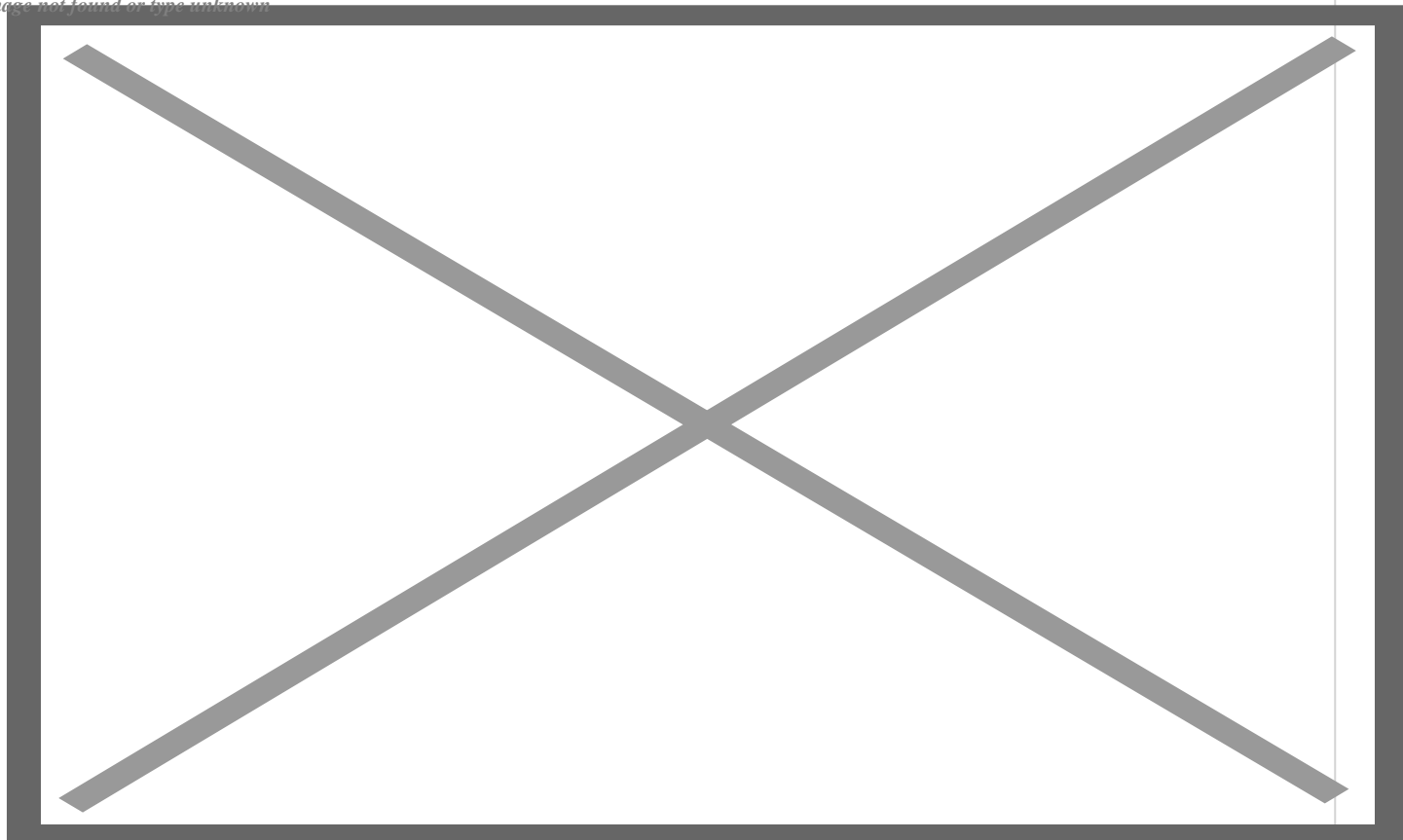


Nothing decided ahead of Sunday's ballot in Ecuador

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**The winner of the elections will complete the current presidential term that ends in May 2025.
Photo taken from Prensa Latina**

By María Josefina Arce

Time is running short for the second round of general elections in Ecuador and insecurity continues to dominate the panorama of the South American country, while so far there is no clear favorite between the two contenders for the presidency for next Sunday's elections.

The last days have been marked by new violent events such as the murder of a prosecutor and the kidnapping and subsequent release of a former mayor of the city of Durán.

The Observatorio Ciudadano de Violencia Política assured that Ecuador has experienced this year the most violent electoral process in its history, with almost 90 cases of political violence, ranging from murders, attacks and kidnappings to threats.

In fact, during the electoral campaign leading up to the August 20 elections, the murders of presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio on August 9 and of the mayor of Manta, Agustín Intriago, on July 23, were recorded.

The Observatory points out that although political violence is not a new event in the electoral contest in Ecuador, the levels reached on this occasion are absolutely unprecedented.

Insecurity, one of the main concerns of Ecuadorians, has been one of the issues that has marked the campaign and the debates of the two presidential candidates: Luisa Gonzalez, of Revolucion Ciudadana, and Daniel Noboa, of Accion Democratica Nacional.

Let us remember that these elections were held after last May, when President Guillermo Lasso, in order to avoid a trial against him, decreed the so-called "muerte cruzada", a constitutional figure to call early general elections and dissolve the National Assembly.

Nothing has been decided for next Sunday's ballot. Meanwhile, some opinion polls give Gonzalez as the favorite to win at the polls, others give Noboa as the possible winner, and some point to a technical tie, in which the difference would be made by the undecided vote, which is between 10 and almost 20%.

The candidate of Revolucion Ciudadana was the most voted in the first round, last August 20, with 33.3% of the votes, followed by Noboa, who obtained 23.66% and surprisingly slipped into the ballot.

The winner of the elections will complete the current presidential term, which ends in May 2025. The reality is that he will have very little time to fulfill his electoral promises before the country returns to the polls.

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