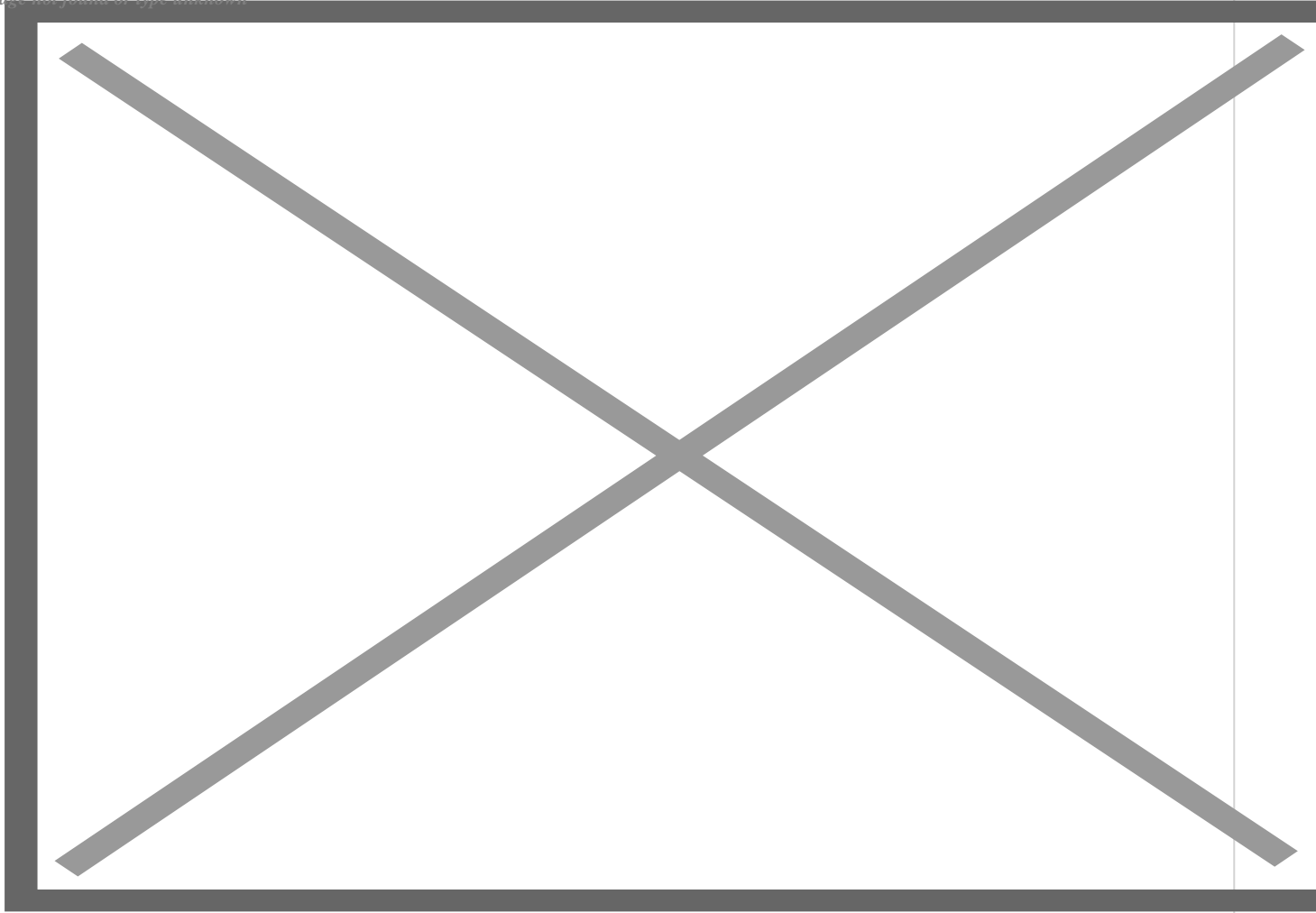


Andres Arauz favorite to become Ecuador's next president

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Ecuador's presidential candidate Andres Arauz

Quito, January 23 (RHC)-- Ecuador's Comunaliza polling company Friday released the results of a survey showing that the Leftist candidate Andres Arauz is the favorite to win the upcoming February 7th election. According to the poll, 49.4 percent of Ecuadorian voters have already decided their intention to vote. Twenty-three percent of them assured they will choose the Union for Hope (UNES) candidate.

The Creo - Social Christian Party Alliance candidate Guillermo Lasso received 11.7 percent of the votes. He is followed by Pachakutik Party candidate Yaku Perez, who got 12.1 percent.

This week, former President Rafael Correa reaffirmed his confidence in the victory of the Arauz-Carlos Rabascal binomial. "All the polls place us in the first place, and many of them assure we will win in a single round," he said.

Most respondents are men from 20 to 35 years old, high school graduates, and middle and lower-class people. Thirty-five percent of the people surveyed are unemployed. That is apparently why their main concern was the lack of access to the labor market.

Disinterest in the election campaign has increased compared to the results of other recent surveys. Fifty percent of those polled said they had no interest in the electoral process, while 38 percent said they did not watch any of the presidential debates.

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