



## **PRELIMINARY STATEMENT**

### **Widespread delays and the postponement of voting in 13 polling centres jeopardised otherwise well-organised elections**

**Lima, 14 April 2026**

*This preliminary statement of the EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) is delivered before the completion of the entire electoral process. Critical stages remain, including adjudication of possible petitions and publication of final results, which the EU EOM remains in the country to observe. The EU EOM is at present solely in a position to comment on observation undertaken to date, and will later publish a final report, including recommendations for electoral reform. The EU EOM may also make additional statements on election-related matters as and when it considers appropriate.*

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### **Summary**

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These general elections were the most complex in the recent history of the Republic of Peru. They took place in a reformed legal framework which posed numerous challenges for both voters and election administration. Against a backdrop of political and institutional crises, reforms also raised concerns about the imbalance of power between the Executive and Congress. The involvement of 37 political organisations emphasised the fragmented nature of the political party system. On election day, the EU EOM noted that 13 polling centres in Lima did not open due to the absence of election kits. The electoral authorities took the quick and positive decision to open the polls in these locations the following day, guaranteeing and prioritising the right to vote and to participation for the 55,261 affected voters. The EU EOM observed the opening of polling and the voting process in all these centres.

Concerning the overall electoral process and the EU's long-term observation, it was noted that the electoral contest was generally peaceful and grounded in respect for fundamental freedoms, although there were some exceptions, including verbal and digital attacks on journalists and the electoral bodies. Nonetheless, the electoral authorities managed substantial human and physical resources in often challenging circumstances.

Over the past two legislatures, various factors have contributed to greatly diminished public trust in state institutions and the political class. Recent constitutional reforms, including a concentration of power in the future Senate, may have an impact on the political system of checks and balances. Opinion polls, showing low levels of trust in many public institutions and a lack of substantial support to any of the candidates, reflected a disconnect between the population and the political class. Public trust was further diminished by concerns over the influence on the election of the informal and illegal economies.

The legal electoral framework offered sufficient guarantees for the conduct of democratic elections, but a number of challenges and inconsistencies remain unaddressed. Recently approved provisions allowed serving Congress members to stand for immediate re-election, and Presidential candidates to run concurrently in legislative elections. 26 out of 35 Presidential candidates also ran for the Congress. The reform specifying there can be only one ballot paper (*cédula*), combined with the large number of political organisations contesting the elections and the reintroduction of the bicameral system and preferential voting, increased the complexity of the *cédula* and the voting process. The *cédula* measured around 42cm by 44cm, contained five distinct elections, and the possibility for electors to express up to 12 different choices.

Fundamental freedoms were widely respected throughout the campaign, except in some political strongholds where candidates from opposing parties were met by verbal and physical attacks. Overall, it was a low-key campaign, with candidates reaching out to voters through smaller meetings, billboards, and door-to-door canvassing. Online platforms were the main arena for the electoral campaign, with Facebook and TikTok leading in popularity. Several political debates involving candidates for the different elections, organised by the electoral authority, contributed to informing voters.

The three electoral bodies – the *Jurado Nacional de Elecciones* (JNE), the *Oficina Nacional de Procesos Electorales* (ONPE), and the *Registro Nacional de Identificación y Estado Civil* (RENIEC) – demonstrated a strong commitment to transparency and neutrality. The election management bodies were committed to strengthening public and candidates' confidence in the electoral process, particularly through extensive in-person and digital voter education campaigns.

Election preparations were mostly adequate and carried out according to the election calendar. ONPE took various measures to manage the increased complexity of this electoral process, such as extending the training period for poll workers and increasing the number of its decentralised offices and results processing centres. New technologies, including the use of artificial intelligence, were incorporated in this electoral process to minimise human error, accelerate the publication of results, and improve transparency and traceability.

A diverse and pluralistic media landscape, although characterised by significant ownership concentration and editorial polarisation, provided access to a wide range of political opinions. State-owned media provided extensive, balanced, and neutral coverage of candidates, whereas private media showed more bias. Overall, there has been pressure on freedom of expression, with journalists facing increasing risks including verbal, physical, and digital attacks as well as judicial actions.

