
Honduras: TSE Agrees to Recount Ballots From 4,753 Polls

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Honduras' Supreme Electoral Tribunal, TSE, has conceded to start recounting presidential election ballots from 4,753 polling stations that Salvador Nasralla and his Opposition Alliance believe had "irregularities" after polls closed on Nov. 26.

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Nasralla said ballots from these polling stations were from certain sectors of the country in his favor and were never added to the official TSE count.

TSE director David Matamoros said they will count the ballots "one by one" and make the information known to the public as each vote is counted. The TSE will then give a copy of each ballot to European Union and Organization of the American States, OAS, delegates for review.

"We want to carry out this process before the eyes of the world," Matamoros said late Thursday night. He invited Honduran citizens to keep a close eye on the recount process so as to "create as much transparency as possible."

During a press conference, Matamoros said "this process will take several days."

Matamoros finally agreed to the special recount of nearly 30 percent of the presidential ballots after pressure from OAS and EU delegates who reported several counts of possible electoral fraud on part of the TSE.

In a Wednesday statement, OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro said the regional organization would push for a new presidential vote if "irregularities" in the existing electoral count continued.

He added that the OAS would prefer to avoid new elections, but it was necessary "an exhaustive and meticulous process of verification that determines the existence or not of an electoral fraud."

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Matamoros was also under pressure by several Latin American leaders who over the past week have pushed for transparency in the electoral process. The U.S. ambassador to Honduras, Heide Fulton, is supporting the OAS and E.U. observed recount.

Nasralla and the Opposition Alliance have presented evidence of electoral irregularities on the part of the TSE and Matamoros.

Nasralla said late Wednesday night that the TSE "isn't neutral," adding that the TSE is working on part of President Juan Orlando Hernandez and his right-wing National Party to "steal the elections." He added, "If we hadn't had international participation, we would truly be in the law of the jungle."

Matamoros said that with the recount of the nearly 5,000 polling stations, they will not need a full recount of all 18,128 polling stations, as the Opposition Alliance demanded earlier this week.

He added, "in the end we'll have the results of the entire Honduran population, not just a particular region ... This is historic because we're creating a transparent process."