

**Globalized Elections**  
**Weekly Report**  
**July 04 2010 to August 10, 2010**  
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**Presentation on August 11, 2010**

**Week # 131**

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Early **parliamentary elections** were held in **Nauru** on 19 June 2010 after the previous parliamentary election in April 2010 had resulted in a deadlock between government and opposition, tied at nine seats each. This led to an extended state of emergency in Nauru as a result of this election.

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**Nauru**

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# Nauru

## Republic of Nauru

<b>Capital</b>	Yaren ( <i>de facto</i> )
<b>Official language(s)</b>	English, Nauruan
<b>Demonym</b>	Nauruan
<b>Government</b>	
- President	Marcus Stephen

## Independence

from the Australian, New Zealand, and British-administered U.N. trusteeship. **31 January 1968**

## Area

- Total	21 km <sup>2</sup> (225th) 8.1 sq mi
- Water (%)	0.57

## Population

- March 2009 estimate 14,019 (216th)

- December 2006 census 9,275

- Density 476.2/km<sup>2</sup> (23rd)  
1,233.3/sq mi

## GDP (PPP)

- Total \$36.9 million (192nd)

- Per capita \$2,500 ('06 est.) - \$5,000('05 est.)<sup>[1]</sup> (135th - 141st)

**Nauru** officially the **Republic of Nauru** and formerly known as *Pleasant Island*, is an island nation in Micronesia in the South Pacific. Its nearest neighbour is Banaba Island in Kiribati, 300 km to the east. Nauru is the world's smallest island nation, covering just 21 square kilometres (8.1 sq mi).

Settled by Micronesian and Polynesian people, Nauru was annexed and claimed as a colony by the German Empire in the late 19th century. After World War I, Nauru became a League of Nations mandate administered by Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. During World War II, Nauru was occupied by Japanese troops who were bypassed by the Allied advance across the Pacific, and after the war ended, it entered into trusteeship again.<sup>[3]</sup> Nauru was declared independent in 1968.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, Nauru was a "rentier state". Nauru is a phosphate rock island, with deposits close to the surface, which allow for simple strip mining operations. This island was a major exporter of phosphate starting in 1907, when the Pacific Phosphate Company began mining there, through the formation of the British Phosphate Commission in 1919, and continuing after independence. This gave Nauru back full control of its minerals under the Nauru Phosphate Corporation, until the deposits ran out during the 1980s.<sup>[4]</sup> For this reason, Nauru briefly boasted the highest per-capita income enjoyed by any sovereign state in the world during the late 1960s and early 1970s. When the phosphate reserves were exhausted, and the environment had been seriously harmed by mining, the trust established to manage the island's wealth became greatly reduced in value. To earn income, the government resorted to unusual measures. In the 1990s, Nauru briefly became a tax haven and illegal money laundering centre. From 2001 to 2008, it accepted aid from the Australian government in exchange for housing a Nauru detention centre that held and processed those who had tried to enter Australia in an irregular manner.

From December 2005 to September 2006, Nauru became partially isolated from the outside world when Air Nauru, the only airline with service to the island,

ceased to operate. The only outside access to Nauru was then by ocean-going ships. The airline was able to restart operations under the name Our Airline with monetary aid from Taiwan. The island has one airport; Nauru International Airport.

## History

Nauru was first inhabited by Micronesian and Polynesian people at least 3,000 years ago. There were traditionally 12 clans or tribes on Nauru, which are represented in the 12-pointed star in the nation's flag. Nauruans traced their descent on the female side. Nauruans practiced aquaculture - they caught juvenile *ibija* fish, acclimatised them to fresh water, and raised them in the Buada Lagoon, providing an additional, and more reliable source of food. The other locally grown components of their diet included coconuts and pandanus fruit.

