



European Union
Election Expert Mission

COSTA RICA 2026

Final Report



Presidential and Legislative Elections

1 February 2026



COSTA RICA 2026

**Presidential and Legislative Elections
1 February 2026**

FINAL REPORT

**EUROPEAN UNION
ELECTION EXPERT MISSION**

Only the original English version is official

*EU Election Expert Missions are independent from the institutions of the European Union.
The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily
reflect the official policy and position of the European Union.*



TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
II.	MISSION BACKGROUND	6
III.	POLITICAL CONTEXT.....	7
IV.	LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM.....	8
V.	ELECTION ADMINISTRATION.....	10
VI.	VOTER REGISTRATION	13
VII.	CANDIDATE REGISTRATION	14
VIII.	ELECTION CAMPAIGN	16
IX.	CAMPAIGN FINANCE	17
X.	MEDIA.....	19
XI.	SOCIAL MEDIA	23
XII.	WOMEN IN ELECTIONS	27
XIII.	PARTICIPATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES	28
XIV.	PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES	29
XV.	NATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION	30
XVI.	POLLING AND COUNTING	31
XVII.	RESULTS PROCESSING AND PUBLICATION.....	32
XVIII.	COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS	34
XIX.	RECOMMENDATIONS	37
XX.	ANNEXES	47
	ANNEX I ELECTORAL DATA.....	47
	ANNEX II ELECTION RESULTS.....	49
	ANNEX III MEDIA	54
	ANNEX IV SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING FINDINGS	55



I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 1 February 2026, Laura Fernandez, presidential candidate for the *Partido Pueblo Soberano* (PPSO) in Costa Rica, won the presidential election with 48.3 per cent of the vote, substantially more than the 40 per cent needed to win in the first round. The *Partido Liberación Nacional*'s Alvaro Ramos obtained 33.4 per cent of the vote, having grown in support and also concentrated almost all the presidential votes from the three other parties which projected themselves as opposition (*Coalición Agenda Ciudadana*, whose Claudia Dobles obtained 4.85 per cent, *Frente Amplio*, with 3.76 per cent for Ariel Robles and *Partido Unidad Social Cristiana*, whose candidate Juan Carlos Hidalgo obtained 2.79 per cent). Results indicated a significant late-stage mobilisation of voters on both sides of a polarised landscape: after years of diminishing turn-outs, close to 70 per cent of the 3.7 million registered voters participated, **the highest turn-out since 2010.**

The PPSO also won a **majority in the Legislative Assembly**, with 31 of the 57 seats. The biggest opposition bench is the PLN, with 17 seats, followed by Frente Amplio with 7 seats. The CAC and PUSC won just one seat each. The executive's majority will enable it to pass ordinary laws and the national budget, although not take actions that require a qualified majority, such as suspending rights guarantees or reform the constitution. **A record number of women enter the Assembly:** 30 have been elected, alongside 27 men.

The elections were organised in a transparent, efficient and inclusive manner, by the *Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones* (TSE). The Constitution establishes **universal suffrage**, and thanks to a passive registration system the Voter Register is highly inclusive, as all those who qualify to vote are automatically drawn from the Civil Registry and included in the Voter Register. The **candidate registration** process was also inclusive and 24 political parties registered candidacies, reflecting a competitive and pluralistic political environment. Twenty presidential tickets were registered as well as 1,020 legislative candidates and substitute nominations submitted through 144 closed party lists. Costa Rica boasts one of the most **advanced gender-equality frameworks**, requiring full parity in candidate nominations through mandatory horizontal and vertical alternation rules, as well as gender parity obligations in party organisation and structures. These rules were fully respected across all candidate nominations.

Despite worsening security conditions, presidential and legislative candidates were generally able to **campaign freely** throughout the country, where they tended to hold events in private venues. Security was a common campaign topic, as it was by far the greatest public concern: Costa Rica was the second country in Central America with the highest homicide rate in 2024. For much of the campaign, political analysts concurred on its low visibility in public spaces, in contrast to campaigning on media and social media, where discussion was vibrant and media outlets made significant efforts to invite candidates and talk about their programmes and positions. During the week before voting, the campaign spilled out onto the streets of San José and other towns, with supporters of the five strongest parties participating in numerous semi-spontaneous events, which were peaceful and characterised as a revival of Costa Rica's '*fiesta civica*' electoral atmosphere.

The TSE faced the task of organising the 2026 elections with an unprecedented doubt cast over its credibility, as criticism in the previous year from the outgoing President led to a polarised view of the election administration. The TSE's most consistent response to being called into question was to give precedence to **transparency**. In this it was successful, organising an



election process which was observable and explained to the public at every stage – from the preparation and distribution of materials, the vote and count in polling stations, to the official results process. The TSE website publishes a vast amount of information on different aspects of the electoral process, from voter registration figures to campaign finance declarations, demonstrating significant effort to ensure transparency.

