

The Liberian 2011 Referendum and Elections Consolidation of Democracy or Concerns for Peace & Stability? [APRIL 29, 2011]

INTRODUCTION

Liberia will go to the polls two times in 2011 for the Referendum, General and Presidential elections scheduled to take place in August and October 2011 respectively. These elections, especially the Presidential elections, are very critical to the sustenance of Liberia's nascent democracy and the stability of its fragile peace. It is the first time after the civil war that Liberians themselves will manage and organize their own elections, unlike the 2005 general and presidential elections which were managed by the International Community under the auspices of the United Nations. Liberia emerged from 14 years of civil war in 2003. Through a long and elaborate mediated peace process, the warring parties finally signed the Accra comprehensive peace agreement paving the way for the elections in 2005. This landmark election brought to power the first female president in the history of Africa.

In light of the strategic importance of the up-coming referendum and the elections, this policy brief seeks to draw attention to some of the emerging issues relating to the conduct of credible and peaceful Referendum and presidential elections in August and October 2011. With the recent political instability in Cote d'Ivoire and its consequences on the security situation

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