

AFRICA CONFIDENTIAL

MOZAMBIQUE

2

A flood of mud

The trial of the alleged murderers of journalist Carlos Cardoso has thrown the spotlight on President Chissano's son and much of the Maputo elite. This is helping presidential hopeful Armando Guebuza to distance himself from Chissano's failures and to form an alliance with his former Renamo enemy, Raul Domingos.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

3

A new front opens

As West African mediation efforts falter, France is stepping up its political and military involvement, but ragged rebel movements emerging in western Côte d'Ivoire may prove harder to overcome than the main northern movement.

NAMIBIA

4

Son of Sam

President Sam Nujoma would like another term in office, but party rivals, especially Hidipo Hamutenya, are lining up an impressive array of forces to stop him. The resultant clash could split SWAPO, the party that has ruled since Independence.

GABON

6

Hear those drums

President Omar Bongo's skill at ensuring there's enough patronage to go around has kept him in power since 1967. Things are getting tougher on the economic front, but the ruling party is set to sweep the board in local elections on 29 December.

POINTERS

8

Burundi/Congo-Kinshasa, Nigeria & Seychelles

KENYA/ZIMBABWE

The big men look to the future

As President Moi prepares to retire, his fellow septuagenarian President Mugabe continues the battle for power

Holding their collective breath, Kenyans expect a new government by the new year and the peaceable retirement of their leader of 24 years, 78-year-old **Daniel arap Toroitich Moi**. Zimbabweans are in the midst of their country's worst economic crisis since the liberation war and face the determination of another 78-year-old, **Robert Gabriel Mugabe**, to remain in power until the third *chimurenga* (the war against invaders) has been completed. A decade ago, the possibility that Moi would hand over power to an opposition leader after multi-party elections looked remote. Zimbabwe has proved more predictable: few doubted that Mugabe would seize white farms and ruthlessly suppress dissent if an opposition party gained political ground.

Economic collapse and corruption may prove to be the most dangerous of Moi's legacies, storing up mass social unrest as his successors battle to reform the threadbare public services and create jobs. Much will depend on the energy of Kenya's business class, increasingly marginalised during the Moi years by a cabal of commission agents which drove productive investment away.

More than half of Kenya's senior politicians defected from Kenya African National Union (KANU) to join opposition parties in the past decade. In 22 years of independence, no more than a handful of Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) politicians have defected. Only a brave few such as former Attorney General **Eddison Zvobgo** openly question Mugabe's wisdom. Mugabe's chosen endgame would be to bequeath power to parliamentary Speaker and presidential protector **Emmerson Mnangagwa**. Mugabe's greatest fear is an exit strategy he doesn't control: that the mass food and fuel shortages, along with the rising death toll from starvation and HIV/AIDS, will finally propel his opponents onto the streets for a **Ceausescu**-like showdown.

For many, Moi and Mugabe appear to represent two different traditions of Africa leadership. Moi is the stern-faced and straight-backed traditional leader clasping his ivory *rungu*, a rural primary school teacher whose halting English and upright carriage have prompted ridicule by local and Western commentators. Mugabe is the cerebral political activist (with five degrees) whose oratorical skills surpass those of many Western politicians. Switching effortlessly from African nationalist invective to a detailed discussion of the English cricket team's loss of form (a frequent topic), Mugabe's sociability still surprises visitors.

Teetotal, religious and violent

These appearances conceal many similarities, though. Both men are teetotalers and both claim to be intensely religious. Moi is an enthusiastic member of the conservative African Inland Mission, said to read the New Testament each night before retiring and looks forward to a weekly video package of BBC religious television programmes. Mugabe was Jesuit-educated. His socialist protestations and authoritarianism owe much to the uneasy mix of Marxism and Catholicism once popular in state socialist regimes in Latin America. Yet often the church, in the form of the National Council of Churches in Kenya and Zimbabwe's Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, has offered the most credible opposition to Moi and Mugabe's rule.

Neither man seems to have struggled to square their religious observance with political practice. Moi and Mugabe have been embattled, bitter and ruthless in their determination to hold on to power. Both celebrate violence. Mugabe speaks of ZANU cadres having 'degrees in violence' and drowning their opponents. Moi's oratory becomes more violent depending on the language he's using: from a more diplomatic English (for the benefit of Western observers), to a more assertive Kiswahili (for a national constituency) and most militantly in Kalenjin (for his own ethnic constituency). He speaks admiringly of his associate **Nicholas Kipyator Biwott** as a 'total man' meaning one who has the courage to fight to the death. Most recently, Moi threatened to make the opposition tremble.

Political violence is the greatest blemish on both men's records. Never liberals, both men sharply stepped up repression in response to opposition. For Moi, the turning point was the 1982 coup attempt led by the air force, supported by some in the army and a few politicians. Rescued by General **Mahmoud Mohammed**, Moi launched a military and political purge. His astute Kikuyu advisor, **Charles Njonjo**,

was disgraced and dropped, oppositionists were detained and tortured, and a *de jure* one-party state was reintroduced. Moi, the mild-mannered disciple of first President **Jomo Kenyatta** and scorned by the Kikuyu elite, now asserted himself as a political hard man.

Opponents were either flattered or crushed – yet there have been fewer political assassinations than under Kenyatta. The most notorious assassinations include those of Foreign Minister **Robert Ouko** in 1990 (AC Vol 31 No 5) and Archbishop **Alexander Muge** (who died in a contrived car accident). Political killings under Mugabe's rule have been more frequent and insiders claim that some (such as those of liberation heroes **Herbert Chitepo** and **Josiah Tongogara**) still haunt the President. A story that Mugabe tries to placate the *ngozi* (ghost) of Tongogara by laying a place for him at dinner each night is told by the same associates who speak of Mugabe's Serbian psychiatrist, Dr. **Vladimir Rankovic**, prescribing courses of anti-depressants.

Mugabe's political turning points have cost thousands of lives. First came the *Gukurahundi* or state war against guerrilla opponents (some backed by apartheid **South Africa**) which peaked in 1982 but lasted until 1988. At least 3,000 people died directly from military operations in 1982 but some accounts suggest that as many as 18,000 may have died in internal military operations during the 1980s. Moreover, the rise of the Movement for Democratic Change has provoked a similarly violent response. More than 200 Zimbabweans have been killed in political violence since 1999 and tens of thousands have been displaced.