Election day unfolded in a well-organised and peaceful manner as reported by observing civil and international organisations. In accordance with a system designed for a bygone two-party system, political parties may nominate one member of polling staff per polling station. TSE figures indicated that the PPSO nominated the most (9,653 people, including substitutes), followed at a distance by the PLN with 1,785 polling staff. Numerous parties nominated few or no poll workers. The TSE also hired three *auxiliares* for each polling station, to ensure that voting and counting was adequately administered. TSE training was made available to both party-nominated and TSE-recruited polling staff, though attendance is only obligatory for the latter.

The TSE implemented flexible and reasonable procedures for registration of **candidate representatives (*fiscales*)**, as a key feature of electoral transparency. Since 2022, the TSE has provided voluntary training to *fiscales*, clarifying their role and channels for presenting any complaints. A total of 53,251 *fiscales* were accredited, with the PUSC, PPSO and PLN all registering over 10,000.

Transmission of provisional results was efficient and transparent and by midnight on election day more than 90 per cent polling station results were published on the TSE website, rising to 97.87 per cent by noon the next day. The TSE website provided detailed and varied information on the provisional results, and also enabled any selection of results to be downloaded in several exploitable formats, considered best practice to enable any verification and analysis. Lastly, the TSE website enabled viewing and downloading of pictures of polling station results forms.

The *escrutinio* – the final, **official results process - provides strong transparency guarantees**. Under the direct responsibility of TSE magistrates and in the presence of party representatives, each polling station's documentation was reviewed, leading to results being confirmed or triggering a recount. Recounts took place by law if, among other criteria, fewer than two political representatives were present during counting at the polling station, providing a guarantee of political oversight of results. An *escrutinio* form was published for each polling station, displaying final results and specifying if and why a recount took place. Almost 50 per cent of presidential results were recounted, and following a reform of the Election Law, the TSE decided to recount all legislative results.

The Constitution guarantees **freedom of expression and of the press**, and overall, these rights were respected during the campaign. However, media interlocutors reported verbal attacks by government officials against certain media outlets and journalists, contributing to a climate of intimidation and, at times, self-censorship. Financial pressure on critical media was also reported, including through the allocation of state advertising. Televised debates and interview programmes contributed to voters' ability to make an informed choice.

Social media was the main source of information for many voters, with most candidates actively using all major platforms. Interlocutors identified misleading or inaccurate content attributed to political actors, including government officials, as a growing concern. Narratives portraying the country's situation, journalists, media outlets, institutions and the electoral



authorities in distorted terms were amplified by politically aligned media, online pages and influencers. **Disinformation** targeting the electoral authorities and the electoral process constituted a significant concern and EEM monitoring identified hundreds of pro-government pages disseminating such narratives and undermining trust in the electoral process and institutions. The TSE's proactive monitoring and countering of disinformation sought to mitigate the spread of such disinformation.

The EU EEM has made 10 recommendations for improving future electoral processes, in line with international standards and for the consideration of the new Legislative Assembly, the government, the electoral administration and Costa Rican civil society. Of these, the priority recommendations include:

1. Simplify and de-politicise the system for selecting polling station staff, ensuring all are under the authority of the TSE and required to attend training. One option could be to select polling staff from the Voter Register.
2. Increase communication about existing technical safeguards and transparency guarantees throughout the electoral process, and in particular regarding counting and the official results process (*escrutinio*). While the TSE should continue to take the lead, other organisations could also increase this public information service, which could be launched earlier in the electoral process, with a view to optimising its reach.
3. To adopt a clear legal framework for state advertising allocation in line with international standards, based on objective, non-discriminatory criteria, and managed by independent bodies, to guarantee media freedom and editorial independence during elections.

II. MISSION BACKGROUND

Following an invitation from the *Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones* (TSE), the European Union sent a mission of electoral experts (EEM) to Costa Rica, to carry out an analysis of the different phases and components of the process of the 2026 presidential and legislative elections, in light of national legislation and international standards for democratic elections. The EEM, composed of three electoral experts, remained in the country between 2 January and 16 February. This was the first EU electoral mission in Costa Rica.

The conclusions of this report are based on the mission's own analysis as well as on exchanges with political stakeholders, the electoral administration, civil society organisations, academics, and the media. The EU EEM met with the six presidential candidates polling highest, including from all parties who make up the incoming Legislative Assembly. In line with their mandate, EEMs do not systematically observe on election day and the data provided by domestic observation missions were particularly useful in this regard. This report includes recommendations for the improvement of future electoral processes.

The EEM is grateful to the Costa Rican authorities, and particularly to the *Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones* (TSE) for their cooperation, openness and responsiveness. Likewise, the EEM maintained fluid communication throughout the process with political parties and candidates,



civil society and media representatives, as well as national and international observation missions.

III. POLITICAL CONTEXT

The 1 February legislative and presidential elections took place in a new political context, following the emergence of a popular political movement, spearheaded by outgoing President Rodrigo Chaves. Constitutionally prohibited from seeking immediate re-election, President Chaves was effectively the figurehead of the *Partido Pueblo Soberano* (PPSO), founded in 2022. Laura Fernandez Delgado, former Minister of Planning in the Chaves government, was the PPSO's presidential candidate.

