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IRI RAPID RESPONSE ASSESSMENT

2025

ECUADOR PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION RUN OFF





IRI Rapid Response Assessment: 2025 Ecuador Presidential Election Run Off

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On February 9, 2025, Ecuador held its General Election to select its president and 151 members of its National Assembly. In a crowded field of 16 candidates, Ecuador's President Daniel Noboa of the National Democratic Action party (Acción Democrática Nacional, ADN) narrowly won the first round of the presidential election with 44.17 percent of the vote followed by Luisa González of the left-wing Citizen Revolution party (Revolución Ciudadana, RC), who garnered 44.00 percent of the vote. The two candidates faced a second round, run-off on April 13, 2025.

The run-off presidential election marked a pivotal moment for Ecuador and its citizens. The country is grappling with multiple crises, including an unprecedented energy and security emergency, and an ongoing war against gangs and organized crime linked to Mexican drug cartels and other foreign mafias. Daniel Noboa entered politics in 2021 as a National Assembly member for the coastal province of Santa Elena. After President Guillermo Lasso (2021–2023) dissolved the legislature in 2023—using the constitutional *muerte cruzada* “crossed death” mechanism to avert impeachment and force snap elections—Noboa created the ADN party and launched his presidential bid. As Ecuador's youngest president, Noboa positioned himself as a pro-business reformer and maintained an approval rating above 50 percent for much of his tenure. However, his presidency was also defined by escalating insecurity and a deteriorating economy, which left many citizens disillusioned with his leadership.

Luisa González began her political career in 2007 as an alternate legislator for the right leaning Social Christian Party but soon joined former president of Ecuador Rafael Correa's leftist movement. Between 2007 and 2017 she held senior posts in Correa's government, including Secretary of Public Administration and Presidential Office Coordinator. Elected to the National Assembly for Manabí in 2021, González was seen as the political heir to Correa, whose decade-long rule was characterized by corruption, authoritarianism, and alliances with dictatorial regimes in China, Cuba, Iran, and Russia. Correa's administration had adopted anti-business policies, ended years of U.S. cooperation on drug enforcement, and took a lenient stance toward criminal gangs—factors that contributed to a surge in narco-fueled violence still beleaguering the country today. Concerns mounted that González would continue this destructive legacy, particularly given her alleged ties to Venezuela's repressive Maduro regime.

The looming threat of electoral violence and the possibility of a contested outcome posed significant risks to the country's already fragile democratic institutions. Given these concerns, the International Republican Institute (IRI) conducted an urgent technical election assessment to signal international support for a transparent and credible electoral process. On March 21, IRI Regional Director for Central America, Jorge Ceballos, and IRI Senior Advisor for Elections, Jessica Keegan, arrived in Quito to initiate the assessment and thematic analysis of the April 13 presidential run-off. The assessment aimed to evaluate key aspects of the election including administration, the political environment and campaigning, election security, and the immediate post-election period. This report summarizes the observations and analysis of the delegation which was made possible with the support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

IRI's assessment included observation of election day voting in Quito, Ecuador on April 13. The delegation was led by IRI Vice President for Programs Scott Mastic and included former USAID Acting Administrator John Barsa, Senior Policy Analyst, Allison Center for National Security at the Heritage Foundation, Andres Martinez-Fernandez, IRI LAC Senior Director Antonio Garrastazu, IRI Senior Advisor for Electoral Integrity Jessica Keegan, and IRI Central America Program Director Jorge Ceballos. Thematic analysis of the pre-electoral environment was augmented by delegation meetings with key electoral stakeholders. In total, the delegation met with over 30 stakeholders representing political parties, journalists, private sector, civil society, election administration officials, diplomatic corps, and international and citizen monitoring organizations.

The mission conducted its activities in accordance with Ecuadorian law, the *Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation*, and adhered to the principles of non-interference.



Quito, the capital of Ecuador.

Ecuador's electoral processes are governed by a comprehensive legal framework rooted primarily in the 2008 Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador and the *Ley Orgánica Electoral y de Organizaciones Políticas de la República del Ecuador*, commonly known as the *Código de la Democracia* or Democratic Code. Enacted in 2009, this organic law provides detailed regulations on the electoral system, the fiscal management of political parties and movements, the conduct of electoral processes, and the organization of the electoral management body. It serves as the primary legislative instrument governing elections in Ecuador.

