
So How Many Did Vote in Venezuela's Opposition Plebiscite?

18/07/2017



A teleSUR investigation shows how one person could vote three times.

There's no doubt there was a significant turnout for the Venezuelan opposition's informal plebiscite Sunday, which the electoral authorities classified as a political gesture with no constitutional status.

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The opposition said 7,186,170 people voted to reject the Venezuelan government's plan to elect a new Constituent Assembly — that includes 6,492,381 inside Venezuela and 693,789 at voting stations set up for Venezuelans in other countries.

But even if these numbers are accurate — which can't be verified — an estimated 7.2 million votes out of an eligible voting population of just under 20 million is no mandate and even falls short of the 7.7 million the opposition garnered in the 2015 national assembly elections.

But since this was an informal vote, with no register of eligible electors and only a rudimentary record of who voted and where these numbers are almost impossible to verify. At the end of the day, at least some of the opposition voting centers burned their ballot boxes, making any subsequent investigation equally impossible.

However, teleSUR journalists were able to carry out a simple test that suggested the real number of voters was probably less.

They accompanied a citizen who was registered to vote in the Valles del Tuy — a poor suburb on the outskirts of the capital — to the upscale opposition stronghold of eastern Caracas and recorded how he was able to vote multiple times with no problem.

First, they went to a voting station next to the Unicentro El Marques shopping mall. Here are the pictures of him voting.

The organizers asked to see his identity card but did not check it against any list of eligible voters in that district. They just noted his name on a list, along with his ID number, his signature and their own stamp. Then they gave him a voting slip and invited him to fill it in, in front of them, and then put it in the ballot box. Not exactly a secret ballot. And the voting slip had no unique identification to ensure it couldn't be duplicated. After he'd finished, they gave him a receipt to show he had voted.

Then the teleSUR team went with him to another polling station at Romulo Gallegos Avenue in front of Miranda park. The same voter went through the same process and put his voting slip in the box.

The final stop was a voting station outside the Chacaito metro station. The only difference here was that after he voted he was not given a receipt of voting.

The whole process took just an hour.

So the obvious question is, how many others might have voted three times? Or even more times?

There is a video of the citizen casting his second and third votes.