Laura Fernandez's continuity candidacy built on many of the same anti-establishment positions which characterised President Chaves' mandate, during which he frequently accused other branches of power or oversight institutions of blocking progress, namely the Legislative Assembly and the judiciary (*Poder Judicial*), as well as institutions such as the Prosecutor General's Office (*Fiscal General*) and the *Controloría* (State Comptroller's office), and, crucially, the election administration, the Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones (TSE). This discourse exacerbated a loss of confidence in institutions, primarily among PPSO supporters.

The PPSO competed among 24 parties (20 national and 4 provincial), but its main opposition was largely composed of three establishment parties: the *Partido de Liberación Nacional* (PLN) and the *Partido Unidad Social Cristiana* (PUSC), which together had defined a long era of two-party governance, and the *Coalición Acción Ciudadana* (CAC), a coalition built on the *Partido Acción Ciudadana* (PAC), which held the presidency between 2014 and 2022. A fourth party also prominent in the main campaign opposition to PPSO was the *Frente Amplio*, a leftwing party which first entered the Legislative Assembly in 2006.

The election results indicated were consistent with poll trends but were amplified by a significant mobilisation of voters on both sides of a polarised landscape: after years of diminishing turn-outs, close to 70 per cent of voters participated, and Laura Fernandez won a decisive victory for the *Partido Pueblo Soberano*, obtaining 48.3 per cent of the vote, substantially more than the 40 per cent needed to win in the first round.¹ Alvaro Ramos (PLN) obtained 33.4 per cent of the vote, having grown in support and also concentrated almost all the presidential votes from the three other parties which projected themselves as opposition (*Frente Amplio*, 3.76 per cent, *Coalición Agenda Ciudadana*, 4.85 per cent, *Partido Unidad Social Cristiana*, 2.79 per cent). Nonetheless, adding all presidential votes for these parties, the group of four obtained 44.84 per cent of the national vote, still less than Laura Fernandez, who furthermore obtained over 40 per cent in all provinces save Cartago. Losing candidates swiftly conceded defeat.

The PPSO also won a majority in the Legislative Assembly, with 31 of the 57 seats. The biggest opposition bench is the PLN, with 17 seats, followed by *Frente Amplio* with 7 seats. The CAC and PUSC won just one seat each.² The newly elected assembly is thus less fragmented, mainly by dint of the executive holding a majority, which will enable it to pass ordinary laws and the

¹ TSE provisional results. The last first-round win in Costa Rica was in 2010, for the PLN's Laura Chinchilla, which was also the last time turn-out was so high. Turn-out in the last general elections in 2022 was 60 per cent.

² The CAC seat was won in San José by presidential candidate Claudia Dobles.



national budget without negotiation, as well as appoint the heads of the *Defensoria de los Habitantes* and *Procuraduría General* (Ombudsman and State Prosecutor's Office). The PPSO did not reach the 38 assembly members required to reform or renew the constitution or suspend guarantees of fundamental freedoms. In addition, approval of key appointments, notably Supreme Court judges, also requires a reinforced majority (of 38 members), as does voting for laws which affect the judiciary or electoral process and about which Supreme Court or TSE, respectively, have issued a negative assessment.

President-elect Laura Fernandez will take office on 8 May, and the newly elected Legislative Assembly will be inaugurated on 1 May.

IV. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Electoral system

Costa Rica is a unitary republic with a presidential system. Elections for the executive and legislative branches are held simultaneously every four years on the first Sunday of February. The President and two Vice-Presidents are elected by popular vote, and must obtain at least 40 per cent of the valid votes cast to win. Otherwise, a second round is held between the two most voted tickets.

The unicameral parliament, the Legislative Assembly, composed of 57 members, is elected through a closed-list proportional representation system. The Costa Rican proportional system includes a threshold, which, particularly in constituencies with smaller number of elected members, tends to reinforce bigger parties.³

Each of the country's seven provinces constitutes a multi-member constituency. The Constitution requires the revision of seat allocation following each population census. On that basis, on 24 July 2025 the TSE updated the number of seats elected per province. Compared to the 2022 elections, the redistribution reduced representation in the urban Central Valley provinces—San José (19 to 18 seats), Cartago (7 to 6) and Heredia (6 to 5) - while increasing representation in coastal provinces Guanacaste (4 to 5) and Puntarenas (5 to 6), as well as in Alajuela, which borders Nicaragua (11 to 12). Limón remained unchanged, with five seats.

Legal framework

International Commitments and Standards

Costa Rica is a State Party to the principal universal and regional human rights instruments relevant to democratic elections and political participation. These include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocol, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

³ In each province, the quotient is the total number of valid votes, divided by the number of seats to be elected. The 'sub-quotient' is half that figure, and any party who does not obtain more votes than the sub-quotient is excluded from the distribution of seats.



At the regional level, Costa Rica is a State Party to the American Convention on Human Rights and has recognised the compulsory jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Costa Rica is also a member of the Organization of American States (OAS) and is bound by the principles of representative democracy enshrined in the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Costa Rica hosts the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in San José.

Pursuant to the Constitution, international treaties have authority superior to ordinary legislation and prevail over domestic law, subject to constitutional supremacy, and the Electoral Code explicitly recognises international treaties in force as a direct source of electoral law.