Electoral processes are overseen by two principal institutions: the Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE) and the Tribunal Contencioso Electoral (TCE). The CNE is responsible for organizing, directing, supervising, and ensuring the transparency of electoral processes, while the TCE serves as the judicial body tasked with resolving electoral disputes and upholding the legality of electoral acts and procedures. Both operate under the framework of the Constitution and the Democratic Code, with the shared goal of maintaining electoral integrity and fairness.

However, IRI noted a vulnerability of Ecuador's electoral institution due to the way it selects members of the CNE. Although the process is officially presented as a "citizen-driven contest," in practice, political parties and movements often nominate partisan candidates who present themselves as independent. IRI heard from interlocutors that, once appointed, these individuals frequently reveal clear political allegiances, undermining the credibility and neutrality of the electoral authority. Critics argue that this dynamic has given the perception that the CNE is vulnerable to executive influence¹. To restore transparency and public trust, Ecuador should reinstate a more structured system—previously in place—where slates of nominees (ternas) are proposed by various branches of government and selected through a vote in the National Assembly. While this earlier model also faced criticism and led to the creation of the Council for Citizen Participation and Social Control (CPCCS) under the 2008 Constitution, it at least required candidates to demonstrate relevant technical qualifications, offering a more accountable and transparent approach to CNE appointments.

Ecuador has a mixed electoral system that incorporates both majoritarian (plurality) and proportional representation elements. Elected positions include the President and Vice President, members of the National Assembly (Assembly Members), and local authorities. The President of Ecuador is elected using a two-round system (majority run-off). A candidate wins in the first round if they receive over 50 percent of the votes, or at least 40 percent of the votes and a 10-point lead over the second-place candidate. If no candidate meets these criteria, the top two candidates compete in a second-round runoff election. The President and Vice President run together on a joint ticket for a four-year term, with one reelection.

The vast number of political parties in Ecuador—over 232—is enabled by a proportional electoral system with low barriers to entry and the ability of both parties and political movements to register and participate in elections leading to an abundance of competing groups². Low requirements for party registration and weak party regulation mean many parties simply rebrand under different names when they fail to meet minimum thresholds. The fragmentation of political parties is a key challenge of Ecuador's electoral system that contributes to shifting and unstable coalitions in the National Assembly.

1 Hurtado, Sebastián. "Ecuador's High-Stakes Elections." *Americas Quarterly*, 29 Jan. 2025, <https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/ecuadors-high-stakes-elections/>.

2 César Ulloa, "A Fragmented Ecuador Heads to the Polls," *Latinoamérica 21*, September 23, 2024, <https://latinoamerica21.com/en/a-fragmented-ecuador-heads-to-the-polls/>.

The CNE has consistently demonstrated a high degree of professionalism in managing the country's complex electoral cycles. Its professional staff oversee a fully digitized results management system that publishes tallies within hours of polls closing, enabling real-time public scrutiny and independent verification. Ahead of election day, IRI delegates observed a rigorous testing of equipment where the CNE also shared its contingency plans in the event of disruption. Rigorous chain of custody procedures for ballots and results forms underscore the institution's commitment to integrity—key to ensuring public confidence in the process amid Ecuador's volatile political landscape.

However, despite a high degree of transparency and competency, political parties and civil society continued to raise concerns about the CNE's independence and neutrality. In 2018, the Transitional Council for Citizen Participation and Social Control (CPCCS-T) announced the selection of five new principal members of the CNE for the 2018–2024 term. This marked the reintroduction of partisan representation within the CNE, which had been excluded since the adoption of the 2008 Constitution. The three most electorally successful political organizations—Alianza País (AP), CREO, and the Social Christian Party (PSC)—each secured a seat on the Council through the appointment of Esthela Acero (AP), Enrique Pita (CREO), and José Cabrera (PSC), respectively. They were joined by Diana Atamaint, nominated by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), and Luis Verdesoto, supported by various civil society organizations, including the Guayaquil Civic Board and the Esquel Foundation. Although regulations required a partial council renewal in 2021, institutional delays in the CPCCS prevented it, so the same plenary—now with Verdesoto's seat filled by his alternate, Mérida Nájera—continues through 2025³.

Following allegations by President Noboa of voter intimidation through vote selling schemes by organized crime during the February 9 first-round election, the CNE issued a controversial resolution on March 13 prohibiting the use of cell phones inside polling stations⁴. Though the resolution was aimed at curbing vote-buying, it drew criticism for relying on classified reports, enacting disproportionate penalties, and violating the constitutional ban on regulatory changes within 12 months of an election⁵. Moreover, the CNE's communication strategy for the resolution came late. Although the CNE launched an education campaign in Quito, the campaign had limited reach which raised concerns that inconsistent enforcement would lead to confusion and tension at polling centers. However, those concerns proved inconsequential on election day.