Today in Zimbabwe, the terror is economic as much as political: most citizens are oppressed by the struggle to feed their families and by (near impossible) efforts to secure drugs to treat HIV/AIDS more than by ZANU's political commissars. ZANU loyalists can still count on preferential treatment for food and other economic goods. Although Moi is a long-time supporter of Western style capitalism and Mugabe is a proponent of socialist style command economics, the economies over which they preside have ended up at similar points. Both Kenya and Zimbabwe are off limits for the international lending agencies and both are mired in corruption. Kenya under Moi has been better managed – inflation, money supply and exchange rates have been kept stable although corruption has let rip. However, in Zimbabwe, the economy has been so badly managed that it is now the country's major security threat. Fear of revenge by Mugabe and the ZANU hierarchy, for years the main brake on graft, has eroded fast.

It is in foreign policy that Moi has diverged most sharply from Mugabe. Trading on his reputation as a regional Western ally, Moi was horrified by Western pressure for political reforms in the early 1990s. He argued that Western ideas of competitive multi-party politics would cause chaos in Africa and his associates seemed determined to prove him right in murderous political clashes ahead of the 1992 and 1997 elections (which displaced tens of thousands of opposition voters). Moi's nemesis was a hard drinking **American** journalist-turned-Ambassador, **Smith Hempstone**, who succeeded in drawing out the President's most vehement African nationalism.

Moi tells friends he's won no plaudits for his reform efforts; last year he publicly condemned the critical outgoing **British** High Commissioner **Jeffrey James**. Relations with James's successor, **Edward Clay**, are not much warmer. Yet last week, Moi was back in the White House, along with **Ethiopia's** Prime Minister **Meles Zenawi**, being hosted by President **George Bush** as a loyal ally in the war against terror. US-Kenya relations have turned full circle. US-Zimbabwe relations have never been worse. Washington has gone further than Britain and its European allies in imposing sanctions on the Mugabe regime and its business allies. For Mugabe, this feeds his continuing the struggle against colonial powers. In their different ways Moi and Mugabe have turned worsening relations with the West to their political advantage.

MOZAMBIQUE

A flood of mud

The President's son is not on trial but he's on the spot

The trial of those accused of killing crusading journalist **Carlos Cardoso** (AC Vol 41 No 24), broadcast live and likely to last at least until the New Year, is followed avidly throughout the country. It reveals among the children of the elite arrogance, high living, widespread illegality, nepotism in business dealings and a total assumption of impunity. All this is bound to influence the local elections, due in mid-2003, and the national elections due in late 2004. The man who increasingly looks like Mozambique's next leader, **Armando Guebuza**, the presidential candidate of the ruling Frelimo party (formerly *Frente de Libertação Moçambicana*), is distancing himself from the current leader, President **Joaquim Chissano**.

Six men are on trial for killing Cardoso on 22 November 2000. Three are charged with carrying out the killing, three (convicted loan-shark brothers **Nini Satar** and **Ayob Satar**, and former bank manager **Vicente Ramaya**) of ordering the murder, to stop Cardoso investigating a multi-million dollar bank fraud in which they were involved. The proceedings take place in a large marquee inside the walls of the maximum security prison, whose 400 seats are almost full each day.

Nini Satar admitted to the court that he paid for the murder but claimed he merely passed on money from **Nyimpine Chissano**, a presidential son of 32, without knowing what it was for. In an electric exchange on 6 December, Nyimpine and Nini accused each other of lying. Other witnesses placed Nyimpine at planning meetings and making payments. Both the private newspapers and the government news agency, AIM, said Nyimpine's evidence sounded dishonest.

Several witness said Cardoso was a second-choice victim and that meetings, sometimes involving Nyimpine, were held to discuss the killing of someone else. There is disagreement as to who this might have been. Some say it was **Albano Silva**, husband of Finance Minister **Luisa Diogo** and victim of a failed murder attempt in 1999, when he was lawyer for one of the defrauded banks. Other witnesses claim the intended victim was **Pedro Bule**, then head of the customs reform unit and said by witnesses to have been involved with Nyimpine and **Maria Candida Cossa** in questionable duty-free imports of alcohol and other goods. One witness claimed Cossa, 36, had been Bule's lover but shifted her affections to Nyimpine; Bule then blocked a shipment of alcohol by Cossa and Chissano, and Bule and Chissano fell out in public.

Cossa, in turn, who has links to the Satars and Ramaya, was alleged to be involved in lending and borrowing hundreds of thousands of dollars. Witnesses also claim the Satars, Cossa, Nyimpine and others were involved in illegal currency dealings with **South Africa**, which Nyimpine also denies. Other illegal financial dealings are alleged, involving the Polana Casino, part-owned by senior Frelimo figures.

One witness said a meeting to plan the killing of Bule, then of Cardoso, involved Cossa, Nyimpine, Nini Satar and **Nanaio Pateguana**, a business partner of Nyimpine's and his younger brother, **N'naiti Chissano**. Pateguana and **Bruno Morgado** are the local partners of Vodacom, which has just been awarded Mozambique's second mobile telephone licence. (On 13 December, **British** multinational Vodafone, an offspring of defence contractor Racal, took its share of South African-based Vodacom from 31.5 to 35 per

cent). Pateguana's and Morgado's fathers, former Inhambane Governor **Francisco Pateguana** and Industry Minister **Carlos Morgado**, are two of President Chissano's most trusted associates.

Mozambicans increasingly treat the trial as a *telenovela*, the popular **Brazilian** soap operas on Mozambican television. A lot is going on outside the courtroom, too. In a public pre-trial hearing on 20 September, one witness cautiously spoke of involvement by 'the son of the rooster'. The daily *MediaFaz* ran the story under the headline 'The chicken is Nyimpine'. Later, in the small hours, 100 live chickens were delivered to *MediaFaz*'s Editor, **Marcelo Mosse**, its Director, **Fernando Lima**, and eventually to the newspaper's office. The delivery people said they were from **Marcelina Chissano**, wife of the President and mother of Nyimpine. A local journalist said Marcelina had telephoned him from Oporto, **Portugal**, where she is in hospital, to tell him to take a picture of the delivery. Chickens are sacrificed in traditional ceremonies and the journalists regarded the gift as a threat. A subsequent note from Marcelina's lawyer to *MediaFaz* pointedly did not deny that Marcelina had sent the chickens.