Electoral Legislation

The legal framework provides a solid basis for the conduct of democratic elections. It is composed primarily of the 1949 *Constitución Política* and the 2009 *Código Electoral* (Law No. 8765, last amended in 2025), complemented by binding jurisprudence, regulations and interpretative criteria issued by the *Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones* (TSE).

The Constitution guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms of expression, association, assembly, movement and political participation. It ensures the right to vote and to be elected through universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage. The Constitution establishes a system of checks and balances based on the separation of powers among the legislative, executive and judicial branches, which are distinct and independent from one another. Legislative power rests with the Legislative Assembly whose decisions are adopted by majority of votes present, including the approval of ordinary laws and the national budget. However, a qualified majority of two thirds of the total membership (38 of 57 assembly members) is required for matters of particular constitutional significance, such as constitutional reforms, the suspension of fundamental rights and guarantees, the appointment and removal of Supreme Court magistrates, or the approval of international treaties.

The Election Law regulates all aspects of the electoral process, including voter registration, political party and candidate registration, campaign rules, political financing, electoral offences, and complaints and appeals procedures.

The Constitution grants the TSE competence in all electoral matters, including the administration of elections and the sole interpretative authority over electoral law. Moreover, under article 97 of the Constitution, all draft legislation related to electoral matters must be formally consulted with the TSE. Any departure from its opinion requires a two-thirds majority of the total membership of the Legislative Assembly for its approval, and within the six months preceding and the four months following an election, the Assembly is constitutionally barred from enacting electoral legislation to which the TSE has expressed its disagreement.

Since the adoption of the Electoral Code in 2009, which consolidated electoral legislation and strengthened guarantees related to pluralism, transparency, gender equality and electoral justice, and introduced voting for Costa Ricans abroad, the electoral legal framework has remained broadly stable. The Election Law has been amended three times since the last general election in 2022. These changes provide for the prevention and sanctioning of political violence against women, the widened application of electoral recount procedures, and enhanced oversight of political party financing.

State neutrality in elections and ‘political belligerence’



State neutrality is a core constitutional principle in Costa Rica (article 95.3 of the constitution) and has historically been considered a fundamental guarantee of the integrity and fairness of the electoral process. Accordingly, senior public officeholders are subject to strict restrictions and may not participate in electoral campaigning, nor support or oppose any candidate or political option, either directly or through the use of public office, public resources or institutional channels. Political belligerence constitutes an electoral offence arising from a breach of this duty of neutrality and, if established, is sanctioned with removal from office and political disqualification (*inhabilitación*) for a period of two to four years.

In June 2025, in application of its exclusive and obligatory duty to interpret electoral law, the TSE issued an interpretative decision clarifying the scope of existing constitutional and legal prohibitions on the use of public resources for electoral purposes. The interpretation made explicit that the restrictions applicable to traditional media equally extend to the digital platforms of public institutions, including official websites and social media accounts. The clarification reaffirmed that institutional digital channels constitute public resources and may not be used to disseminate content capable of influencing electoral competition during the campaign period. On 1 October, at the official start of the electoral campaign, President Chaves and several members of the Executive launched a campaign “*Cayó la mordaza*”, publicly challenging the TSE’s position and suggesting that the electoral authority was unduly restricting their freedom of expression.

The President brought the matter before the Supreme Court’s Constitutional Chamber (*Sala Constitucional*). A week later, on 22 October 2025, the Supreme Court ruled that the TSE’s interpretation of art. 142 of the Election Law did not prevent the president or ministers from fulfilling their reporting obligations. As such, the Court considered that the TSE had acted within its mandate to regulate the use of public institutional communication channels in order to safeguard electoral neutrality. The Chamber concluded that the dispute did not constitute a conflict of constitutional competences and consequently rejected the case as inadmissible.

By 3 October, 15 complaints had been filed with the TSE alleging political belligerence of President Chaves and in order to pursue the investigation into these allegations, following constitutional requirements, the TSE requested the lifting of presidential immunity. On 16 December 2025, the Legislative Assembly voted on this request, with 35 votes in favour and 21 against, falling short of the 38 votes required; as a result, immunity was not lifted and the proceedings were suspended. On 23 December 2025, the TSE formally warned the President that failure to comply with its binding resolutions could give rise to additional legal consequences, including potential proceedings for disobedience to the electoral authority.

V. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The *Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones* was established by the 1949 Constitution which followed a brief but bloody civil war triggered by election results being rejected. The Constitution establishes the TSE as a powerful independent body, in some respects effectively the state’s fourth power. It is responsible for the civil registry and voter register as well as organising elections and is the sole authority on electoral justice.

The TSE’s three principal magistrates (*propietarios*) and six substitute magistrates are appointed by the Supreme Court with a qualified majority among its 22 judges. Mandates are



for six years, renewable, and appointments are on a rolling basis, with one principal and two substitute magistrates renewed or replaced every two years. For national elections - one year before and for six months after voting – two substitute magistrates rise to form a five-person tribunal. The TSE magistrates choose their president from among themselves.

The TSE is staffed by civil servants who tend to remain in the institution for many years, which has helped to ensure a high level of experience and professionalism. Primarily for the purposes of the civil registry, the administration has 32 offices throughout the country.