Efforts to improve election-day administration in the second round included reinstating 1,400 polling center coordinators, a role abolished in 2024 due to budget cuts. These coordinators were tasked with consulting with security forces and ensuring compliance with new protocols. However, previous budget cuts constrained training, leaving many officials untrained for the second round. Nevertheless, the CNE maintained a commendable level of transparency and openness to observers, reportedly accrediting approximately 476 international observers, 1,213 citizen observers and 95,000 political party representatives⁶.

3 Villota, Andrés. "Partidos políticos vuelven a tener presencia en el CNE." *El Comercio*, 16 Nov. 2018, www.elcomercio.com/actualidad/politica/partidos-politicos-presencia-cne-ecuador.html.

4 Consejo Nacional Electoral. "El CNE Resolvió Prohibir el Uso del Dispositivo Móvil Durante el Acto de Sufragio." *Consejo Nacional Electoral*, 13 Mar. 2025, <https://www.cne.gob.ec/el-cne-resolvio-prohibir-el-uso-del-dispositivo-movil-durante-el-acto-de-sufragio/>. Accessed 22 Apr. 2025.

5 *Constitución de la República del Ecuador*. Art. 177. Registro Oficial, 20 Oct. 2008.

6 Consejo Nacional Electoral [@cne gobec]. "El @cne gobec garantiza el derecho de participación política de todas y todos los ciudadanos. Delegadas y delegados de organizaciones políticas están autorizados para hacer uso de teléfonos celulares durante las fases de instalación, votación y escrutinio." X, 13 Apr. 2025, <https://x.com/cnegobec/status/1914365526148833427>. Accessed 22 Apr. 2025.

Second-round presidential campaigning in Ecuador was notably less visible than in the first, as both candidates shifted their focus to rural outreach and digital platforms. Noboa was less visible in Quito than Luisa Gonzales, who relied on conventional campaigning. Noboa instead focused his outreach on provinces affected by seasonal flooding—regions where his electoral support was comparatively weak. His campaign employed youth-oriented strategies such as distributing full-size cardboard cutouts of the candidate to local businesses and residences, contrasting González's traditional posters placed throughout Quito.

The campaign unfolded amid a backdrop of polarization, the targeting of candidates' families and both candidates alleging electoral fraud⁷. On March 23, the CNE hosted a nationally televised debate. Positively, debates are now a regular feature of Ecuador's electoral process. However, the exchange was marked by personal attacks rather than substantive policy debate. Noboa sought to frame González as a sympathizer of Nicolás Maduro's regime in Venezuela, playing to public anxieties about authoritarianism in the region. He also highlighted his administration's efforts on security and infrastructure, particularly cooperation with international partners against organized crime. González, in turn, tried to distance herself from former president Rafael Correa, promoting a narrative of stability and "inclusive change" while pledging to oppose privatization and accusing Noboa of political interference in state institutions⁸.

Despite these attempts at differentiation, many interlocutors expressed disappointment in the quality of the discourse. The debate failed to engage undecided voters or provide concrete plans for addressing Ecuador's severe security and economic crises. Failure to communicate clear policies contributed to a climate of disillusionment and voter apathy, as many citizens struggled to find meaningful contrasts between the two contenders⁹.

In the final weeks of the campaign, González appeared to gain momentum through outreach to labor unions and international leftist allies. On March 12, CONAIE and its political arm Pachakutik—led by Leonidas Iza, who drew 5 percent in the first-round vote—conditionally endorsed Luisa González, provided she adopt key Indigenous policy demands. Some smaller Indigenous groups still supported Daniel Noboa. The alliance was formalized on March 30, when Pachakutik and González's Citizens' Revolution Party signed a 25-point policy pact¹⁰.

7 Culver, David. "Ecuador's President Questions First-Round Election Results in a Claim Ruled Out by Election Observers." *CNN*, 12 Feb. 2025, www.cnn.com/2025/02/12/americas/ecuador-election-irregular-latam-intl/index.html.

8 "Ecuador's Presidential Candidates Clash in Contentious Debate." *CGTN America*, 24 Mar. 2025, <https://america.cgtn.com/2025/03/24/ecuadors-presidential-candidates-clash-in-contentious-debate>.

