

African Democracy Simulation

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In this simulation, students will study the politics around an upcoming election in the fictional African country of Mambia. In different groups, students will study the perspectives of and represent one of seven community organizations in a national meeting. In this meeting, students must develop collective goals for Mambia's civil society for responding to the growing authoritarianism of the incumbent leader, President Jones.

The overall goal as a participant in the meeting is to help influence the collective group to choose political demands and strategies that best serve the interests of the assigned organization.

Simulation Procedure

1. Each student should receive a copy of the Background Information handout and read and annotate the document.
2. The teacher should assign students to one of the seven community organizations:
 - **Mambian Human Rights League** – Coalition of ten human rights groups, including women's and journalists associations
 - **Christian Council of Mambia** – National organization that brings together leaders of the Catholic, Anglican, and Pentecostal churches
 - **Mambian Muslim Council** – Group of Muslim community leaders, primarily from the Hima ethnic group
 - **Business Alliance of Mambia** – Association of business leaders, including mining and petroleum interests
 - **Mambian Youth Alliance** – Group representing Mambia's large youth population
 - **Bundu People's Association** – Group representing the interests of the Bundu majority ethnic group
 - **Association of Mambian Minorities** – Group representing the interests of the Hima and Lombo groups.
3. Each student should receive a copy of the handout on their assigned community organization. Depending on class time, the teacher may require students to research information about different international agreements on topics such as human rights, environmental regulations, economic development, etc. Alternatively, the teacher may provide each group with additional information that might help them formulate and justify their demands, such as the [UN's Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights](#) or the [UN's Paris Agreement](#) on combatting climate change.

- Students representing each community organization should meet together for an allotted time to review their assigned perspective and read through and annotate the explanatory handout. Students should be able to paraphrase the demands of their group and be comfortable defending the position in a class-wide discussion. Students should use a graphic organizer to list the demands they think their assigned organization would want and the justifications for each. The teacher should draw the graphic organizer on the board and have students copy it on their handout. The teacher should provide an example of how to complete the graphic organizer by asking for volunteers from 1-2 different groups to suggest a potential demand and justification. Alternatively, a sample demand for each group could be provided by the teacher depending on the grade and skill levels of the students. It might also be helpful to provide students with sentence starters for the justification statements. A sample graphic organizer by representatives of the Mambian Human Rights League is included here. This exercise encourages students to conduct higher level thinking by going beyond the text itself and understand why a given demand is important. This helps students prepare for the class-wide discussion where they have to justify to the other community organizations why their demand(s) is important and relevant to all the represented groups.

Mambian Human Rights League Graphic Organizer

Demands	Justifications
1. Restore freedom of the press.	1. Without freedom of the press, issues of political corruption and human rights abuses cannot be effectively communicated to the public and fought against.
2. Reinstate term limits.	2. Term limits are an important for preventing authorities and unfair seizure of political and military control.

- Once students have met with the other members of their assigned community organization, the teacher should announce a period of time for informal discussion among the different groups. The teacher should explain the types of questions different groups should ask each other (e.g., What is the number one priority for your organization? Why?; Would you agree with strict term limits? Why or why not?) and allot a specific time period for discussion. This allows members of the various groups to have time to mingle and discuss informally prior to calling the national meeting to order. In order to track this time, teachers may require students to submit 2-3 sentences about each discussion they had with another group.
- Once the teacher calls the national meeting to order, the first task of the civil society meeting is to elect a chairperson, who will then chair the meeting. The chairperson should be another student who promises to lead the meeting in a respectful and conscientious matter. The chairperson is also responsible for keeping the meeting on track and on time.
- The chairperson leads the collective group in addressing the second task—establishing a set of demands to present to current President Jones and his administration. The group should try to come as close to consensus as possible, which will require discussion and compromise, though in the end, some issues may have to be put up for a vote. For this simulation, a simple majority (over 50%) is required to approve a demand.

