



PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

An electoral process marked by severe institutional crises contrasted with a well-organised and peaceful election day

Tegucigalpa, 2 December 2025

The preliminary statement of the EU Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) is delivered before the completion of the entire electoral process. Critical stages remain, including municipal, departmental and national tabulations and the declaration of final results. The EU EOM is now only able to comment on observation undertaken to date, and will later publish a final report, including full analysis and recommendations for future improvement of the electoral processes.

Summary

- On 30 November 2025, Hondurans voted for the president and three vice presidents in a single ticket and 128 members of the National Congress, as well as for the 298 municipal councils. Although 11 political parties were registered with the National Electoral Council (CNE), the EU EOM noted a contraction of political space, with only five parties allowed to participate in the elections, after the CNE rejected the candidacy of other political parties previously represented in Congress. The three main parties were the Liberty and Refoundation Party (LIBRE), the National Party of Honduras (PNH) and the Liberal Party of Honduras (PLH), while the other two were the Christian Democrats (DC) and the Innovation and Social Democratic Union (PINU).
- The general elections took place in a tense and highly polarised environment, with political disputes permeating the functioning of both the CNE and the Electoral Justice Tribunal (TJE). Internal disagreements among plenary members reflected the vulnerability of institutions to paralysis and politicisation, hindering important decision making. Furthermore, the LIBRE representatives' resort to state authorities, namely the Public Prosecutor's Office, to initiate politically motivated legal actions against their CNE and TJE colleagues undermined the effective operation and autonomy of electoral institutions. Concerningly, the Armed Forces, responsible for ensuring the security for the transportation of the election material, attempted to intervene in the country's political life.
- The voting was conducted in a peaceful manner and was assessed by EU observers as good or very good in 97 per cent of the polling stations observed. Polling procedures were largely adhered to, and polling staff performed well. The secrecy of the vote was generally respected. National observers were present at 38 per cent of polling stations visited, contributing to the transparency of the process. The CNE announced the first preliminary results for the presidential elections based on 34 per cent of the results forms received through TREP four hours after the closing of polls. Access to the results from individual polling stations was made available to political parties and election observers contributing to the transparency and traceability of the election results.

This preliminary statement is available in English and Spanish but only the English version is official.

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- The legal framework provides an acceptable basis for democratic elections to be conducted in accordance with international commitments, but some important shortcomings remain in the legislation. Contrary to good international practice, regulations were often approved very late in the process, creating legal uncertainty regarding relevant procedures, notably the regulation for candidate nomination, campaigning, election observation, transmission of preliminary election results (TREP), and election dispute resolution.
 - The CNE's current tripartite political configuration, which is reflected in its directorates, has led to diffusions of responsibility, poor coordination and slow decision making. Throughout the process, the CNE did not establish a coherent institutional public communication. Apart from announcing tenders and resulting contracts, key decisions were not systematically published, and joint press conferences involving all three commissioners were rare. This undermined transparency. Instead, commissioners chose to post information selectively on their personal social networks, sometimes presenting conflicting accounts of the preparations for the election. This affected the credibility of the CNE but also contributed to the erosion of public trust in the electoral process. In contrast, the three CNE members jointly announced the preliminary election results on the night of election day.
 - Internal disputes between the three TJE magistrates and consecutive intentional absences, that prevented the quorum required to hold sessions, resulted in the tribunal being effectively paralysed since the end of October. The instrumentalisation of the Public Prosecutor's Office by one magistrate against the other two, followed by a case against them at the Supreme Court amid rumours of their potential detention, curtailed the electoral justice institution's capacity to prepare for the post-election period.
 - Fundamental freedoms were respected during the election campaign, despite a state of emergency being in place in most municipalities. Political parties were able to campaign freely. However, candidates had to negotiate their access in some urban areas where criminal gangs exercise control. Campaign messaging was divisive and polarising. The presentation of parties' programmes remained limited, with political parties advancing thematic action proposals and focusing on accusations of electoral fraud, as well as on cases initiated by the Public Prosecutor against TJE and CNE opposition members.
 - EU observers recorded incidents of intimidation by parties' militants primarily in Yoro, Cortés, Santa Bárbara and Francisco Morazán. Despite the prohibition of the inauguration of public works, the EU observers reported that the three main political parties had held such events, calling them "supervision" or "follow-up" events. EU observers also noted that political parties were attributing social programmes to voters in exchange for support during the campaigning period at national and municipal levels.
 - Intimidation, smear campaigns and lawsuits have been used to strategically undermine media freedom. At the same time, weak protection mechanisms and aggression against the media fostered self-censorship. The distinction between public information and campaign messaging in favour of the ruling party candidate was blurred by government communication and the selective allocation of state advertising. While the public broadcasters did not provide equitable or impartial coverage of the campaign, some private media provided a more balanced coverage.
 - Monitoring of social media revealed a deeply polarised information space, marked by the widespread circulation of conspiracy theories about electoral fraud, disinformation, and

