

UN chief commends peaceful vote in Liberia, dispatches Nigeria's Obasanjo

27 December 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres on Wednesday welcomed the peaceful conduct of the second round of the presidential election in Liberia, and announced he is sending former Nigerian leader Olusegun Obasanjo to support the country in the first peaceful transfer of power from one democratically-elected leader to another in more than 70 years.

The Secretary-General hopes that the will of the Liberian electorate will be respected and that a seamless transfer of power will take place within constitutional timelines, his spokesperson [said](#) in a statement.

Mr. Guterres has requested Mr. Obasanjo, who is a member of the Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation, to travel to the capital, Monrovia, from 28 to 30 December.

Liberians yesterday voted in a second round of elections, deciding between Vice-President Joseph Boakai and George Weah, a politician and former soccer star.

The first round of elections in the west African country was held in October. A runoff was originally scheduled for November, but was delayed due to allegations of voter irregularities by a third candidate.

Speaking at the UN General Assembly in September, outgoing President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf – the first woman elected as head of an African country – said that the polls would signal an irreversible course towards democracy in the country.

Ms. Sirleaf took office in 2006, ending a civil war that erupted under the leadership of her predecessor, Charles Taylor. This election would be the first time in more than 70 years that the country sees a peaceful transfer of power from one democratically-elected leader to another.

High-level Advisory Board

Mr. Obasanjo is one of 18 global leaders, senior officials and experts on the high-level board created earlier this year to advise the Secretary-General on mediation and back those efforts around the world.

The former President of Nigeria [was involved in mediation efforts](#) in Angola, Burundi, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa, among others.

The high-level board is part of the Secretary-General's pledge for the UN to embark on a surge in diplomacy for peace.

The idea, according to Tarja Halonen, former President of Finland and also a high-level board member, is to prevent wars by hybrid peace-

building.”

Ms. Halonen spoke to *UN News* during the board's first meeting last month.