8. Once the group has come to agreement on a set of demands, the group needs to decide on a strategy. The moderator should list the possibilities for specific action:
 - Court challenge – bring cases in the courts to issues such as President Jones’ seeking re-election or to demand Dave Davis’s release from prison;
 - Social media campaign – Use Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp to challenge the regime and its policies;
 - Protest – organize a public demonstration to show popular opposition to the regime;
 - Walk to work campaign – a protest that involves showing opposition by walking to work rather than driving or taking public transportation, thereby slowing economic activity;
 - General strike – encouraging people to shut down the city for a day by staying home from work;
 - International appeals – call on the international community to do such things as condemn the Jones administration, put restrictions on administration travel, and freeze the bank accounts of administration officials and members of the Jones family.

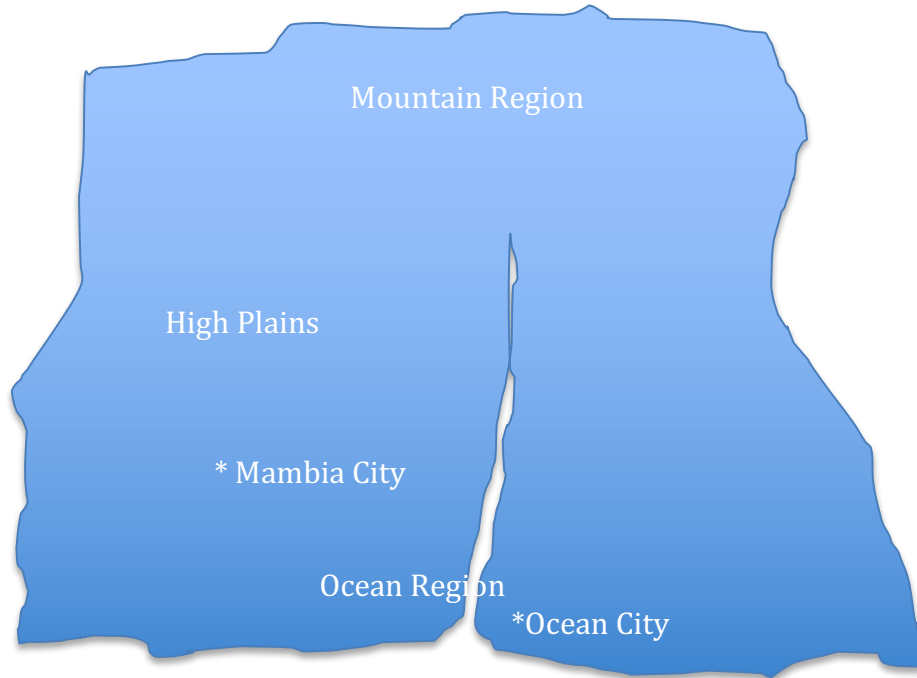
9. While the group is debating appropriate ways to promote their agenda, the moderator should announce that news has come that Party of Change leader Sara Simon has been arrested on charges of corruption while she was vice-president. With this new information, the group may edit their demands or their strategy once more.

10. Once the group has come to agreement on their demands and the strategy, the simulation can be brought to an end by the chairperson announcing the close of a successful meeting. After the simulation, students should reflect on the experience in a response paper addressing whether or not their community organization was satisfied with the demands and strategy agreed upon.

Background Information

Directions: You are now a citizen of the fictional African country of Mambia. Read through and annotate this document, which contains basic information on Mambia and its current political climate. As you read, be sure to underline any important facts and make notes in the margin as necessary. Circle any words or phrases that you do not know or that seem confusing.

Map of Mambia



Mambia Basic Facts

- Population: 20 million
- Major Ethnic Groups: Bundu (12 million, majority Christian), Hima (7 million, mostly Muslim), Lombo (1 million)
- Economic Activities: Food crops (65% of GDP – bananas, maize, vegetables); Export crops (20% of GDP – tea, palm oil); copper (10% of GDP); fishing (5% of GDP)
- Largest cities: The Capital: Mambia City (2 million), Ocean City (1 million)
- Religious demography: Christian (60%), Muslim (35%), Indigenous Religion (5%)

Recent Election Results

	2003	2008	2013
Party of the President (POP)	55%	64%	78%
Mambia People's Party (MPP)	45%	36%	22%



Background

Mambia is an African country of 20 million people. The geography ranges from a coastal lowland area, home to the minority Hima people, to a broad fertile plain where the majority Bundu people live to a mountainous borderland, sparsely populated by the small Lombo group. The economy is largely dependent on agriculture, though a small amount of copper is mined in the mountain region. Petroleum has recently been discovered just off the coast, though it has not yet been exploited.

