



1101 15<sup>th</sup> St. NW, Floor 3 | Washington, DC 20009 | 202.350-6700 tel | 202.452-0804 fax | [www.ifes.org](http://www.ifes.org)

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**CONTACT: Pablo Galarce in Asuncion, 595-982-858-844, [pgalarce@ifes.org](mailto:pgalarce@ifes.org)  
Laura Ingalls in Washington, 202-350-6729, [lingalls@ifes.org](mailto:lingalls@ifes.org)**

## **IFES Deploys International Election Observers to Paraguay**

**Washington, DC – FEBRUARY 27, 2008** – A team of five international election experts led by IFES arrived in Paraguay this week to begin observation activities for the April 20 presidential and parliamentary elections. The assessment delegation—led by IFES Regional Director for the Americas Pablo Galarce—includes Gabriel Medrano of Guatemala, Patricio Gajardo of Chile, Luis Sobalvarro of Nicaragua, and Gustavo Villamil of Colombia.

The IFES team will examine the preparedness of electoral authorities in Paraguay, analyze the political situation, and monitor campaign activities of participating political parties and organizations. The electoral experts will meet with representatives from the Superior Tribunal for Electoral Justice, or TSJE, political party leaders, civil society organizations, business leaders and private citizens to assess election preparations.

The project aims to strengthen Paraguay’s democratic development and increase voter confidence in the electoral process.

“IFES looks forward to working closely with Paraguayan electoral authorities, political parties, and civil society organizations to ensure the transparency of these important elections,” said Mr. Galarce.

The pre-assessment team will also establish IFES’ permanent observation mission in Paraguay. Based on the findings of this preliminary mission, IFES will deploy observers throughout Paraguay to monitor election day activities including voter education and get-out-the vote efforts, voter turnout, and the transmission of preliminary and final results.

IFES has worked in Latin America and the Caribbean for almost two decades with its first project in Paraguay in 1989. In the past 15 years, IFES organized more than 30 observation missions in the region and provided professional expertise to a variety of stakeholders in Paraguay including the TSJE, political parties and civil society.

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*IFES is an international, nonprofit organization that supports the building of democratic societies.*