

The Political Structure of Swaziland:

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- The government of Swaziland entails three branches similar to the U.S. yet they operate differently than in the States. The executive branch consists of the King, the prime minister, and the cabinet. The current king is King Mswati III, the second king since Swaziland was declared independent in 1968. The prime minister, who is the head of government, is chosen by the King. Sibusiso Barnabas Dlamini is the current prime minister. The cabinet of Swaziland is originally recommended by the Prime Minister and then approved by the king. Similar to the United States cabinet, the Swaziland cabinet consists of eighteen different departments including departments of health, agriculture, and finance. The king, the prime minister, and the cabinet exercise total executive authority.
- The legislative branch is called the Libandla (the Parliament) which contains two parts, the House of Assembly and the Senate. The House of Assembly contains sixty-five members. Fifty-five of those members are elected through popular vote while the other ten are appointed by the king. The Senate consist of thirty members; twenty appointed by the king and the other ten are elected through popular vote. Members of the Senate and the House of Assembly both have a five year term. Libandla can create laws that must be passed by the King who has the power to deny every law in place and can recommend new laws to be installed.
- The judicial branch is based on a dual system. One part consists of courts based on the western model and laws, while the second part consists of Swaziland laws and customs. The king appoints the judges of both sections in the judicial branch.
- Swaziland is separated into four districts: Hhohho, Lubombo, Manzini, and Shiselweni. Each district is supervised by an administrator appointed by the king. These four regions parallel the federal government structure with an administrator, traditional courts, and fifty-five tinkhundla. A tinkhundla is subregional district governed by traditional chiefs.
- Even though the Swaziland's government seems to have a system of checks and balances that keeps each branch from attaining too much political power, the king as an absolute monarch can exercise total control over the economy. He uses however much money he desires from the federal reserves. For example, in 2002, King Mswati bought a fifty million dollar jet while the Swaziland population suffered and starved from famine. Mswati also financed twelve mansions for his wives, each costing over a million dollars. In a country with an extremely impoverished population, the king uses the nation's money for his own selfish reasons.