

EL SALVADOR

Date of Elections: March 12, 1978

Purpose of Elections

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

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of El Salvador, the Legislative Assembly, is composed of 54 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 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. 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 five 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 and military officers on active service (on condition that all of these positions have been held within three 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 of the public or municipal treasuries. Deputies in office may generally 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

In the 1978 elections, the ruling National Conciliation Party (PCN), holding all parliamentary seats, was challenged in a few districts by the right-wing People's Party (PPS). The National Opposition Union (UNO), a coalition party which includes the Christian Democrats and which was formed to contest the 1972 and 1977 presidential elections, boycotted this particular poll.

Statistics

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

Number of registered electors . . . 1,800,000 (approx.)

Political Groups	* " £ £
National Conciliation Party (PCN)	50
People's Party (PPS).	_4_
	54*

* Two seats added since last elections.