



Press Release, March 11, 2014

National Lawyers Guild Observers Praise the Salvadoran Election Process

A group from the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) traveled to El Salvador to observe the second round of the presidential elections and to understand the context in which the elections took place. NLG delegates met with civic and social movement leaders, the electoral authority and United States Embassy personnel, and toured the facilities of several Salvadoran government social programs. Additionally, the delegates were credentialed international observers of the elections, and observed the election process at several voting centers in and around San Salvador.

The elections were very close with the left-leaning FMLN party leading in the preliminary vote count by **0.22 percentage points, or fewer than 7,000 votes. Voter turnout was higher than average at about 60%**. The election tribunal is continuing to count each of the 1,591 polling station tally sheets and the final results are expected to be announced within one or two days.

It was the opinion of the delegates that the elections were marked by a high degree of transparency, fairness and efficiency. Polling locations opened on time. Despite the high degree of public participation, lines were short and waiting times minimal. With few exceptions, disputes were resolved professionally. Voting equipment functioned, allowing results to be transmitted in a timely fashion. The delegates would like to congratulate the electoral authority and the government of El Salvador, as well as the Salvadoran people, for their respect for and cooperation with the voting process.

The delegates recognize and respect the fact that the U.S. government issued a statement of neutrality prior to the elections, taking into account its history of interference in Latin American politics. The delegates urge the U.S. government to continue to respect El Salvadoran sovereignty. Additionally, the delegates call on all parties, both domestic and international, to respect the independence and legitimacy of the Salvadoran election tribunal's constitutional authority to certify the elections.

Founded in 1937, the National Lawyers Guild is the oldest and largest public interest/human rights bar organization in the United States. Its headquarters are in New York and it has chapters in every state.

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