defamatory and gender-based attacks, frequently amplified by AI-generated content and inauthentic behaviour. This undermined confidence in the electoral process and fuelled expectations of post-election instability.

- Despite political influence in the leadership of some civil society organisations, many credible organisations acted as election observers, carrying out observation of the pre-election period and publishing regular reports. The CNE accredited 32,612 national observers from 46 organisations. The two largest of these were the National Convergence Forum (FONAC) and the Election Observers for Honduras 2025 (OEH25).

The European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) has been present in Honduras since 11 October following an invitation from the Government and the National Electoral Council (CNE). The Mission is led by Chief Observer, Francisco Assis, Member of the European Parliament. In total, the EU EOM deployed 138 observers from 26 EU Member States plus Norway and Canada across the country to assess the whole electoral process against international obligations and commitments for democratic elections as well as the laws of Honduras. A six-member delegation of the European Parliament, headed by Hélder Sousa Silva member of the European Parliament, also joined the Mission and fully endorses this Statement. On election day, observers visited 414 polling stations to observe voting and 45 for counting. The EU EOM is independent in its findings and conclusions and adheres to the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation signed at the United Nations in October 2005.

Preliminary Findings

Background

On 30 November 2025, Hondurans voted for the president and three vice presidents, 128 members of the National Congress and mayors and councillors of 298 municipalities, as well as indirectly for the 20 members of the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN).

Although 11 political parties were registered with the CNE, the EU EOM noted a contraction of the political space with only five political parties being approved to participate in the elections. The remaining parties were disqualified on controversial grounds regarding deadlines for presentation of candidacies, considerably reducing voters' choice. The three main parties were LIBRE, PNH and PLH. The two other parties were the Christian Democrats (DC) and the Innovation and Social Democratic Union (PINU).

The general elections took place in a tense and polarised environment, with political disputes permeating electoral institutions - the CNE and the TJE. Internal disagreements among members reflected the vulnerability of institutions to political influence leading to consecutive paralysis in their functioning and decision making. Furthermore, the use of state authorities, namely the Public Prosecutor's Office, as a political tool by the LIBRE representatives against their CNE and TJE colleagues, undermined the effective operation and autonomy of these electoral institutions. The involvement of the Armed Forces in the country's political life is concerning, especially given that the Constitution of the Republic of Honduras entrenches their separation.

Due to the failure of the President of Congress to convene sessions, such have not been held since 27 August 2025. This has prevented the approval of budgets for the TJE and the Campaign Finance

Oversight Unit (UFTF). Despite objections from the majority of deputies, the Congress President established a Permanent Commission on 31 October. This followed an extraordinary session held by opposition deputies outside the premises on 28 October, which had the legally required quorum, and aimed to extend the period for ordinary sessions in order to prevent the establishment of the Permanent Commission.

Legal Framework

The legal framework provides an acceptable basis for the conduct of democratic elections, with shortcomings persisting in the legislation.

The legal framework provides an acceptable basis for the conduct of democratic elections in accordance with international commitments undertaken by Honduras, but shortcomings persist in the legislation. These include ambiguous provisions and deadlines for submission of candidate lists that did not hold primary elections, loopholes in the gender parity provisions, and vague provisions regarding the use of state resources for campaigning.

Important laws, such as the Electoral Procedure Law and the Law on Campaign Financing, lacked implementation regulations. Contrary to international good practice, CNE regulations were often approved very late in the process, creating legal uncertainty regarding relevant procedures. This was evident within the regulations for candidate nomination, campaigning, election observation, election dispute resolution and for the transmission of preliminary election results (TREP) approved during the night before E-day.

Election Administration

The politicisation of the election administration put organisation and holding of the general elections at risk.

