

## Politics

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Until 1990, the Mongolian Government was modeled on the Soviet system; only the communist party--the MPRP--officially was permitted to function. After some instability during the first two decades of communist rule in Mongolia, there was no significant popular unrest until December 1989. Collectivization of animal husbandry, introduction of agriculture, and the extension of fixed abodes were all carried out without perceptible popular opposition.

The birth of perestroika in the former Soviet Union and the democracy movement in eastern Europe were mirrored in Mongolia. The dramatic shift toward reform started in early 1990 when the first organized opposition group, the Mongolian Democratic Union, appeared. In the face of extended street protests in subzero weather and popular demands for faster reform, the politburo of the MPRP resigned in March 1990. In May, the constitution was amended, deleting reference to the MPRP's role as the guiding force in the country, legalizing opposition parties, creating a standing legislative body, and establishing the office of president.

Mongolia's first multi-party elections for a People's Great Hural were held on 29 July 1990. The MPRP won 85% of the seats. The People's Great Hural first met on 3 September and elected a president (MPRP), vice president (SDP--Social Democrats), prime minister (MPRP), and 50 members to the Baga Hural (small Hural). The vice president also was chairman of the Baga Hural. In November 1991, the People's Great Hural began discussion on a new constitution, which entered into force February 12. In addition to establishing Mongolia as an independent, sovereign republic and guaranteeing a number of rights and freedoms, the new constitution restructured the legislative branch of government, creating a unicameral legislature, the State Great Hural (SGH).

The 1992 constitution provided that the president would be elected by popular vote rather than by the legislature as before. In June 1993, incumbent Punsalmaagiyn Ochirbat won the first popular presidential election running as the candidate of the democratic opposition.

As the supreme government organ, the SGH is empowered to enact and amend laws, determine domestic and foreign policy, ratify international agreements, and declare a state of emergency. The SGH meets semiannually. SGH members elect a chairman and vice chairman who serve 4-year terms. SGH members are popularly elected by district for 4-year terms.

Until June 27, 2004, the predominant party in Mongolia was the ex-communist party Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party or MPRP, which was formed by Mongolia's communist leaders after the end of the Cold War. The main opposition party was the Democratic Party or DP, which controlled a governing coalition from 1996 to 2000.

From 2000 to 2004 MPRP was back in power, but results of the 2004 elections required the establishing of the first ever coalition government in Mongolia between the MPRP and MDC (Motherland Democratic Coalition).

Mongolia uses a parliamentary system where the president has a symbolic role and the "government" chosen by the legislature is the executive power. The legislative power State Great Khural, has one chamber with 76 seats and is chaired by the speaker of the house.

On January 13, 2006 the parliament's 39 members, mostly MPRP but including four Democratic Party members Mendsaikhan Enkhsaikhan, Janlavyn Narantsatsralt, Mishig Sonompil, Jamiyandorj Batkhuyag, overthrew democrat Tsakhiagiyn Elbegdorj's grand coalition government violating the Constitution as it exceeded its power. This was based on the MPRP Directing Board's decision which violates its three agreements with the Democratic Party. Mongolians made strong protests against the MPRP and the Parliament's decision to overthrow Elbegdorj's Government almost over four months. MPRP did not have enough reason to overthrow Elbegdorj's government. However, the event immediately followed the arrest of Mongolia's Customs Chairman Baatar on spot of corruption. Baatar claimed his key ties are MPRP leaders according to Mongolian newspapers.

Three of the four DP MPs who violated its own party decision were rewarded with positions in the new MPRP government, at the price of getting expelled from the DP afterwards. Chairman of MPRP Miyegombo Enkhbold became the new prime minister on January 26th. The power shift triggered strong protests against the MPRP by several civil and political organisations.

In February 2006, MP Tsogtyn Bataa changed sides from the Motherland Party to the MRPR, giving the latter exactly 50% of the seats.

In April 2006, Tsakhiagiyn Elbegdorj was elected as a Democratic Party chairman by the two step elections of the party.

