

Goodluck Jonathan, Africa's first socially-networked president



By Sipho Hlongwane: @comradesipho

20 Sep 2010

Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's life is turning into an extraordinary adventure. Not only did he come to power in Nigeria without directly winning an election in 11 years and somehow managing to avoid the stench of corruption, but he has now turned to Facebook as his electoral platform.



As in every other country where extremely powerful and incendiary groups vie for control, Nigeria's presidential elections are a delicate affair. The battles between the country's Muslim north and Christian south were settled somewhat by the unwritten rule of the People's Democratic Party, which has been in power since 1999, of rotating presidency between candidates from the Muslim north and Christian south.

Olusegun Obasanjo, a Christian southerner, was succeeded in 2007 by Umaru Yar'Adua, a Muslim northerner, which was the first peaceful civilian-to-civilian in Nigeria's history. Yar'Adua chose as his running mate for the PDP presidential ticket the little-known Goodluck Jonathan, who at that stage was the governor of the Bayelsa state, located in the very heart of the Delta region.

Jonathan was considered one of the cleanest politicians in the country, with only the small matter of his wife being indicted in September 2006 by the economic and financial crimes commission for money laundering activities to the tune of \$16 million hanging over his head.

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