

Irregularities in El Salvador's February 4, 2024 Election

On Election Day, international observer missions in El Salvador [documented](#) the following irregularities:

- Removal of trained and credentialed poll workers supplied by opposition parties and their substitution, in many cases, by uncredentialed poll workers supplied by Bukele's party. Frequently, this decision was approved by representatives of the Attorney General's Office;
- Many voting centers were not provided with the necessary materials to record the preliminary vote count, resulting in tallies being recorded by hand on notebook paper, as well as delaying the transmission of preliminary results; and
- Major technological failures on election night, including duplication and, in some cases, triplication of votes in favor of Bukele's party when entered into the electronic system, coupled with widespread system failure prevented approximately 30% of presidential votes and 95% of legislative results from being electronically recorded and transmitted. This opened the door for potential manipulation of data during the final vote count, as not all parties and relevant authorities were provided with signed copies of the official vote tally sheets.
- Failure of the TSE to guarantee the chain of custody for ballot boxes, leading to concerns over the integrity of the ballots, including broken seals on packages containing votes.

In the United States and other countries around the world where Salvadoran citizens were excited to exercise their right to vote in both presidential and legislative elections, international observer missions witnessed the following irregularities:

- Contracted Indra personnel, not credentialed members of the Juntas Receptoras de Voto en el Exterior (JRVEX), reviewing voters' identification documents;
- Routine and widespread violations of the secrecy of the vote, as Indra IT consultants, party monitors, consular staff, and even other voters were routinely called upon to help people vote, not infrequently inputting votes for them. This was exacerbated by the lack of adequate process, technology or secure location for voters who presented U.S. address on their identification to vote online via the TSE portal;
- The dominance of New Ideas party representatives and electoral propaganda at most voting centers generated an intimidating atmosphere disrespectful of a serious democratic process,
- Many people who arrived with a passport as their form of identification were unable to vote;
- No means were provided for political parties to review or audit the voter registry to ensure, for example, that people could not vote more than once (e.g. on their phone using a current ID card and in person using an expired passport or in a different locale); and
- As the Organization of American States mission has stated, there is no plan to audit the electronic vote, nor any mechanism to confirm that the electronically-generated results correspond to votes cast per candidate or party.

During the extended final scrutiny processes that followed the elections, international observer missions documented the following irregularities:

- During the final count of presidential ballots, reliance on data from copies of vote tally sheets provided by Nuevas Ideas and/or the Attorney General's office, rather than a manual count;
- During the final count of legislative ballots, apparently new, un-creased ballots being counted (to fit into the ballot box, the ballots need to be folded at least twice);
- Failure of TSE staff to abide by the instructions for the final vote count, including verifying that the total number of ballots cast matched the number of voters who had signed in at any given voting table, leading to discrepancies; and
- Intimidating and threatening actions on behalf of representatives of the Attorney General's Office toward representatives of opposition parties, the press, and international observers, and the presence of riot police in the vote count center.
- An aggressive and disproportionately large presence of Nuevas Ideas party members throughout the process, witnessed, at times, dictating instructions to TSE workers. Media reports also confirm a number of TSE workers who were registered members of Nuevas Ideas, a violation of Salvadoran electoral law.