Confidence in the TSE

The TSE is one of the oldest election administration in Latin America and has been considered a role model in the region, and highly respected within the country. However, in the years prior to the 2026 elections, unprecedented doubt was cast on the TSE.

Although President Chaves had spoken highly of the TSE in the early part of his mandate, he eventually criticised the election administration, as he had done with other independent institutions.⁴ President Chaves questioned the TSE's impartiality, and asserted that the institution was censoring him.⁵ Presidential claims that the TSE acted unfairly were heightened around the time that the TSE requested that the Legislative Assembly lift his immunity, as a necessary step towards investigating complaints regarding his alleged belligerence, by which time the election campaign was underway.⁶ Laura Fernandez was less confrontational, but both as a presidential candidate and previously, when Minister of Planning, she made public comments implying that the electoral authority was prejudiced against their movement. All other presidential candidates expressed trust in the TSE and the electoral system.

The TSE responded to allegations defending the institution's credibility, and was defended in turn by a range of actors, notably the eight former presidents elected between 1986 and 2018 who underlined the importance of the laws obliging government figures to maintain impartiality during electoral processes – several of whom had received warnings on the subject in the past – and later requesting that US authorities refrain from echoing the same view as President Chaves.⁷ In addition, UNIORE (*Unión Interamericana de Organismos Electorales*) issued a statement in defence of its member, as did several professional associations.⁸

The TSE's most consistent response to being called into question was to give precedence to transparency. Despite having run a successful pilot for electronic voting, the TSE decided to retain all manual voting in the 2026 general elections, a decision which served as a guarantee of traceability and transparency, particularly given Costa Rican provision for extensive

⁴ Numerous EEM interlocutors dated the change of discourse to late 2024, when the TSE found that the President's *Ley Jaguar* did not qualify to be the subject of a referendum, as the Supreme Court found it to be unconstitutional.

⁵ See legal and social media sections. The *Cayó la Mordaza* campaign resulted in a complaint by the Defensoria, on grounds including distortion of the TSE's credibility.

⁶ See legal section.

⁷ <https://observador.cr/expresidentes-de-costa-rica-piden-prudencia-a-la-comunidad-internacional-y-advirtiendo-intenciones-de-desprestigiar-proceso-electoral-2026/>

⁸ <https://www.tse.go.cr/comunicado1109.html>

<https://delfino.cr/2025/11/llamado-a-la-defensa-de-la-independencia-del-tribunal-supremo-de-elecciones-y-la-institucionalidad-democratica-de-costa-rica>; <https://culturacr.net/organizaciones-convocan-2-manifestaciones-nacionales/>



recounts.⁹ In addition, the TSE communicated well to the public, using traditional and online media to relay information about renewing identity cards, electoral preparations and voting procedures, as well as safeguards such as security features on ballots, seals on materials packages and the presence of observers and party representatives. As the elections approached, the TSE published and broadcast segments explaining the counting and transmission processes, as well as provisions for recounts. Several media and civil society initiatives also explained key transparency and security features of the process. Nonetheless, it was challenging to reach those who were most suspicious: even after the *Pueblo Soberano*'s decisive electoral success, PPSO supporters began alleging that they had been cheated out of several members of the Legislative assembly, highlighting the persistence of mistrust.¹⁰

The TSE website publishes a vast amount of information on different aspects of the electoral process, from voter registration figures to campaign finance declarations, demonstrating significant effort to ensure transparency. However, the website presentation and navigation make much of the information difficult to find, limiting the confidence-building that could be achieved through this commitment to transparency.

Recommendation: Increase communication about existing technical safeguards and transparency guarantees in the electoral process, particularly regarding counting and the official results process (escrutinio). While the TSE should continue to take the lead, other organisations could also increase this public information service, which could be launched substantially before elections, with a view to optimising its reach.

Organisation of the elections

The TSE's experienced and professional staff organised the elections well, in accordance with arrangements that have largely remained unchanged in past decades.

Staffing of both decentralised election organisation (*juntas cantonales*) and polling stations (*Juntas Receptoras de Voto, JRV*) retains a system designed for a two-party scenario: political parties are invited to nominate one person to each of the 84 *juntas cantonales* and each of the 7154 polling stations.¹¹ *Juntas cantonales* are established three months before elections, and in addition to political nominations, each has one TSE representative.¹² For the 2026 elections, 1110 nominations from 15 political parties made up the *juntas cantonales*, which ranged from two to 10 members. Two parties had a representative in each canton: the PLN and the PUSC. The *juntas cantonales* are responsible for verifying voting centres and receiving nominations from political parties for polling station staff, among other duties. The number of polling stations (*Juntas Receptoras de Voto, JRV*) increases slightly with each election.¹³

Increasingly, political parties struggle to take up the opportunity to staff polling stations, particularly as this function is in addition to fielding party representatives to witness

⁹ For the municipal elections in February 2024, the TSE piloted electronic voting in 499 polling stations, and later considered expanding the programme to 25 per cent (some 1765) of polling stations.