Social media played a key role in political communication, with an online political arena dominated by Facebook and TikTok-era campaigning, uneven ad spending, and presence of verbal attacks and negative posts. EU EOM social media monitoring identified coordinated activity consistent with algorithm-driven amplification of political content, widespread use of influencer-based campaigning formats, and a predominantly negative tone in user reactions. Throughout the observation period disinformation remained limited and was mainly confined to false opinion polls and fraud-related narratives circulating within politically aligned online communities. However, there was an uptick in disinformation in the final week ahead of the polls.

As regards political participation of women, only four of the 35 tickets featured a woman as presidential candidate, and about 20 per cent of Congressional candidate lists were headed by women. The principle of alternation to the presidential ticket was removed, and the principle of parity did not apply to heads of congressional candidate lists. Although parties must commit part of their public funding to support training with parity criteria, women candidates reported that compliance remains limited. During the campaign period, the Honour Tribunal issued a statement condemning harassment against female candidates.

Although political platforms paid little attention to issues affecting indigenous communities, many political organisations included indigenous candidates on their lists. Voter education was provided in various languages by the JNE and ONPE. EU observers reported that audiences were addressed in indigenous languages in almost 15 per cent of the observed campaign events.

Inclusive provisions for the participation of observers and party agents contributed to the transparency of the process. *Transparencia* deployed over 5,000 observers nationwide, conducted a

quick count, and issued regular statements throughout election day. In addition to the EU EOM, other international groups deployed observation missions.

Election day was calm and orderly in most parts of the country, but with significant delays in the opening of polling stations in parts of Lima where 13 polling centres did not open due to the non-delivery of election kits. These delays left voters queuing for hours, causing much frustration and discontent. Despite the complex ballot paper, EU observers assessed voters' understanding of the procedures as good or very good in almost all of the 620 observed polling stations. The counting of the ballots by poll workers was observed to be overall transparent and well-intentioned but affected by the complexity of the procedures and insufficiently prepared poll workers. Transmission of results was smooth but slow. Official results indicate a presidential run-off, set for 7 June.

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*The European Union was invited by the Government of Peru and the Jurado Nacional de Elecciones to observe the 2026 general elections. The EU EOM is led by Annalisa Corrado, a Member of the European Parliament from Italy. The mission comprises a core team of 10 analysts who have been in Peru since 26 February, 50 Long Term Observers (LTOs) who have been present since 12 March, and 50 Short Term Observers (STOs) who have been present since 3 April. In addition, the mission was joined by Locally Recruited STOs from the EU member states and partner countries' diplomatic missions to Peru. Observers were drawn from 27 EU member states, as well as Canada, Norway, and Switzerland.*

*The EU EOM assesses the whole electoral process against international obligations and commitments for democratic elections as well as the laws of Peru. The EU EOM is independent in its findings and conclusions, and adheres to the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, endorsed at the United Nations in October 2005.*

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## Preliminary findings

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### 1. Background

On 12 April, 27 million Peruvians were called to the polls to elect the president and vice-presidents as well as the 130 deputies and 60 senators of the Congress of the Republic, and five members of the Andean Parliament for a five-year term. A total of 35 presidential tickets and 37 political organisations competed, reflecting a political landscape that offered a diversity of options. However, these elections followed political and institutional crises, reflected in eight presidents over the past two legislatures, and which highlighted the power imbalance between the Executive and the Congress. Elections took place in a context where the influence of the informal and illegal economies on the electoral process was a major concern. According to the Institute of Peruvian Studies, ahead of the polls only seven per cent of Peruvians expressed confidence in the Congress, and over 80 per cent declared little or no trust in political parties.

