
Honduras' Right Defeated: Xiomara Castro, New President

By: Arnaldo Musa
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With more than half of votes counted, Xiomara Castro (*Partido Libre*) gets one million votes, 400 000 more votes than her closest rival, the pro-government Nasry Asfura, mayor of the city of Tegucigalpa, which has resulted in a sounding blow and farewell to the disastrous government of Juan Orlando Hernández, who ruled for eight years, taking advantage from spurious electoral outcomes and the assassination of members of the opposition.

The third place, by wide margin, was for liberal Yani Rosenthal. Thus, a transcendental election has just taken place, as the two traditional parties —the governing *Partido Nacional* (PN) and the *Partido Liberal*, with five terms each— had prevailed in ten prior presidential elections. Bi-partisanship seems to be mortally wounded in Honduras.

"Justice has been done by the people. We reverted authoritarianism and continuity. We are going to form a government of national reconciliation, peace, and justice. We are going to build a new era," cried the wife of former president Mel Zelaya before her followers, determined to reach out to the different sectors of the country, including the defeated ruling party.

Castro invoked a national dialogue from now on in search of *"responding to so much need."* The electoral winner also drew the applause from those closest to her with references to participatory and direct democracy, common terms used in the revolutions that supported her husband in his 12-year journey, after the 2009 coup. *"The people will be the eternal leader. I will call for a permanent dialogue with the people,"* she said.

The leader of *Alianza de Oposición* not only becomes the first woman in history to govern in Honduras ever, she is also the sole woman leader in Latin America right now. The coalition she leads has been favored with a historical participation in the elections, over 3 million voters, nearly 69%.

The urge for a change and the powerful protest vote against the administration of right-winger Juan Orlando Hernández, tainted by corruption and drug trafficking, show the weariness before the multiple denounces against the current government, added to its proven inefficiency in the fight against poverty, not to mention the wounds that remain open after the events that took place twelve years ago.

"We won," said out loud former President Mel Zelaya, Castro's husband and founder of *Partido Libertad y Refundación* (Libre), shortly after the closing of polling centers.

Libre leads the coalition *Alianza de Oposición*, along with *Partido Salvador* (PSH), led by Salvador Nasralla (who lost four years ago among fraud allegations and after Hernández forced the Constitution to run for a second term), center-left *Partido de Innovación and Unidad* (PINU), and a group of Liberal leaders.

The same Resistance team —after the coup— has lined up around the presidential couple, when Zelaya, who was elected in 2005 as the candidate for the Liberal Party, was taken out of bed by the military and sent to Costa Rica, after wanting to hold a Constituent Assembly.

"12 years after the coup against Brother Manuel Zelaya, the people of Morazán resume the path of hope, granting a historic victory to the president-elect, Xiomara Castro. The great homeland celebrates the triumph of democracy and peace in Honduras," celebrated Nicolás Maduro as soon as he knew about the results.

Before the elections began, Nayib Bukele, president of El Salvador, sent a strong message to Hondurans.

His statement came after the ultra-reactionary political party ARENA, one of the oldest and most conservative parties, urged Hondurans to vote for the National party of Honduras (ruling government).

Bukele, in his statement, pointed out that people should not be carried away by what ARENA suggested. He stressed that he did not want to express any opinion, but this was the trigger for him to tweet.

"I was not going to say anything about the elections in Honduras, but I recommend that my Honduran brothers do exactly the OPPOSITE of what ARENA says," he wrote. *"Nothing that ARENA suggests can be good, we can prove it with three decades of looting and death in El Salvador,"* he said.

A party broke out at Libre's headquarters even before the results were confirmed. Thousands of Hondurans took to the streets to celebrate the fall of *Partido Nacional*, which refused to admit defeat. The cries of "Yes, it was possible!" were mixed with those of "Xiomara, Xiomara!", including the usual outbursts of fireworks.

Of the 18 departments, Xiomara Castro won in 17: Atlántida, Colón, Comayagua, Copán, Cortés, Choluteca, Francisco Morazán, Gracias a Dios, Intibucá, Islas de la Bahía, La Paz, Lempira, Ocotepeque, Olancho, Santa Bárbara, Valle and Yoro.

On the other hand, the candidate Nasry Asfura, of the *Partido Nacional*, only succeeded in the department of El Paraíso. It is worth mentioning that no vote abroad has yet been counted.

So far, the National Electoral Council has only shared preliminary results. The agency has 30 days to release the final results and share the official statement.

GOVERNMENT PLAN

Last September 5th, Xiomara Castro released her Government Plan 2022-2026 at the convention center of a capital hotel.

"I am releasing my Government Plan for the re-founding of Honduras and the construction of democratic socialism 2022-2026, which consists of a critical analysis and structural and humane proposals, which guarantee that Honduras will be able to live in freedom and peace," she said.

Among the proposals that the newly-elected President introduced were: The installation of the CICIH 2, a plebiscite for a national constituent assembly, the sale of the presidential plane and the strengthening of relations with China.

"This commission of the CICIH 2 will be created by the government of Honduras, with the support of the United Nations organization; I will promulgate a Penal Code to replace the Corruption Code, I will create the Community Police in all neighborhoods and villages, in every corner of our country, as a coordinated arm of the National Preventive Police."

Likewise, she will cancel monopolies and oligopolies, while creating 200 000 jobs a year.

"I will become guardian of your own rights," she said.

On the political and social issue, she indicated that *"I will order an amnesty for political prisoners and a pardon for those prisoners who were wrongly sentenced for protesting in defense of human rights and natural resources."*

"The crisis is so serious that there are those who lose faith, due to poverty, lack of food, the inability to pay the high cost of water, electricity, transportation and medicines; Hundreds of companies and thousands of ventures went bankrupt," she pointed out.

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