Elections are administered by the CNE, whose structure reflects a tripartite political configuration. Although this setup was designed to maximise mutual control and counter deep-rooted mistrust among the three main political forces, in practice it has undermined the institution's autonomy and made decision making cumbersome. The tripartite division, which is also replicated in the CNE's directorates, has led to a diffusion of responsibility, poor coordination, and slow decision making. Consequently, the CNE was often forced to improvise ad hoc solutions to preventable problems.

Throughout the process, the CNE did not establish coherent institutional communication. Apart from announcing tenders and resulting contracts, key decisions were not systematically published, and joint press conferences involving all three commissioners were rare, which limited transparency and forced journalists to gather information themselves. Instead, the commissioners chose to post information selectively on their social networks, sometimes constructing conflicting narratives about the election preparations. While this brought the commissioners national and political prominence, it also affected the credibility of the CNE. Together with the frequent changes to the tendering procedures, it further eroded public trust in the electoral process.

Election Preparations

Political rifts within the CNE, which relied on outsourced technology and services, caused significant delays to the election calendar.

Since the operational problems of the March primaries, political infighting became more intense at the CNE. Following the Congress' late approval of the election budget, the CNE commissioners disagreed in early July over the previously agreed procedures and configuration of the preliminary results management system (TREP). Due to mutual distrust within the tripartite setup, most material and service supplies had to be outsourced through public tendering instead of developing solutions in-house. To force changes to the TREP system, supporters of the ruling party impeded access of prospective technology suppliers to the CNE's premises to present their offers on 7 July. The subsequent refusal of the LIBRE commissioner to join plenary sessions and the unwillingness of substitute CNE members to replace him led to a four-week paralysis of the CNE before a compromise on the TREP was found on 4 August.

The CNE never fully recovered from this delay, which resulted in shorter timeframes that negatively impacted most of the operational calendar, especially the parts involving outsourced technological solutions and their integration. This was further exacerbated by frequent disagreements and mutual accusations between commissioners, resulting in additional delays and dramatic twists in the tendering processes.

Apart from a few simple informative videos about some aspects of the process, which were aired in the last few days before election day, the CNE did not develop a voter information strategy. In this context, the private media stepped in to provide voter information programmes.

Candidate Nomination

A contraction of political space with only five political parties approved to participate in the elections.

Of the 11 officially registered political parties, only five had their lists of candidates approved by the CNE. Of the 31 independent candidatures to compete for municipal councils, only six were approved by the CNE.

In a controversial decision on 30 May, the CNE rejected the candidate lists of five political parties, including the Honduras Salvador Party (PSH) holding six seats in the outgoing Congress. In the absence of legal timeframes, the CNE gave political parties that did not hold primaries and independent candidates less time to submit their candidacies than to parties that held primaries. In communication 23/2025 on 10 May, the CNE requested these political parties to submit their lists by 19 May but only issued the candidate nomination regulations on 17 May. The EU EOM considers that these parties were not given sufficient time to submit their candidacies especially given the deregistration sanction imposed by article 148 of the Electoral Law for parties that do not participate in a given election.

Campaign Environment

A campaign marred by mistrust, violence and advantages of incumbency

Fundamental freedoms were respected during the electoral campaign, despite a state of emergency being in place in most municipalities. Political parties were able to campaign freely. However, in some urban areas where organised criminal groups are present, interlocutors told the EU EOM that candidates had to negotiate access. The five presidential candidates campaigned actively alongside candidates for Congress or municipal councils. While large rallies were held in the final weeks of

the campaign, marches and door-to-door activities were the preferred method of attracting votes, especially outside urban centres. Campaign messaging was divisive and polarising. The presentation of parties' programmes for the next government remained limited with political parties promoting specific actions. They also focused on accusations of electoral fraud and the cases initiated by the Public Prosecutor against TJE and CNE opposition members.

The campaign was marred by violent incidents, including the shooting of two municipal candidates (one from the PNH and one from the LIBRE) in Colón, a LIBRE congressional candidate in Yoro, and a minor leaving from a LIBRE campaign event in Santa Bárbara. EU observers reported 18 instances of intimidation, harassment or threats by political parties' militants during campaign events, particularly in Yoro, Cortés, Santa Bárbara and Francisco Morazán.

