

Initial indications are that the trend towards democracy will continue throughout Africa in 1996. Threshold elections will remain commonplace throughout the year, with 18 national elections scheduled as the electoral cycles begun in the early 1990's run their course. The process of deepening the entrenchment of democracy in these countries will likely also continue, albeit slowly. However, some disturbing incidents early in the new year, marked by two coups in West Africa and a third threatened, are worth watching.

Nigeria will continue to be the focus of considerable attention, particularly as the Commonwealth moves to bring the principles of the Millbrook Declaration to play in pressing reform on the military regime. In Bosnia and Gaza/West Bank, where elections have been made key elements of the peace processes being carefully implemented, the entrenchment of democratic principles will depend on the degree to which the peace processes in both areas can be sustained and the success or legitimacy of the electoral outcome. In the Americas strengthening the fragile democratic institutions throughout the region and consolidating the gains in Haiti will be a continuing preoccupation, particularly as the transition to the UNMIH follow-on mission is completed.