Lucky 'escape'

Anibalzinho dos Santos, accused of organising the team which killed Cardoso, has 'escaped' from the maximum security prison (AC Vol 43 No 18) and is being tried *in absentia*. **Almerino Manhenje**, Interior Minister and Minister in the Presidency for Security, dismissively told parliament: 'Prisoners escape from gaol in all countries'. Manhenje, a former Minister in the Presidency and a Joaquim Chissano man, is under attack by the Guebuza camp. Guebuza himself prefers to speak through **Teodato Hunguana**, a member of parliament and former Justice and Information Minister, who claims Anibalzinho did not escape but was released and called on Chissano to dismiss Manhenje.

On 26 November, after the court had heard repeated allegations of Nyimpine's involvement, Hunguana dramatically told MPs they should not 'kneel before the bandits who are trying to control and govern us through slaughter and fear... We are either on the side of Carlos Cardoso and **Siba-Siba Macuacua** or on the side of the bandits who killed them or ordered them to be killed'. The late Siba-Siba, as head of banking supervision, was investigating bank scandals and had taken interim charge of the bankrupt *Banco Austral*. The independent weekly *Savana* claims that, just before Siba-Siba was murdered in August 2001, he had ended Nyimpine's US\$3,000-a-month 'consultancy' contract with *Banco Austral*. Guebuza told parliament the police were not even investigating that murder.

Many senior Frelimo people are trying to distance themselves from the Chissano family. Nyimpine's advocate is not one of the many Frelimo lawyers but **Orlanda da Graça**, a member of the Political Committee of Renamo (former *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*), the main opposition party.

Since July, when Frelimo's congress elected Guebuza Secretary General and presidential candidate, he has been touring the country, trying to rebuild the party machine – and to find out why Chissano won only 52 per cent of the vote in the 1999 election. International donors are keen on Chissano and regard Mozambique as one of Africa's few success stories because its government faithfully follows their demands, as formulated by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Party members outside the capital are more concerned about the growing gap between rich and poor, and the leadership's rising corruption. The now independent National Statistics Institute shows that real annual income per head fell from \$241 in 1998 to \$205 in 2001. The United Nations Development Programme's data show that the per capita income ratio between Maputo city and the poorest province, Zambézia, jumped from 10 to 1 to 14:1 in four years. In

October, **Prakash Ratilal**, former Governor of the Bank of Mozambique, warned that 'peace cannot be built on poverty and growing inequality.'

Samora Machel, the President killed in 1986, is gaining fresh popularity. Samora tee-shirts and taped speeches are on sale and ordinary people contrast his dynamism and integrity with the present leadership. Hunguana publicly links Guebuza to him and calls for Machel-style 'offensives' for legality and against corruption.

Yet Renamo (which began as a terrorist group backed by apartheid South Africa) has so far failed to take advantage of Frelimo's growing embarrassment, in the run up to next year's municipal elections. Renamo officials admit that it was a mistake to boycott the first local elections in 1998 and, at the very last minute, agreed to changes in the election law which allow the coming polls to go ahead, probably in August 2003. Renamo is stronger in rural areas, Frelimo in towns, but Renamo could win control of over a dozen of the 33 town councils, which have real devolved powers. This might be the first time since Independence in 1975 that Frelimo does not totally control the administrative apparatus.

Renamo sits in parliament as *Renamo-União Eleitoral* (Renamo-UE), a coalition with ten small parties, but will stand on its own in the municipal polls. The ten other parties now hope to field common lists and mayoral candidates in all 33 towns and cities, which should surely win them seats in local assemblies.

However, party President **Afonso Dhlakama** maintains his obsessive control of Renamo, weakening it by marginalising or dismissing competent people who might become rivals. This year, he has expelled five prominent MPs and dismissed Secretary General **Joaquim Vaz**, who got the job at the October 2001 party congress. In the selection process for mayoral candidates, a major test, will he allow local parties to choose competent and popular people or insist on loyal party hacks?

One of the dismissed Renamo MPs is no other than **Raul Domingos**, who is now a friend and business partner of Frelimo's Guebuza: the two headed the opposing teams at the Rome negotiations of 1990-2 that ended the war. Domingos has said he will form a new party to stand in local elections in the centre of the country. One likely scenario is for him to stand as an independent candidate for president in 2004, taking votes away from Dhlakama – and then receive a senior post in Guebuza's new government.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

A new front opens

France is determined to enforce the peace but may find the latest rebels hard to handle

The images of frightened Ivorian people with bundles of possessions on their heads are even more shocking because the refugees are fleeing down well maintained tarmac roads with a white line down the middle. Côte d'Ivoire is not like its chronically unstable neighbours: it has an established middle class, infrastructure, democratic institutions. And now a civil war.

The latest political victims of the crisis (AC Vol 43 No 22) include opposition leader **Alassane Dramane Ouattara**, who spent ten weeks holed up in the **French** Embassy complex before France organised his departure to **Gabon** on 27 November. Despite government accusations that he instigated the crisis, he has seemed largely detached from events and may not return to the political scene. French Ambassador **Renaud Vignal**, whose relations with President **Laurent Koudou Gbagbo** have sharply deteriorated and who has become a hate figure for the pro-

government press, was recalled for consultations on 6 December and replaced by **Gildas le Lidec**, a former ambassador to Kinshasa.

Paris has ordered in 500 more troops, with a beefed up mandate to preserve stability as well as to protect the 20,000 French residents. French officials emphasise that this is a French initiative rather than a multilateral one, to find a political solution to the three-month-old crisis before things deteriorate further. As well as sending more troops to enforce the ceasefire line, France has offered to host a summit of African presidents in Paris and to organise a meeting of Ivorian political leaders.

Mediation efforts by the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) are struggling. Most heads of state stayed away from a summit in Dakar on 18 December (AC Vol 43 No 22). Several members of Ecowas are directly implicated in the conflict and its mediation had risked being swallowed up by infighting among member states, notably the region's two top negotiators, **Senegal**, the current Ecowas President, which brought **Madagascar's** rival presidents together earlier this year (AC Vol 43 No 9), and **Togo**, whose President **Gnassingbé Eyadéma**, the regional *doyen*, is hosting the faltering peace talks. **Burkina Faso's** President **Blaise Compaoré**, a key regional ally of French President **Jacques Chirac**, is acting with great discretion, even by his standards, hoping to bolster both his ties with France and his regional standing.

