

EL SALVADOR

Date of Elections: March 8, 1970

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of El Salvador, the Legislative Assembly, consists of 52 members who are elected for 2 years and are eligible for re-election.

In March 1970, the Legislative Assembly elected on March 10, 1968, had reached the end of its mandate.

Electoral System

All Salvadorian citizens of either sex and over 18 years of age have the right to vote provided they enjoy their civil and political rights, are of sound mind and are registered on the electoral list of their municipality. The lists are revised some weeks before the election and are used to compound the Central Register of electors. Voting is a legal right and a moral duty, but is compulsory in only a few departments.

To stand for election to the Legislative Assembly, a candidate must be Salvadorian by birth, aged at least 25, have been in possession of his political rights during the 5 years preceding the elections, and must be resident or have been born in the department in which he submits his candidature. In addition, he must be educated and of sound morals.

Elections to the Legislative Assembly are held in each of El Salvador's 14 departments by closed list system with proportional representation.

The electoral quotient is established in each department by dividing the total number of valid votes by the number of seats to be filled.

Seats that remain unfilled after the first operation are allocated to the lists with the highest number of left-over votes.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

As at the previous elections, there were 2 main parties contesting the seats in the Legislative Assembly on March 8, 1970: the Party of National Coalition (PCN), which had held a majority in the previous legislature; and the Christian Democratic Party (PDC).

Three other parties also submitted lists, the right-wing Salvadorian Popular Party (PPS) and two left-wing parties, the National Republican Movement (MNR) and the recently formed Nationalist Democratic Union (UDN).

During the electoral campaign, the Government party strove to reap the advantage of the wave of nationalist feeling which swept the country on account of the 1969 conflict with Honduras. It won a considerable victory on polling day, greatly outdistancing its opponents in most of the country's 14 departments. With 34 elected members, it has just 1 less than two-thirds of the seats in the Legislative Assembly.

Demoralized by the success of the PCN's campaign, the other parties, particularly the Christian Democrats, accused the Government of having brought pressure to bear on members of the electorate, especially those living near the frontier.

As regards the small opposition groups, it should be noted that the right-wing Salvadorian Popular Party lost 3 seats, whereas the new left-wing party, the Nationalist Democratic Union, won 1.

Statistics

1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Legislative Assembly*

Number of registered voters	1,494,931
Voters	622,600 (42 %)
Blank or void ballot papers	44,730
Valid votes	528,107

Political Group	Votes obtained	Number of Seats in the Assembly
Party of National Coalition (PCN)	315,160	34 (+7)
	142,659	16 (—3)
Salvadorian Popular Party (PPS)	28,606	1 (-3)
National Republican Movement (MNR)	8,832	- (-2)
Nationalist Democratic Union (UND)	32,450	1 (+1)