Even though inauguration of public works is prohibited during campaign period, EU observers registered 86 such events categorised as "supervision" or "follow-up" events.¹ The use of social programmes for campaigning, mostly the distribution of aid vouchers, was also noted in at least 49 cases by EU observers, including 31 cases by LIBRE and 10 cases by PLH. The use of subsidies and social funds, available to members of Congress at the discretion of the President of Congress or through the social and infrastructure ministries, have been frequently reported for campaign purposes. Similar funds are available to council members in some municipalities.

During the five-day silence period, asking for votes is prohibited and public events are banned. The EU EOM observed that campaign activities continued at a local level after the deadline, while the main presidential candidates held press conferences and TV interviews. Statements published by US President Donald Trump on 26 and 28 November in support of Nasry Asfura and announcing the pardon of Juan Orlando Hernández prompted reactions from the major parties and generated momentum to discuss voter support, despite the electoral silence requirement.

Media

Free expression was constrained by hostile rhetoric towards critical media from senior government officials and high-profile figures.

The media operated in an environment of intimidation, smear campaigns and legal persecution with regular hostile rhetoric from senior government officials and key institutional and political actors towards critical media. Two journalists were killed in June this year and the EU EOM received reports of harassment and death threats against media workers across the country. Of particular concern was the Head of the Armed Forces' stance towards the media, which included verbal attacks, and the filing of multiple defamation suits and requests for the disclosure of journalistic sources, in violation of several international and regional government commitments to protect source confidentiality.²

The Mission's media monitoring³ found that government communication and coverage of political activities, together with the selective allocation of state advertising, further blurred the distinction

¹ These included 50 cases by LIBRE, 30 by PLH and by 6 PNH.

² Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Principle 8 of the Inter-American Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression, among others.

³ From 22 October to 29 November the EU EOM monitored TV channels: *Canal 8 - Televisión Nacional de Honduras (TNH)*, *Canal 5 (Televisión Centro)*, *HCH Televisión Digital*, and *UNE TV* – (07:00-09:00, 11:00-13:00, and 19:00-21:00); Radio stations: *Radio Nacional de Honduras (RNH)*, *HRN (Emisoras Unidas)*, *Radio América*, and *Radio Globo* -

between public information and campaign messaging that benefited the ruling-party candidate, in violation of the Election Law.⁴ The public broadcasters, *Televisión Nacional de Honduras (Canal 8)* and *Radio Nacional de Honduras (RNH)*, did not provide equitable or impartial coverage of the campaign, creating a highly unbalanced environment that fell well short of the standards of independent public service journalism. Both devoted far more airtime and overwhelmingly positive coverage to the government and the ruling party candidate than to all other candidates.

UNE TV gave the ruling party candidate overwhelmingly favourable exposure, while opposition candidates appeared infrequently and mostly unfavourably. *Televisión Centro (Canal 5)* offered comparatively more balanced reporting, with the leading opposition candidates covered mainly in neutral terms, whereas the ruling party candidate received a higher share of negative content. On *HCH*, all three main contenders received substantial visibility, and each enjoyed more favourable than negative coverage.

Radio Globo maintained a predominantly critical tone towards Salvador Nasralla and Nasry Asfura, while giving Rixi Moncada overwhelmingly positive coverage. *Radio América* offered less overall airtime but treated Moncada most favourably, contrasting with the largely negative tone towards the other candidates. HRN provided the most even distribution across tones, though negative items still predominated for all actors except Moncada, who received mainly positive coverage. The tone across the monitored private print newspapers and digital news outlets was more favourable to the opposition candidates.

Social Media

Insufficient safeguards against disinformation favoured the spread of conspiratorial and polarising narratives that undermined confidence in the electoral process.

Social media was extensively used for campaigning. TikTok was one of the most used platforms with content creators and influencers producing highly engaging political and campaign content.

The EU EOM noted widespread distribution of AI-generated content throughout the campaign period. Disinformation and defamatory gender-based insults directed at candidates and other electoral actors were frequently disseminated. There are indications that much of this content was published or amplified by accounts operated by trolls or bots. The EU EOM recorded sophisticated deepfakes intended to mislead voters, which targeted candidates, institutional figures, media outlets, and prominent journalists.