The British sea captain John Fearn, a whale hunter, became the first Westerner to visit this island in 1798, and he named it "Pleasant Island". From around 1830, Nauruans had contact with Europeans from whaling ships and traders who replenished their supplies (such as fresh water) at Nauru. Around this time, deserters from the ships began to live on the island. The islanders traded food for alcoholic palm wine and firearms. The firearms were used during the 10-year Nauruan Tribal War that began in 1878, and by 1888 had resulted in a reduction of the population of Nauru from 1,400 to 900 people.

### Colonial period

Nauru was annexed by Germany in 1888 and incorporated into Germany's Marshall Island Protectorate. The Germans called the island Nawodo or Onawero. The arrival of the Germans ended the war, and social changes brought about by the war established kings as rulers of the island. The most widely known of these was King Auweyida. Christian missionaries from the Gilbert Islands arrived in 1888.<sup>[7]</sup> The Germans ruled Nauru for almost three decades.

Robert Rasch, a German Trader who married a native woman, was the first administrator, appointed in 1890.

Phosphate was discovered on Nauru in 1900 by the prospector Albert Ellis. The Pacific Phosphate Company started to exploit the reserves in 1906 by agreement with Germany. The company exported its first shipment in 1907.<sup>[8]</sup> In 1914, following the outbreak of World War I, Nauru was captured by Australian troops. Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom signed the Nauru Island Agreement in 1919, creating a board known as the British Phosphate Commission (BPC). This took over the rights to phosphate mining.<sup>[9]</sup> According to the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics (now the Australian Bureau of Statistics), "In common with other natives, the islanders are very susceptible to tuberculosis and influenza, and in 1921 an influenza epidemic caused the deaths of 230 islanders." In 1923, the League of Nations gave Australia a trustee mandate over Nauru, with the United Kingdom and New Zealand as co-trustees.

## **World War II**

On 6 and 7 December 1940, the German auxiliary cruisers *Komet* and *Orion* sank four supply ships in the vicinity of Nauru. On the next day, *Komet* shelled Nauru's phosphate mining areas, oil storage depots, and the shiploading cantilever. The attacks seriously disrupted phosphate supplies to Australia and New Zealand (mostly used for munition and fertiliser purposes.)

Japanese troops occupied Nauru on 26 August 1942. The Japanese troops built an airfield on Nauru which was bombed for the first time on 25 March 1943, preventing food supplies from being flown to Nauru. The Japanese deported 1,200 Nauruans to work as labourers in the Chuuk islands.<sup>[12]</sup> Nauru, which had been bypassed and left to "wither on the vine" by American forces, was finally set free from the Japanese on 13 September 1945, when Captain Solda, the commander of all the Japanese troops on Nauru, surrendered the island to the Royal Australian Navy and Army. This surrender was accepted by the brigadier

J. R. Stevenson, who represented Lieutenant General Sturdee, the commander of the First Australian Army, on board the warship HMAS *Diamantina* Arrangements were made to repatriate from Chuuk the 737 Nauruans who survived Japanese captivity there. They were returned to Nauru by the BPC ship *Trienza* in January 1946. In 1947, a trusteeship was established by the United Nations, and Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom became the U.N. trustees of the island.

## **Independence**

Nauru became self-governing in January 1966, and following a two-year constitutional convention, it became independent in 1968, led by founding president Hammer DeRoburt. In 1967, the people of Nauru purchased the assets of the British Phosphate Commissioners, and in June 1970, control passed to the locally owned Nauru Phosphate Corporation. Income from the exploitation of phosphate gave Nauruans one of the highest living standards in the Pacific and the world.

In 1989, Nauru took legal actions against Australia in the International Court of Justice over Australia's actions during its administration of Nauru. In particular, Nauru made a legal complaint against Australia's failure to remedy the environmental damage caused by phosphate mining.<sup>[17]</sup> *Certain Phosphate Lands: Nauru v. Australia* led to an out-of-court settlement to rehabilitate the mined-out areas of Nauru.

