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11 February 2019

***Political and Mining Power Control Botswana***

**Executive Summary**

The incumbent political party and mining companies hold high authority within the country, although voting power increases the influence of citizens. The Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) works closely with Debswana to implement economic policies that support mining. The Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) is a coalition of parties that provides an alternative to BDP for citizens, through a focus on placating concerns surrounding the lack of economic diversity.

**Discussion**The BDP, the ruling party since Botswana’s independence in 1966, faces a faltering level of support with the rise of competition. The UDC provides an alternative for citizens to consider when voting in general elections.[[1]](#endnote-1) In the most recent general election of 2014, the BDP won 65 percent of seats in Parliament,[[2]](#endnote-2),[[3]](#endnote-3) and the UDC won 30 percent, increasing their influence within the government.[[4]](#endnote-4) Support of urban citizens shifted towards the UDC, which inhibited the strength of the BDP within the country and government.

Mining companies in Botswana hold power to influence political decisions. As the public rating of the nation’s economy increases, the government is more likely to increase investment into the industry.[[5]](#endnote-5) While industry makes up 27 percent of Botswana’s GDP, the industrial production growth rate for 2017 showed a decline of four percent.[[6]](#endnote-6)

Citizens discontented with the current economic and political performance shift preference according to the options that best serve them. In the most recent election, the UDC ran on a platform addressing a “growing, resilient, and diversified economy.”[[7]](#endnote-7) The low GDP per capita associated with the mining industry combined with the growing discontent over the youth unemployment rate increases the citizen displeasure and desire for change seen in the 2014 elections.

**References**

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