

## Polity IV Country Report 2010: Swaziland

|   |   |        |            |                |                    |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
|---|---|--------|------------|----------------|--------------------|----|----|---|---------------|---|---|---|---------------|---|---|---|-----------------|--|----|--|-------------------|--|----|--|--|
| <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2009</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2010</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Polity:</b></td> <td>-9</td> <td>-9</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Democ:</b></td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Autoc:</b></td> <td>9</td> <td>9</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Durable:</b></td> <td></td> <td>37</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Tentative:</b></td> <td></td> <td>No</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> | Score:  | 2009   | 2010       | Change         | <b>Polity:</b>     | -9 | -9 | 0 | <b>Democ:</b> | 0 | 0 | 0 | <b>Autoc:</b> | 9 | 9 | 0 | <b>Durable:</b> |  | 37 |  | <b>Tentative:</b> |  | No |  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Authority Trends, 1968-2010: Swaziland</b></p> |
| Score:  | 2009  | 2010   | Change     |                |                    |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
| <b>Polity:</b>  | -9  | -9     | 0          |                |                    |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
| <b>Democ:</b>   | 0   | 0      | 0          |                |                    |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
| <b>Autoc:</b>   | 9   | 9      | 0          |                |                    |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
| <b>Durable:</b>   |   | 37     |            |                |                    |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
| <b>Tentative:</b>   |   | No     |            |                |                    |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
| SCODE   | <b>SWA</b>  | CCODE  | <b>572</b> | Date of Report | <b>1 June 2011</b> |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
| <b>Polity IV Component Variables</b>  |   |        |            |                |                    |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
| XRREG   | XRCOMP  | XROPEN | XCONST     | PARREG         | PARCOMP            |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
| 3   | 1   | 2      | 2          | 4              | 1                  |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
| <b>Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)</b>   |   |        |            |                |                    |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
| End Date  | 12 April 1973   |        | Begin Date | 13 April 1973  |                    |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
| <b>Polity Fragmentation: No</b>   |   |        |            |                |                    |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
| <b>Constitution</b>   | 1968 (suspended in 1973)  |        |            |                |                    |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
| <b>Executive(s)</b>   | King Mswati III; succeeded to the throne 25 April 1986 following the death of his father, King Sobhuza II.<br>Prime Minister Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini; appointed by the monarch, 16 October 2008   |        |            |                |                    |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
| <b>Legislature</b>  | Bicameral (parties are prohibited):<br>House of Assembly (65 members; 10 appointed by the monarch, 55 elected from candidates nominated by traditional local councils; most recent elections, 19 September 2008)<br>Senate (30 members; 10 elected by the lower house of parliament, 20 appointed by the monarch) |        |            |                |                    |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |
| <b>Judiciary</b>  | High Court  |        |            |                |                    |    |    |   |               |   |   |   |               |   |   |   |                 |  |    |  |                   |  |    |  |  |

### Narrative Description:<sup>1</sup>

#### **Executive Recruitment: Dual Executive: Ascription + Designation (2)**

Swaziland's government system is a modified traditional monarchy where all government powers are ultimately vested in the monarch. However, the country also has a more modern regulatory framework and market economy and a Cabinet, appointed by the monarch with a prime minister at the head, has been put in charge of its administration. Absalom Themba Dlamini was appointed prime minister after the 2003 parliamentary elections; he was replaced by current Prime Minister Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini on 23 October 2008. Political parties have been prohibited since April 1973.

<sup>1</sup> The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

**Executive Constraints: Slight Limitations (2)**

Effective political authority rests with the monarch and the royal family, supported by traditional Swazi customs and institutions. When Swaziland acquired independence from Britain in 1968, it had a parliamentary form of government; King Sobhuza II suspended the constitution in 1973, in a decision agreed upon by both houses of Parliament, on the grounds that parliamentary forms were unsuited to the traditions of the Swazi people. Since then, the monarch has combined executive, legislative, and limited judicial powers in his hands. However, limited electoral representation was introduced in 1993 in the form of a partly elected bicameral consultative assembly, the National Council. The judiciary is generally independent, but its powers are limited by those of the monarch. Individuals in high positions close to the monarch occasionally attempt to influence or overturn court decisions.

After nine years of planning, a new constitution was promulgated in January 2006. While the constitution is socially progressive, overturning centuries-old Swazi customs to permit the equality for women for example, nonetheless, it is politically conservative in that it makes no mention of the right to form political parties nor does it weaken the absolute powers of the King. The King will continue to appoint the prime minister and cabinet, principal secretaries, chiefs and high court justices and will retain the ability to dissolve the National Council.

**Political Participation: Repressed Competition (1)**

The royal decree of 12 April 1973 banned political parties and significantly curtailed political freedoms such as the freedom of assembly and processions. The only political organization permitted to function is the Imbokodvo National Movement (INM), formed in 1964 by King Sobhuza II, a traditionalist movement that also promotes policies of development, including literacy for all citizens. Several opposition groups reemerged in the early 1990s when it appeared that constitutional revisions would be enacted to permit the formal legalization of parties. The opposition has made increasing calls for a return to constitutional politics, but its organized activities continued to be suppressed as “threats to state security.” Six members of the political opposition were charged with sedition in April 2007 when they attempted to protest the anniversary of the 1973 royal decree banning political parties. In July 2007 thousands protested in the commercial capital, Manzini, to press for further democratic reforms.

The new constitution, promulgated in January 2006, does not explicitly overturn the ban on political parties. While many have interpreted the new constitution’s protections of the freedom of speech and assembly as giving them the right to organize political parties, it remains unclear how far the King is willing to go in this direction. As a response the political criticism of the new constitution levied by pro-democracy groups in Swaziland in 2005-06, the King placed significant limits on the ability of these groups to assemble and voice their concerns. As it currently stands, only pro-royalists parties have the right to organize in Swaziland. In August 2006 a new royalist party, Sive Siyinaba, was formed while government troops broke up a rally by an opposition group seeking greater liberalization. The Sive Siyinaba (“the nation is a fortress”), which was formed as a “cultural organization” in 1996, includes government officials, current members of parliament and individuals from the royal family.