

## OVERVIEW – Elections 2005

**Date:** October 11, 2005  
Liberia's last presidential and legislative elections were held on July 19, 1997, as according to the Abuja peace agreement and its 1996 supplement. The next elections were to be held in October 2003, but the renewed outbreak of civil war put election preparations on hold. The **Comprehensive Peace Agreement** signed by the parties to the conflict in August 2003, mandated elections to be held no later than October 2005.

**Type of Elections:** President (Vice President elected on same ticket)  
Senate: 30 members  
Two Senators will be elected from each of Liberia's 15 counties.  
House of Representatives: 64 members  
Elected from single-member electoral districts.

**Terms of Office:** President / Vice-President: 6 years  
Senators: 6 / 9 years  
Article 46 of the **1986 Constitution** states: "...the Senators shall be divided into two categories as a result of votes cast in each county. The Senator with the higher votes cast shall be the Senator of the first category and the Senator with the lower votes cast shall be the Senator of the second category... The seats of the Senator of the first category shall be vacated at the expiration of the ninth year. In the interest of legislative continuity, the Senators of the second category shall serve a first term of six years only, after the first elections. Thereafter, all Senators shall be elected to serve a term of nine years."  
Representatives: 6 years

**Electoral System:** The **2004 Electoral Reform Law** stipulates the electoral systems to be used for the three elections.

President / Vice-President: Two-round electoral system  
The first round shall be determined by absolute majority (50% plus one) of the valid votes cast. If no candidate obtains an absolute majority, the two candidates with the highest number of votes will compete in a run-off election the second Tuesday following the announcement of the results of the first ballot. The candidate who obtains the majority of the valid votes cast at the second ballot is elected.

Senators: Simple majoritarian system

The two candidates who obtain the highest and second highest numbers of valid votes cast in the county shall be elected.

Representatives: Simple majoritarian system  
Representatives shall be elected from single-member districts. In the absence of results of a recent population census, the 64 seats will be distributed among 15 counties on the basis of total number of voters registered, provided that no county receives less than two seats.

**Voter Eligibility:** Chapter 3, S 3.1 of the 1986 New Elections Law states: Every citizen of Liberia who has attained the age of eighteen (18) years or older, may register as a voter except one who has been judicially declared to be incompetent or of unsound mind or who has been disenfranchised as a result of conviction of an infamous crime and has not been restored to citizenship. Additional information on voter eligibility is contained in the **2004 Electoral Reform Law**.

**Candidate Eligibility:** Candidates for the 2005 elections can be either independent candidates or members of political parties. Various instruments of the legal framework address candidate eligibility. See particularly the **Guidelines Relating to the Registration of Political Parties and Independent Candidates, January 17, 2005**.

**Inauguration:** January 2006.