
Voters Deny President Noboa Key Security Reforms

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Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa suffered a defeat in the national referendum held this Sunday, which he himself had championed. The populace broadly rejected all four proposals on the ballot, including initiatives to convene a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution and to permit the establishment of foreign military bases.

Turnout exceeded 80% of the 13.9 million eligible Ecuadorians. The electoral process unfolded normally and without major incidents, aside from a bus accident in the Andean locality of Simiátug that claimed the lives of at least twelve people being transported to vote.

A Clear Rejection

The referendum's proposals, which also included reducing the number of assembly members from 151 to 73 and eliminating public financing for political parties, were met with widespread disapproval by Ecuadorians. The 'No' vote won by margins ranging from 6 to 23 percentage points, according to results from over 85% of the tally sheets published.

With these figures, the president of the National Electoral Council (CNE), Diana Atamaint, indicated that the 'No' vote has a marked trend on all four questions. Although the count is not yet complete, with approximately 20% of tally sheets remaining to be processed, the outcome is clear.

On the question of the Constituent Assembly, the 'No' received 61.55% of valid votes versus 38.45% for 'Yes'. Similar results were seen regarding foreign military bases, where 'No' garnered 60.50% against 'Yes' at 39.50%.

Consequently, Ecuadorians voted to maintain the current constitution—inherited from the era of *Correísmo*, as it was established in 2008 under the initiative of Rafael Correa (2007-2017). They also upheld the prohibition enshrined in that constitution that prevents the presence of foreign military bases on Ecuadorian soil.

A Political Setback

The results represent a significant political setback for President Noboa. He had staked his political capital on the referendum just months after being re-elected by a wide margin over *Correísta* candidate Luisa González in a controversial election marred by widespread, though uninvestigated, irregularities.

Regarding Sunday's outcome, Noboa acknowledged his defeat, doing so through the social media platform X rather than through traditional press channels as is customary. *"Our commitment does not change; it grows stronger. We will continue to fight tirelessly for the country you deserve, with the tools we have,"* Noboa stated.

The Backfired Strategy

Noboa sought to leverage the country's record-breaking violence to achieve his goal of altering the nation's sovereignty by allowing foreign military installations. However, the strategy appears to have backfired. Analysts suggest that while security remains a top public concern, the electorate was unwilling to cede elements of national sovereignty as a solution. Despite the government's effective communication during the state of emergency, the people of Ecuador ultimately rejected what they perceived as a denigrating proposal to sell the nation's sovereignty.

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