### 2. Legal Framework

***The legal framework provides a solid basis, although its stability and consistency are challenged by recurring legislative changes.***

The electoral framework provides sufficient safeguards for the conduct of democratic elections. However, regulations are duplicated and fragmented and there are inconsistencies, *inter alia*, relating to the rules governing penalties for electoral offences and the regulation of the electoral campaign period. Since 2021, the legislature has pursued a pendulum-like approach, repeatedly introducing and reversing recent reforms, with significant implications for the configuration of the political system and the electoral framework. The 2024 constitutional reform reintroduced a bicameral system, whose design – in particular, establishing a Senate endowed with extensive

prerogatives and that is not subject to presidential dissolution – may further undermine the balance of powers.

In line with recommendations made by previous EU electoral missions, recent reforms have introduced measures such as a later deadline for address changes in the voter register and the extension of voting hours. Other reforms have included allowing members of Congress to stand for immediate re-election, and Presidential candidates to run concurrently in legislative elections. Congress also introduced a single ballot paper (*cédula*) requirement. This, combined with the large number of political organisations contesting the elections, and the reintroduction of the bicameral system and preferential voting, increased the complexity of the *cédula* and the voting process. The integrity of the vote was reinforced through a new provision allowing for vote recounts when results protocols have arithmetical inconsistencies or formal errors (*actas observadas*).

Another reform adopted by Congress introduced a double threshold to access seat allocation, requiring parties to obtain at least 5 per cent of the valid vote at the national level and at least 5 per cent of seats in the chambers (three seats in the Senate and seven seats in the Chamber of Deputies). These barriers could bring about a situation in which a significant number of votes are cast for parties failing to meet the threshold, and will thus be lost, not resulting in any Congressional representation. Moreover, failure to meet this threshold results in the political organisation losing its legal status.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has expressed concerns regarding the 2024 law on crimes against humanity and the 2025 law governing the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI Law). Recently, the Venice Commission highlighted the urgent need for a comprehensive reform of the justice system.

### **3. Election Administration**

#### ***The electoral bodies took measures to adapt to the complexity of these general elections.***

The three electoral bodies – the *Jurado Nacional de Elecciones* (JNE), the *Oficina Nacional de Procesos Electorales* (ONPE), and the *Registro Nacional de Identificación y Estado Civil* (RENIEC). The electoral bodies took measures to adapt to the complexity of these general elections. Technical coordination between the three bodies proceeded smoothly at national level as well as between their decentralised, temporary bodies, the *Jurados Electorales Especiales* (JEE) and *Oficinas Descentralizadas de Procesos Electorales* (ODPEs). EU observers encountered a high degree of openness and were granted full access to information from the three institutions. ONPE undertook increased efforts to inform political parties and the media about the procedures and logistics of the election preparations. Still, confidence in the election administration was questioned by some EU EOM interlocutors, mainly because of unsubstantiated narratives of fraud in past elections, as well as smear campaigns and threats made by individual candidates in these elections. The late delivery of election materials in some districts of Lima caused disruption on election day, and further undermined confidence in ONPE.

To respond more effectively to critical situations such as electoral conflicts or natural disasters, the JNE for the first time chaired inter-institutional commissions at the regional level, bringing together representatives of ONPE, RENIEC, the Public Prosecutor's Office, Armed Forces, National Police, and other electoral actors, thereby strengthening coordination and the exchange of information. ONPE took various measures to manage the increased complexity of this electoral process compared to previous processes as there were five elections represented on one single ballot. The training period for poll workers was extended. The number of ODPEs was doubled, allowing the deployment of more staff on the ground and the set-up of additional results processing centres.

ONPE and JNE conducted extensive social media campaigns, producing large volumes of original, high-quality voter information content on electoral procedures and various institutional activities, reflecting strong transparency. Both maintained fact-checking initiatives focused on official information. These communication efforts operated largely in parallel rather than as part of a coordinated strategy. Despite extensive voter education and information campaigns by ONPE and the JNE, EU observers noted ahead of the polls that electors had a limited understanding of voting procedures, especially in rural and isolated areas.

