

Historic vote to reshape South Africa

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Voters reshaped South Africa Wednesday, putting blacks in charge of cities and towns that had once been white preserves.

It was the first time South Africa has had local elections with all the country's races taking part and only the second time blacks have been allowed to vote.

The first, in April 1994, brought President Nelson Mandela to power and ended white minority rule at the national level. But at the local level there were still no black elected officials, although some black mayors had been appointed as transitional leaders.

"This is the completion of the democratic process that we began" last year, Mandela said on a visit to a polling station in the Atteridgeville black township outside Pretoria.

Voting for almost 700 local and rural councils was marred in some areas by improper ballots, late officials and even a hungry elephant. Some people went to the wrong polling

stations or found their names were not on the registration lists, slowing the process and provoking angry confrontations.

Election officials expressed satisfaction with the voting, calling it generally smoother than the problem-plagued national vote last year. But in some areas, long lines formed outside the polling places and the slow pace meant voting continued well after polls were to have closed.

"I want to live in a safe place, to be comfortable. To have a house, a street," said Winnie Cebu, a student living in a squatter camp south of Johannesburg.

Cebu arrived armed with a blanket, a tin pot of coffee and a deck of cards three hours before polls opened. Still, she was far from first in line at three green and yellow tents set up on a soccer field as polls for the Phola Park camp.

Results are expected today, but there is little doubt the winners will be with few exceptions black — if only because most of the candidates

are black.

Elias Maluleke was pleased several candidates running for his community council in Johannesburg were neighbors.

"I've met them; I've sat and discussed with them. I know what they want out of life," said Maluleke, who is black.

Tommy Swanepoel, a white retired policeman, feared white conservatives would lose control in his town — Ventersdorp, the headquarters of the neo-Nazi Afrikaner Resistance Movement, west of Johannesburg.

"The biggest thing here is to make sure the white wards are still run by whites," he said. "We already pay all the taxes here, and the blacks want us to pay over there too. They think we're all Father Christmas."

Mandela himself didn't vote Wednesday because he had registered in Cape Town. Disputes over districts' boundaries postponed voting until next year in KwaZulu-Natal province and the Cape Town metropolitan area. Procedural problems also postponed

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NELSON MANDELA

South African president

balloting in some isolated rural areas, which will hold elections later this year or next year.

Going into the election, turnout had been expected to be low because of voter apathy and confusion over a dual ballot that asks people to vote for a candidate and then a party.

Many South Africans also complained Mandela's government had failed to deliver on promises of jobs and houses and questioned why they should vote again.

"Most of us, we don't want to vote because the government doesn't want to do anything for us," said Mongezeleli Nqilo, 27, outside a polling station in the Kayamandi black township near Stellenbosch in West-

ern Cape province.

Among the logistical problems at some polling places were improper ballot papers, missing materials, late officials and even a lack of electricity.

Election officer Piet van Rooyen said the process was slowed in the area just southeast of Johannesburg because his staff had to argue with people whose names weren't on the register.

Meshack Mangike's name was missing from a list of registered voters at the polling station closest to his home, and he was sent to another nearby.

"If I don't find my name here, I'll just go home and go to sleep," he said.

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Campus upset by mistaken detention of black students

MIDDLETOWN, Conn. — Four black students at Wesleyan University were taken into custody by police while walking down a street in the middle of the night. Their only offense: They would not produce their student IDs.

The handcuffed students were released as soon as they arrived at police headquarters, where a sergeant said a mistake had been made. They also received a formal apology.

But the early Tuesday incident left the students shaken and angry, and college administrators said they would use it to educate the community about a problem common to society as a whole.

"We were violated to the extreme," Umi NiiLampti, an 18-year-old freshman from Atlanta, said Wednesday. "It wasn't justified."

Blacks make up about 9 percent of the student body at Wesleyan, an elite liberal arts college with about 2,700 undergraduate and 300 graduate students.

In Middletown, a city of about 43,000, blacks make up about 11 percent of the population.

Another student involved, Markell Parker, 19, of New York City, wouldn't comment. The other two, sophomores Bishara Wilson, 19, also of New York, and Tarik Holder, 19, of West Hempstead, N.Y., didn't return telephone calls.

The confrontation came when an officer spotted the four in the middle of a public street near dormitories, police said. When the officer asked the students to move aside, they did, but they did not respond when asked if they were students.

The officer followed them and contacted campus police. Stopped again, the young men said they were students but declined to produce their ID cards, police said. With campus security present, the students were handcuffed and taken to the police station.

A sergeant released the students, informing the unidentified officer that there were no grounds for charges. Police Lt. Christopher Barrow went to campus and met with the students soon after to apologize.

Capt. Robert Clayton, who is leading an internal investigation, said there was no cause for their detention and the students did not have to produce their ID cards.

About 120 black students met on campus Tuesday night to talk about the racial implications of the incident.

"We're talking about an issue that is not Wesleyan per se," said Gayle Pemberton, chairwoman of the college's African-American studies program. "It's a much larger problem than that; it's a 20th-century problem."

Clinton, Republicans discuss budget

WASHINGTON — President Clinton and Republican congressional leaders met face to face on their budget impasse Wednesday, emerging with no specific agreements but speaking positively about the chances of temporarily avoiding a federal default.

"We agreed there's an immediate problem, the debt ceiling," House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., told reporters after the hour-long session attended also by Democratic congressional leaders. "We want to be helpful on that. We're trying to work out a way to work together."

Gingrich and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., said Republicans were considering extending the government's soon-to-expire borrowing authority into early December, shortly after they hope to send Clinton a final version of their seven-year, budget-balancing package.

Republicans earlier had considered an extension through Nov. 29. But they revised that Wednesday because the government has a huge payment due Dec. 1, when it mails out Social Security checks.

The conciliatory words on the debt limit contrasted with remarks Gingrich made earlier in the day, when he said Wall Street investors had told Republicans that "the market would shrug it off" if the government went into default, something that has never happened.

That conflicts with the views of Democrats and most economists, who say a federal failure to pay its creditors would spark higher interest rates and an unforeseeable reaction by

financial markets.

Clinton and GOP leaders agreed to meet again, which could only be a positive sign amid the heated exchanges the budget battle has produced in recent weeks.

"Both sides understand each other better now than they did three hours ago," said White House spokesman Mike McCurry. The last time Clinton and GOP congressional leaders met on the budget was Sept. 12.

But neither side indicated any movement toward solving the standoff over the GOP's plans to balance the budget over seven years by paring Medicare, Medicaid and other social programs while providing a \$245 billion tax cut.

Clinton has said he will veto the Republican budget-balancing measure, which House and Senate negotiators are trying to shape into a compromise, bicameral bill. The president has said the plan's spending cuts are too severe and its tax reduction too generous.

Republicans said they stuck to their insistence that the budget and the debt limit be linked. They plan to include a long-term extension of borrowing authority in their budget-balancing bill to put pressure on Clinton to sign it.

But the administration continued to insist that the two issues be separated, and that Republicans drop their plans for some spending cuts.