Some neighbours stand to gain

The emergence of two new rebel movements in western Côte d'Ivoire, the *Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand-Ouest* (Ivorian Popular Movement of the Greater West) and the *Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix* (Movement for Justice and Peace), complicates the picture still further. **Liberian** President **Charles Taylor** – who launched his own rebel movement with an invasion from the Danané region in 1989 – made the symbolic gesture of closing the border, except to refugees, and even expressed concern that the Ivorian conflict could destabilise Liberia. In fact, it provides just the environment in which Taylor flourishes. 'You know it's bad when refugees are fleeing into Liberia,' a rueful aid worker told *Africa Confidential*.

The anti-Taylor rebel group, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), has been recruiting in the refugee camps around Danané and had been hoping to open up a new front around Taylor's former stronghold of Gbarnga. The LURD was unable to hold on to the town, though. The two new rebel movements, who describe themselves as supporters of General **Robert Gueï**, the former military ruler killed on the first day of the rebellion, seem to have Liberian or **Sierra Leonean** fighters in their ranks.

Taylor is supposed to hold a presidential election next year but may use the conflict as an excuse to postpone it. **Guinean** President **Lansana Conté** is also up for re-election next year and, in a bizarre offshoot of the Ivorian crisis, a document is circulating in Conakry accusing former Prime Minister **Sidy Touré** of planning a coup. It quotes a dissident Ivorian army lieutenant, **Michel Déon**, who is in custody in Conakry, as saying that Touré (who in a less xenophobic Ivorian era was Alassane Ouattara's *Directeur de cabinet* before becoming Guinean Premier) tried to recruit him to topple Conté. Déon quit the army but remained in contact with leading dissidents such as Staff Sergeant **Ibrahim Coulibaly** known as 'IB', Sergeant **Souleymane Diomandé**, aka '*La Grenade*', and Corporal **Oumar Diarrassouba** ('Zaga Zaga') who broke with Gueï, fled to Burkina and masterminded the 19 September rebellion. The whole thing is grimly reminiscent of efforts to discredit opposition leader **Alpha Condé** before Guinea's December 1998 presidential election.

While other European countries, notably **Britain**, have urged their

nationals to leave, the more phlegmatic Abidjan residents keep an eye on the French community, now with an extra 500 troops to protect them. 'So long as the French haven't yet evacuated, it's still quite safe,' said one resident. The first detachment of 150 Foreign Legion paratroopers from the Second Foreign Parachute Regiment, 11 Parachute Brigade, arrived on 15 December from Solenzara air base in Corsica to join over 1,200 already in Côte d'Ivoire.

The African Development Bank, the largest international organisation in Abidjan with 1,200 staff, held a meeting of its Governors' Consultative Committee of ministers from the countries of the 18 executive directors in Accra, **Ghana**, on 16-17 December. They discussed how to operate during the crisis and drew up recommendations to pass on to the Board of Governors. However, the Bank issued a statement before the meeting emphasising that it had no plans to leave Abidjan. Many international organisations, even non-governmental organisations and news agencies such as *Reuters*, have drawn up contingency plans to move to Accra but moving the Bank would send too strong a political message. *Notre Voie*, the daily of Gbagbo's *Front Populaire Ivoirien*, has denounced Bank President **Omar Kabbaj**, a **Moroccan**, as 'ungrateful' and accused him of seeking to sabotage Côte d'Ivoire's economic recovery.

ADB staff have had the option of evacuating their families but only about 60 per cent have done so. 'If you're from Brazzaville, Abidjan's still safer,' a Bank official told *Africa Confidential*. If the situation worsens to Phase Four in the United Nations' security code, staff will be evacuated, and about a third will operate the Bank temporarily from an emergency base in Tunis. The pace of project approvals has hastened markedly in the run-up to Christmas as staff clear their desks.

Nervousness in Abidjan is exacerbated by the lack of information. The government has jammed FM broadcasts by foreign radio such as *Radio France Internationale* and the BBC, and most Ivorians rely on the less-than-neutral state media for information. Yet while thousands of young men responded to the government's call for volunteers, the near-collapse of the peace talks leads some to realise that the war is now more about keeping Gbagbo in power than crushing the rebels.

France is emphatic that he must see out his mandate unless he chooses to resign but some Abidjan liberals are now talking of the possibility of an interim military council led by the armed forces chief, General **Mathias Doué**. He is said to have been offered the presidency during the 1999 coup and to have declined. Those looking to the military hope Doué can lower the political temperature and revise the constitution so that fair elections can be held.

If it is opening its limited coffers to boost the armed forces, it will not be long before the government runs out of money to pay civil servants. Ill-advised, isolated and turning increasingly to prayer rather than action, Gbagbo may not last. The main rebel group, the *Mouvement Patriotique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (MPCI) is remarkably well disciplined and equipped, in contrast to its western Ivorian colleagues. Its backers have still to emerge.

NAMIBIA

Son of Sam

Nujoma's fourth term bid could at last split his party

It's getting to be a habit. President **Sam Nujoma**, who said last year he would stand down at the end of his current term, has changed his mind and wants to stand again. The constitution, drafted at

Diamond poker

The concentration of decision-making in the presidency was shown by the spectacular offer made by **Maurice Tempelsman**, a **United States'** diamond dealer, to President **Sam Nujoma**. To bridge Namibia's budgetary shortfall, he offered an interest-free loan of US\$80 million, against future sales of the country's high-quality diamond gemstones. Tempelsman is a close confidant of Nujoma's and is in business with **Aaron Mushimba**, brother of Nujoma's wife **Kovambo**; they are partners in a **Bahamas**-based firm that owns half of Northbank Diamonds, which shares with **South Africa's** Trans Hex group a licence to explore for alluvial diamonds in a promising area along the Orange River.

Windhoek is not satisfied with the way the Diamond Trading Company (De Beers' London-based marketers) sells its gemstones. The offered loan appeared to make their exclusive marketing contract with Namibia's biggest producer, Namdeb Diamond Corporation, feel sweeter; Tempelsman's company, Lazard Kaplan International, is in the inner ring at De Beers' select auctions. The offer bypassed the Mines Ministry and was handled by Nujoma's office, with Mushimba as intermediary.