ONPE introduced several technological innovations to minimise human error, accelerate the publication of results, and improve transparency and traceability. The Technological Solution for Vote Counting Support (STAE system) was implemented in Lima and Callao (one third of all polling stations) to reduce arithmetic errors in results protocols and enable their immediate publication through digital signatures. In the other regions, the tabulation software included an AI-powered tool to detect errors. Also, the results publication website was redesigned to make it more user-friendly, offer full traceability of results protocols, and enable real-time data downloading for independent analysis by political parties and observers. ONPE carried out successful simulation tests open to political parties and observers, through which minor logistical and performance issues were identified and addressed.

#### **4. Voter Registration**

***There was overall confidence in the accuracy of the voter register, and RENIEC took measures to increase voter participation.***

A total of 27,325,432 citizens were registered to vote on 12 April, including 1.2 million Peruvians living abroad. Voters under the age of 30 comprised 26 per cent of the electorate and included some 2.5 million first-time voters. Voting is compulsory for citizens aged 18 to 70 and failure to vote is subject to a fine. To facilitate participation, RENIEC resolved to allow voter identification with an expired ID card.

RENIEC undertook efforts to raise awareness about updates to the voter register, and no major concerns were raised regarding its accuracy and inclusiveness. The database underlying the voter register is permanently updated by RENIEC through the exchange of information with other state institutions and changes made by citizens themselves. Voters had the opportunity to verify their information on preliminary voter lists, which were published online and in hardcopy in remote villages.

#### **5. Candidate Registration**

***The candidate registration process was effective, although challenges remain regarding internal party democracy and the screening of candidates.***

There are no excessive or restrictive legal requirements to run for the Presidency, Congress, or Andean Parliament. However, the requirement for certain public officials to resign in order to stand – while incumbent members of Congress seeking re-election (88 of 130) are exempt – may affect equality of conditions in the exercise of the right to stand for office.

The online registration process was generally assessed positively by EU EOM interlocutors, with no major issues reported apart from a technical glitch shortly before the deadline, which prompted the JNE to extend the process by a few hours. Overall, 1,772 of 1,900 candidate lists submitted to the 60 JEEs were approved, confirming 7,484 of 9,069 candidates. Almost all political parties nominated some candidates with a criminal record.

Prior to candidate registration, political organisations held primaries to select candidates and determine their order on the candidate lists. Most political organisations opted for delegate-based

voting, one of the three modalities set out by law, which favoured party control. Moreover, the provision allowing up to 20 per cent of congressional candidates to be directly appointed by the party may adversely affect the quality of internal party democracy.

In line with previous EU recommendations, the grounds for excluding candidates due to omissions and inaccuracies in sworn declarations have been reduced. Interoperability with the judiciary for candidate screening purposes remains limited. A total of 119 JNE monitors (*fiscalizadores*) reviewed candidates' compliance with CV requirements. Some appeals against JEE decisions were filed before the JNE, including the first-instance disqualification of presidential candidate Mario Vizcarra (*Perú Primero*). The decision was overturned based on a broad interpretation by the JNE of Constitutional Court jurisprudence regarding the principle of rehabilitation.

Another notable case included the presidential candidate Vladimir Cerrón (*Perú Libre*), a fugitive from justice after violating a preventive detention order, who conducted a remote campaign on social media. Cerrón applied for a habeas corpus to the Constitutional Court. A decision was pending at the time of the election.

## 6. Campaign Environment

***An overall subdued campaign was punctuated by a few incidents of violence and the use of divisive language.***

The campaign was subdued, with interlocutors citing citizens' disillusionment and disengagement from politics, limited campaign funds, and a shift to online campaigning. Candidates reached out to voters via smaller meetings, billboards, murals, door-to-door campaigns, and caravans. Larger rallies were organised on occasions of presidential candidates' visits to the regions, with most not exceeding 300 participants. In the week ahead of the polls, the campaign gained momentum, with closing rallies of some candidates drawing over 1,000 participants and in five cases over 3,000. In 30 per cent of the observed rallies there were no women among the speakers. Campaign topics included corruption, organised crime, economy, education, healthcare, access to potable water, and issues of local importance. Given the complexity of the ballot, many political parties explained during the campaign events how to vote for them.