## **Politics**

Main articles: Politics of Nauru and Districts of Nauru

Nauru is a republic with a parliamentary system of government. The president is both the head of state and of government. An 18-member unicameral parliament

is elected every three years. The parliament elects a President from its members, and the President appoints a cabinet of five to six members. Nauru does not have any formal structure for political parties. Candidates typically stand for office as independents. Fifteen of the 18 members of the current Parliament are independents, and alliances within the government are often formed on the basis of extended family ties.<sup>[18]</sup> Three parties that have sometimes been active in Nauruan politics are the Democratic Party, Nauru First, and the Centre Party.

Since 1992, local government has been the responsibility of the Nauru Island Council (NIC). The NIC has limited powers, and it functions as an advisor to the national government on local matters. The role of the NIC is to concentrate its efforts on local activities relevant to Nauruans. An elected member of the Nauru Island Council cannot simultaneously be a member of parliament.<sup>[19]</sup> Land tenure on Nauru is unusual: all Nauruans have certain rights to all land on the island, which is owned by individuals and family groups. Government and corporate entities do not own any land, and they must enter into a lease arrangement with the landowners to use land. Non-Nauruans cannot own land.

Nauru had 17 changes of administration between 1989 and 2003.<sup>[18]</sup> Between 1999 and 2003, a series of no-confidence votes and elections resulted in two people, René Harris and Bernard Dowiyogo, leading the country for alternating periods. Dowiyogo died in office in March 2003 and Ludwig Scotty was elected as the President. Scotty was re-elected to serve a full term in October 2004. Following a vote of "no confidence" by Parliament against President Scotty on 19 December 2007, Marcus Stephen became the President.

Nauru has a complex legal system. Its Supreme Court, headed by the Chief Justice, is paramount on constitutional issues. Other cases can be appealed to the two-judge Appellate Court. Parliament cannot overturn court decisions, but Appellate Court rulings can be appealed to the High Court of Australia.<sup>[21]</sup> However, in practice, this rarely happens. Lower courts consist of the District Court and the Family Court, both of which are headed by a Resident Magistrate,

who also is the Registrar of the Supreme Court. Finally, there also are two quasi-courts: the Public Service Appeal Board and the Police Appeal Board, both of which are presided over by the Chief Justice.

Nauru, with its small population, has no armed forces. Under an informal agreement, its defence is the responsibility of Australia. There is a small police force under civilian control.

Nauru is divided into fourteen administrative districts which are grouped into eight electoral constituencies. The districts are: Aiwo • Anabar • Anetan • Anibare • Baiti • Boe • Buada • Denigomodu • Ewa • Ijuw • Meneng • Nibok • Uaboe • Yaren

## Politics of Nauru

**Politics of Nauru** takes place in a framework of a parliamentary representative democratic republic, whereby the President of Nauru is the head of government of the executive branch. Legislative power is vested in both the government and the parliament. The Judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature.

## Political conditions

### Background

Nauru's economic viability has historically rested on its phosphate reserves. Phosphate — in actuality a resource derived from a 1,000-year cycle of bird droppings—has been mined on the island since 1906. In the 20th century, the small Pacific nation generated healthy revenues from this lucrative—but finite—resource.

The phosphate supply has virtually all been exhausted in recent years and as such, the future of the people of Nauru is uncertain, and the challenge for the



country's policy makers will be to determine a path of continued economic prosperity, without the benefits of this resource.

## **Offshore banking**

In this regard, the government has tried to develop the island into an offshore financial center, imitating the success of the Bahamas and other island nations around the world that have emerged as major offshore banking centers. The government has also invested in property on other islands and the United States through its Nauru Phosphate Royalties Trust.

Over the course of recent years, however, offshore banking institutions and instruments have come under increasing scrutiny by international bodies seeking to make international finance a more transparent system. Nauru, as a result, has been a casualty of this movement.

