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Aged 17  
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The election of Barack Obama is a real eye opener. Many of us in my constituency believed the U.S. was too racist to elect a black man as president. I personally backed him all the way. One member of my constituency cried in joy at the election of Obama. In my eyes, as we look back through the history of the USA, we can see why. Martin Luther King had a dream, on the 4th November that dream became reality.



**Charity Mhende**  
Age 15  
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Barack Obama is a shining beacon that gives the next generation a starting point. He has opened doors for so many of us and I am so glad he is where he is. As a black African and resident of the Western World it gives me pride to say that he has shown the way to the future and is such an inspiration. We should all shout it loud and proud... YES WE CAN!

# FORUM RANT

**“We must protect our electoral integrity, otherwise we might be invaded by the USA to protect democracy!”**

Rant by Paul

**O**ur government has of course been disgusted at the low level of voting in the UK – they attempted to solve this with the introduction of new methods of voting to “open up the franchise”. We now have postal and proxy voting, provisions for those who cannot prove their eligibility to vote [tendered voting] and now talk about e-voting [online, by phone, etc].

Unfortunately, this was the wrong way to tackle the problem – it has opened up wider the potential for fraud in the UK electoral system. The Council of Europe considers British elections as “very vulnerable to fraud” (there have been at least

42 convictions for electoral fraud in the UK in the period 2000–2007). How can we take the moral high ground internationally when our voting system is fundamentally unsafe?

We must protect our electoral integrity, otherwise we might be invaded by the USA to protect democracy! I demand that mainland UK is subject to the same voting regulations as Northern Ireland, measures that have increased confidence in the electoral system – and accuracy of the electoral register.

Public confidence in the electoral process in the UK was the lowest in Western Europe in 1997 – let’s fix it!

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