9 Adamson, Sophia. "Ecuador's Bitter Presidential Debate Leads to More Polarization: Analysts." *Latin America Reports*, 28 Mar. 2025, <https://latinamericareports.com/ecuadors-bitter-presidential-debate-leads-to-more-polarization-analysts/11126/>.

10 Kueffner, Stephan. "Ecuador Indigenous Leader Signals Support for Socialist." *Bloomberg*, 19 Feb. 2025, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-02-19/powerful-indigenous-leader-signals-support-for-ecuador-socialist>.

Some interlocutors with whom the delegation met criticized President Noboa's conduct during the three-week campaign period. Although regulations require incumbents to request formal leave when campaigning, analysts noted that Noboa blurred the line between his executive role and candidacy by briefly alternating roles without proper Assembly approval¹¹. Moreover, his administration's decree granting a \$500 bonus to security forces mid-campaign and offering \$400 to young people who engage in climate initiatives was criticized as a form of indirect campaigning.

Public opinion polls during the campaign period reflected a marginal but consistent edge in favor of Gonzalez, although the race remained within the margin of error, signaling a technical tie¹². On April 13, the CNE authorized four organizations to conduct exit polling: Cedatos, Centro Invest, Corp Montpubli and Telcodata, anticipating a contested and tightly monitored conclusion to a deeply polarized electoral season¹³. In the end only two firms conducted polls, Telcodata, associated with Topic (RC) and Cedatos, a new firm supported by ADN.

11 Ecuadorian election law requires that incumbents seeking reelection take a temporary leave of absence for the entire campaign period, which ended on April 10. Candidates are also prohibited from using state funds or resources for campaigning.

12 Robertson, Khalea. "Poll Tracker: Ecuador's 2025 Presidential Runoff." *Americas Society/Council of the Americas*, 8 Apr. 2025, <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/poll-tracker-ecuadors-2025-presidential-runoff>.

13 Coba, Gabriela. "Estos son los 'Exit poll' o encuestas a boca de urna de la segunda vuelta entre Daniel Noboa y Luisa González." *Primicias*, 13 Apr. 2025, <https://www.primicias.ec/elecciones/ecuador2025/presidenciales/exit-poll-encuesta-boca-urna-daniel-noboa-luisa-gonzalez-cne-segunda-vuelta-93941/>.



Ecuador's campaign finance laws are designed to ensure a level playing field by providing equal public funding for media advertising e.g., press, radio, TV, and billboards. The law also sets limits on private donations to cover other campaign expenses, particularly for social media. Additionally, there are mechanisms for transparency, requiring presidential candidates to submit their campaign income and expenditure reports biweekly through a dedicated CNE webpage. However, insufficient resources within the CNE and gaps in the legislation—such as the absence of sanctions for non-compliance with transparency requirements—have hindered the effective supervision of campaign finances. Notably, during the current campaign, both candidates failed to submit the required biweekly finance report by the April 6 deadline, and many interlocutors believe that the reported campaign expenditure figures are unrealistically low.

For this reason, the CNE has faced significant criticism for its inadequate enforcement of campaign finance laws and its failure to prevent the misuse of state resources by incumbent candidates. This weak enforcement and oversight of campaign finance laws have eroded public trust in the electoral process. With allegations of biased decisions and a lack of transparency, the CNE's credibility remains fragile, and the reporting system's vulnerability to misuse by powerful political actors continues to undermine public confidence in Ecuador's elections.



Given the surge in transnational crime, the security environment was a significant issue throughout the electoral process. In the first 50 days of 2025, Ecuador experienced a spike in violent crime including 1,300 homicides—one murder every hour¹⁴. In January 2025, Noboa declared a state of emergency due to escalating violence and established a national crackdown on criminal organizations, which included deploying military forces, closing borders, and instituting a three-day alcohol ban leading up to the election. The military's role in securing polling stations, traditionally a stabilizing force, raised concerns among some interlocutors, as military personnel were reported to be heavy-handed in several instances during the first round, with alleged limited understanding of electoral procedures. This led to accusations of intimidation, particularly toward younger polling officials.

Additionally, the country faced significant challenges in protecting journalists. Media outlets were increasingly targeted by organized crime groups, with attacks and threats against reporters leading up to the election. The assassination of former investigative journalist and presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio in August 2024, just weeks before the special election, highlighted the dangerous environment for journalists. The threat of press freedom and the safety of journalists has drawn concern from human rights groups, who have urged the government to address the rising violence and impunity affecting the press¹⁵.

