Honduras' Nasralla: 'Electoral Body Rigging Vote Count'

30/11/2017

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The Opposition Alliance candidate Salvador Nasralla has alleged that the Supreme Electoral Tribunal is distorting the vote count, to favor his opponent, incumbent President Juan Orlando Hernandez, and has said his alliance will not recognize "manipulated" results.

"We do not trust these results of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal that manipulated the system," the candidate told a crowd attending a press conference on Wednesday night.

Former President Manuel Zelaya also brought up other irregularities that have angered the opposition and electoral experts alike. "This is the first time that the TSE does not give results in the stipulated times of an electoral process," said Zelaya.

"David Matamoros is doing everything possible to take away our triumph," he said. The TSE is in its third day of counting presidential electoral votes but has yet to announce the winner.

The Honduran Roundtable for Human Rights said that Matamoros is giving false information to the public that "doesn't correspond to reality but only benefits" Hernandez. The RHR said this delegitimizes the TSE and casts doubts on the hundreds of other municipal-level and assembly electoral results that also took place Sunday.

The organization called on candidates and the TSE to respect the popular vote, and for international organizations to stay vigilant of electoral rights violations taking place in Honduras.

Meanwhile, a group of international organizations called for U.S. Congress to stop all support to Hernandez, "We, an international delegation sponsored by La Voz de los de Abajo, CODEPINK, and the Honduras Solidarity Network, urge you to contact the US Embassy in Tegucigalpa as well as your Congressional and Senate

representatives to demand that the US stop all support (political and economic) for Juan Orlando Hernandez as he attempts to steal an election to extend his dictatorship."

Since polls closed Sunday afternoon, both Hernandez of the right-wing National Party and Nasralla of the center-left Alliance Opposition have both declared themselves the winner.

Yesterday in a press conference Matamoros announced that the TSE already knows the presidential winner, but is waiting to count all ballots to confirm the numbers. Nasralla had an early lead on Monday, ahead of Hernandez by 5 percent.

As of 8:30 a.m. local time, 75.39 percent of the votes were counted with Nasralla still leading with 42.63 percent of the votes, Hernandez is less than 1 percent behind with 41.66 percent.

Nasralla said the TSE is not counting ballots from regions sympathetic to him and his party, including 28 percent of ballots from the department of Cortes, counting first the ballots from departments aligned to Hernandez, cutting his lead.

He also said he has information that the TSE computer system was tampered with, eliminating certain electoral transparency and security mechanisms.

With that, Nasralla is calling supporters to the streets to protest the TSE slow counting process and its lack of electoral transparency, "I call all of Honduras to help me DEFEND THE VOTE tomorrow morning in Tegucigalpa … ALL TO TEGUCIGALPA to DEFEND THE TRIUMPH." He added that protesters should act calmly, but won't be victims of "intimidation" or "violence."

Nasralla is calling on the Organization of the American States and the European Union to not only observe the elections but to investigate "fraudulent acts" he said the current government is committing.

In a press conference Tuesday, Marisa Matias, mission leader of the European Union Parliament Electoral Observation Mission in Honduras, agreed that the TSE needs to count ballots faster and update electoral numbers on its website in real time. The TSE immediately began posting the most recent electoral numbers on its 2017 General Elections website.