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# **Elections in Panama**

## *2019 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 decisions made by the Panamanian elections authorities as of May 1, 2019, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.*

## When is Election Day?

On May 5, 2019, Panama will hold presidential, legislative and local elections. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.<sup>1</sup> The upcoming elections will mark the sixth time Panamanians go to the polls for general elections since the ousting of the Manuel Noriega dictatorship in 1989.<sup>2</sup>

## Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?

In the 2019 general elections, Panamanians will vote for:

- The president and vice president;
- All 71 deputies to the National Assembly;
- 20 seats to the Central American Parliament;
- 81 mayors;
- 679 local representatives; and
- Nine councilors.<sup>3</sup>

All elected officials will serve five-year terms.

## How is Panama's political system structured? What are its policies on presidential reelection?

Panama is a presidential republic, with three branches of government: executive, legislative and judiciary. The president and the vice president are elected on the same ballot by a simple majority and serve five-year terms. Presidents and vice presidents can be reelected for nonconsecutive terms after two presidential terms have passed. The legislative branch is a unicameral National Assembly with 71 seats, of which 45 are elected by proportional representation and 26 by plurality vote. Collaboration and coordination between the executive and legislative branches are key in shaping political, economic and legislative initiatives. Since 1989, Panama has experienced a successful democratic process that has been validated by five national elections as well as several referendums.

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

The Panamanian Constitution, the 2017 reformed Electoral Code and decrees issued by the Electoral Tribunal (TE) govern elections in Panama. The TE is Panama's election management body, responsible for both administration of the elections and election dispute resolution.<sup>4</sup> According to Article 136 of the Panamanian Constitution, the TE has the responsibility to interpret and apply the electoral law. The TE administers the elections as well as the registration of vital records, deaths and naturalizations and other legal acts related to citizens' civil status, including the issuance of identity cards. The TE has

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/INSTRUCTIVO-DE-MESA-2019-ELECCIONES-GENERALES-PARA-WEB.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/explainer-whos-who-panamas-presidential-candidates>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/DECRETO-22-Y-23-DEL-5-DE-MAYO-DE-2018.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/organizacion/juzgados-penales-electorales/>

national jurisdiction and is comprised of three magistrates: the president, appointed by the legislative branch; the vice president, appointed by the Supreme Court; and a speaker, appointed by the executive branch. The three magistrates serve 10-year terms. Each magistrate can select two alternate members.

## What are the reforms enacted in the new 2017 Electoral Code?

Panama's 2019 general elections will be the first held under the reformed Electoral Code, passed as Law 29 on May 29, 2017. The code's electoral reforms were further implemented by the Electoral Tribunal, in its capacity as the country's electoral authority, through decrees. The decrees define procedures for independent candidates, political parties, placement of electoral propaganda, campaign financing, and registration for out-of-country voters, based on the provisions in Law 29.

**These key decrees include, but are not limited to:**

- **Decree 7 (2017)** restricts electoral campaign advertising, including prohibiting the placement of permanent advertisements in specific locations.
- **Decree 10 (2017)** establishes rules for candidates running as independents.
- **Decree 11 (2017)** establishes rules and procedures for candidate inscription to political parties.
- **Decree 13 (2017)** establishes rules for the opening and management of campaign accounts for independent candidates.
- **Decree 17 (2017)** establishes rules for public campaign finance requiring that political parties set aside funds exclusively for training women during the post-electoral cycle.
- **Decree 20 (2017)** reforms Decree 10 by granting independent candidates' permission to collect signatures of support from within the offices of the Electoral Tribunal.
- **Decree 22 (2017)** establishes rules and processes for the enforcement of sanctions regarding the release of campaign advertising any time outside the official campaign period.
- **Decree 30 (2017)** establishes the registration process for out-of-country voting.
- **Decree 31 (2017)** establishes the reach and limitations of the electoral cycle, including limiting the campaign period to 45 days before party primary elections and 60 days before general elections.
- **Decree 34 (2017)** establishes regulation of electoral finance, including financial registries, and places limits on private financing.<sup>5</sup>
- **Decree 27 (2018)** requires that political parties' nominations include 50 percent candidates of each gender.
- **Decree 35 (2018)** defines requirements for the media, including that television and radio stations submit a detailed weekly report of any political advertising sold and aired, as well as to save a digital copy of these advertisements for three months.<sup>6</sup>
- **Decree 11 (2019)** decreases the period before elections when surveys are not allowed to be published, from 20 days to two days before the election. This decree followed a decision on the

