

# CONSORCIO PANORAMA ELECTORAL

## PRE-ELECTION OBSERVATION UPDATE AND ELECTION DAY OBSERVATION PREVIEW

With the elections just one day away, the Panorama Electoral Consortium, comprised of four organizations: Ethics and Transparency Civic Group, Leadership Institute of the Segovias, the Chinandega Women's Movement and the Chontaleñas Women's Network, presents the latest findings from its independent and systematic pre-election observation, as well as a summary of the Consortium's plans for election day observation.

### PRE-ELECTION OBSERVATION FINDINGS: OCTOBER 16 - 31

Panorama Electoral has been observing the pre-election period since mid-August, involving 152 long-term observers (LTOs) across 152 municipalities. Despite the restrictive environment for election observation, the observers have objectively and professionally monitored key aspects of the pre-election environment, including the electoral authorities, voter education campaigns, the campaign environment, abuse of state resources, and electoral violence. They have submitted reports via text message to a central data center every two weeks and reported critical incidents in real time.

During the period of October 16 - 31, Panorama Electoral has observed many of the same fundamental flaws in the electoral process that have persisted throughout the observation period, including a lack of genuine competition, transparency, checks and balances. Key findings from this period are detailed below.

#### **The abuse of state resources by FSLN continued on a widespread, systematic level.**

From October 16 – 31, a nearly all observers reported that FSLN used state vehicles (90% of municipalities) and public buildings (84% of municipalities) for campaigning. In contrast, observers reported that the PLI used state vehicles in 5% of municipalities and public buildings in 6%. Although the First Lady announced on November 2 that FSLN should remove all propaganda from public buildings, this announcement comes just four days before election day, after the impact of these illegal acts on electoral integrity has already occurred.

**The level and quality of campaign activity continued to reflect an election that lacks genuine competition.** FSLN candidates continued to more actively campaign than other parties. Observers did report a slight increase in campaigning this period, as election day draws near.

- Observers reported FSLN campaign activity in 81% of municipalities, up from 73% in the first half of October.
- PLI candidates were significantly less active than FSLN, with observers observing campaign activity in only 36% of municipalities.
- Observers reported that political parties other than FSLN and PLI were campaigning in 52% of all municipalities.

**Voter education activities conducted by the Supreme Electoral Council (CSE) remained at a low level**, even during this period immediately preceding election day. Less than half of observers reported voter education campaigns via radio (43%), television (43%), print media (37%), social media (37%), and mobile publicity (32%). Voter education

did increase slightly since the first half of October. It is worth noting, however, that since observation began in mid-August, at no point did a majority of observers report seeing voter education activities via any medium.

**The campaign environment remained peaceful** during the second half of October. Physical violence, messages of hate speech, threats or intimidation were rare.

It is also important to note the CSE's late accreditation of independent media to cover activities on election day, indicating a discriminatory behavior toward independent media compared to state-controlled media.

## **PREVIEW OF ELECTION DAY OBSERVATION**

With election day just one day away, the Panorama Electoral Consortium is well-prepared to deploy its systematically-trained observers across the country to deter fraud and impartially assess the process.

On election day, Panorama Electoral will deploy 652 well-trained, non-partisan election observers to all municipalities. This includes 158 municipal supervisors, as well as 494 short-term observers deployed in a systematic, proportional manner across the country. This allows Panorama Electoral to provide a more representative and comprehensive assessment of election day processes.

Observers will send reports via text messages, which will be processed by a sophisticated database. When needed, data clerks will rapidly communicate with observers to ensure completeness and accuracy of observer reports. Panorama Electoral observers will also immediately report any serious problems that may occur.

Observers will monitor the environment around voting centers and will also observe aspects of the voting process. However, since the CSE did not accredit any independent election observation groups, including Panorama Electoral, observers have very restricted access and cannot provide a comprehensive assessment of election day. In particular, observers do not have access to monitor the critical processes of set-up, voting throughout the day, and closing of polling stations, nor the counting and tabulation of results.

Panorama Electoral will issue two statements in the coming days that will include its assessment of election day as well as the broader electoral process:

### *Statement on Opening and Morning Voting*

Panorama Electoral will issue a statement assessing the opening and morning voting at polling stations on **Sunday, November 6, at 2:00 pm at the Barceló Managua hotel.**

### *Preliminary Report on 2016 Elections*

Panorama Electoral will issue a preliminary report providing and assessment of the overall election process, including election day, on **Monday, November 7 at 11:00 am at the Barceló Managua hotel.**

Panorama Electoral will also issue a final, comprehensive report in the weeks following election day.

**Issued in Managua on November 5, 2016**

*For more information about Panorama Electoral, please visit our website at [www.panoramaelectoral.org](http://www.panoramaelectoral.org) and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/panoramaelectoralnicaragua](https://www.facebook.com/panoramaelectoralnicaragua)*