee of the PCT. PCT was the sole legal party established the 1979 constitution, with the chair of its Central Committee serving as president of the country (Muller et.al., 2011:320). In 1991, the decision was made to transition from one-party Marxist rule, and multi-party presidential elections were held in August, 1992. The winner, Pascal Lissouba, was a member of the Union for Development and Social Progress (UDAPS, SOLS change). GWF code the country in 1992 as provisional.

Lissouba was able to remain in office until 1997. Throughout his tenure as president, he was faced with disputed legislative elections and civil unrest, combined with constant conflict between himself and Sassou-Nguesso. In 1997, Lissouba's government forces surrounded Sassou-Nguesso's compound, leading to resistance and a four-month conflict. The conflict ended with the intervention of Angolan troops, who sided with Sassou-Nguesso, toppling Lissouba's government in October 1997.

Sassou-Nguesso, now solely a member of the PCT, declared himself President soon after. This is a SOLS change.

Sassou-Nguesso, in a government that Geddes classifies as personalist, has remained in power until the present day. In 2002, the PCT joined a group of parties which are collectively known as the United Democratic Forces (FDU). Sassou-Nguesso is the leader of the FDU. He changed his affiliation in 2002 from PCT to FDU. This change does not represent a SOLS change because Geddes codes his regime as a pure-Personalist regime

References

United States Department of State. "Country Background Note: Congo (Brazzaville)". Last edited 19 April 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2825.htm>

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