

Malawi

Rice

Malawi gained independence from Great Britain in 1964. Prior to this date, in 1963, the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), led by Dr. Hastings Banda, had assumed control of the government. Banda became Prime Minister in that year, and remained Prime Minister upon Malawi's independence. Two years later, in 1966, Malawi ratified a new constitution that transformed the country officially into a one party state, of which Banda was President (United States Department of State, 2010). It should be noted that Geddes classifies Malawi as a personalist state dating from independence until 1994, after which POLITY codes Malawi as democratic.

Banda was named President-for-Life in 1971. However, in the 1990s, after civil unrest and pressure from the international community, a referendum was held on the future of the one-party state. In 1993, the people of Malawi voted for multi-party democracy, and free and fair elections were held in 1994 (ending the personalist regime of Banda). Bakili Muluzi, the leader of the United Democratic Front (UDF) was elected President. This is a SOLS change. A new constitution was ratified in 1995. Muluzi was reelected in 1999, but could not run for reelection after that due to term limits. In elections held in 2004, the UDF candidate, Bingu wa Mutharika, defeated challengers from the MCP and other opposition parties and became Malawi's next President. Although Mutharika belonged to the same party as Muluzi (UDF) at the beginning, he left the UDF and formed a new party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) after an ideological falling out with Muluzi and other leaders of the UDF on February 5, 2005, (U.S. Department of State, 2010; Freedom House, 2010). Because this split happens less than a year after Mutharika took power, we code a SOLS change (from UDF to DPP) from the beginning of his presidency. Mutharika, as the DPP candidate, won reelection in 2009, which is outside of the years examined by this study.

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