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Elecciones-3-correo.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Periodico-Elecciones-2019-septiembre.pdf>

matter by the Supreme Court of Justice and loosens the limitations on electoral public opinion surveys implemented by the reformed Electoral Code.<sup>7</sup>

## Who can vote? How many registered voters are there?

Registered Panamanians over the age of 18 are eligible to vote. Currently there are 2,757,823 registered voters, of whom 1,385,076 are women and 1,372,747 are men.<sup>8</sup> Voters between the ages of 18 and 25 constitute 18.91 percent of the electorate.<sup>9</sup> Of the total voter registry, 1,333,308 are affiliated with a political party while 1,424,515 are independent.<sup>10</sup>

## Is out-of-country voting allowed?

In accordance with the Electoral Tribunal's Decree 53, Panamanian citizens who reside abroad can vote to elect the president and vice president if registered in the out-of-country voter registry by April 8, 2019.<sup>11</sup>

The Electoral Tribunal (TE) provided the 7,674 Panamanians<sup>12</sup> registered to vote abroad the option to cast their vote via the internet from April 23-May 2.<sup>13</sup> Then on May 3, the TE Electoral Voting Corporation will print the votes cast via the internet and deposit them in an acrylic ballot box in a public place until May 5. Those unable to cast their vote by May 2 can still vote in person in Panama on May 5.

## Did this election allow for early voting?

For the first time in Panama, the 2019 general elections allowed citizens to exercise early voting. Early voting was available for this electoral cycle from March 8-April 8.<sup>14</sup> The Panamanian Electoral Code stipulates the following eligibility requirements for early voting:

**Article 11.** Citizens who are abroad on the day of general elections or popular consultations and those who are serving in the Public Force, Benemérito Fire Department of the Republic of Panama and in the National Civil Protection System, Panamanian Red Cross, as well as the

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<sup>7</sup> <http://laestrella.com.pa/panama/politica/podra-publicar-encuestas-hasta-48-antes-comicios/24109216>, <https://www.panamaamerica.com.pa/politica/tribunal-electoral-establece-periodo-para-publicar-encuestas-politicas-1129045>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.telemetro.com/politica/elecciones-Panama/voto19/Entregan-Padron-Electoral-Final-habilitados\\_0\\_1215478671.html](http://www.telemetro.com/politica/elecciones-Panama/voto19/Entregan-Padron-Electoral-Final-habilitados_0_1215478671.html)

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.telemetro.com/politica/elecciones-Panama/voto19/Voto-representa-Padron-Electoral-Final\\_0\\_1220878443.html](http://www.telemetro.com/politica/elecciones-Panama/voto19/Voto-representa-Padron-Electoral-Final_0_1220878443.html)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.telemetro.com/politica/elecciones-Panama/voto19/Entregan-Padron-Electoral-Final-habilitados\\_0\\_1215478671.html](http://www.telemetro.com/politica/elecciones-Panama/voto19/Entregan-Padron-Electoral-Final-habilitados_0_1215478671.html)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/cnpp-conoce-plataforma-del-voto-por-internet-para-los-panamenos-residentes-en-el-extranjero/>

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.telemetro.com/politica/elecciones-Panama/voto19/Entregan-Padron-Electoral-Final-habilitados\\_0\\_1215478671.html](http://www.telemetro.com/politica/elecciones-Panama/voto19/Entregan-Padron-Electoral-Final-habilitados_0_1215478671.html)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/cnpp-conoce-plataforma-del-voto-por-internet-para-los-panamenos-residentes-en-el-extranjero/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/mas-de-4-mil-panamenos-habilitados-para-el-voto-adelantado-que-inicia-hoy/>

electoral delegates and individuals serving in offices of the Electoral Court and the Electoral General Prosecutor's Office, may exercise suffrage for the president through early voting.<sup>15</sup>

A total of 4,507 Panamanians were eligible to vote early for the president under this new system.