The overall peaceful campaign was punctuated by a few incidents of violence. Rafael López-Aliaga's (*Renovación Popular*) campaigning in Puno (1 April) and Apurímac (2 April) was met with violent attacks in these opposition strongholds. Presidential candidates César Acuña (*Alianza para el Progreso*) and Fernando Olivera (*Frente de la Esperanza*) had eggs and water thrown at them on two separate occasions (23 and 30 March). Twenty-nine of the 37 competing political organisations subscribed to the JNE's Electoral Ethics Pact, committing themselves to observe democratic principles during the campaign. However, there were some instances of discriminatory and divisive language. The Honour Tribunal, tasked with monitoring compliance with the pact, issued warnings to *Podemos Perú* candidates for their divisive, racist, and classist language and called for a campaign environment free of violence and discrimination against women. *Renovación Popular* did not sign the Pact and López-Aliaga issued violent threats against adversaries, journalists, and the ONPE chief. *Avanza País* resorted to divisive and homophobic language.

Community police (*rondas campesinas*) engaged in the electoral process, at times in violation of the law; in rural and mountainous provinces of Piura they banned all political propaganda, whereas in Puno they publicly whipped a government official for participating in a *Fuerza Popular* campaign event. In several regions, EU observers heard allegations that contestants resorted to vote-buying in the form of financial or in-kind incentives (Cajamarca, Huancavelica, Lima, Madre de Dios, Pasco, Piura, Tacna, Tumbes) and promises of scholarships (La Libertad) or election day transportation and meals (Ayacucho, Cusco).

Many candidates claimed that disparities in access to public funds resulted in an unlevel playing field. The PEN 77.7 million (EUR 19.4 million) in public funding for campaigning in media (*franja electoral*) was divided among political organisations partly in equal shares and partly in proportion to their existing representation in the current Congress. It ranged from PEN 7.5 million (EUR 1.95 million) to PEN 1.3 million (EUR 320,000). The Political Organizations Law was amended in February 2025 to permit donations not only from citizens but also from private enterprises. However, most political organisations reported that donations came primarily from their members and supporters, and also from fundraising dinners. Campaign expenses in the regions were reportedly covered almost entirely by the candidates. Several interlocutors voiced concerns over alleged illicit financing in politics.

Some 90 per cent of political organisations and 84 per cent of candidates complied with the obligation to submit interim campaign finance reports. Many highlighted ONPE's capacity building efforts and assistance in the process. ONPE was quick to publish these reports and present declared data in a user-friendly format. According to the financial declarations, which covered the period until 13 March, *Alianza Para el Progreso* ran the most expensive campaign, with the party and its candidates having jointly spent PEN 10.4 million (EUR 2.6 million). This represented more than double the expenditure by the next highest spenders, *Renovación Popular* and *Fuerza Popular*, each declaring PEN 4 million (EUR 1 million) in expenditures.

## 7. Traditional Media

### *State owned media provided extensive, balanced and neutral coverage of candidates.*

The media landscape in Peru is diverse and pluralistic but characterised by ownership concentration and editorial polarisation. Radio remains the most far-reaching medium, while all traditional media continue to grow digitally. National media offered extensive election campaign coverage. Regional coverage was constrained by precarious financial conditions, with local media frequently charging for interviews or coverage. This often left populations in radio-dependent areas with poor access to quality information.