## The situation today

Mongolia has had a comparatively successful transition to parliamentary democracy. Successive Governments have been chosen through elections that reflect the will of the people, and the transition from one government to the next has taken place in a largely positive and cooperative atmosphere.

Mongolia has also begun to break out of the political and economic isolation that characterized its modern history from the 1920s to the 1990s, this is largely caused by a new, young generation of Mongolians, which has tasted the rewards of democracy and the opportunity presented by a market economy, and are moving into positions of influence and power within the Mongolian economy. Their outlook on the world and Mongolia's place in it is markedly different than that of their parents and grandparents.

Political Stability (percentage Rank 1-100)

Source: the CIA World

## Factbook

Mongolia, today, is "on the march" not only at home, but also on the international scene. Mongolia redefined its vital national security and foreign policy priorities and concepts in a new 1992 Constitution and in a 1994 national security and foreign policy document. Defined as an "open and non-aligned" policy, Mongolia declared it would safeguard its independence and security primarily by political and diplomatic means and by striving to create an external environment that was favourable for its economic, scientific and technological development.

Mongolia's national security and foreign policy is premised on peaceful and friendly relations with its immediate neighbours, partnerships with "third neighbours," and integration into existing, and new, regional and international organizations.

In the past three years alone, Mongolia has become a "partner" of the Organization of Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and an "observer" in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Mongolia joined the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Asia-Pacific's sole government-level regional security organization, in 1998 and the World Trade Organization in 1997. Mongolia has expressed interest in joining other regional forums such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation organization (APEC) and in the NATO's Partnership for Peace. Mongolia seeks to play a leading role in Northeast Asia, either by joining existing, or creating new, Northeast Asian organizations that will link the economies of the region to each other, and to the rest of the world.

Mongolia is one of the few functioning democracies in North East and Central Asia; as such, it serves as a model for other post-communist and post-authoritarian societies still striving to democratize.

## The MPRP

The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (Mongolian: Mongol Ardyn Khuv'sgalt Nam, >=3>; @4K= %C2LA30;B 0<) is an ex-communist political party in Mongolia. The party is abbreviated MPRP in English and MAKN in the transliterated Mongolian form. The transliteration MAKN is also the Mongolian word for "meat," the staple of the Mongolian diet. Because of this the MPRP is often referred to as the "meat" party.

The MPRP was the ruling party of the People's Republic of Mongolia from 1921 until 1996 (with no other political parties allowed until 1990) and from 2000 until 2004. The current President, Natsagiyn Bagabandi, is a member of the party. As of January 2006, the party holds exactly half of the 76 seats in the State Great Hural, and has nominated former mayor of Ulan Bator, Miyeegombo Enkhbold as party leader and prime minister.

The party was established on March 1, 1921, and is claimed to have been the first real political party in Mongolia. It was originally known simply as the Mongolian People's Party, but added the word "Revolutionary" at a conference in 1924. The organizational structure was modeled closely on that of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which the party followed closely.

The early days of the party were marked with considerable controversy, often related to Mongolia's relationship to the Soviet Union; eventually, the pro-Soviet faction was triumphant, and more independent-minded leaders such as Dagsomyn Bodoog and Peljidiyn Genden were either sidelined or executed. Genden's fall resulted in the rise of Horloogiyn Choybalsan, who was a strong follower of Joseph Stalin and is generally regarded as the most brutal of the communist-era leaders. Many members of the party were purged during this period, primarily supporters of Genden's faction.

Choybalsan was followed by Yumjaagiyn Tsendenbal, who was Prime Minister of Mongolia for twenty-two years (the longest time served by any Prime Minister). Tsendenbal was considerably more moderate than Choybalsan, and implemented policies similar to those of new Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.

In the 1990s, Mongolia began to modernize its political system, implementing many of the reforms seen in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the People's Revolutionary Party remained in office until 1996, when the Mongolian Democratic Union won power.

