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Elections in Honduras

2017 General Elections

Frequently Asked Questions

Americas

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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Frequently Asked Questions

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Disclosure:

These FAQs reflect information and decisions made by the Honduran Supreme Electoral Tribunal as of November 20, 2017, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.

When is Election Day and for whom are citizens voting?

Hondurans will cast ballots in general elections on November 26, 2017. Citizens will elect a president; three presidential designees; 128 deputies to the National Congress; 20 deputies and alternates to the Central American Parliament; and almost 2,700 local officials across 298 municipalities.

Who are the presidential candidates?

Honduras traditionally had a two-party system but it fractured in the years following the forced removal of then President Manuel Zelaya in 2009. With the consecutive re-election prohibition amended in the constitution in 2015, candidates including the current president are:

- **[Juan Orlando Hernandez](#), National Party of Honduras (PN):** Hernandez, the current president, is a native of Gracias a Dios in western Honduras. He is a lawyer and notary who graduated from the National University of Honduras and has a master's degree in public administration from the State University of New York. He began his political career as a deputy representing Lempira. In this role, he ascended the ranks, becoming secretary of the Board and Congressional leadership in 2002. He served as president of Congress beginning in 2010, when he started to pursue his presidential ambitions. In the 2013 general elections, [Hernandez beat Xiomara Castro](#), the wife of former president Manuel Zelaya, with 36.9 percent of the vote to her 28.8 percent.
- **[Luis Zelaya](#), Liberal Party Of Honduras (PL):** Zelaya is from Tegucigalpa. He studied in the Tecnological Institute of Monterrey in Mexico and obtained a degree in business administration. More recently, he served as president of the the Central American Technological University (UNITEC) and has begun his foray into politics accompanied by his brother and ex-deputy in the National Congress Ivan Zelaya Medrano.
- **[Salvador Nasralla](#), Honduran Opposition Alliance:** Following an unsuccessful presidential bid in 2013, Nasralla is running once again, however this time as the leader of the Honduras Opposition Alliance, a coalition of several opposition parties including members of the Anti-Corruption Party (PAC), the Party for Freedom and Refoundation (LIBRE) and the Innovation and Unity Party (PINU). Nasralla was born in Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, and lived in Chile as a child. He is a civil engineer who graduated from the Catholic University of Chile. In 1981, he became a TV sports broadcaster and continued on to a career in broadcasting. In 2013, he created PAC and ended up finishing fourth in the 2013 general elections.
- **[Jose Alfonso Diaz](#), Democratic Unification Party (UD):** Diaz grew up in El Progreso, in northwestern Honduras, before going on to study civil engineering at the National Autonomous University of Honduras. In addition to his work in engineering, Diaz has been involved in politics since high school when he was a student leader in the Secondary National High School Students Federation. More recently, he has served in several leadership posts for the Democratic Unification Party including president of the National Board of Directors. He has also trained members of political parties on electoral matters for the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE).

- [Eliseo Vallecillo](#), **Solidarity Movement**: Having spent 37 years as a teacher, Vallecillo decided to embark on a political career with a specific focus on children and youth. From 2002-2006, he was a deputy to the National Congress for the Christian Democratic Party and is now running for president with the Solidarity Movement.
- [Lucas Aguilera](#), **Christian Democratic Party (DC)**: Aguilera grew up in the municipality of El Corpus with nine brothers. At a young age he joined the National Peasant Union (UNC) and went on to become the president of the National Executive Committee. Following the division of the UNC, Aguilera worked for several similar organizations including the National Peasant Association, the Peasant Coordinating Council of Honduras, the Honduran Confederation of Cooperatives and the Cooperative Research and Training Institute. He has also been a deputy to the National Congress, a member of the TSE and a deputy to the Central American Parliament.
- [Romeo Vásquez](#), **Honduran Patriotic Alliance Party**: Vasquez is a decorated soldier with a history of leadership posts in the armed forces and the business sector. He was general manager of the Honduran telecommunications company HONDUTEL and chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Honduran Armed Forces. He has also served in numerous other military posts over the past 37 years.
- [Isaías Fonseca](#), **Broad Front Party**: The youngest of the presidential candidates, Fonseca, is representing the Broad Front Party (*Frente Amplio*), formerly known as FAPER. He is a thirty-year old architect who got into politics in 2009 in response to the coup d'état that unseated former President Manuel Zelaya.
- [Marlene Alvarenga](#), **Anti-Corruption Party (PAC)**: Alvarenga will be running on November 26 as the only female candidate of the nine nominees. Before becoming involved in politics, Alvarenga led an evangelical church with her husband, Deputy Commissioner of the National Police Ruben Santos Rivera. In 2013, she was elected to the National Congress and this year she became the nominee of PAC after an extended party dispute with former PAC member and fellow presidential candidate Salvador Nasralla.

Who can vote?

According to Articles 6 and 7 of the Honduran Elections and Political Organizations Law, all citizens over the age of 18 who are registered in the National Electoral Census and are not prohibited by the constitution or Honduran Electoral Law may vote.

Article 37 of the constitution prohibits active members of the armed forces and other security forces from voting.