Namdeb, which produces all the country's onshore and most offshore diamonds (almost 1.5 million carats of mainly gem-quality stones last year) has been a 50-50 government/De Beers joint venture since 1994. Also, Namdeb owns 30 per cent of De Beers Marine Namibia (DBMN), which operates the huge offshore Atlantic 1 concession covering 6,000 square kilometres off the south coast. Revenue from tax and royalties has risen along with output and the impressive **Inge Zaamwane**, a Namibian, is Namdeb's Managing Director.

Namdeb's total exports were worth some \$360 mn. in 2001 when demand for diamonds, especially Namibia's gems, dropped sharply. De Beers cut prices for some gem categories and deferred some purchases from contracted producers, including Namdeb. Depreciation of the South African rand, to which the Namibia dollar is pegged, helped salvage Namibia's local currency earnings and ensured an unexpected boost to revenue this fiscal year. Prior to this becoming apparent, Mines Minister **Jesaya Nyamu** is said to have complained to De Beers' Managing Director **Gary Ralfe** about

the marketing deal; the current five-year agreement lasts until 2005. De Beers has not responded; any reduction in Namibian take-up would affect its access to the best gems. De Beers was already worried about inroads by **Lev Leviev**, an **Israeli** diamond-dealer, in **Angola**, in **Congo-Kinshasa** and in **Namibia** itself.

Early this year, Namibia's cabinet authorised Nyamu to market Namdeb's output outside De Beers, under Section 59 of the Diamond Act, which allows the government to sell up to 10 per cent of any producer's output independently. De Beers does not want to risk losing any of Namdeb's output. Given his friendship with Nujoma, Tempelsman seemed the ideal interlocutor. A week after the government said it would implement Section 59, Tempelsman met Nujoma and Mushimba in Windhoek; in his subsequent letter to Nujoma of 27 May, he insisted that the interest-free loan would be conditional on the government extending its exclusive marketing agreement with De Beers for three more years, to 2008.

De Beers does not acknowledge a link to Tempelsman's loan offer. Nyamu developed misgivings about independent sales and was switched sideways to the Trade and Industry portfolio in August. His replacement, **Nicky Iyambo**, is Nujoma's former doctor, more amenable to presidential wishes. For now the government is neither marketing its gems independently nor accepting Tempelsman's loan offer which, incidentally, is the sort of deal that raises hackles at the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

Nujoma hears much criticism of De Beers' marketing methods, especially from rival **Russian** and **Israeli** companies. The government has allocated offshore exploration acreage to new companies – one of which, backed by Nujoma, was Namibian Minerals Corp. (Namco), in which several ministers are said to have bought shares secretly on the Namibia Stock Exchange. When Namco went bust last year, the government backed its takeover by the Leviev Group through its subsidiary L.L. Mining. Financing problems persisted and Leviev pulled the plug in November. Liquidation is due early next year, barring last-minute rescue. Namibia will have trouble breaking out of De Beers' marketing arrangements – at least until the world economy, and the price of diamonds, starts rising again.

Independence in 1990, limits the president to two five-year terms; a loophole allowed Nujoma to stand for his third term. At 73, he wants a fourth, and his supporters are confident they can win it for him. He is strongly backed among Oshivambo traditional leaders in the north and officials of the governing South West Africa People's Organisation.

In a bad-tempered interview with **Germany's** newspaper *Die Welt* last month, Nujoma said his interest in a fourth term was 'nobody's business but Namibians'. The campaign will take off early in 2003, leading to a referendum in mid-year, comfortably ahead of elections for Namibia's 13 regional authorities, probably in November. SWAPO's Congress in August (AC Vol 43 No 17) passed a resolution calling for an extraordinary party congress to decide the leadership, some time in 2004. The wording was vague enough to allow Nujoma to stand again as the party's presidential candidate, given the necessary constitutional change. A constitutional amendment requires two-thirds support in the National Assembly but his campaign team wants to add legitimacy to the change by winning a referendum on it (although this isn't legally necessary).

The two main opposition parties, the Congress of Democrats (COD) and the enfeebled Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), have a combined 17 seats in parliament, far short of one-third. It would take many defectors from SWAPO's 55-strong parliamentary group, in improbable coordination with the opposition, to block an amendment. Resistance within SWAPO to Nujoma's fourth term is fuelled by ambitions and rivalries among party leaders, heightened in August

when Nujoma tried to neutralise his main potential successors as party leader, **Hage Geingob** and **Hidipo Hamutenya**.

Geingob was replaced as Prime Minister by **Theo-Ben Gurirab** (also from the minority Damara community) and offered the insultingly junior portfolio of Regional and Local Government. He rejected it and left government. Hamutenya was switched from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, where he had built up an impressive network of local and Asian business contacts, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is particularly close to **Abdool Aboobakar**, the **Mauritian** Chairman of the Namibian Development Corporation, which has promoted the establishment of an industrial park and several private companies run by Hamutenya's associates. Hamutenya is also close to the **Malaysian** Chairman of Air Namibia and former Governor of the Central Bank of Namibia, **Jafar bin Ahmed**, whose management record has come under sharp criticism locally.

Journalists and anti-corruption campaigners have criticised Hamutenya's business associations and his distaste for independent journalism. Many believe that a government led by him would crack down on political activists, too. We hear that Geingob tells his supporters that, *in extremis*, a fourth term for Nujoma is better than a first term for Hamutenya; the rivals' backers are discreetly briefing against each other's putative candidate.

Gurirab would not challenge Nujoma but if the President resigned or fell sick, he could stand against Hamutenya – who, numerically, is well placed. He is Kwanyama, the biggest sub-group of the politically

dominant Oshivambo, and has used this base to build support within SWAPO, from head office to most regional offices. At the last SWAPO congress, the Hamutenya faction secretly circulated its proposed list of candidates for the Central Committee; 99 per cent were from Ohangwena, the most populous region after Karas (which includes Windhoek) and other northern regions where the Kwanyama form the majority. The plot was undone when Geingob's supporters got hold of the list and exposed the machinations.

Hamutenya has a formidable grip on the party machine, the army and the security apparatus, in which Kwanyama former members of SWAPO's People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) hold the senior posts and form the majority. At the last SWAPO Women's Council elections in Ongwediva, Hamutenya supporters swept the board. They included SWAPO's Secretary for Women's Affairs, **Eunice Ipinge**; the Minister for Women's Affairs, **Netumbo Nandi**, is another Hamutenya loyalist. Other Hamutenya supporters in government include his successor as Trade Minister, **Jeseya Nyamu**, Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister **Kaire Mbuende** and Deputy Higher Education Minister **Hadino Hisongwa**.

