

Observers Praise Transparency, Deny Fraud in Ecuador Elections

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Without evidence, opposition candidates have accused the government of trying to meddle with the election results, whipping up discontent.

Observers from international organizations have reported that Ecuador's elections Sunday were transparent and asked Ecuadorians to calmly wait for the final results, as opposition candidates have launched accusations of fraud and [threatened destabilization](#) if the left-wing front-runner Lenin Moreno wins in the first round.

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The electoral mission of the Union of South American Nations, Unasur, said that there was no attempted fraud during the final count of votes for the presidential election.

According to the head of the mission, Alexander Vega, the delay in the release of final results is a normal vote-counting procedure and called for people to be calm and wait for the final results.

"No one has denounced a fraud," Vega said, adding that it is difficult to believe "that the National Electoral Council would have invited more than 200 observers for a fraud."

He added that the Ecuadorean system is "so transparent that whoever wins can download the transcripts, add the votes and will get the same result."

With 93 percent of votes counted, Alianza Pais' Lenin Moreno leads the race with 39.11 percent of votes, close to the 40 percent that he needs to avoid a second round, and more than 10 percent ahead of conservative banker Guillermo Lasso of the right-wing CREO party, who has 28.38 percent.

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With those numbers, Moreno has received a higher percentage of the vote in the first round of the election than any other president in Ecuador in past 40 years, with the exception of President Rafael Correa, who won the election in the first round with more than 50 percent of the votes in 2009 and 2013.

If Moreno doesn't reach the threshold he will have to face Lasso in a runoff vote on April 2. The National Electoral Council, CNE, said the final result of Sunday's presidential election will be released by Thursday.

Moreno said that although polls say he could win in the first round, his team is still waiting for the final confirmation of the CNE, and he called on other candidates to do the same.

"It has caught my attention that some loser politician is calling for violence. That can not be tolerated, we are a country of peace, we have learned to live in peace and we want to continue like this," said Moreno.

The ballots that have not been processed yet have errors in the scanning process, are illegible, have inconsistencies, lack corresponding signatures of the members of the voting tables, or come from areas of the country that don't have the right conditions to digitally transmit results to the main processing center.

The special representative of the electoral mission of Unasur, former Uruguayan President Jose Mujica, also called Ecuadoreans to remain calm and wait patiently for the results.

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"The tranquility and peace of society is such an important value that one does not realize when one loses it," said Mujica.

A total of 47 delegations for the electoral councils of 11 countries in South America participated in the elections.

The head of the electoral mission of the Organization of American States, OAS, Leonel Fernandez, stressed that the CNE is the only institution authorized to present the final results.

He called for political parties and candidates to "act with prudence and responsibility" and to "provide citizens with truthful, timely and objective information from the CNE."

The calls for calm come as some opposition politicians, including second-place candidate Guillermo Lasso, have accused the government of attempting to meddle with the election results, whipping up expectations of electoral fraud among his supporters, which some fear raises the specter of violence in the wake of Sunday's elections.