Despite these security challenges, the election proceeded without major disruption. Just 24 hours before the elections, President Daniel Noboa issued Executive Decree No. 599, declaring a state of emergency in several provinces, including Guayas, Los Ríos, Manabí, Orellana, Santa Elena, El Oro, Sucumbíos, the Metropolitan District of Quito in Pichincha, and Camilo Ponce Enríquez in Azuay¹⁶. While the measure was intended to restore order, opposition political groups expressed concern that the curfews and restrictions on freedom of transit, assembly, and communication would hinder their ability to oversee the electoral process effectively. Despite initial concerns, no formal complaints about restrictions on oversight were reported.

Positively, the CNE implemented measures such as security roundtables to address election-related violence and criminal activity, although specific plans for the runoff election remained unclear. While the atmosphere surrounding the election was tense, the election day itself was conducted in an orderly manner, with few incidents reported by the CNE and National Police.

14 "Ecuador se sitúa como el país más violento de América Latina: un asesinato cada hora." *El País*, 2 Mar. 2025, <https://elpais.com/america/2025-03-02/ecuador-se-situa-como-el-pais-mas-violento-de-america-latina-un-asesinato-cada-hora.html>.

15 Human Rights Watch. *World Report 2025: Ecuador*. Human Rights Watch, 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/ecuador>.

16 The decree, aimed at curbing violence and organized crime, imposed a curfew from 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. in 22 cantons.

The CNE conducted the run-off election transparently and efficiently, implementing robust mechanisms to ensure the veracity and traceability of results. Logistics were well-organized, including the printing, assembly, and distribution of electoral materials despite heavy rainfall and flooding that affected numerous provinces. CNE's technical systems, including electronic results management, performed well during pre-election testing and proved resilient. Diaspora voting for Ecuadorians living outside of the country was organized across 39 countries, and special provisions were made for vulnerable populations, including 6,218 eligible voters incarcerated and 662 persons eligible for in-home voting¹⁷. While voting in two prison detention centers could not proceed due to the CNE's inability to secure voting for prisoners at those locations, the CNE reported a turnout of over 80 percent among eligible home voters¹⁸.

Both before and during election day, the CNE monitored polling centers across Ecuador to assess whether to move some polling centers due to damage from rains and floods. In response to these weather challenges, before election day the CNE relocated 24 polling stations across various provinces, including Cotopaxi, El Oro, Los Ríos, and Guayas. While some raised concerns that last-minute changes might not allow enough time to notify voters, the relocations impacted fewer than one percent of polling centers and were broadly viewed as necessary to safeguard citizens' right to vote.

Election day was largely calm and orderly, with the CNE and National Police reporting only isolated incidents. Interlocutors reported that political party representatives were more present in polling stations than in the first round, with ADN present in 74 percent and RC in 73 percent according to EU observers¹⁹. Generally, opening procedures were followed, though IRI delegates noted that in some polling stations the orientation of the polling booth did not fully protect the secrecy of the vote. Voting procedures were respected, with several instances of polling officials enforcing the ban on cell phones. Polling stations closed on time, with the closing and counting procedures followed according to procedure. Political party representatives were able to follow the process without restrictions. IRI noted that the closing and counting was conducted according to procedure. The CNE's results website and mobile app functioned smoothly with initial results protocols transmitted, processed, and posted within hours of polls closing.

17 Consejo Nacional Electoral. "Inicio." *Consejo Nacional Electoral*, <https://www.cne.gob.ec/>. Accessed 22 Apr. 2025.

18 Consejo Nacional Electoral. "Inicio." *Consejo Nacional Electoral*, <https://www.cne.gob.ec/537-beneficiarios-del-voto-en-casa-su-fragaron-en-la-segunda-vuelta/>. Accessed 24 Apr. 2025.

19 European Union Election Observation Mission. *Preliminary Statement: Second Round Presidential Elections Ecuador 2025*. European External Action Service, 11 Feb. 2025, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eom-ecuador-2025/preliminary-statement-second-round-presidential-elections-ecuador-2025_en?s=410456. Accessed 5 May 2025.

RESULTS

Exit polls on election night proved wildly inaccurate, with some declaring González the winner and others declaring Noboa victorious. However, incumbent President Daniel Noboa emerged victorious with 55.65 percent of the vote, securing a 11-percentage-point lead over his opponent, Luisa González, who garnered 44.35 percent. With 97.04 percent of the ballots tallied, Noboa's victory was deemed irreversible, expanding his margin to over 1.1 million votes, compared to a slim 17,000 vote lead in the first round. The voter turnout was significant, with 83.76 percent of eligible voters participating, totaling 13.7 million individuals, slightly surpassing the first round's turnout. A total of 92.66 percent of the votes were valid, while 6.69 percent were null and 0.65 percent blank.