Hamutenya has influential backers in parastatal companies: Namibia Power Corporation Managing Director **Leake Hangala**; Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) Managing Director, **Jerry Munyama**, and Chairman, **Uazuva Kaumbi**; TransNamib Director **John Shaetonondi**; Nampost Managing Director **Tsekerero Tweya**. Politicians and party officials supporting a Nujoma fourth term include: SWAPO Secretary General and Minister of Justice **Ngarikutuke Tjiriange**, from the minority Herero community; National Planning Commission Director General **Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadilha**, an Ngandjera from the same small Oshivambo sub-group as Nujoma; Minister of Works, Transport and Communications **Moses Amweelo**; Fisheries Minister **Abraham Iyambo**; Deputy Trade and Industry Minister **Bernard Esau**.

'Better the devil you know'

After Geingob's fall in August, the President's camp was reinforced by his supporters who prefer Nujoma to Hamutenya. Several are at the heart of government: Attorney General **Pendukeni Ithana**, Finance Minister **Nangolo Mbumba**, Public Services Commission Chairman **Joe Itana**, Environment and Tourism Minister **Philemon Malima** and the National Youth Council General Secretary, **Pohamba Shifeta**.

Nujoma's supporters know his popularity could fade if the referendum is not well prepared. Hamutenya's supporters know that any open criticism of Nujoma and his fourth-term plans would prompt a party purge. Most northern traditional leaders back a fourth term for Nujoma – King **Elias Kauluma** of the Ndonga (the second-biggest Oshivambo sub-group), Chief **Shikongo Taapopi** of the Ukwalundi and even King **Weyulu** of the Kwanyama. King Kauluma, who chairs the state-run Council of Traditional Leaders, sat at the high table beside Nujoma at August's SWAPO Congress.

Hamutenya's substantial backing from the state media dates from his time as Minister of Information and Broadcasting. It includes Kaumbi and Munyama at the NBC; **Mark Shivute**, Permanent Secretary for Information and Broadcasting; **Asser Ntinda**, Editor of *Namibia Today*. His supporters dominate the management board of *New Era* newspaper. Publicly, Hamutenya's faction espouses national unity. More quietly, they argue that Geingob (and Nujoma himself) have dragged their feet on land resettlement, by persisting with the willing buyer-willing seller policy which makes most white-owned commercial farms too expensive to buy. They argue for a much faster, **Zimbabwean-style** approach. They also argue that Namibia should be expanding trade links with **China, India** and Malaysia. Hamutenya

helped to ensure that Malaysia's Ramatex group set up a N\$500 million (\$48 mn.) textile and garment factory in Namibia, not **South Africa**, but its performance has been disappointing.

Despite Nujoma's public support for Zimbabwe's President **Robert Mugabe**, he has told his circle that he doesn't intend to allow the Namibian economy to follow Zimbabwe's into decline for the sake of ideology. Nujoma, adjusting his rhetoric to his audience, has cultivated Afrikaner Namibians and recently reassured the leadership of the Namibia Agricultural Union (NAU) that their security of tenure would remain: only foreign absentee land owners would be expropriated.

At regional conferences Nujoma emphasises his liberation-leader credentials and solidarity with Mugabe. In discussions with foreign business people and diplomats he is pragmatic, which makes political sense, too. Land in Namibia lacks the political resonance it has in Zimbabwe. Most subsistence farmers are in the north; the commercial farms, mainly in the south, are large livestock ranches unsuitable for division into small farms. The groups that suffered most from land expropriation under German colonialism were minorities such as the Damara, Herero and Nama, who don't carry any weight in SWAPO.

Nujoma has tried to downplay tribalism by maintaining a regionally balanced cabinet, resisting pressure to appoint disproportionate numbers of Kwanyama, the largest ethnic group. Other groups fear they would lose out under Hamutenya, a Kwanyama. If Nujoma takes his campaign for a fourth term to a referendum, he will probably win. Hamutenya's best chance would be to mobilise enough votes from SWAPO members of parliament to block the change in the National Assembly. That is the great gamble – Nujoma's bid for a fourth term could split the party that has dominated the nation since Independence.

GABON

Hear those drums

For want of opposition, President Bongo can plan to rule until 2012

After three decades at the head of one of Africa's worst managed and most corrupt oil economies, President **Omar Bongo** might well expect some political trouble. Quite the opposite. His ruling *Parti Démocratique Gabonais* (PDG) will sweep the board in the local elections on 29 December and Bongo (health permitting) could win yet another seven-year presidential term in the election due in 2005. The oppositionists of the early 1990s have been exiled, crushed or coopted.

The economy has been shrinking for four years. Budget projections for 2003 show that, for the first time in Bongo's presidency, oil revenues will meet less than half of state income, excluding borrowing. The President's response is to open the patronage taps even wider and to reshuffle the army again. His usual practice has been to distribute senior posts among the main ethnic groups: Fang (north, part of Libreville; over half the population of 1.3 million); Myéné (coastal: Port-Gentil, Lambaréné and part of Libreville); Punu/Eschira (south-west); Téké and Nzébi (south-east), Okandé (centre), Bakota (east). Recently Bongo has boosted the Téké from his native Haut-Ogoué Province in the north-east; they are allied with the Nzébi across the **Congo-Brazzaville** border.

His fellow Téké did well from a military reshuffle in September, under Defence Minister **Ali Bongo**, the President's son. The new armed forces' Chief of Staff is **Jean Ntori-Longho**, from Bongo's mother's village, Ngouoni, in Haut-Ogoué. He replaced **Augustin Anguilé**, a Myéné from Libreville; Ntori's ally, General **Idriss Ngari**,

the Interior Minister who crushed opposition protests in the 1990s, is Téké from Ngouoni. Gen. **Honoré Olery** (Haut-Ogoué) replaced Gen. **Jean-Pierre Dombénény** (Haut-Ogoué) as head of the *gendarmérie*. The national police chief, **Jean-Claude Labouba**, is Téké from Haut-Ogoué. The *Garde Republicaine*, with 2-300 soldiers, is commanded by Gen. **André Oyini**, 61, also from Ngouoni. (The main army, less well equipped and trained, provides about 200 peacekeeping troops for **Central African Republic**; 1,500 recruits are sought for the army, 600 for the police.)