¹⁰ The PPSO posted a call for calm and trust in the official recount process, but this did not quell its supporters' concerns, and indeed prominent PPSO figure Pilar Cisneros commented that the recount process could produce several more members of the assembly, for which there was no evidence.

¹¹ Of the 7154 polling stations, 7063 are in Costa Rica, and 91 are abroad.

¹² The full list of political party nominations was published <https://www.tse.go.cr/pdf/normativa/23-2025-Integracion-jtas-cantonales-elecc2026.pdf>. There are no '*juntas cantonales*' abroad, where voting is organised by consulate staff.

¹³ In 2026, there are 7,154 JRVs, 307 more than in the last general elections in 2022.



procedures. TSE figures indicated that the PPSO nominated 9,653 people to perform as polling staff (including substitutes), by far the greatest number fielded by any party. The PLN followed with 1,785 polling staff, and the PUSC nominated 925, and the *Partido Justicia Social Costaricense*, 519. No other party put forward more than some 40 polling staff members, and numerous parties had none. The TSE also hires three *auxiliares* for each polling station, to ensure that voting and counting is adequately administered, totalling 21,189 people.¹⁴ The TSE provided training to both party-nominated and TSE-recruited polling staff, though attendance is only obligatory for the latter. Both received a refresher focusing on results forms when they were sworn in, a practical method – together with the provision of manuals – of ensuring that even those who do not attend training have some guidance.

The TSE designed good quality materials for polling staff, including a booklet of relevant law and regulation, and a manual with checklists and instructions.¹⁵ In addition, ballots were clear and displayed party logos and names as well as candidate pictures (presidential ballots), making voting and counting straightforward. The *Padrón Registro*, defined in the Election Law, is the collection of each polling station's documentation, ranging from the voter list to forms to record the opening, potential incidents, and results.

Materials distribution was carried out on time and by 20 January, all election materials had arrived at the 84 *juntas cantonales*. There, a numbered seal is removed and materials are checked, before a new seal is applied and they are stored in the home of a polling staff member (*Integrante de JRV, IJRV*) until election day. The TSE asserts that there is no record of this tradition having ever resulted in any alteration of materials or related accusation, and there were no complaints to that effect in 2026.

Recommendation: Simplify and de-politicise the system for selecting polling station staff, ensuring all are under the authority of the TSE and required to attend training. One option could be to select polling staff from the Voter Register.

VI. VOTER REGISTRATION

The Right to vote

The Constitution establishes universal suffrage, guaranteeing the right to vote to all registered adult citizens. Naturalised citizens must have held Costa Rican citizenship for one year before they can vote. The 2009 Electoral Law introduced voting for citizens abroad, in national constituency elections, in this case the presidential election.

There is no blanket removal of the right to vote for convicted prisoners; they retain the right to vote unless their sentence specifically suspends their civil rights. Those convicted of electoral offenses to a sentence of more than three years imprisonment have their political rights suspended for the duration of their sentence.¹⁶

¹⁴ *Auxiliares* are hired through a competitive process. They must be registered voters, have no party affiliation, and comply with educational and work experience requirements.

¹⁵ Directrices y normas para el funcionamiento de las juntas receptoras de voto, and Padrón Registro, cuaderno de prácticas.

¹⁶ Article 282, Electoral Law 2009



The Voter Register

Costa Rica has a passive registration system which means all those who qualify to vote are automatically drawn from the Civil Registry and included in the Voter Register. This includes young people who will turn 18 after the close of the register four months before the elections. As such, the Voter Register is highly inclusive. To be registered, eligible citizens must have applied for an identity card (*cédula*) and according to TSE figures, the vast majority of first-time voters did so in time (by 30 September), though 24,675 did not.

The 2026 Voter Register had 3,731,788 voters, an increase of 4.3 per cent (160,981 people) - since the last national election. Among the new voters, 131,403 were young first-timers, and 10,826 citizens who naturalised at least a year before. The TSE also registered over 10,000 people in detention. Included in the total were 67,270 Costa Ricans registered to vote from 42 countries abroad, where 49 consulates hosted 91 polling stations. Almost two thirds (44,580) of Costa Rican voters abroad were in the United States. The countries with the next highest number of Costa Rican voters were Spain (2,688); Canada (2,132), Nicaragua and Panama (2094 and 1950, respectively.)

Voters must present their *cédula* – the only qualifying document for identity at polling stations, and *cédulas* up to one year after their expiry were acceptable. In order to ensure people who needed a new card could collect it in time, the TSE issued numerous public announcements and extended its opening days and hours, even including election day, both at its headquarters and in its 36 decentralised offices.

In addition, in response to complaints registered by prisoners with the *Defensoría*, alleging their *cédulas* had been withheld from them, the TSE issued identity cards to 2000 prisoners in the days leading to election day.

VII. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

The registration process was inclusive and procedurally clear, with no unreasonable restrictions. A total of 24 political parties registered candidacies - 20 national and 4 provincial - reflecting a competitive and plural political environment. In total, 1,270 candidacies were registered, including 20 presidential tickets (composed of one presidential and two vice-presidential candidates), 1,020 proprietary legislative candidates and corresponding substitute nominations submitted through 144 closed party lists.