## Who is running in the presidential election?

Currently there are seven candidates running in this presidential election. According to Article 289 of the Electoral Code, candidates running for the presidency and vice presidency must meet the following criteria:

- Be a Panamanian citizen by birth;
- Be 35 years old by Election Day;
- Not have been convicted of a felony with imprisonment of five years or more, by means of an enforceable sentence issued by a court of law;
- Not be rendered ineligible by the impediments or conditions outlined in Articles 192 and 193 of the Political Constitution; and
- Not be ineligible by the established conditions in Article 30.<sup>16</sup>

Information on all candidates for all offices at stake in these elections, is available on the Electoral Tribunal's informed voter [website](#).

The seven presidential candidates are:

- Marco Ameglio
- José Isabel Blandón
- Laurentino "Nito" Cortizo
- Ana Matilde Gómez
- Ricardo Lombana
- Saul Méndez Rodríguez
- Rómulo Roux

### **Marco Ameglio, with running mate Mario Boyd Galindo**

#### ***Independent***

Ameglio is 58 years old and running as an independent candidate. He holds a degree in business administration from Santa Maria la Antigua in Panama and undertook postgraduate studies at the Institute for Central American Business Administration. He has experience in different areas of the private sector. He first came into public office at the National Assembly, as a legislator and currently as a representative. He held the posts of president of the Panameñista Party (2005-06) and director of the

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Texto-Unico-Codigo-Electoral.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/eventos-electorales/requisitos-para-ser-candidato/>

Panama Canal authority. He is running under the motto of “Enough, Panama” (*Basta ya Panamá!*) calling for change to the status quo.<sup>17</sup>

**José Isabel Blandón<sup>18</sup> with running mate Nilda Quijano<sup>19</sup>**

***Party: Panameñista Party***

Blandón is the candidate for the Panameñista Party, Panama’s current ruling party. Blandón, age 51, was a law student when his political activism against the 1988 dictatorship proved successful in convincing his father, a Noriega advisor, to defect. In 1994, Blandón served in the National Assembly as a substitute deputy for Marco Ameglio. Blandón won reelection in 1999 as a deputy and served in the National Assembly until 2014. Currently, he is the mayor of Panama City. As mayor, he has focused on ensuring party unity and launching urban transportation and infrastructure initiatives.<sup>20</sup>

**Laurentino “Nito” Cortizo<sup>21</sup> with running mate José Gabriel Carrizo<sup>22</sup>**

***Party: Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD)***

Nito Cortizo is the candidate for Panama’s largest party, the PRD, which was the first party to hold the presidency after Noriega’s ousting and has held the post for 20 of the past 50 years. Cortizo is a graduate from the University of Texas at Austin and is 66 years old. He first came into the political arena upon his election to the National Assembly in 1994 and later served as the Assembly’s president and a minister. Cortizo made inequality and poverty his front-and-center campaign issues, labeling these issues the “fifth frontier.”<sup>23</sup>

**Ana Matilde Gómez<sup>24</sup> with running mate Jorge Arango**

***Independent***

Gómez is an independent candidate for the presidency. Born in 1962, she became Panama’s first female attorney general in 2004 and the first independent deputy elected to the National Assembly in 2014. Gómez holds a master’s degree in criminology and a bachelor’s degree in law and political science from the University of Panama.<sup>25</sup> During her early career, Gómez held executive positions in the Panamanian Continental Bank and the Business Executive Association, and other Public Ministry positions.<sup>26</sup> Gómez is placing an emphasis on education and transparency and advocating for “A Different Panama” (*Un*

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<sup>17</sup> <https://marcoameglio.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Plan-Gobierno-MAS.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.blandonjose.com/>

<sup>19</sup> [https://impresaprensa.com/panorama/Blandon-escoge-colonense-Nilda-Quijano\\_0\\_5230726879.html](https://impresaprensa.com/panorama/Blandon-escoge-colonense-Nilda-Quijano_0_5230726879.html)

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/explainer-whos-who-panamas-presidential-candidates>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.nitocortizo.com/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://metrolibre.com/actualidad-y-pol%C3%ADtica/politica/158499-cortizo-acert%C3%B3-al-nombrar-a-carrizo-como-su-vicepresidente.html>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/explainer-whos-who-panamas-presidential-candidates>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.anamatildegomez.com/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.panamatoday.com/panama/three-independent-candidates-point-presidency-8358>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/explainer-whos-who-panamas-presidential-candidates>

*Panamá Diferente*).<sup>27</sup> Of the three independent candidates, only Gómez has reached poll numbers of over 5 percent.