How many registered voters are there?

There are 5,355,112 registered voters in the National Electoral Census, of which 2,724,004 (51%) are women and 2,611,108 (49%) are men. There are 5,308,781 registered voters in Honduras and 46,331 in the United States. A total of 1.2 million (22.4%) voters are under 25 years old.

What is the structure of the government?

Honduras is a constitutional democracy. There are three branches of government: the executive, legislative and judicial branches. All are independent of each other to provide a balance of power.

The executive branch consists of one president and three presidential designees. The legislative branch contains a unicameral Congress of Deputies, with 128 deputies elected by proportional representation. The judicial branch includes the Supreme Court of Justice, the Appeals Court, lower courts and other dependencies. The Supreme Court of Justice is made of 15 magistrates and seven alternates.

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

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) is the institution responsible for elections in Honduras. It is an independent, autonomous body in charge of calling, organizing and regulating elections. The TSE is comprised of three magistrates and one alternate elected to serve for a period of five years, with the possibility of re-election. Magistrates are elected by a two-thirds majority of the National Congress; the presidency of the TSE alternates every year among the three magistrates.

How many polling places will be set up on Election Day?

For this election, there will be 5,433 voting centers, including a total of 16,094 individual polling stations set up across the 18 departments of Honduras.

What provisions are in place to promote gender equity in Honduras?

In 2004, the Honduran Elections and Political Organizations Law was modified to ensure “equity in politics.” Article 105 of the law established a quota for women, requiring 30 percent of the opposite gender be nominated for party leadership; National Congress and Central American Parliament deputies and alternates; mayors; vice mayors; and aldermen positions.

However, this provision permanently set the quota to 30 percent and required women to be nominated for positions that gave them a very low probability of election. In 2012, the electoral law was modified to increase the gender quota to 40 percent of the nomination for elected positions. The quota will be progressively increased starting in 2016 until there is a greater gender balance across elected positions.” The Supreme Electoral Tribunal is responsible for regulating the implementation of this strategy.¹

¹ International Foundation for Electoral Systems (2013). “La Participación Política de las Mujeres en Honduras.” <<http://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/womenspoliticalparticipationinhonduras.pdf>>.

Is out-of-country voting allowed?

Yes. Hondurans outside of the country are permitted to vote for the president and presidential designees. Through Honduran consulates, they must vote on the same day as elections in Honduras, between 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. local time.

In the U.S., there are 46,331 registered voters outside of the country eligible to vote. They can vote in one of seven cities: Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York and Washington, D.C.

How will voters with disabilities cast their ballots?

According to Article 171 of the Honduran Elections and Political Organizations Law, voters with disabilities are permitted to cast their ballot with the help of polling station staff. At the request of the voter, the president of the polling center will aid the individual, marking the ballot as instructed. Other electoral officials will then review the ballot to ensure the officer voted for the voter's desired candidate.

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) has also included a section on administering the vote to people with disabilities in the poll worker manual. The TSE also trained volunteer facilitators from civil society who are assigned to support people with disabilities, the elderly and pregnant women on Election Day.

Where is voting, counting and tabulation held?

Voting, counting and tabulation will be held at 5,433 voting centers throughout the country. Each voting center contains several polling stations. *Mesas electorales receptoras* (MERs) administer voting and oversee the voting process at each center, ensuring transparency and compliance in the voting process.

Upon closing of the polls, the MERs will then count and tabulate votes and transmit results to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal.

What technology will be used?

After the initial counting and scrutiny process by each electoral table, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal will report preliminary electoral results of each voting center. This process of results transmission is known as the Integrated System of Scrutiny and Electoral Information (SIEDE, for its acronym in Spanish).

The SIEDE process will use a system of scanning and digitizing electoral results at each voting center and then electronically transmitting the results to a centralized data center where the outcome can be reported to the public and scrutinized.

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

Both national and international observers are permitted to observe. Observers are first required to obtain authorization from the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) to participate as an official observer of the election. Upon receiving authorization, they will then receive accreditation from the TSE. Before publishing or distributing their observations, all official observers must submit a copy of their reports to the TSE.

Conversely, individuals are also allowed to accompany elections. This is a separate category from observation. People who accompany elections may only be invited by political parties participating in the election process, and they must be foreigners.

When will official results be announced?

The results will be announced no later than 30 calendar days after the date of the election.

How will election disputes be adjudicated?

Election disputes are adjudicated through the Public Ministry Office. Individuals may file complaints at the local district attorney's office. Claims may be submitted in person, writing, via the internet or over the phone.

An Electoral Unit has been established for a four-month period, whereby attorneys from the Public Ministry are assigned to oversee and try electoral cases.

How will Election Day security be ensured?

Election Day security is ensured through the deployment of the Honduran Armed Forces (FFAA). In order to provide security during the election process and guarantee free elections, the constitution allows the FFAA to be at the disposal of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal for a month prior to the election and through the announcement of a winner.

Resources

- Honduran Constitution ([Spanish](#))
- Honduran Elections and Political Organizations Law ([Spanish](#))
- Supreme Electoral Tribunal ([Spanish](#))