Mambia gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1960 and for the next two decades changed back and forth between civilian and military rule. In 1980, military leader General **Abdul Adams**, a Hima, seized control in a bloody coup in which he executed the sitting civilian president and two of his military predecessors. He then exercised brutal control over Mambia until the early 2000s, when a pro-democracy movement emerged to push for a return to civilian rule. After two years of protests that continued to grow despite mass arrests, President Adams agreed to step down. In 2003, a new constitution was adopted and, in a presidential election, **Jacob Jones**, a newspaper editor from the Bundu group who had been imprisoned by President Adams, won a majority as leader of the Party of the People (POP) against **Dave Davis**, a labor activist from the Hima group and his **Mambia People's Party** (MPP).

For most of his first two terms, President Jones was relatively popular, as he focused on increasing access to education. But the economy remained stagnant, and as Jones faced increasing criticism, he reacted with increasing repression, banning some newspapers and human rights organizations. In 2012, parliament passed a constitutional amendment that eliminated term limits, allowing Jones to run for president again. In the 2013 election, the MPP faced limits on its ability to campaign. After the results showed a huge win for the POP, Davis and the MPP protested against electoral fraud. A few months later, Davis was arrested on charges of corruption, while parliament voted to ban the MPP, accusing the party of promoting social division because it draws support mostly from Hima. Davis was found guilty and remains in jail today. Since banning the MPP, President Jones has become increasingly autocratic, even changing the name of his party to the **Party of the President**. Parliament has passed a controversial law requiring media outlets and civil society groups to meet strict registration requirements, and some critics of the regime have since been denied registration. A faction of the POP has broken off under the leadership of former Vice-President **Sara Simon**, herself a Bundu, to oppose President Jones' growing authoritarianism. Simon founded the **Party of Change** (POC) that is now seeking to register as a new political party, but so far the Electoral Commission has not issued a registration.

The Challenge

New elections are scheduled for 2018. President Jones has not yet announced whether he plans to seek reelection, but it is rumored that he will announce his candidacy next week. A group of organizations has called a meeting to plan a coordinated response. The participants include:

- **Mambian Human Rights League** – Coalition of ten human rights groups, including women's and journalists associations;
- **Christian Council of Mambia** – National organization that brings together leaders of the Catholic, Anglican, and Pentecostal churches;
- **Mambian Muslim Council** – Group of Muslim community leaders, primarily from the Hima ethnic group;
- **Business Alliance of Mambia** – Association of business leaders, including mining and petroleum interests;
- **Mambian Youth Alliance** – Group representing Mambia's large youth population;
- **Bundu People's Association** – Group representing the interests of the Bundu majority ethnic group;
- **Association of Mambian Minorities** – Group representing the interests of the Hima and Lombo groups.


Today's meeting has been called to develop collective goals for Mambia's civil society for responding to the growing authoritarianism of President Jones. The first specific task is to elect a chairperson for the collective. The next task is to develop an agenda of demands. **Your overall goal as a participant in the meeting is to help influence the group to choose demands and methods that best serves the interests of your group.**

Mambian Human Rights League

Directions: As a member of this community organization, you are responsible for representing the perspective and demands of your group in the national meeting. Read through the following information, annotating the text when you find information relating to a potential demand your group might want to make. Keep in mind the following questions: What does your organization want? What demands do you think would be accepted by others at the national meeting?

Based on this information, complete the graphic organizer with a list of demands and justifications for those demands. Number each demand in the order of its importance (e.g., 1 being the most important demand, 2 being the second most important, and so on).

Make Notes Here



You represent a coalition of Mambia's ten most important human rights groups. Your coalition includes several well-established human rights organizations that were created in the struggle for democracy back in the 1990s as well as a powerful women's rights group and an association of journalists fighting for press freedom. Your coalition is multi-ethnic, non-sectarian, and non-partisan, which means that you do not care which political party governs or from what ethnic or religious group the country's leaders come.