Narratives of electoral fraud and the use of manipulative disinformation strategies and techniques aimed at undermining public confidence in the electoral process circulated widely in the monitored online platforms.⁵ The EU EOM noted insufficient efforts for pre-bunking to facilitate voters' understanding and identification of falsehoods, as well as disinformation and a lack of institutional online voter education by the CNE. Despite some fact-checking initiatives and efforts to promote ethical conduct, these were insufficient due to poor coordination among fact-checkers, non-adherence of political parties to the Content Integrity Pledge endorsed by multiple stakeholders

(06:00-09:00 and 16:00-19:00); Print newspapers: *La Prensa*, *El Heraldo*, and *La Tribuna*; Digital news outlets: *El Libertador*, *Hondudiario*, *Proceso Digital* and *Tu Nota*

⁴ Articles 229, 232 and 233 of the Electoral Law.

⁵ The EU EOM conducted social media monitoring to assess online political discourse throughout the campaign period across Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok and YouTube.

and the failure of technology companies to implement measures to counter electoral disinformation. In the lead-up to the elections, an increased investment in paid-for content was observed. This content often sought to discredit candidates by launching severe personal attacks.

The absence of regulation on online political advertising creates an unregulated digital environment that hinders effective oversight of campaign spending.

National Observers

Despite political influence in the leadership of some civil society organisations, many organisations engaged as election observers increasing the level of transparency of the elections.

Despite the shrinking of civic space due to party appointees to leadership positions in some organisations, civil society continues to play a significant role in the Honduran political landscape, carrying out election observation and publishing regular reports on its findings. The CNE accredited 32,612 national observers from 46 organisations. The two largest organisations were the FONAC, which registered 9,731 observers, and Election Observers for Honduras 2025 (OE25) with almost 7,000. OE25 relied on well-established methodology, including the parallel vote tabulation (PVT).

Electoral Justice

Internal disputes and intentional absences resulted in the TJE being paralysed, curtailing its capacity to prepare for the post-election period.

Internal disputes between the three TJE magistrates and consecutive intentional absences that prevented the quorum required to hold sessions resulted in the tribunal being paralysed since 31 October, thereby limiting its ability to operate during the electoral period. The instrumentalisation of the Public Prosecutor's Office by one magistrate against the other two, followed by a case against them at the Supreme Court amid rumours of their potential detention, curtailed the electoral justice institution's capacity to prepare for post-election period. It remains unclear whether the TJE will be able to function properly in order to handle possible electoral appeals.

Election Day

Voters turned out in high numbers in a peaceful and widely observed election day marked by occasional procedural shortcomings.

EU observers visited 414 polling stations in all departments throughout the country. Opening was observed in 50 of these polling stations and closing and counting in 45.

Two thirds of the polling stations observed opened either on time or within 30 minutes of the official opening time. Delays were mostly caused by limited preparedness of polling staff and difficulties with biometric voter identification devices. In spite of the delays and organisational difficulties observed in the weeks preceding the elections, the material was delivered in a timely manner to all visited voting centres. Opening procedures were generally adhered to in a transparent process. EU observers assessed the opening procedures as good or very good at 42 of the 50 polling stations observed. All 17 polling stations in the San Antonio de Flores municipality (El Paraíso) did not open at all due to disputes over polling staff credentials.

The EU EOM assessed the overall conduct of voting as good or very good in 97 per cent of the polling stations observed and described the process as calm and orderly. Large queues were observed in 20 per cent of polling stations. Polling procedures were largely adhered to, and polling staff, appointed mostly by the three main parties, performed well. Sixty-six per cent of members of the visited polling stations were women. Biometric identification was systematically used in nine out of 10 polling stations observed. The secrecy of the vote was generally respected. National observers were present at 38 per cent of polling stations visited, contributing to the transparency of the process. According to the EU observation, the OEH25 deployed the largest number of observers.

EU observers assessed the counting process positively and open to the public. Ballot reconciliation and counting procedures were generally followed. EU observers were not permitted to observe the process inside five polling stations and observed from the window.

The three CNE councillors announced preliminary results for the presidential elections based on 34 per cent of the results forms received through TREP four hours after the closing of polls. Throughout the election night, TREP transmitted 57 per cent of presidential, 42 per cent of congressional and 41 per cent of municipal results sheets. Based on the preliminary results, the EU EOM estimates the turnout to exceed 60 per cent. Access to the results from individual polling stations was made available to political parties and election observers contributing to the transparency and traceability of the election results. The EU EOM will remain observing until the completion of the process.

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