Presidential candidates must be Costa Rican by birth, at least 30 years old and in full enjoyment of civil and political rights, while legislative candidates may be Costa Rican by birth or naturalisation (in which case they must have held citizenship for at least 10 years), be at least 21 years old and enjoy full political rights. The Constitution establishes an extensive incompatibility regime: public officials - including ministers, senior executive authorities, magistrates and members of the police forces - must resign at least one year prior to election day to run for office. Immediate re-election is constitutionally prohibited: outgoing presidents may not run again for two full constitutional terms (eight years), while members of the



Legislative Assembly must wait one full legislative term (four years) before seeking re-election.¹⁷

Candidacies may only be submitted through political parties, which must have been registered before the TSE at least one year before the vote. The Election Law establishes organisational and territorial requirements and mandates democratic internal governance, and also requires that prospective parties submit a minimum amount of citizen support – effectively commitments to join the party if it is registered.¹⁸ To this end, prospective national parties require support from 3,000 registered voters, provincial parties require 1,000, and cantonal parties require 500 prospective members. Considering a national voter register of some 3.7 million voters, this represents roughly 0.08 % of the electorate, constituting a low threshold.¹⁹ Moreover, there are virtually no ongoing requirements to remain registered as a political party, contributing to the current registration of approximately 160 parties. A political party may be cancelled only if, following a national election, it fails to obtain a number of valid votes equivalent to the signature threshold required for its registration - namely 3,000 votes for national parties and 1,000 for provincial parties. Deregistration for non-participation in an election was annulled by Constitutional Chamber in 2011.²⁰

The Election Law embeds gender parity obligations in party organisation, requiring party organs, delegations and nomination structures to be composed of 50 per cent women and 50 per cent men, with alternation mechanisms to ensure balanced representation. Moreover, the adoption of the 2009 Election Law introduced one of the most advanced gender-equality frameworks in the region and beyond, requiring full parity in candidate nominations through mandatory horizontal and vertical alternation rules, widely regarded as international best practice.

The candidate registration period opened with the official call to elections on 1 October and closed on 17 October 2025. The TSE rejected 95 candidacies due to non-compliance with formal requirements, including incomplete documentation, missing photographs, failure to comply with gender alternation rules, and with nationality or naturalisation criteria.

Gender parity rules were fully implemented across all nominations. Five of the 20 presidential candidates were women, as were 21 of the 40 vice-presidential candidates. For the Legislative Assembly, 504 of 1,020 proprietary candidacies were women (49.4%) and women headed 64 of the 144 provincial lists.

¹⁷ In 2003, the Constitutional Court annulled a 1969 constitutional reform which prohibited presidential re-election. This ruling enabled the candidacy and re-election of Oscar Arias in 2006, and marked a first breach in the region's political commitment to limiting presidential mandates.

¹⁸ For national parties, the required organisational presence in all provinces entails holding the required cantonal and provincial assemblies throughout the country and constituting a national assembly and executive organs (art. 58–59 and 67). The law requires this territorial structure but does not mandate permanent physical offices.

¹⁹ Requirements in other OAS countries are generally higher: Mexico requires support equivalent to ~0.26% of the electoral roll; Peru ~0.1% plus territorial structures; Colombia 3% of valid votes for certain candidacies; Chile ~0.25% regionally; Argentina ~0.4% of the roll; Panama 2% of votes cast in the previous presidential election; Guatemala ~0.3% nationwide; while Honduras and El Salvador require tens of thousands of affiliations, typically exceeding 0.2–0.5%.

²⁰ Supreme Court Judgment No. 16592-2011. In practice, parties that cease organisational activity become 'inactive.' The TSE may declare a party inactive one year after when its internal structures expire and are not renewed; only parties that have completed the democratic renewal of their organs may participate in elections or operate financially. To regain active status, the party must complete the renewal of its internal bodies and accredit new leadership before the TSE, and - if it intends to compete - it must initiate this process at least one year prior to the relevant election.



VIII. ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Twenty national parties presented presidential tickets, and the same parties presented candidate lists to the legislative elections, as did four provincial parties. The political parties in the contest ranged across the political spectrum, offering Costa Ricans a pluralistic choice. The election campaign officially began with the call for elections on 1 October, which also opened the candidate registration period, and, after a suspension between 16 December and 1 January for the Christmas period, continued until its staggered close during the week before voting.²¹

Despite worsening security conditions, presidential and legislative candidates were generally able to campaign freely throughout the country, where they tended to hold events in private venues. Security was a common campaign topic, as it was by far the greatest public concern: Costa Rica is the second country in the Americas with the highest perception among citizens that public security has deteriorated.²² Laura Fernandez addressed the issue as the result of a too lenient and rights-based system, while her competitors blamed the outgoing government for the rise in drugs found in the US and Europe originating from Costa Rica and the surge in homicides. Other frequent campaign topics were corruption - a topic mainly highlighted by PPSO candidates, regarding previous governments and competitors - and state provisions such as public health care, education and infrastructure.