Private security companies employ hundreds of heavily armed men. The biggest, the *Société Gabonaise de Services* (SGS) is not to be confused with **Switzerland's Société Générale de Surveillance**; it is run by a **French** ex-colonel, **Edouard de Béthencourt**, and owned by Bongo. It runs surveillance and security guards in the main towns and some oil sites, such as Shell's Rabi oilfield.

Gabonese have lost interest in the perennially rigged elections. Turnout at the legislative polls last December was under 20 per cent and may be lower still in the local polls. Electoral registers have been doctored down to 523,000: there were 775,000 names on the lists for the 2001 elections. Many nominal political opponents are in Bongo's pay, the rest are divided and lack national support. In November, the nominally oppositionist *Parti de l'Unité du Peuple* (PUP), led by a PDG stalwart and ethnic Punu from Ngounié Province, **Louis-Gaston Mayila**, and the *Mouvement Commun de Développement* (MCD) of **Paul Biyoghé Mba**, agreed to be absorbed into the PDG.

The *Parti Gabonais du Centre Indépendant* (PGCI) announced a formal alliance with the 'presidential majority' in November but remains a separate party. Its leader, Pastor **Jérôme Okinda** (Haut-Ogoué), is less important than its Secretary General, **Jean-Pierre Lemboumba Lépendou**, a wealthy former Finance Minister who knows many presidential secrets; he split with Bongo when multi-party politics arrived in 1990 and subsequently financed the now defunct newspaper *La Griffé*. Also now formally allied to the presidential majority is the *Rassemblement National des Bûcherons* (RNB) of **Abbé Paul Mba Abessole**.

Pierre-Louis Agondjo Okawe, regarded as close to Bongo, leads the *Parti Gabonais du Progrès* (PGP), which is strongly Myéné and popular in the oil town of Port-Gentil, where he will probably win the mayoralty despite a challenger from his own party, **Marie-Augustine Hounagni-Ambouroué**. **Pierre Mamboundou** of the *Union du Peuple Gabonais* (UPG), is Punu and a more credible opponent; he was runner-up to Bongo with 16.5 per cent of the vote in the fraudulent 1998 presidential election. **Pierre-André Kombila**, a respected doctor and leader of an RNB faction which broke away from Mba Abessole's group, is independent but unpopular.

For wealthy Gabonese, elections are a patronage competition which shares out jobs and resources from 250,000 barrels of oil a day, plus smaller timber and manganese exports. Patronage is squeezed by a new rule that politicians cannot have two jobs at once (for example Mba Abessole is both Minister for Human Rights and Mayor of Libreville). The most important local elections will be Port-Gentil, and Libreville in Estuaire Province. Normally, the Mayor of the capital has been Fang from Estuaire or Myéné. Abessole, an Estuaire Fang, may win again, against competition from the (weak) Prime Minister, **Jean-François Ntoutoume Emame**, another Fang from Estuaire; the Myéné contenders are **Jacques Adiahenot**, Minister of Urban Development, and **Michel Teale**, former Director of Bongo's private office. Abessole and Emame would lose out if the new rule against holding two jobs at once is enforced. In Port-Gentil, Agondjo has a good chance.

Despite rumours about his health, Bongo (66) looks set for seven

more years from 2005. Constitutionally, his successor is **George Rawiri**, a Myéné from Lambaréné who is Senate President and a senior freemason like Bongo (who is also Muslim). Bongo's Defence Minister son Ali is a contender; Bongo's daughter **Pascaline**, Vice-President of Elf-Gabon, backs a rival, her husband **Paul Toungui** (Haut-Ogoué), a former Oil Minister who replaced the politically less weighty **Émile Doumba** as Finance Minister in January. Pascaline used to be married to Foreign Minister **Jean Ping**. Lemboumba of the PGCI may be a king-maker. Even Pierre Mamboundou, in opposition and a Punu, could one day be important.

Bongo's court borders on the incestuous. A previous front-runner, the wealthy Nzébi politician **Zacharie Myboto**, was forced to resign in January 2001 and is probably out of the picture. His daughter **Chantal**, a former mistress of Bongo's, later married **Paul-Marie Gondjout**, brother of Bongo's Private Secretary **Laura Gondjout**. Vice-President **Didjob Divungi Di Ndinge**, a Punu from Ngounié, and Planning Minister (and ex-Premier) **Casimir Oyé Mba**, a Fang from Estuaire, are also lining up for the *après-Bongo*.

Bongo is well guarded. His family has a strong grip on the military. The 600-strong **French** Sixth Marine Infantry Battalion is encamped next to the main presidential palace in Libreville and (like his son-in-law, **Congo-Brazzaville's** President **Denis Sassou Nguesso**) he can rely on security and diplomatic support from French President **Jacques Chirac**, in return for protecting France's oil and other economic interests. French officials are often seconded to the civil service.

Washington has in the past used Bongo as a regional go-between and has recently been courting friends on Africa's oil-rich Atlantic seaboard. The **United States'** presence in Libreville consists of a Defence Attaché, Air Force Major **Bruce Barr**, and a staging area for evacuating Americans. Yet Secretary of State **Colin Powell** visited in September, ostensibly to launch a US\$53 million bio-diversity project.

Bongo's standing in French and US eyes soars above the corruption scandals around his presidency. Revelations at a 1999 US Senate hearing that he moved at least \$180 mn. through private Citibank accounts briefly embarrassed him in Washington (AC Vol 40 No 23); a French judicial investigation into Elf-Gabon's finances is temporarily awkward. In particular, it scuppered attempts to raise a cheap loan from the International Monetary Fund. Gabon is negotiating for a new loan next year, now it is sure of a friendly French (and probably US) vote on the IMF Board.

Along with Sassou Nguesso and **Chadian** President **Idriss Déby**, Bongo ignominiously abandoned a defamation suit against French writer **François-Xavier Verschave**, whose book *Noir Silence* had 'offended' them. Writers and anti-corruption campaigners do not vote on the IMF Board.

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Pointers

BURUNDI/CONGO-KINSHASA

Two helpings of peace

Peace deals for both Congo-Kinshasa and Burundi, brokered by **South Africa**, will be tested early in 2003. The Congo deal, signed in Pretoria on 17 December, proposes a government of national unity, national assembly and senate, with all factions fighting since 1998 integrated into a new national army. The World Bank and European Union have promised help worth over US\$2 billion, conditional on political agreement.