In December 1999, four major United States banks banned dollar transactions with four Pacific island states, including Nauru. The United States Department of State issued a report identifying Nauru as a major money laundering center, used by narcotics traffickers and organized crime figures.

## **Shifting governments**

The last few years has seen repeated changes of government. Nauru's unsettled political situation never led to civil disturbances; the transitions were always sanctioned by parliament and occurred peacefully.

President Bernard Dowiyogo took office in April 2000 for his fourth and, after a minimal hiatus, fifth stints as Nauru's top executive. Dowiyogo first served as president from 1976 to 1978. He returned to that office in 1989, and was re-elected in 1992. A vote in parliament, however, forced him to yield power to Kinza Clodumar in 1995. Dowiyogo regained the presidency when the Clodumar government fell in mid-1998.

In April 2000, René Harris, former chairman of the Nauru Phosphate Corporation, became president as he briefly assembled support in parliament. Harris' attempt to put together an administration lasted for only a few days of parliamentary maneuvering. In the end, Harris proved unable to secure parliament's confidence, and Dowiyogo returned yet again to the presidency by the end of the month.

Rene Harris was finally able to claim power as the president of Nauru in March 2001 when he was elected to the presidency by the parliament; his term was to last three years, presumably ending in 2004.

### **Environmental concerns**

Phosphate depletion will likely be one of the most important considerations for the government in the next few years as the supply is forecast to be exhausted by 2003. Since Nauru imports almost everything it consumes (including food, water and fuel) the need to diversify the economy and to generate other sources of revenue is of paramount importance.

As noted above, offshore banking has been one arena into which Nauru has traversed, however, the rewards are limited by growing concern about the ethical parameters of this business. Tourism is another industry that is also being gradually built.

Yet another concern is the ecological damage that resulted from a century of phosphate mining. Along with the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand were responsible for the large scale and indiscriminate mining of phosphate on the tiny island for most of the 20th century.

The mining left an ecological and economic disaster for Nauru to handle when the country achieved independence in 1968. Not only was the country's principal resource and employment generating activity almost entirely depleted by the rapid mining done by the three countries, the mining companies had also failed to

follow the basic principles of restoring and regenerating the lands where mining had been completed. Thus, Nauru was left to handle the immense and expensive task of restoring large chunks of land which were destroyed by the mining.

Nauru demanded compensation from the three nations, but was refused. Finally, in 1993, Nauru was forced to turn to the International Court of Justice at The Hague in The Netherlands. It filed a claim of \$73 million against the three countries. The case was soon afterwards settled out of court by Australia, with Britain and New Zealand also contributing to the reparations sought by Nauru.

Today, Nauru is almost totally dependent on trade with New Zealand, Australia and Fiji. Arable land is very limited as are all other natural resources, now that its long-time economic base of phosphate mines has been almost completely depleted.

## **Foreign policy**

On the international front, in late July 2002, Taiwan cut its diplomatic ties with Nauru. Taiwan and Nauru had shared diplomatic ties for 22 years; Taiwan has enjoyed diplomatic ties with several Pacific countries even in the face of the "One China policy" by Beijing. Nevertheless, this particular 22-year long legacy was broken when Nauru's president decided to change its allegiance and establish formal relations with China. The move effectively shifted diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing, thus angering the government of Taiwan, which described the shift in policy as "reckless."

Nauru's decision to recognize Beijing via the signing of diplomatic papers and a joint communique ultimately resulted in the cessation of Taiwanese aid. Nauru instead received a US\$150 million aid package from Beijing.

In April 2005, during a state visit to the Marshall Islands, ROC President Chen Shui-bian met and spoke with the Nauruan President Ludwig Scotty. On May 14, 2005, the two countries signed the necessary documents to restore formal ties

and reopen embassies.[6] The People's Republic of China consequently severed ties two weeks later on May 31.

