

Australia, New Zealand, or anybody else. The whole proposal was a fake, and I came to believe that the investors were simply after Tuvalu's Trust Fund."

Reference

Keith-Reid, Robert, and Samisoni Pareti. 2005. Tuvalu's Next Big Hope. *Islands Business*, August. Online at <http://www.islandsbusiness.com/archives>

WALLIS AND FUTUNA

On Sunday, 1 April 2007, the 11,165 registered voters in Wallis and Futuna elected the twenty members of the Territorial Assembly. Thirteen of the twenty incumbent assembly members were part of the national presidential majority lead by Ermenegilde Simete (Union pour un Mouvement Populaire [UMP], from Mua). The archipelago is divided into five electoral constituencies, with thirteen territorial representative seats for the three Wallisian districts (Mua, Hahake, and Hihifo), and seven seats for the two kingdoms of Futuna (Sigave and Alo). Twenty-six party lists were filed for these elections just before the proportional vote. Three women were listed at the head of their parties along with Victor Brial, the UMP territorial deputy.

An audiovisual campaign, monitored by the French media authority (Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel [CSA]), was broadcast by RFO (Réseau France Outre-mer) on both radio and television—the only media currently available there. This was the second

time this had occurred in Wallis and Futuna. Unfortunately, a breakdown in the aging plane that provides domestic flights for the two-hundred-thirty kilometer journey between Wallis and Futuna caused a problem for certain candidates in recording campaign messages.

While the health of the elderly lavelua (paramount chief, or king) remained precarious (see the account of the 2005 customary law crisis in Angleviel 2006), the question of his succession was not an issue in this campaign. The rate of voter participation, always very high, was 75 percent. Twenty of the twenty-six party lists obtained a seat. Seventeen incumbent representatives ran for reelection, and fourteen of them succeeded. Two women were voted into the new assembly with a five-year mandate. Ermenegilde Simete was reelected, despite being beaten by Donald Mercier (a candidate with Socialist leanings) in Mua. Simete won 481 votes, compared to his competitor's 392. UMP deputy Victor Brial came in first in the Sigave electorate with 309 votes. The departing UMP majority representatives were either directly reelected (as was the case for ten of them), or replaced by new representatives also favoring this majority.

Due to the wide range of voting possibilities, negotiations were held to strengthen the UMP majority. The UMP/consolidated right parties came out slightly ahead in the end, winning twelve seats to the Socialist/consolidated left's eight seats. On 11 April, Pesamino Taputai, a member of the UDF (Union pour la démocratie française)—MoDem (Mouvement

démocrate), a centralist party, became president of the Territorial Assembly, with Victor Brial elected vice president, and Ermenegilde Simete president of the permanent commission.

On 22 April 2007, 7,208 voters (64.5 percent) went to the polls for the French presidential elections, with the following results: Olivier Besancenot 71 votes (0.99 percent); Marie-George Buffet 40 votes (0.56 percent); Gérard Schivardi 15 votes (0.21 percent); François Bayrou 804 (11.20 percent); José Bove 41 votes (0.57 percent); Dominique Voynet 60 votes (0.84 percent); Philippe de Villiers 14 votes (0.20 percent); Ségolène Royal 2,832 votes (39.46 percent); Frédéric Nihous 25 votes (0.35 percent); Jean-Marie Le Pen 86 votes (1.20 percent); Arlette LaGuiller 63 votes (0.88 percent); and Nicolas Sarkozy 3,125 votes (43.55 percent).

Sixty-nine percent of Wallisians and Futunians turned out to vote during the second round of the presidential election on 6 May 2007; 3,866 voted for Nicolas Sarkozy (50.17 percent), while 3,840 voted for Ségolène Royal. There has been a clear shift in Wallis and Futuna toward the left, which may be due either to a change in attitude or to voters being weary of the principal local authorities, who have been in office for a long time.

The victory of the departing UMP deputy following the presidential elections seemed to be a foregone conclusion in June 2007. However, surprisingly, Victor Brial was beaten by Socialist Albert Likuvalu. This result was due to declining support for those in power too long (which is often a problem in small insular areas), as well as a combination of several other

factors: Likuvalu's strong support for the former lavelua during the 2005 customary law crisis, internal conflicts in the local UMP chapter, and private problems in Futuna.