**Ricardo Lombana<sup>28</sup> with running mate Guillermo Márquez Amado**  
***Independent***

Lombana is running as an independent candidate. The 44-year-old lawyer began his public-sector career in 2002 as a delegate. In the past, Lombana worked in the Panamanian Embassy and Consulate in the United States, as a subdirector for the news editorial *La Prensa* and an associate lawyer for the firm Galindo, Arias & Lopez. Currently, Lombana is both a partner and director at the firm Lombana Law & Media, a practice that focuses on communication rights. Lombana is running on a robust anti-corruption platform that advocates “Another Road for Panama” (*Otro Camino Panamá*).

**Saúl Méndez Rodríguez with running mate Maribel Gordón**  
***Party: Broad Front for Democracy (FAD)***

Méndez is running as the candidate for the FAD. Born in 1969, he holds a degree in work science and technical labor relations from the Specialized University of the Americas and a degree in political science from the University of Panama. He served as secretary general of the Joint Syndicate of Construction Workers for the 2016-19 term.<sup>29</sup> Méndez is running on a platform that advocates “For a Panama for All” (*Por Un Panamá Para Todos*).

**Rómulo Roux<sup>30</sup> with running mate Luis Casis**  
***Party: Democratic Change (CD)***

Roux is the candidate for the CD party. He is a 54-year-old lawyer who studied in the United States, with degrees from Babson College, the University of Miami and Northwestern University. Roux held various posts during Ricardo Martinelli’s administration, including minister of canal affairs, president of the Panama Water Authority Committee and minister of foreign affairs. Currently he serves as the CD’s president. Early in his campaign he invited Ricardo Martinelli, who served as president of Panama from 2009-14, to run as his vice president, a post which Martinelli declined. Roux is running on a platform that he believes to be reflective of CD values, calling for a “Return to Good Government” (*Lo Bueno Vuelve*).

## **Why are these elections important?**

The lead-up to the May 2019 elections in Panama has shed light on issues of intense public concern, including corruption, demands for a new Constitution, crime, unemployment and a high cost of living. Corruption, in particular, dominates the public debate, fueled by the ongoing trial of former president Ricardo Martinelli (in office from 2009-14) on corruption and wiretapping charges from his term in

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.anamatildegomez.com/transparencia>

<sup>28</sup> <https://otrocaminopanama.com/perfil-ricardo-lombana/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://sertv.gob.pa/biografia-de-los-candidatos-a-la-presidencia-de-panama/>

<sup>30</sup> <http://romuloroux.com/>

office. After being extradited from the United States to Panama in June 2018, the former president's trial is the cause of great controversy, as debate continues over his upcoming oral judgment.<sup>31</sup> Other heated issues include the Panama Papers and accusations that current President Juan Carlos Varela (in office from 2014-19) received funds from Odebrecht, a Brazilian construction company involved in a series of bribery scandals throughout the region. Panamanians are going to the polls on May 5 with hopes of increased government transparency.<sup>32</sup>

Candidates are running on a series of platforms centered upon public grievances and voiced stances during their first debate on February 20, 2019, on corruption, the Constitution, agriculture, trade, health and education.<sup>33</sup> All seven presidential candidates adamantly embraced anti-corruption approaches, by either incorporating anti-corruption measures in their platforms or highlighting anti-corruption rhetoric.<sup>34</sup> Six of the seven candidates – all but Méndez – reiterated their commitment to the issue by also signing Transparency International's pact committing candidates to include anti-corruption and pro-accountability policy in their platforms.<sup>35</sup>

Post-elections, the new administration will have to settle points of dispute, including decisions regarding the addition of a second round of elections and reforming the processes of judicial appointment to the Supreme Court and electing deputies. Citizens are also rallying for change in the economic, health and educational sectors. Their concerns stem from a growing disparity in wealth distribution, high indices of poverty and poor access to health care and education.<sup>36</sup>

## **To what extent do women have equal access to political participation?**

In terms of international treaties, Panama signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women in June 1980 and ratified it in October 1981.