According to Reporters Without Borders, freedom of expression in Peru is in serious decline. Journalists face increasing threats including verbal, physical and digital attacks as well as judicial persecution, with 458 incidents recorded last year, including four murders. Although journalists were generally able to cover the campaign, they were often targeted, with over 60 such incidents, including death threats, reported by the National Association of Journalists in the past three months. These attacks were echoed in social media, amplifying their effect. EU EOM interlocutors indicated that the release in March of Daniel Urresti, convicted in 2023 for the 1988 murder of journalist Hugo Bustíos, has fuelled a climate of impunity. Despite condemnation by the IACHR and media watchdog organisations, Urresti actively participated in the campaign of *Podemos Perú*. EU EOM interlocutors also indicated that investigative journalism is limited by APCI Law amendments that control foreign funding and provide for heavy sanctions. Five outlets have initiated constitutional protection actions in response.

The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and the press. However, the Penal Code provides for prison sentences of up to three years for defamation, a sanction that goes against international standards. While a draft law increasing this to five years has been archived, EU EOM interlocutors fear that such initiatives may be brought back on the agenda. At the same time, there are still open defamation cases against journalists, including one involving a leading candidate.

The Election Law does not include specific provisions on media coverage beyond requiring non-discrimination. The ONPE-administered *franja electoral* was broadcast from 11 February to 9

April. Some 57 per cent went to TV, 32 per cent to radio, and 11 per cent to social media, with similar shares between national and regional outlets. New rules allowing political parties to select both from a wide range of media outlets and from specific broadcast slots sparked controversy and investigation, as some parties allocated their *franja electoral* to party affiliated outlets. In its current configuration, the *franja electoral* does not serve the citizens' right to information and risks fostering unethical relationships between media and political organisations. Some interlocutors complained that the unequal distribution of the *franja electoral* favoured incumbent parties represented in the outgoing Congress, which already benefitted from direct public financing. *Pais para Todos* was the only party not to use it, deeming the mechanism untransparent.

Media coverage of the campaign increased in the last weeks, following a series of presidential debates organised by JNE and transmitted by *TVPerú*. Considering the constraints resulting from the high number of candidates, the debates were well-structured and informative, but candidates often used the time for mutual accusations rather than presenting their platforms. These confrontational moments were widely rebroadcast by other outlets.

EU EOM media monitoring indicated that media coverage was concentrated on the presidential race and focussed on the candidates leading in opinion polls.<sup>1</sup> State-owned media provided extensive, balanced and neutral coverage of candidates. The private television outlets with the largest amount of electoral coverage showed more bias. In the combined data from all monitored private television channels, Rafael López-Aliaga and Keiko Fujimori received the most extensive coverage, largely neutral in tone and with the highest level of direct access. Other candidates received significantly less coverage. Among them, Álvarez's coverage was mostly neutral with considerable direct access, while Acuña, Grozo, López-Chau and Sánchez were more often covered negatively and had limited direct access. Monitored radio offered largely neutral coverage. Newspapers monitored by the EU EOM were mostly critical in tone.

## 8. Digital Communication and Social Media

***Social media dominated the campaign, marked by innovative digital outreach, high engagement, and a predominantly negative tone.***

Social media platforms proved to be the main arena for the electoral campaign, supported by high internet penetration and widespread use among political actors and election authorities. Around 80 per cent of the population had internet access, although a pronounced urban-rural digital divide persisted, with connectivity exceeding 90 per cent in Lima Metropolitan Area but remaining below 60 per cent in rural regions. Mobile devices constituted the primary means of internet access across the country, supporting the use of major platforms led by Facebook, TikTok and Instagram, while X had a comparatively smaller reach.

Since 2020, the legal framework governing online campaigning has progressively incorporated provisions on social media. Reforms adopted in 2024 and 2025 integrated social media into *franja electoral* and clarified the regulation of online campaigning within campaign finance and advertising rules. *Franja electoral* was used by political organisations to disseminate pre-recorded campaign spots through approved accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, which was paid directly with public funds. A total of 203 registered online channels or accounts authorised to disseminate electoral advertising across 95 digital media providers posted approximately 20,000 spots during the campaign period.

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<sup>1</sup> From 11 March until 12 April, the EU EOM monitored the primetime broadcast of national TV channels *TVPerú*, *America TV*, *Latina TV*, *ATV*, *Panamericana TV*, and *Willax TV*, as well as *Radio Nacional*, *RPP*, and *Radio Exitosa*, and the daily newspapers *El Peruano*, *El Comercio*, *La República*, *Correo*, *Peru21*, and *Trome*.