Under the leadership of Nambaryn Enkhbayar, the party modernized its image of corruption and appeared to shed many of the legacies of communism. Today, the party portrays itself as a social democratic organization, and its leader claims to be an admirer of Britain's Tony Blair. Based on this image, it won a landslide victory in the 2000 elections.

Critics of the party, however, allege that its "reform" was illusionary, and that the party's success was the result of better public relations rather than any real change. In particular, the party's critics have alleged that the People's Revolutionary Party sought to acquire and censor television and print media, and there were claims of opposition journalists being imprisoned. A number of prominent government opponents, such as General Baatar (former Head of Mongolia's Intelligence Agency), L. Gundalai (an MP), and B. Batbayar (a former Finance Minister), were arrested and jailed during 2000-2004 for their political views when Nambaryn Enkhbayar's Government solely controlled the country.

The elections of June 27, 2004, in which Mongolians voted in record numbers, saw a major defeat for the People's Revolutionary Party, which lost a total of 35 seats (47% of what it had previously held). Elections irregularities became common in Mongolia where General Elections Committee consists of only MPRP members except one. Elections tricks, cheating and several reelections on the constituencies where MPRP didn't win were redone at the request of MPRP and brought those seats to MPRP against voters protests widely reported. Still after these, Mongolian democratic parties won half of the seats at the Parliament and a power-sharing agreement was put in place between the MPRP and its opponent Democratic Party from August 2004. As part of the terms of the power-sharing agreement, the MPRP would regain the Prime Ministership in August 2006 after a term in office by Tsakhiagiyn Elbegdorj of the Democratic Party. However, MPRP violated its three contracts with Democratic Party and its dominating parliament illegally overthrew Elbegdorj's Government violating Mongolia's Constitution's Article 25, Paragraph 1-6 on January 13, 2006.

MPRP Directing Board made the decision to overthrow democrat Tsakhiagiyn Elbegdorj's Government, a day after MPRP leaders met with MPRP appointed Customs Chairman Kh. Baatar who was arrested with other Customs officials on spot of corruption and who claimed that the MPRP leaders are his key ties in the corruption network. Also the decision was coincided with the beginning of the financial investigation at various funds of Ulaanbaatar City. Land related corruption scandal over the MPRP appointed city officials upheaved in recent years. MPRP's high ranking officials are deeply involved in corruption. Mayor of Ulaanbaatar City (1998-2005) and MPRP chairman Miyegombo Enkhbold became the prime minister on January 25, 2006 after overthrowing Elbegdorj's government which was fighting against corruption. Many Mongolians have protested strongly against the MPRP's decision to overthrow Elbegdorj's Government. The MPRP established a government named as "Government of National Unity", a label first applied by Nelson Mandela's 1994 post-apartheid government.

## The Democratic Party

The Democratic Party (Ardchilsan Nam) is the second political party in Mongolia. At the last legislative elections, 27 June and 17 July 2004, the party was a constituent part of the Motherland Democracy alliance (Ech Oron-Ardchilan) that won 44.7 % of the popular vote and 34 out of 76 seats. Its leader Tsakhiagiyn Elbegdorj became the prime minister. In the presidential elections of 20 May 2005, its candidate Mendsayhany Enkhsaikhan won only 19.7 %.

On April 1, 2006, Democratic Party members who participated in the party convention elected Tsakhiagiyn Elbegdorj as a leader/chairman of Democratic Party. Four candidates ran for the elections and in the first round, Tsakhiagiyn Elbegdorj won 46%, Erdeniin Bat-Uul won 40% and two other candidates won the rest. Since none of the four candidates won more than 50%, there was the second round of the elections according to the party rule, and the highest scored candidates who are coincidentally two of the thirteen Mongolian democracy fathers Tsakhiagiyn Elbegdorj and Erdeniin Bat-Uul ran and Tsakhiagiyn Elbegdorj won with 57.2% vote according to Mongolia Web.