Domestically, Article 303 of the Panamanian Electoral Code stipulates that at least 50 percent of internal political party nominations for candidacies are women,<sup>37</sup> yet results from the 2014 general elections found that women made up less than 20 percent of the National Assembly, holding 13 of 71 seats.<sup>38</sup> Based on the National Forum of Women in Political Parties, in the upcoming elections there is one woman running for the office of the presidency, 92 women announced their candidacy as deputies, 80 women are running for mayoral offices, and 483 are running as local representatives to their respective municipalities.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/explainer-whos-who-panamas-presidential-candidates>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/poll-tracker-panamas-2019-presidential-election>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/explainer-whos-who-panamas-presidential-candidates>

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.panamatoday.com/panama/presidential-candidates-accept-transparency-challenge-panama-9087>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/explainer-whos-who-panamas-presidential-candidates>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Texto-Unico-Codigo-Electoral.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/panama>

<sup>39</sup> [https://impresa.prensa.com/panorama/Sociedad-civil-promueve-voto-mujeres\\_0\\_5282471768.html](https://impresa.prensa.com/panorama/Sociedad-civil-promueve-voto-mujeres_0_5282471768.html)

## How are electoral authorities promoting equal access to the electoral process for persons with disabilities?

Two years ago, Panama's Electoral Tribunal (TE) created its Subcommittee for the Preferential Treatment of Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly, focused on registering and ensuring accommodations for voters with disabilities and older voters. In preparation for the May 2019 elections, the subcommittee launched an initiative called "Report Your Disability" (*Reporta Tu Discapacidad*) to promote the registration of and ensure the provision of special accommodations for persons with disabilities and older persons. Voters could register under this initiative by dialing the toll-free number 800-111 or by visiting the TE's voter information [website](#).<sup>40</sup>

As of December 31, 2018, the TE had registered 29,644 voters with disabilities – 15,310 women and 14,334 men – under the "Report Your Disability" initiative.<sup>41</sup>

According to the TE, registered voters with disabilities and older voters will be able to vote on the first floor of schools or colleges that are compliant with a set of accessibility requirements. The TE announced that 1,329 electoral staff, including registered assistants, electoral delegates and security members, will be able to assist voters on May 5.<sup>42</sup>

## How do electoral authorities and political stakeholders use media outlets, including social media? What is the media landscape?

The Electoral Tribunal (TE) has both a Communications Department and a Digital Media Unit, through which it holds workshops on issues such as communications management during a crisis.<sup>43</sup> The TE uses Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to engage with voters and distribute information relevant to the Panamanian elections. As of April 15, the TE has over 67,500 followers on Facebook,<sup>44</sup> 36,400 followers on Twitter,<sup>45</sup> 39,400 followers on Instagram<sup>46</sup> and 2,400 YouTube<sup>47</sup> subscribers, and these numbers are steadily increasing throughout the 2019 electoral process. The TE uses these platforms to encourage political participation, including to reach and register eligible Panamanians, as well as to reach voters abroad, promote civic education and dispel misinformation circulating on social media. The TE also has online resources available, such as its informed voting [website](#) to provide voters with direct access to all registered candidates' information.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> [http://www.telemetro.com/politica/elecciones-Panama/voto19/Personas-discapacidad-registrarse-facilitar-elecciones\\_0\\_1194480777.html](http://www.telemetro.com/politica/elecciones-Panama/voto19/Personas-discapacidad-registrarse-facilitar-elecciones_0_1194480777.html)

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/tribunal-electoral-asegura-accesibilidad-de-las-personas-con-discapacidad-en-centros-de-votacion/>

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/equipo-de-comunicacion-se-refuerza-en-conceptos-sobre-manejo-de-crisis/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/tepanama/>

