

Voting underway in Colombia; UN hopes elections will be free of violence

Bogota, May 29 (RHC)-- Voting is underway in Colombia, with some 39 million Colombians eligible to go to the polls on Sunday to elect the next president == a decision for which surveys show leftist Gustavo Petro, of the Pacto Histórico coalition, as the favorite.

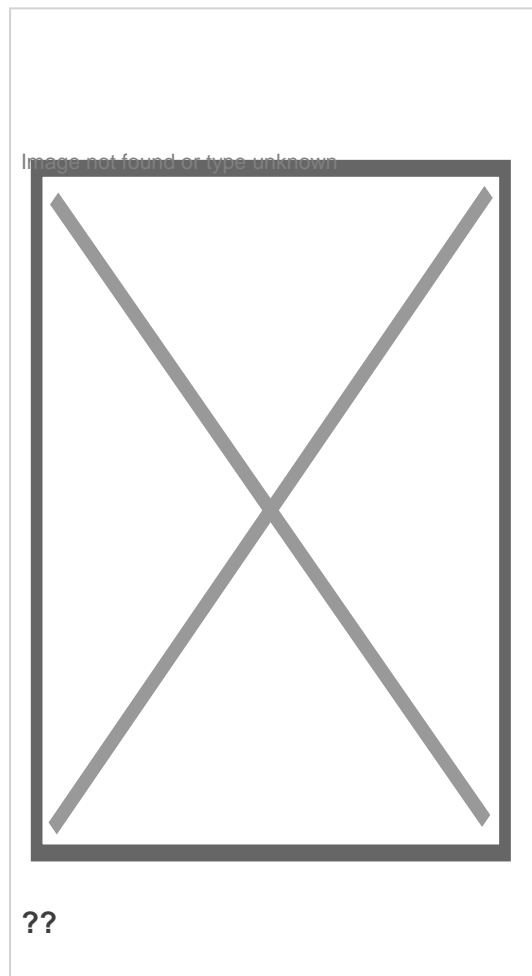
Representatives of the United Nations Organization in Colombia expressed their confidence that Sunday -- Election Day -- will be carried out in a participatory and inclusive manner, in an atmosphere of respect and free of violence.

Through a statement, the United Nations valued Colombia's democratic tradition and its institutional strength, including that of its electoral system. In the UN document, the international organization added that it expects Sunday's presidential elections to guarantee the political rights of citizens and their representatives, as well as the principles of transparency, accountability and the rule of law.

Judging by the polls, Petro will not reach the votes to win in the first round, which would take the decision to the second round of elections scheduled for June 19th, with either the right-wing Federico Gutierrez or the populist independent Rodolfo Hernandez, who are following him in the polls.

In order to be elected in the first round, the winning party must obtain half plus one of the total valid votes, otherwise a second round will be held between the two candidates with the highest number of votes.

The presidential candidate who obtains the victory in these decisive elections will govern for a period of four years without the right to re-election.





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