Your coalition strongly supports efforts to promote rule of law, and you are worried about the growing personalization of power and arbitrary rule under President Jones. Your members were among the first to criticize President Jones when he began to limit rights, and you were particularly bothered by the decision to change the constitution to allow President Jones to run again. The immediate release of Dave Davis and legalization of the MPP are important demands. You have tried to fight these actions in the courts, and you have traditionally supported using the courts to fight for rights. You strongly believe that President Jones must not run for office again and that electoral rules need to be changed to allow free and fair elections in 2018. You are open to any political strategies that will maintain order and promote human rights.

Christian Council of Mambia

Directions: As a member of this community organization, you are responsible for representing the perspective and demands of your group in the national meeting. Read through the following information, annotating the text when you find information relating to a potential demand your group might want to make. Keep in mind the following questions: What does your organization want? What demands do you think would be accepted by others at the national meeting?

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Mambia is a majority Christian country, with at least 60% of the population members of Christian churches. Your group includes people from all ethnic groups and political parties, although most Christians are Bundu, since only a minority of Hima are Christian. Nearly all Lombo are Christian as well, and your group has long promoted the interests of the minority Lombo people. The Christian Council of Mambia (CCM) was formed by leaders of the Catholic, Anglican, and Pentecostal churches in the 1990s to oppose the authoritarian rule of President Abdul Adams, who was a Muslim. The CCM called for Adams to respect human rights and to organize free and fair elections. After the election of President Jones, the CCM became much less active, but the CCM still plays an important role in conducting civic education and providing monitors each election cycle.

The CCM began to become more outspoken again after the controversial 2013 election. You believe that protection of human rights is important and that elections should be free and fair, but your group is particularly concerned that President Jones' policies are dividing the country along ethnic and religious lines. You believe that violence must be avoided, since it affects the most vulnerable in the society most. You are wary about more radical approaches that might lead to violence. All of your churches have strong international ties, and you support calling on the international community to place pressure on President Jones to hold free elections.

Mambian Muslim Council

Directions: As a member of this community organization, you are responsible for representing the perspective and demands of your group in the national meeting. Read through the following information, annotating the text when you find information relating to a potential demand your group might want to make. Keep in mind the following questions: What does your organization want? What demands do you think would be accepted by others at the national meeting?

Based on this information, complete the graphic organizer with a list of demands and justifications for those demands. Number each demand in the order of its importance (e.g., 1 being the most important demand, 2 being the second most important, and so on).

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Muslims make up just over one third of Mambia's population, but they are heavily concentrated in the Coastal Region. About 90% of the Hima population is Muslim, while less than 6% of the Bundu and only a tiny percentage of the Lombo are Muslim. Mambia's Muslim population is comparatively prosperous, with many Muslims involved in business and trade. Nevertheless, Muslims in Mambia face discrimination, not only because they are a minority but also because the brutality of President Adams was himself a Muslim and made many of Mambia's non-Muslims suspicious of Muslim leadership. In reality, Adams targeted Muslims as well as non-Muslims for his brutality, but many in Mambia are unaware of this fact.


Your group, the Muslim Council was founded just over a decade ago to push for the rights of Mambia's Muslims. The Muslim community was among the first critics of President Jones, because of his failure to appoint Muslims to prominent positions in his administration. Your group is made up of business people and other Muslim leaders, including youth leaders. The Council supports electoral reforms, such as a shift to proportional representation for parliament and greater regional autonomy that would allow more Muslims to win office. Many young Muslims have called for public protests against the Jones regime, though your group's membership includes more older Muslims who support fairly moderate approaches than young radicals.

Business Alliance of Mambia

Directions: As a member of this community organization, you are responsible for representing the perspective and demands of your group in the national meeting. Read through the following information, annotating the text when you find information relating to a potential demand your group might want to make. Keep in mind the following questions: What does your organization want? What demands do you think would be accepted by others at the national meeting?

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You are a leader of the Business Alliance, a group that includes representatives of Mambia's major economic sectors, including retail, agricultural export, mining, and petroleum industries. Many of your members are part of Mambia's business elite who have close ties to the Jones administration. These business leaders have been reluctant to criticize the president. Nevertheless, some worry that his growing authoritarianism will lead to instability that could undermine the economy. In addition, many in the Business Alliance are Muslim, so the Alliance has tended to support rights for Muslims.