## **Internal disputes**

In early 2003, a fight for power emerged between President Rene Harris and former President Bernard Dowiyogo. The power struggle occurred following a non-confidence vote in parliament, which effectively ejected Harris from the position of president. Reports suggested that Harris was ousted because of rising anxieties regarding economic mismanagement. At the time, Dowiyogo referred to Nauru's political scenario as being "critical."

It was reported that Dowiyogo became the president replacing Harris, however, information surrounding the shift in power was sparse. There was very little international coverage of the matter. Regardless, Dowiyogo's tenure did not last for long. In March 2003, Dowiyogo had heart surgery in the United States and died.

## **2003 - present**

In May 2003, elections were held within the parliament to select a new president. In those elections, Ludwig Scotty gained the most support and became the new president. The actual results of the parliamentary vote were as follows: Ludwig Scotty—10 parliamentary votes, Kinza Clodumar—7 parliamentary votes. President Scotty became president on May 29, 2003. He served only until August 2003 when he was ousted in a non-confidence measure. Rene Harris was elected as president.

Meanwhile, in parliamentary elections held in May 2003, Nauru First Party won 3 seats and independents garnered 15 in total.

In late June 2004, Nauru's former parliament speaker Ludwig Scotty became the country's new president. His presidency followed the exit of outgoing President Rene Harris following yet another non-confidence measure.

For his part, Scotty had resigned as parliamentary speaker in April 2004 in protest of the Nauru's financial crisis which included the commencement of receivership proceedings by corporate giant, General Electric. During that period, Nauru faced the seizure of its assets if the country failed to honor its debt payments.

Since Scotty's resignation as parliamentary speaker, the parliament was unable to convene as members of parliament could not decide whom to appoint as his replacement. The scenario led to a political crisis, the financial crisis notwithstanding.

In mid-2004, the government of Australia sent envoys to help Nauru deal with its financial crisis. By August 2004, a report by the Australian Center for Independent Studies suggested that Nauru might consider relinquishing its independent status in favor of becoming an Australian territory. The report called for radical economic reform as well as the restructuring of both governmental instruments and public service. The author of the report has offered Nauru economic advice in the past.

## **Executive branch**

Main office holders

<b>Office</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Party Since</b>
President of Nauru	Marcus Stephen	19 December 2007

The Parliament elects a president from amongst its members, who appoints a Cabinet of 5-6 people. The President is both the head of state and head of government.

A series of no-confidence votes, resignations and elections between 1999 and 2003 saw René Harris and Bernard Dowiyogo as President for numerous short periods during a period of political instability. Dowigoyo died in office on March 10, 2003, in Washington, D.C., after heart surgery. Ludwig Scotty was elected President on May 29, 2003, but this did not bring to an end the years of political uncertainty as he was replaced by Harris a few months later. Scotty regained the presidency in 2004, only to be ousted in a vote of no confidence in 2007.

## Legislative branch

Parliament has 18 members, elected for a three year term in multi-seat constituencies. Each constituency returns 2 members to the Nauruan Parliament, except for Ubenide which returns 4. Voting is compulsory for all citizens aged 20 or more.[edit] Political parties and elections

For other political parties see List of political parties in Nauru. An overview on elections and election results is included in Elections in Nauru.

Nauru does not have a formal structure for political parties; candidates typically stand as independents. 15 of the 18 members of the current parliament are independents, and alliances within the government are often formed on the basis of extended family ties.<sup>[3]</sup> Three parties that have been active in Nauruan politics are the Democratic Party, Nauru First and the Centre Party.

### Summary of the 19 June 2010 Parliament of Nauru election results

	Seats
Non-partisan followers of Marcus Stephen	9

Non-partisan opponents of Marcus Stephen	8
Independent	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>
Source: Australia Network News	

## Judicial branch

Nauru has a complex legal system. The Supreme Court, headed by the Chief Justice, is paramount on constitutional issues. Other cases can be appealed to the two-judge Appellate Court. Parliament cannot overturn court decisions, but Appellate Court rulings can be appealed to the High Court of Australia; in practice, this rarely happens. Lower courts consist of the District Court and the Family Court, both of which are headed by a Resident Magistrate, who also is the Registrar of the Supreme Court. Finally, there also are two quasi-courts: the Public Service Appeal Board and the Police Appeal Board, both of which are presided over by the Chief Justice.

