

## PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Polity5 regime codes:

fac	scode	polity	pers	bmon	bday	byear	emon	eday	eyear	exrec	exconst	polcomp
0a	PNG	4	37	9	16	1975	8	8	2012	7	5	4
0b	PNG	5	6	8	9	2012	99	99	9999	7	6	5

PITF Problem Events:

- 1) 05/89-05/97 (ETH 05/89-05/97)

**0a)** September 16, 1975 (independence) – Papua New Guinea achieved independence from Australia on September 16, 1975, having exercised limited self-rule since December 1, 1973. The Chief Minister during this period, Michael Somare, became Prime Minister upon independence. Although nominal party organizations have existed since the late 1960s, these have been loose networks of supporters centered on relatively prominent regional personalities, including the *Pangu Pati* formed by Somare in 1967. Politics in the years after independence have been characterized by weak party loyalties and high numbers of independents, frequent turnovers in elections of all but the most prominent leaders, unpredictable cross-over voting in parliament, fluid political alliances, very high numbers of candidates (e.g., 2370 candidates for 109 parliamentary seats in 1997 elections), increasing fragmentation of the party structure over time (e.g., there were 25 parties in parliament following 2002 elections with the largest party controlling only 19 seats), and generally low voter turnouts. With large numbers of candidates on the ballot, some candidates win election with as little as 7% of the popular vote in their constituency. The lack of cohesion and continuity in parliament has relegated policy initiative to the prime minister; however, the lack of political coherence and party discipline has severely limited government stability, program consistency, and policy effectiveness. Attempts by the government to stabilize party politics, such as the 2000 Political Party Integrity Bill, have been thwarted by the lack of a basic procedural consensus within the legislature. The conduct of elections, while regular and broadly contested, has been poorly organized and has not met basic standards of openness and fairness.

### **Ethnic War: May 1989 – May 1997**

The Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) launched attacks in May 1989 to end large-scale mining and gain independence for the island. A controversial decision to use mercenaries to regain government control on the island brought down the government in March 1997; the new government took a more conciliatory stance that led to a cessation of fighting in May 1997 and a permanent cease-fire agreement in January 1998. A peace agreement was signed on August 30, 2001, that established an autonomous administration on the island (inaugurated on June 15, 2005) with an option to hold a future referendum on independence.

**0b)** August 9, 2012 (unity government) – Institutionalized party politics in Papua New Guinea took a step forward following parliamentary elections held from June 23 through July 14, 2012. A leadership crisis that emerged on August 2, 2011, when parliament voted to declare the office of prime minister vacant due to the protracted illness of Sir Michael Somare appeared to have been resolved when it voted to replace him with Peter O'Neill. On July 24, 2012, Somare's National Alliance Party agreed to join a broad coalition with O'Neill's Peoples National Congress. O'Neill was elected prime minister unopposed on August 3 and a coalition government was formed on August 9, 2012