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Elections in Honduras

November 24 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 Honduras Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), 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 24, 2013. Citizens will elect a new President; 128 deputies to the National Congress; 298 mayors and 298 vice mayors; 2,092 municipal aldermen across 298 municipalities; and 20 deputies and alternates to the Central American Parliament.

Who are the presidential candidates?

Honduras has nine registered parties, of which eight will present a candidate for President. The candidates are:

Jorge Aguilar, Innovation and Unity Party (PINU-SD): Aguilar is a civil engineer with a master's degree in business administration. He serves as President of the PINU-SD and as deputy to the Central American Parliament. He was also a deputy in Congress from 2002-2006. Outside of political life, Aguilar is a national and international consultant in land valuations and survey studies.

Iris Xiomara Castro Sarmiento, Liberty and Refoundation Party (LIBRE): Castro is a native of Tegucigalpa in Francisco Morazán. She has been active in politics alongside her husband, former President Manuel Zelaya. She is a founding member of the Liberty and Refoundation Party, which was founded after Zelaya's return to power in 2010.¹

Salvador Nasralla, Anti-Corruption Party (PAC): Nasralla is from Trujillo, Colón. He is a civil engineer who graduated from the Catholic University of Chile. Since 1975, he has been a radio and TV sports broadcaster. He has also taught civil engineering and administration at the National University of Honduras.²

Juan Orlando Hernández, National Party (PN): Hernández is a native of Gracias a Dios in northern Honduras. He is a lawyer and notary who graduated from the National University of Honduras and began his political career as a deputy in Lempira. In this role, he ascended the ranks, becoming Secretary of the Board of Directors of Congress in 2002. He has served as President of Congress since 2010, when he began to pursue his presidential ambitions.³

¹ See official biography: <http://www.eleccioneshonduras.com/xiomara-castro-candidata-presidencial-partido-libertad-refundacion>

² See biography on Honduras Supreme Electoral Tribunal website:
<http://exclusivas.elheraldo.hn/csp/mediapool/sites/ElHeraldo/Especiales/EleccionesGenerales2013/candidatos/salvadorNasralla.csp>

³ See biography on Honduras Supreme Electoral Tribunal website:
<http://exclusivas.elheraldo.hn/csp/mediapool/sites/ElHeraldo/Especiales/EleccionesGenerales2013/candidatos/juanHernandez.csp>

Andres Pavón, Ample Electoral Political Front Party and Unification Democratic Party (FAPER): Pavón is from Bajo Aguán. He comes from a merchant family in Olanchito and holds multiple degrees in teaching from the National University of Honduras, where he also studied law and agricultural economy.⁴

Orle Aníbal Solís Meraz, Christian Democratic Party (DC): Solís is a political science and law graduate from the National University of Honduras. He has been a member of the National Congress for the Department of Olancho since 2002, representing the Christian Democratic Party.⁵

Romeo Vásquez Velásquez, Patriotic Alliance Party: Vásquez is a native of Siguatepeque. He is the former Commander of the Armed Forces of Honduras and was involved in the 2009 coup, which ousted Manuel Zelaya from power. Most recently, he was the General Director of Hondutel, a national telecommunications company. He resigned in January 2013 and officially announced his intention to run for President.⁶

Mauricio Villeda, Liberal Party (PL): Villeda is a native of Tegucigalpa and is the son of former President Ramon Villeda Morales. A commercial lawyer by trade, Villeda is a founder of the private law firm Falla Gutiérrez and Associates, where he has practiced commercial law. He is a founding member of the Honduran Human Rights Committee and the Pro-life Committee of Honduras. Villeda has been an active member of the Liberal Party since 1971, serving as a poll worker in many elections. He has been a member of the Disciplinary Consultative Board of the Liberal Party and participated as a pre-presidential designate in 1996, when his brother Ramón Villeda Bermúdez ran for President.⁷

Who can vote?

According to Articles 6 and 7 of the Honduran Electoral 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.

⁴ See biography on Honduras Supreme Electoral Tribunal website:
<http://exclusivas.elheraldo.hn/csp/mediapool/sites/ElHeraldo/Especiales/EleccionesGenerales2013/candidatos/andresPavon.csp>

⁵ See biography on Honduras Supreme Electoral Tribunal website:
<http://exclusivas.elheraldo.hn/csp/mediapool/sites/ElHeraldo/Especiales/EleccionesGenerales2013/candidatos/orleSolis.csp>

⁶ See biography on Honduras Supreme Electoral Tribunal website:
<http://exclusivas.elheraldo.hn/csp/mediapool/sites/ElHeraldo/Especiales/EleccionesGenerales2013/candidatos/romeoVasquez.csp>

⁷ See official biography: <http://www.mauriciovilleda.com/biografia>

How many registered voters are there?

There are 5,355,112 registered voters in the National Electoral Census, of which 2,724,004 (51 percent) are women and 2,611,108 (49 percent) 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 percent) 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 reelection. Magistrates are elected by a two-thirds majority of the National Congress; the presidency of the TSE is alternated 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, which include 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 Electoral and Political Organizations Law (LEOP) 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.⁸

⁸ International Foundation for Electoral Systems. *La Participación Política de las Mujeres en Honduras*. 2013. <<http://www.ifes.org/~media/Files/Publications/Reports/2013/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 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 Electoral 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.

In this election, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) has included a section on administering the vote to persons with disabilities in the poll worker manual. The TSE also trained volunteer facilitators from civil society who are assigned to support persons 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 the 5,433 voting centers throughout the country. *Mesas Electorales Receptoras*, or MERs, administer voting and oversee the voting process at each center, ensuring transparency and compliance in the voting process.

Upon closing of the polls, MERs will 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 transmit 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. Any individual is allowed to request authorization from 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 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 the month prior to the election through the announcement of a winner.

Resources

- Honduran Electoral and Political Organizations Law (LEOP) ([Spanish](#))
- Honduran Constitution ([Spanish](#))