

EL SALVADOR

Date of Elections: March 10, 1974

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of Parliament upon the normal expiry of their term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of El Salvador, the Legislative Assembly, is composed of 52 Members elected for 2 years.

Electoral System

All Salvadorian citizens over 18 years of age who are included on the electoral register of their municipality have the right to vote. This right is suspended by reason of formal imprisonment, mental derangement, judicial interdiction and refusal to accept, without just cause, an elective office; the same rights are lost by those of notoriously depraved conduct, those convicted of crime, those who buy or sell votes in the elections, those committed to promote or support the re-election or continuation in office of the President of the Republic, and officials having used their position to restrict the freedom of suffrage.

Electoral registers are revised before elections and are used to compile the Central Register of electors. Voting is a right and a moral duty, but is compulsory in only a few departments.

To be elected Deputy, a person must be over 25 years of age, a Salvadorian by birth, and of well-known integrity and education; he must not have lost his rights of citizenship during the 5 years preceding the elections and must be a native or resident of the corresponding electoral district.

The following may not be Deputies: the President of the Republic, the Ministers and Under-Secretaries of State, magistrates of the Supreme Court of Justice, officials of the electoral agencies, military officers in active service and, in general, officials who exercise jurisdiction (on the condition that all of these positions have been held within 3 months prior to the election); persons who have handled or administered public funds, until their accounts have been audited; public contractors; relatives of the President of the Republic within the fourth degree of consanguinity or second degree of affinity; and delinquent debtors to the public or municipal treasuries. In general, Deputies in office may not hold any other remunerative public office during the term for which they have been elected.

Elections to the Legislative Assembly are held in each one of the 14 departments into which the country is divided, according to a closed list system, with proportional distribution of seats.

Within each department, the electoral quota is obtained by dividing the number of seats to be filled into the total number of valid votes cast. Seats remaining vacant after the first allotment are apportioned to the lists with the highest number of leftover votes.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

General elections were held simultaneously with those for councils in the 261 *municipios* throughout the country. As for the previous elections held two years earlier, 4 political parties contested the 52 parliamentary seats at stake. There were the ruling Party of National Conciliation, the left-wing National Opposition Union, the conservative Salvadorian Popular Party and the right-wing United Democratic Independent Front.

The elections were preceded by an increase in left-wing guerilla activity marked by terrorist bombing and attack on the offices of the Central Elections Council, as well as occupation of two radio stations and consequent criticism of the Government by members of the " People's Revolutionary Army ".

On the heels of the balloting, Opposition Union officials charged vote fraud at some provincial polling booths.

Results gave the ruling Conciliation Party — whose disputed victory in the 1972 presidential election precipitated an abortive military coup — a renewed majority within the Assembly. It held 32 seats to 14 for the National Opposition Union.

Statistics

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

Number of registered voters. 1,400,000

Political Group	of S t a
Party of National Conciliation (PCN).	32 (—6)
National Opposition Union (UNO).	14 (+7)
Salvadorian Popular Party (PPS).	4 (—2)
United Democratic Independent Front (FUDI).	2 (+1)
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