The day after the election, provinces such as Azuay, Bolívar, Cañar, Cotopaxi, and others had completed vote counting and, in some areas, recounts. Despite a wide margin of victory in favor of Noboa, the RC issued a statement rejecting the results but did not submit substantial documentation supporting widespread irregularities.

Noboa's campaign paid particular attention to older voters, including those over 65. Media reports highlighted instances of centenarians casting their votes, underscoring the effectiveness of Noboa's outreach to this demographic. Though the exact percentage of older voters supporting him remains unknown, his considerable gain of over one million new votes indicates that voters who did not vote for either candidate in the first round swung considerably toward Noboa in the second round and were decisive for his margin of victory.



By implementing reforms, Ecuador can enhance future electoral transparency, strengthen democracy, and build public trust in its electoral processes. In the spirit of international cooperation, and to help Ecuador improve future elections, IRI offers the following seven recommendations:

- **Strengthen political party registration requirements** by potentially raising the minimum number of signatures or membership requirements needed for a party to register and maintain legal status; and introducing rules preventing political movements from re-registering under a different name if they fail to meet electoral thresholds.
- **Enforce political financing laws** and promote transparent campaign financing by enforcing stricter disclosure rules and implementing real-time reporting of campaign donations; impose harsher penalties for illicit financing and vote-buying.
- **Enhance the independence of electoral institutions** by implementing reforms to ensure the CNE and TCE are free from perceived political interference by changing the selection process for their members and/or potentially introducing an independent body to oversee electoral authorities.
- **Improve transparency in the CNE** to enable independent audits and increase public oversight of the results management process; continue education and training for election officials especially concerning procedural changes; and taking steps to increase voter education, especially in rural areas.
- **Enhance coordination among electoral authorities, security forces, and electoral bodies** to align security measures with electoral procedures and collectively address security concerns and develop effective strategies to protect journalists.
- **Establish and strengthen protection mechanisms for journalists** including implementing national mechanisms dedicated to the protection of journalists, ensuring they can operate without fear of violence or intimidation and equip journalists with the necessary tools and knowledge to navigate high-risk situations, including safety training.
- **Security personnel should receive comprehensive training** focused on electoral laws, human rights, and appropriate engagement with voters and electoral staff to promote a secure and non-intimidating environment.

President Noboa's runoff victory—the largest since Rafael Correa's 2006 election—grants him a historic mandate not seen in nearly two decades. At just 37 years old, Noboa became the youngest president in Ecuador's history and one of the youngest heads of state globally. The 2025 electoral cycle marks a pivotal turning point in Ecuador's political landscape, presenting the new administration with a critical opportunity to confront an array of urgent national challenges, including a deepening security crisis driven by narcotrafficking and entrenched organized crime, an ongoing energy shortage, and rising unemployment and inflation.

With only 66 seats in the National Assembly, Noboa's ADN party will fall short of a majority, requiring coalition-building with parties such as Pachakutik and the Christian Social Party, which together hold just 13 seats. Despite these limitations, the coming years offer a rare and vital window to strengthen Ecuador's democratic governance and economic trajectory.

Ecuador now finds itself in urgent need of international cooperation—particularly with partners like the United States—to confront its crime wave and catalyze economic recovery. President Noboa is already signaling a readiness to bring Ecuador's security doctrine into closer alignment with Washington, laying early groundwork for a revitalized bilateral relationship. Security and combatting transnational organized crime will be the cornerstone of any such strengthened partnership, but there is an open door for broader strategic cooperation across economic, political, and military spectrums.

For the United States, this moment represents an opportunity to engage meaningfully with a willing, democratically elected government in a region increasingly challenged by instability. With shared interests in regional stability, security, and prosperity, Ecuador and the U.S. have a strategic opening to forge a deeper, more resilient partnership for the future.

The mission is grateful for the cooperation it received from Ecuadorian election officials, government, candidates, party members, representatives from civil society and the journalists with whom it interacted. IRI has led or supported 250 international and citizen election observation missions worldwide and is recognized for its impartiality and professionalism. IRI is also grateful for the support and funding of the National Endowment for Democracy, without which this report would not be possible.

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