



## EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

In June, Iran elected a new President. After two terms in office, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was not permitted to stand again. On the face of it, the transfer of power took place in accordance with democratic principles: Ahmadinejad accepted the constitution or at least submitted to the will of the Guardian Council, which did not consider changing the constitution to his benefit. And his successor, Hasan Rouhani, is indeed the candidate who drew most of the votes. Furthermore, Rouhani had expressed some criticism of the status quo during the election campaign and announced changes, as Christian Funke illustrates by numerous examples in this issue.

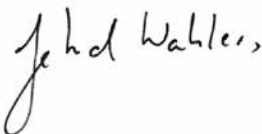
Elections were also recently held in another Muslim country. In May, parliamentary elections took place in Pakistan. In their article Jakob Rösel and Pierre Gottschlich highlight the following: "A democratically legitimate, civilian government took over following a full legislative period through largely free and fair elections for the first time since Pakistan's independence in 1947. Such a conventional, peaceful power shift under the rules of a parliamentary democracy is a completely new experience for Pakistan." Do the course the elections took in Iran and Pakistan and their results then mean that democratic conditions have become established in the two countries?

Presumably it is true that no one was prevented from casting their vote in Iran, and Rouhani was not the preferred choice of the Guardian Council. However, the candidates were handpicked by the regime. While some presidential candidates did voice criticism of the status quo, those potential candidates who were rightly known as reformers were not allowed to stand. The leaders of the "Green Movement" from 2009 are still under house arrest today.

Events in Egypt have demonstrated that it is too early to celebrate democratic progress when one election has proceeded successfully and in line with international standards. Last year, the Muslim Brotherhood came to power as a result of largely free and fair elections. In line with

the “winner takes all” principle, the immediate action the Muslim Brotherhood took was first and foremost aimed at shoring up its own power rather than addressing the country’s problems. The protection of minorities and tolerance towards dissenting ideas were no longer of importance. As the Muslim Brothers impinged as well on the interests of the military and the old power elite, their attempts to reshape the Egyptian state according to their religiously motivated political ideas failed. Today, Egypt is divided. There is serious unrest and it remains uncertain as to whether the country’s current course will lead to a democratic future.

In and of itself an examination of the course of the election campaign and the elections as well as the final official results does not provide much insight into the democratic development of a country. Other elements must be in place before one can speak of a democracy and a liberal state. People need freedom of association to form political parties and assert their rights without having to fear for their lives and liberty. Minorities need to be protected, because even if parties gain clear majorities through free elections they must always respect the rights and interests of those they defeated. Free media are necessary to monitor those in government and inform the public of their activities. Procedures of law and order must be available to guarantee civil rights and encourage businesses to engage in economic activity by providing minimum standards of legal security. Finally, safeguards must be in place to ensure that these rights do not merely exist on paper, but are enforceable as well. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung is active in all areas involved in democracy and the rule of law. And we do not leave once the elections are over.



Dr. Gerhard Wahlers  
Deputy Secretary General

gerhard.wahlers@kas.de