President **Joseph Kabila's** government (AC Vol 43 No 23) has rejected Pretoria's offer to provide security for rebel organisations moving to Kinshasa. Unless **Belgium, Britain and France** move quickly on their offer to re-form and train the new national army, demobilisation and disarmament look problematic. The declared withdrawals of **Rwandan** and **Ugandan** forces have barely improved security in eastern Congo. This month the United Nations Security Council boosted its observer force to 8,000 from 5,000 but the region needs a UN peacekeeping force backed by Western powers, whose politicians and armies are busy worrying about **Iraq**.

Burundi, too, has been nudged towards power-sharing. This week in South Africa it was due to start ceasefire negotiations with **Agathon Rwasa's** rebel *Forces Nationales de Libération*, who have agreed to talk under pressure from the **United States** and from **Ugandan** President **Yoweri Museveni**, credited with much of the progress so far. The rebels want the army back in barracks, the government-established 'protected villages' closed and political prisoners freed.

On 3 December President **Pierre Buyoya** and **Pierre Nkurunziza**, leader of the other main Hutu rebel group, the *Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie*, signed a ceasefire in Arusha, **Tanzania**. The deadline is 30 December, when army and rebels are meant to be in camps supervised by observers. Other monitors will watch arms movements, the release of political prisoners and the withdrawal of (mainly Rwandan) foreign forces. The next negotiations are supposed to cover constitutional issues and the integration of guerrillas into the army and police.

The Tutsi-dominated army will not put its heavy weaponry under regional supervision until the FNL too has laid down its arms. Buyoya, who must sell the ceasefire to the soldiers, is due to hand over power to his Hutu Vice-President **Domitien Ndayizeye** by mid-2003. Meanwhile he is losing popularity to Tutsi rivals – ex-President **Jean-Baptiste Bagaza** of the *Parti du*

Redressement National (who is still under house arrest) and **Charles Mukasi** of the anti-Buyoya wing of the *Union pour le Progrès National* (just out of gaol).

NIGERIA

Election year

The main milestone in preparations for the 2003 elections will be the Nominating Convention of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on 3-5 January, probably at Eagle Square, Abuja. Whoever is named as party presidential candidate is likely to win the election. The 3 December registration of 22 new political parties, including those of such distinguished figures as **Anthony Enahoro, Gani Fawehinmi** and **M.D. Yusuf**, is unlikely to affect the race for the presidency.

The two main candidates for the PDP nomination will be the incumbent President, **Olusegun Obasanjo**, 65, whose running-mate will be the current Vice-President, **Atiku Abubakar**, and a former Vice-President from the Second Republic, **Alex Ekwueme**, 70, a respected Igbo elder statesman. Two other candidates, former Kano State Governor **Abubakar Rimi**, and former PDP Chairman **Barnabas Gemade**, a political heavyweight from Benue State, have apparently been eliminated by party rules, while Igbo Senator **Ike Nwachukwu** is charging betrayal, as Ekwueme is more likely to get endorsement from the Igbo pressure-group *Ohaeneze Ndigbo*.

A great deal of money will change hands, especially as governors, state governors and parliamentarians are also up for nomination. This is likely to be followed by mass defections by those disappointed in their ambitions.

Ekwueme's 1 December declaration was made in Minna, the fiefdom of ex-President **Ibrahim Babangida** (1985-1993). His running-mate may be **Aliyu Mohammed Gusau**, National Security adviser and IBB's main contact man in the Obasanjo government.

There are fears that too close an identification with the 'Minna Machiavelli' (IBB) will make Ekwueme look like a northern puppet. But Obasanjo has lost much of the northern support he had in 1999, and despite Atiku's best efforts there will be northern votes up for grabs, many of which will go to the All Nigeria Peoples' Party, successor to the former All Peoples Party, the PDP's main opponent in 1999. The Yoruba south-west, unlike in 1999, will be solidly for Obasanjo, though the PDP will still have difficulty making any inroads into the heartland of the Alliance for Democracy in the Governors' elections. But if the nomination goes to Obasanjo/Atiku, the famous 'incumbency factor' will carry much weight, even in the north.

The poll is expected in April, since the new

president must be installed on 29 May. But uncertainties over the date, which election law will apply, whether the presidentials will be first or last, and the anaemic, under-funded state of the Independent National Electoral Commission under Chairman **Abel Guobadia**, worry Nigeria's well-wishers, especially in the donor community.

SEYCHELLES

Of ranch and rupees

In the 6 December legislative election, President **France-Albert René's** Seychelles People's Progressive Front polled just one per cent above the two-thirds majority needed to change the constitution and seek another term. René seized power in 1977 in a bloodless coup against elected President **James Mancham**. Since multi-party democracy returned in 1991, he has won the maximum three terms in office.

But Africa's last white president no longer seems to have the stomach for a fight. René is said to be tired and is noticeably short of breath during his increasingly rare public appearances. His recent purchase of a ranch in **Australia**, the latest in an extensive property portfolio, has fuelled speculation that he is ready to retire. Members of his inner circle say he now worries how his people will remember him – father of the nation who improved the lot of ordinary Seychellois or corrupt dictator who rewarded his henchmen with state monopolies and national property?

An electorate grateful for their pensions and free health care is quickly being replaced by a more acquisitive generation which resents the wealth of René's allies, such as Seychelles Marketing Board Chief **Mukesh Valabji** and **Glenny Savy**, head of Seychelles Island Development Corporation. The economy is in tatters; the International Monetary Fund recently named the country as one of the top five bad debtor nations and the Seychelles rupee is seriously ailing. René would be wise to slip away before electors can fully appreciate the extent of national bankruptcy.

In the 2001 presidential election, the opposition Seychelles National Party leader **Wavel Ramkalawan** shocked René by winning 45 per cent of the vote to his 54 per cent. Ramkalawan and fellow SNP leaders **Jean-François Ferrari** and **Roger Mancienne** have promised not to pursue René, though those who have amassed significant personal fortunes under his so-called Socialist government may not be so lucky.

Mancham remains absurdly confident of taking the presidency in 2006 despite not having won a single seat in the National Assembly. His Democratic Party, supported by René's SPFF as a means of splitting the opposition vote, failed to poll the ten per cent minimum.