Your group is very suspicious of protests and other strategies that might lead to instability. You support more incremental reforms. You worry in particular about undermining Mambia's international reputation, since it might affect international investment. At the same time, you worry that President Jones' policies are themselves tarnishing Mambia's international image, so you are willing to discuss possibilities for change, as long as they are not too radical.

Mambian Youth Alliance

Directions: As a member of this community organization, you are responsible for representing the perspective and demands of your group in the national meeting. Read through the following information, annotating the text when you find information relating to a potential demand your group might want to make. Keep in mind the following questions: What does your organization want? What demands do you think would be accepted by others at the national meeting?

Based on this information, complete the graphic organizer with a list of demands and justifications for those demands. Number each demand in the order of its importance (e.g., 1 being the most important demand, 2 being the second most important, and so on).

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You are a leader of the Mambian Youth Alliance (MYA), a relatively new group, founded only in 2013 to push for major changes in Mambian politics and society. The MYA is strongly committed to ethnic and religious inclusiveness and supports a more open political system that protects individual rights. You insist that President Jones must not seek re-election and are pushing for serious electoral reforms. You are also strong supporters of environmental protection and minority rights.

Since its foundation, your group has deftly used social media to organize protests against various human rights violations by the Jones regime. They are now calling for an all-out campaign to force President Jones from office. They support actions that would shut down commercial activities, such as a general strike, in which citizens would stay home from work for a day, or a walk to work campaign, in which people would show their opposition to the government – and slow down economic activity – by walking to work rather than driving or taking public transportation.

Bundu People's Association

Directions: As a member of this community organization, you are responsible for representing the perspective and demands of your group in the national meeting. Read through the following information, annotating the text when you find information relating to a potential demand your group might want to make. Keep in mind the following questions: What does your organization want? What demands do you think would be accepted by others at the national meeting?

Based on this information, complete the graphic organizer with a list of demands and justifications for those demands. Number each demand in the order of its importance (e.g., 1 being the most important demand, 2 being the second most important, and so on).

Make Notes Here



The Bundu are the majority ethnic group in Mambia. They live primarily in the Plains Region and make up over 90% of the population of the capital, Mambia City. Your group, the Bundu People's Association, is among the oldest civil society groups, having been formed in the colonial period to support Bundu interests in the independence process. The majority of Mambia's presidents have come from the Bundu group. The Bundu have voted overwhelmingly for President Jones, and many were suspicious of Dave Davis, because he comes from the Hima group and his MPP party got most of its support from the Hima. Since Sara Simon herself comes from the Bundu group, some Bundu who have been bothered by President Jones' authoritarianism have been willing to support her and her Party of Change.


Your group has gradually moved away from unquestioning support of President Jones, and you now support calls for stronger human rights protections and better elections. But you also are worried about radical changes and are opposed to public protests. You seek to ensure that any reforms do not undermine the Bundu's political power. However, your group does support the registration of Davis' POC, and some of your group members think that Jones should not run for election again.

Association of Mambian Minorities

Directions: As a member of this community organization, you are responsible for representing the perspective and demands of your group in the national meeting. Read through the following information, annotating the text when you find information relating to a potential demand your group might want to make. Keep in mind the following questions: What does your organization want? What demands do you think would be accepted by others at the national meeting?

Based on this information, complete the graphic organizer with a list of demands and justifications for those demands. Number each demand in the order of its importance (e.g., 1 being the most important demand, 2 being the second most important, and so on).

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The Association of Mambian Minorities (AMM) brings together several groups that represent the interests of the Hima and Lombo minority ethnic groups. Your group has been among the strongest critics of the Jones regime, because of its discriminatory policies against the country's ethnic minorities. Your Hima members view the arrest of Dave Davis and the banning of the MPP as a direct attack on them. Your Lombo members complain that Jones has allowed copper mining companies to ignore environmental standards in the Lombo mountain homeland, while providing almost no financial benefit to the Lombo.

The AMM is in favor of far-reaching reforms. You want President Jones to step down and not seek re-election. You want the MPP legalized and its leader Davis released from prison. You support reforms that would allow Hima and Lombo to have greater political representation, like proportional voting for parliament and greater regional autonomy. You support environmental protections for the Lombo mountains and want to guarantee that the Hima coast is protected and the Hima people properly compensated when petroleum exploitation begins.