The 2007 legislative elections were held on 10 and 17 June 2007. In the first round, Victor Brial received 2,624 votes (33.7 percent); Albert Likuvalu 2,424 votes (31.1 percent); Atonia Ilalio 973 votes (12.5 percent); Pesamino Taputai 661 votes (8.5 percent); and Ermenegilde Simete 1,101 votes (14.1 percent). The smaller parties then joined forces with the larger ones, as they usually do. Simete (UMP) and Taputai (UDF) from the territorial majority gave their support to Victor Brial and, once Atonio Ilalio, the third candidate, had been eliminated, he asked his supporters to vote for Likuvalu. In the meantime, Donald Mercier, though Socialist, stated prior to the first round that he would vote for Brial, asking his territorial voters to do the same.

In the second round on 17 June 2007, Likuvalu received 4,152 votes (51.79 percent), while Brial only received 3,865. It should be noted that in the first round the number of people voting by power of attorney was 20 percent, while the number of abstaining voters was 29.67 percent. In the second round, 27.50 percent abstained. Likuvalu, the new deputy, was born on 14 November 1943 in Alo. He was the first Wallisian to obtain a baccalaureate, and after earning a master's degree in geography from the University of Lyon, he became the first certified teacher in history-geography. His opposition party, Alliance d'opposition (opposing the UMP), was recently absorbed by the

local chapter of the national Socialist party (PS) to which he belongs. Victor Brial has appealed the results of the election.

In customary law matters, the Administrative Court of Mata'utu studied approximately fifty appeals presented by the leaders of Uvea on 12 March 2007. These were intended to render null and void the prefectorial decrees made by Xavier de Fürst, who represented the French State during the 2005 crisis. At that time the prefect had, among other things, published several decrees recognizing the customary law chiefs who were in favor of change. The court finally rendered null and void the decrees made by Fürst and ordered the State to pay damages to the territorial constituency of Uvea, or in other words, to the members of the lavelua's governing body. The court cited Article 3 of the 1961 statute that in part specifically "prohibits any involvement of the Republic's institutions in the operation of customary law institutions, and does not give any administrative authority either to the State or the territory in questions of customary law."

Lavelua Tomasi Kulimoetoke, king of Wallis since 1959 and father of six, died on 7 May 2007 at the age of eighty-eight. A six-month period of mourning was decreed and a new lavelua cannot be named until it is over. Some people have raised the possibility of amending customary law to replace the lavelua by the three district chiefs (faipule), thereby reinforcing their authority.

In military affairs, the French frigate *Jacques Cartier* arrived in Wallis on 5 May with a detachment of twenty naval infantrymen (Régiment

d'Infanterie de Marine du Pacifique [Nouvelle Calédonie] or RIMAP-NC) aboard. They were quartered in the village of Halalo, where they built a fale (traditional house) as part of their tour of duty.

The Wallisian and Futunian community in New Caledonia, numbering over 20,000 people, remains the archipelago's key link with the outside world. A special agreement among the State, New Caledonia, and the island territory of Wallis and Futuna, specified in Article 225 of the organic law dated 19 March 1999 affecting New Caledonia, was signed into law on 1 December 2003. This agreement formalized relations between Wallis and Futuna and New Caledonia. Articles 1 and 2 of the agreement concern the organization of services provided by the State, with the latter providing that services in New Caledonia and the island territory of Wallis and Futuna can be organized separately. A private civil aviation department specifically for Wallis and Futuna was therefore created by interministerial decree on 12 July 2006, fully independent of the one existing in New Caledonia. A defense ministry decree dated 22 November 2005 replaced a national police detachment stationed on the islands of Wallis and Futuna with a company, and increased the number of staff. The creation of the Department of Health and Social Services within the Work Inspection and Social Services Administration was formalized by a Territorial Assembly decree of 2 August 2006. This decree was necessary to better coordinate the territory's health and social policy.

Article 4 of the agreement allows for New Caledonia and the island

territory of Wallis and Futuna “to discuss (when necessary) subjects having an impact on the . . . expatriate community.” Periodic meetings take place between Wallis and Futuna’s Territorial Assembly president and the president of the government of New Caledonia, to discuss specific subjects.

On 1 September 2006, the City of Noumea’s Jeudi du Centre-Ville (Thursday evening open air market) was dedicated to Wallis and Futuna and its expatriate community. On 13 September 2006, the Territorial Advisory board for the women of Wallis and Futuna put on an exhibit of Wallisian and Futunian arts and crafts

in Noumea. Following sixteen months of construction, the Wallisian and Futunian community of Vallon-Dore inaugurated a new church dedicated to St Theresa on 24 September 2006. Aloisio Vaitulukina, president of the kingdom of Sagave’s expatriate community since 1994, died on 12 June 2007 at the age of seventy-one.

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Reference

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