## Local government

Since 1992, local government has been the responsibility of the Nauru Island Council (NIC). The NIC has limited powers and functions as an advisor to the national government on local matters. The role of the NIC is to concentrate its efforts on local activities relevant to Nauruans. An elected member of the Nauru Island Council cannot simultaneously be a member of parliament. Land tenure in Nauru is unusual: all Nauruans have certain rights to all land on the island, which is owned by individuals and family groups; government and corporate entities do

not own land and must enter into a lease arrangement with the landowners to use land. Non-Nauruans cannot own lands.

## Elections in Nauru

Nauru elects on national level a head of state - the president - and a legislature. **Parliament** has 18 members, elected for a three year term in multi-seat constituencies. The president is elected for a three year term by the parliament.

However, it must be added that there are frequent changes of government in Nauru which occur without an election; most recently, in December 2007, that of President of Nauru Marcus Stephen came to office following a Parliamentary vote of no confidence which overturned the preceding Administration of Ludwig Scotty, reelected just a few weeks previously with a landslide majority.

## Nauruan parliamentary election, June 2010

### Nauruan parliamentary election, June 2010

2010 (April)

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All 18 seats of the Parliament of Nauru

**19 June 2010**

	<b>First party</b>	<b>Second party</b>
<b>Leader</b>	Marcus Stephen	David Adeang



<b>Party</b>	Nonpartisan	Nonpartisan
<b>Leader's seat</b>	Anetan	Ubenide
<b>Last election</b>	9 seats	9 seats
<b>Seats won</b>	9	8
<b>Seat change</b>	±0	−1

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**Previous**  
 Marcus  
 Nonpartisan

**President**  
 Stephen

**President-designate**  
 TBD

Early **parliamentary elections** were held in Nauru on 19 June 2010 after the previous parliamentary election in April 2010 had resulted in a deadlock between government and opposition, tied at nine seats each. This led to an extended state of emergency in Nauru as a result of this election.

## Background

The election occurred during a state of emergency imposed by President of Nauru Marcus Stephen. Voters were given just one week's notice for the date of the election.

## Result

The result was no clear majority, meaning a hung parliament.

One MP belonging to the opposition lost the re-election, while all 17 others were re-elected. Independent MP Milton Dube holds the balance of power. The Nauru Parliament's two groups must compete for his support. Dube was elected in Aiwo constituency, unseating Dantes Tsitsi of the Opposition. The new MP declared himself independent, and stated he would support the side which would do the most for his constituency. He wants to reduce the levels of phosphate dust from a problematic drying plant. The MP in favour of government, Doctor Kieren Keke, plans to discuss the matter with Dube within a week of his election.<sup>[2]</sup> Parliament have scheduled a sitting on the Tuesday morning following the election.

Aloysius Amwano was successfully elected as speaker on 30 June 2010, but demanded that Stephen stand down as president. Stephen's followers agreed to this, but only if the new president came from their ranks, with their preferred nominee being Kieren Keke. However, there are two other contenders, Baron Waqa (the opposition leader) and Godfrey Thoma.

Rykers Solomon, an opposition MP, joined the government on 6 July 2010, but Amwano nonetheless refused to allow a motion to elect the president, suspending parliament until 8 July 2010. Amwano was then dismissed on 7 July 2010 by Stephen, but refused to quit. In a short parliamentary session held on 9 July 2010, Deputy Speaker Landon Deireragea announced that he had assumed the Speaker's position.

Following further disagreements, the president called a state of emergency.

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