



Global Expertise. Local Solutions.
Sustainable Democracy.

Elections in Liberia

2014 Special Senatorial Elections

Frequently Asked Questions

Africa

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

1850 K Street, NW | Fifth Floor | Washington, D.C. 20006 | www.ifes.org

December 18, 2014

Frequently Asked Questions

When is Election Day?.....	1
Why were the elections delayed from October 2014?.....	1
Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?.....	1
Who can vote in the country?.....	1
How many registered voters are there?.....	1
What is the structure of the government?.....	1
Are there reserved seats for women?.....	1
What is the gender balance within the candidate list?.....	2
What is the election management body? What are its powers?.....	2
What is a polling place? What is a polling booth?.....	2
How many polling places are set up on Election Day?.....	2
Will there be out-of-country voting?.....	2
How will voters with disabilities cast their ballots?.....	2
What technology will be used?.....	2
Who is managing security on Election Day?.....	3
Who will can observe during Election Day? How can they get accreditation?.....	3
When will official results be announced?.....	3
How will election disputes be adjudicated?.....	3
Resources.....	4

Disclosure:

These FAQs reflect decisions made by the National Elections Commission of Liberia as of December 18, 2014, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.

When is Election Day?

The special senatorial elections were originally scheduled for Tuesday, October 14, 2014, but they have been rescheduled for Saturday, December 20, 2014.

Why were the elections delayed from October 2014?

Liberia's elections were originally delayed through a joint resolution by Liberia's National Legislature due to the declaration of a State of Emergency on August 6, 2014 as a result of the Ebola Virus that has killed more than 3,250 Liberians. Several petitions were filed with the Supreme Court to delay the elections until Liberia could be declared Ebola free. Subsequently, a Stay Order was declared while the Supreme Court deliberated over the petitions, which prohibited a number of election-related activities, including campaigning. On December 13, the Supreme Court dismissed all petitions against the elections and the National Legislature announced December 20 as the new election date in order to allow candidates to campaign through 6:00 p.m. on December 19.

Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?

Fifteen of Liberia's 30 Senate seats will be contested; each elected Senator will serve a nine-year term.

Who can vote in the country?

Liberia's Constitution and Election Law state that every citizen of Liberia who is 18 years or older may register to vote unless she/he "has been judicially declared 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."

How many registered voters are there?

At present, there are 1,903,229 registered voters in Liberia.

What is the structure of the government?

Liberia's Government consists of a Head of State (currently President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf), a Vice President (currently Joseph Boakai) and a bicameral National Legislature consisting of a Senate (30 seats) and a House of Representatives (73 seats). Each of Liberia's 15 counties has two elected Senators. Members of the House of Representatives are elected for a six-year term by the registered voters of each county's legislative constituencies.

Are there reserved seats for women?

Liberia's Constitution does not reserve seats for women in either the Senate or House of Representatives. At present, 13 of Liberia's 103 National Legislature members are women (five in the Senate and eight in the House of Representatives).

What is the gender balance within the candidate list?

Of the 139 official candidates for the 2014 senatorial elections, 20 are female (14.3 percent).

What is the election management body? What are its powers?

Liberia's National Elections Commission (NEC) was established in February 2004 and consists of seven Commissioners.

The NEC is mandated to formulate and enforce guidelines controlling the conduct of all elections to public offices. Among its primary responsibilities are: administering and enforcing all laws and actions related to the conduct of elections and referenda; establishing electoral constituencies according to population figures; maintaining a register of all qualified voters; conducting civic and voter education; proposing to the National Legislature for enactment any provisions related to Liberia's Elections Law; and accrediting and registering political parties and independent candidates who meet the minimum requirements.

What is a polling place? What is a polling booth?

Sometimes also referred to as a "polling station," a polling place is the official location where voters mark and cast ballots during an election.

A polling booth is the physical structure inside a polling place where voters mark their ballots. Polling booths are structured to prevent others from seeing how a voter's ballot is marked.

How many polling places are set up on Election Day?

There will be 4,701 polling stations (within 1,708 precincts) throughout Liberia on Election Day. No polling station may have more than 500 registered voters.

Will there be out-of-country voting?

No out-of-country voting has been organized for this election.

How will voters with disabilities cast their ballots?

Section 5.8 of Liberia's Elections Law provides that "a voter who is unlettered or incapacitated" may request the assistance of a person of his/her choice to mark his/her ballot in secret, provided that the person giving assistance shall be a registered voter.

What technology will be used?

Ballot papers are manually marked, but each of the country's 19 electoral Magistrates will transmit results electronically to the National Elections Commission's Data Center in Monrovia for final tabulation, verification and public transmission.

Who is managing security on Election Day?

Liberia's National Police, Immigration Officers and Fire Services of Liberia will jointly provide security on Election Day.

Who will can observe during Election Day? How can they get accreditation?

The right to observe the electoral process is safeguarded by law (Section 4.10 of the 1986 New Elections Law, as amended by the 2004 Electoral Law, Section 13). Domestic and international organizations may appoint persons to observe the electoral process following their accreditation by the National Elections Commission.

The following bodies may apply for accreditation to observe the electoral process: domestic organizations which have been accredited by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs; internal and regional intergovernmental organizations; representatives of States and foreign missions, and; international non-governmental organizations permitted to exercise their activities in accordance with the laws effective in their home countries.

When will official results be announced?

Election results are scheduled to be announced on December 31, 2014.

How will election disputes be adjudicated?

Per Section 6 of Liberia's Elections Law, any political party or candidate who has justifiable reasons to believe that the elections were not in keeping with the Elections Law may file a complaint with the National Elections Commission (NEC) within seven days after the announcement of the results. Upon receipt of the complaint, the NEC must cite the parties, conduct an impartial investigation, and render a determination within 30 days. Any contestant affected by the NEC's decision may appeal to the Supreme Court of Liberia within seven days after the decision is rendered.

Resources

- [Elections Law \(2011\)](#)
- [National Elections Commission](#)