

GHANA

H.E. Flight-Lieutenant (ret'd) Jerry John Rawlings

President of the Republic of Ghana

President Rawlings was born in Dzelukope (Volta region) on June 22, 1947, to a Ghanaian mother and a Scottish father. Rawlings attended the prestigious Achimota School, graduating in 1966. He enlisted in the Ghana Armed Forces as a flight cadet in 1967, rising to the ranks of pilot officer (1969) and flight lieutenant (1978).

In 1979, Rawlings and several young military officers were arrested for a coup attempt. They were later forcibly released from detention and with popular support successfully overthrew the military government of the time. Following elections held a few months later, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) led by Rawlings turned over power to the new civilian government of President Hilla Limann. However, on December 31, 1981, Rawlings and many of his former AFRC colleagues staged a new coup, citing the widespread corruption and ineffectiveness of the Limann government.

Rawlings' Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) ruled until January 7, 1993, becoming Ghana's longest-serving government. The first years of PNDC rule saw the establishment of revolutionary organizations, which sought to protect workers' rights and root out corruption. In 1983, faced with economic difficulties, Rawlings' government agreed to implement a comprehensive Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) with International Monetary Fund/World Bank and other donor support. The SAP was successful in correcting many distortions in the Ghanaian economy and in producing solid economic growth for the country. Ghana's successful economic recovery contributed to Rawlings' landslide victory in the presidential elections on November 3, 1992. He received 58 per cent of the vote, while his nearest opponent received 30 per cent.