EU EOM social media monitoring of Facebook, TikTok, Instagram and X identified that approximately PEN 2.75 million (EUR 683,000) was spent on political advertising on Meta by presidential candidates and political organisations between 4 March and 4 April. Spending was concentrated among a small number of candidates and their parties. José Luna and his party *Podemos Perú* were the highest combined spenders, investing PEN 664,500 (EUR 168,000) on Meta. César Acuña was the highest individual spender, investing PEN 406,500 (EUR 103,000), while his party *Alianza para el Progreso* recorded an additional PEN 218,000 (EUR 55,000) in political adverts on the Meta platforms. This was followed by Keiko Fujimori and *Fuerza Popular* (PEN 306,000 (EUR 77,000)), George Forsyth and *Somos Perú* (PEN 219,000 (EUR 55,000)), and Rafael López Aliaga and *Renovación Popular* (PEN 166,000 (EUR 42,000)), where spending was driven primarily by the parties, while individual candidate spending remained negligible.

The campaign saw the novel and increasingly systematic use of influencers and live-streaming formats by several presidential candidates, marking a shift towards more personalised forms of digital campaigning. These practices were most prominently associated with César Acuña, whose campaign made more systematic use of influencers, while Rafael López-Aliaga maintained a strong presence on TikTok with influencer engagement appearing more sporadic. EU EOM social media monitoring identified coordinated bot-like activity amplifying posts related to Acuña, while trolling-style messaging was frequently observed in support of López-Aliaga and Keiko Fujimori.

The televised presidential debates generated high levels of online engagement, with activity peaking during confrontational exchanges and controversial statements. Across the six debate nights, reactions by social media users reflected an increasingly confrontational tone, characterised by personal attacks, accusations of corruption, and recurring references to criminality directed at candidates.

Overall, disinformation was present but did not constitute a dominant feature of the online campaign. False or misleading opinion polls of varying levels of sophistication represented the most common format and saw a marked increase in the days immediately preceding the elections. Narratives alleging electoral fraud were mainly promoted in networks supporting Rafael Lopez-Aliaga and were at times accompanied by hostile rhetoric directed at electoral authorities. However, these narratives circulated mainly within politically aligned communities and did not gain widespread traction.

## 9. Political Participation of Women

***Setbacks in the parity law and the absence of measures for effective inclusion continue to limit women's participation in political life.***

Recent setbacks regarding the 2020 Law on Parity and Alternation included the removal of the gender alternation rule for presidential tickets. Only four of 35 tickets featured a woman as presidential candidate (*Fuerza Popular*, *Un Camino Diferente*, *Fuerza y Libertad*, and *Primero La Gente*), though all included at least one woman. Measures for gender parity in top positions were not considered, as reflected by the fact that only about 20 per cent of congressional lists were headed by women.

Candidates confirmed that, although part of public funding must legally support training with parity criteria, and ONPE regulations require political organisations to allocate part of their budget to women's inclusion, compliance remained limited without concrete enforcement.

The 2021 Law to prevent and sanction harassment of women in political life contains gaps in its scope of application and its penalty framework, rendering it unenforceable and ineffective. Most EU EOM interlocutors were unaware of the new JNE guidelines to coordinate the handling of complaints. Women candidates also reported a recent uptick of violence in digital and media

environments. The Honour Tribunal issued a statement condemning harassment against female candidates, quoting a specific case involving a congressional candidate.

## **10. Political Participation of Indigenous and Afro-Peruvian Peoples**

### ***Remoteness and diversity of the indigenous communities hamper their right to well informed choice and election participation.***

Voter education materials were developed in various languages by the JNE and ONPE. Indigenous communities inhabiting remote areas received limited voter education and campaigning efforts. Interlocutors in Loreto and Madre de Dios raised concerns over remoteness of polling stations from some communities, for whom voting would entail travel expenses that frequently exceeded the fine for failing to vote.