<sup>45</sup> <https://twitter.com/tepanama/>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/tepanama/>

<sup>47</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEkREtyiKjqAg2qZV8jgu\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEkREtyiKjqAg2qZV8jgu_Q)

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.votoinformado2019.net/>

Similarly, six out of the seven candidates have their own online pages. Political parties are increasingly using social media platforms to connect with young voters, who make up nearly 20 percent of the electorate. The relatively high percentage of young voters this year is predicted to impact electoral results significantly.<sup>49</sup> Voter use of social media platforms as their main source of news is one reason electoral actors are intensifying their approaches via platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter to communicate directly with the electorate.<sup>50</sup>

Panama's Public Service Authority found that, in 2016, there were 1.3 cellphones for every Panamanian and that 94 percent of Panamanians accessed Facebook via their mobile device. Cellphone usage is an increasingly popular point of access for social media platforms, contributing to the rapid dissemination of information. The increased reliance on social media as a source of election information in Panama fosters communication between electoral actors and voters but can also contribute to vulnerabilities. There is increasing concern about the use of social media platforms to spread disinformation, also popularly known as "fake news." The spread of fake news demonstrates the need for civic awareness, verification of sources and good reporting by all actors during Panama's electoral cycle.<sup>51</sup> As part of the effort to counter the spread of disinformation, some news outlets have established their own fact-checking columns ahead of the election, including Telemetro's [Panamá Check](#) and TVN's [Bien Chequeado](#).

## **Will there be observation during Election Day?**

As of April 18, 1994, the Electoral Tribunal (TE) Decree 31 gives the Panamanian government, through the president of the TE, the right to extend invitations to political parties, foreign government representatives, foreign organizations and international organizations to conduct international electoral observation. The TE classifies observers into two categories: official observers and guest observers.

## **How will voters cast their ballots?**

Voters will be able to cast their ballots in one of 7,027 polling stations located in 2,798 polling centers. The number of polling stations includes several special voting stations, such as those available in hospitals. Voters can find information about the location of their respective voting centers and stations through this [website](#).

## **How will votes be counted, tabulated and reported?**

On Election Day, according to Article 152 of the 2017 Electoral Code, circuit boards will add the results received from the polling stations for president and vice president and send these to the National Scrutiny Board. The electoral authorities responsible for the election of deputies will add the results received from the polling stations and will award the seats based on the provisions of the Electoral Code.

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<sup>49</sup> <https://www.csis.org/analysis/elections-crisis-and-what-expect-year-ahead>

<sup>50</sup> <http://laestrella.com.pa/panama/nacional/poder-redes-sociales-marketing-politico/24106574>

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

According to Article 412, on the appointed Election Day, the National Scrutiny Board, the Boards of Electoral Circuit Scrutiny and the District and Communal Scrutiny Boards will convene at 2:00 p.m. to receive the results coming from the polling stations and proceed to general counting. The meeting will be continuously in session from the moment it convenes until the vote counting concludes with the announcement of the results in accordance with the Electoral Code. As stated by Article 413, the boards will proceed to tabulate the results as results from polling stations arrive. Once finished, the president of the National Scrutiny Board, the Electoral Circuit Scrutiny Board or the District or Communal Board of Scrutiny will announce the results. The validity of the results is subject to a final decision by the Electoral Tribunal.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Texto-Unico-Codigo-Electoral.pdf>

## Resources

- Website for the Republic of Panama's Electoral Tribunal (TE): <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/>
- Unique Text of the 2017 Panamanian Electoral Code: <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Texto-Unico-Codigo-Electoral.pdf>
- The TE's General Plan for Elections 2017-19: <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Folleto-Plan-General-de-Elecciones-Web.pdf>
- 2019 General Elections Table Instruction Manual: <https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/INSTRUCTIVO-DE-MESA-2019-ELECCIONES-GENERALES-PARA-WEB.pdf>
- Registry for Out-of-Country Voting: <http://www.rere.pa/ReReApp/FAQs.aspx>
- The Electoral Tribunal's Consultation Resource for Where and How to Vote: [verificate.pa](http://verificate.pa)
- The TE's Informed Voting Resource: <https://www.votoinformado2019.net/>