

Nayib Bukele declares victory in El Salvador elections



San Salvador, February 5 (RHC)-- In El Salvador, President Nayib Bukele has declared victory in Sunday's election — though the official results haven't been announced. Early ballot counts showed Bukele with over 80% of the votes.

Meanwhile, his political party, New Ideas, is expected to win almost all of the seats in El Salvador's Legislative Assembly, where it already held a supermajority.

Bukele addressed his supporters in the capital San Salvador on Sunday night: “We have started to defeat our biggest evil. We are on the cusp of winning the war against the gangs. Literally, it’s not an exaggeration; it’s not a hyperbole. Literally, we went from being the most dangerous country in the world to being the most secure in all of the Western Hemisphere.”

Human rights advocates warned of holding Sunday’s election in El Salvador under a brutal state of emergency enacted by Bukele’s government to “crack down” on gangs, which has led to heavy militarization and the mass arrest of tens of thousands of people since March 2022.

Rights groups have documented arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances, torture and violations of due process. They also estimate more than 200 people have died in jail and police custody.

Last year, El Salvador’s Supreme Electoral Tribunal allowed Bukele to run for a second term even though the Salvadoran Constitution prohibits it. Many fear Bukele’s grip on power will further erode democracy in El Salvador and push the Central American country to authoritarianism.

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