Political platforms paid little attention to issues specifically affecting indigenous communities. However, many political organisations included indigenous candidates on their lists. Some interlocutors underlined that prior community endorsement is often a prerequisite if an indigenous candidate hopes to be elected. Indigenous leaders ran for the vice-presidency on the *Ahora Nación* and *Juntos por el Perú* tickets, and an Afro-Peruvian activist ran for the vice-presidency on the *Partido del Buen Gobierno* ticket. A number of candidates used indigenous languages and clothing when campaigning. EU observers reported that audiences were addressed in indigenous languages in almost 15 per cent of observed campaign events.

## **11. Citizen and International Observers**

### ***Inclusive provisions for the participation of observers contributed to the transparency of the process.***

The legal framework provides for national and international election observation of all stages of the electoral process. The citizen observer group *Transparencia* formed a broad coalition of civil society organisations, deploying over 5,000 observers on election day. Apart from the EU EOM, international observers were deployed by the Organization of American States, the Carter Center, the Inter-American Union of Electoral Bodies, the Association of World Electoral Bodies, and the Association of Women Electoral Magistrates of the Americas.

## **12. Polling, Counting and Tabulation of Results**

### ***Significant delays in opening of the polls complicated an otherwise well-organised election day.***

Election day was calm and orderly in most parts of the country, but with significant delays in the opening of polling stations in parts of Lima where 13 polling centres did not open. ONPE stated that the delays were due to the late delivery of election kits and insisted that the contracted transport company would be held accountable. After the closing of polls, the JNE declared that voting in the 13 polling centres would take place the following day, guaranteeing and prioritising the right to vote and to participation for the 55,261 affected voters.

On 12 April, the EU EOM observed the opening of polls at 60 polling stations across the country. Only 2 opened on time, 36 with up to 60 minutes delay, and the rest with a delay of more than one hour. In most cases, this was due to the late arrival or unpreparedness of polling staff, and in six cases, due to a lack of essential election material. EU observers assessed the overall opening process as transparent but also slow and with excessive delays with procedures not always being followed. Party agents and observers were able to follow the process without restrictions.

The EU EOM observed voting at 577 polling stations during the day and described the process as calm, orderly, and smooth. There were no incidents recorded in the vicinity of polling centres. Most observed polling stations were staffed by the pre-designated poll workers, and in only 19 polling

stations was it necessary to draft a replacement member from among queuing voters. Voting procedures were mostly followed. Despite the complex ballot paper, EU observers assessed voters' understanding of the procedures as good or very good in 94 per cent of the observed polling stations. The EU noted the presence of national observers from *Transparencia* who had deployed more than 5,000 observers.

Closing and counting were overall transparent and well-intentioned but affected by the complexity of the procedures and insufficiently prepared polling staff. The presence of party agents increased as compared to during the day, with agents present in 53 out of 59 polling stations observed during counting. The most-represented parties were *Renovación Popular*, *Alianza para el Progreso*, *Fuerza Popular*, and *Ahora Nación*. Procedures were mostly followed, and EU observers qualified the closing and counting process positively in 47 out of 59 observed polling stations.

The first results protocols were published on the ONPE results website around 19:00 on the election night. Results tabulation is ongoing in the 126 results computing centres, with EU observers initially evaluating the process as methodical, and orderly. The EU EOM will continue to observe results tabulation as well as any potential recounts and legal challenges.

On 13 April, the EU observed the opening of polls at the 13 polling centres in Lima that were not operational the previous day. By 09:00, 12 of these centres had opened for voting, mostly with the pre-designated poll workers. One centre in Pachacamac opened only shortly before 12:00 due to a shortage of poll workers.

An electronic version of this Preliminary Statement is available on the EU EOM website:

[https://www.eas.europa.eu/eom-peru-2026\\_en](https://www.eas.europa.eu/eom-peru-2026_en)

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