For most of the last month of the campaign, there were arguably two separate campaign spheres: Laura Fernandez took her campaign across the country while those next in the polls appeared on almost nightly televised debates, and were reportedly less present on the ground. For much of the campaign, EEM interlocutors concurred on its low visibility, with only a sparse deployment of billboards or activities in public spaces, in contrast to campaigning on media and social media, where discussion was vibrant and media outlets made significant efforts to invite candidates and talk about their programmes and positions. Candidates and campaign finance experts cited a lack of funds for most candidates.

The TSE issued a warning to the PPSO and to Laura Fernandez after leaflets calling for evangelical Christians to vote for the party were given to church leaders, for them to distribute to their congregations. The TSE warned that the electoral code prohibits using religious grounds or symbols as part of election campaigning, as well as on religious leaders directing their congregations' vote.²³

The candidates polling highest behind Laura Fernandez - albeit at a significant distance – increasingly made gestures of a united front, in deference to what they described as a competition between democratic and anti-democratic movements. They spanned the political spectrum from the left (*Frente Amplio's* Ariel Robles) to centre-right (Juan Carlos Hidalgo, of

²¹ Campaign events may be held in public spaces until one week before election day (Sunday 25 January inclusive), and paid propaganda and opinion polls may be published until four days before (including Wednesday 28 January). Interviews, debates and spontaneous supporter-led activities in public spaces may continue.

²² Behind only Chile. In 2024, Costa Rica's homicide rate soared to 17 per 100,000 people, the 2nd highest rate in Central America only after Honduras. This now places Costa Rica in the middle of regional statistics, with 12 countries having worse homicide rates, and 12 much lower rates. Prior to 2023, the homicide rate varied between 9.5 and 12.1 per 100,000 inhabitants.

²³ The leaflets were entitled '*Who Should Evangelical Christians Vote For?*' The TSE simultaneously warned Fabricio Alvarado, presidential candidate for *Partido Nueva Republica*, as his objection to the PPSO's approach also used religious grounds.



the *Partido Unidad Social Cristiana*), with Alvaro Ramos of the *Partido Liberación Nacional* (PLN) Claudia Dobles for *Coalición Acción Ciudadana* (CAC) in between.²⁴

The last week of the campaign hinted at the significant mobilisation of both pro and anti-PPSO electorates, as the issue of security and fundamental freedoms came to the fore in several televised debates which saw the participation of all highest polling presidential candidates.²⁵ Laura Fernandez had stated when she presented her manifesto that her government would seek to suspend fundamental freedoms as a means of clamping down on violent crime, and in later debates the issue was revived, with Alvaro Ramos, Claudia Dobles and Ariel Robles arguing against the proposal. During the last week, San José and other towns saw numerous semi-spontaneous and peaceful street events, wherein supporters of the five strongest parties spilled onto the streets and roads with party flags, and EEM interlocutors commented on the revival of Costa Rica's '*fiesta cívica*' electoral atmosphere.

IX. CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Costa Rica has a mixed private and public political party financing system. Public financing is designed to contribute to general party functioning, not specifically campaign costs, and depends on how many votes a party obtains. To access public financing, a registered party must obtain at least 4 per cent of the combined presidential and legislative vote, or one member of the Legislative Assembly. They are then entitled to their share of the allocated public funds, which for the 2026 elections was set at 39.292 million colones (66 million euros).²⁶

There are no ceilings on party donations or campaign spending – these were removed with the introduction, in the 2009 Electoral Law, of a model which gives precedence to transparency.²⁷ Donations may only be from private Costa Rican individuals – donations from foreign nationals and from companies are prohibited – and must be deposited in a designated account. Both donations and campaign spending must be reported, and during election campaigns, parties must report their finances every month.²⁸ Failure to report, or to disclose any income or disbursement, is an offence.²⁹

During the 2026 election campaign, opposition parties complained of difficulty in accessing funding, with some asserting that donors were reluctant to be seen by the government to be supporting them. The TSE may provide advances, but in addition to compliance with several administrative requirements, guarantees are required, which can make advances difficult to

²⁴ For example, presidential candidates from these four parties together broadcast an 'anti-debate', consisting of a non-confrontational chat, and in standard debates highlighted their common ground as well as points of disagreement.

²⁵ Having taken part in the TSE debate in early January, Laura Fernandez declined most televised debates until the last week.

²⁶ This amount is 0.11 of GDP in the year before elections are called, with 0.3 allocated to municipal elections and 0.8 to national elections.

²⁷ The 1952 Electoral Code did include ceilings on spending. The TSE considers that transparency is better served without imposing legal limits on amounts, which may act as a disincentive to reporting. The TSE has other proposals towards improving equitable access to campaign funds.

²⁸ Outside of electoral periods, reporting is trimestral.

²⁹ In January 2025, the Prosecutor General took possession of TSE documentation investigating alleged undeclared financing structures that would have contributed to President Chaves' 2022 campaign.



obtain for those who need it most.³⁰ Three parties did receive advances from the TSE: PPSO, CAC and Nueva República.³¹ According to the TSE, three parties obtained bank loans: the PLN, Frente Amplio and PUSC.

Because of the difficulty in obtaining advances – and as an alternative means of borrowing money - parties may issue ‘*certificados de cesión*.’ These are certificates issued by parties which guarantee the bearer reimbursement for funds or goods, on condition that the party eventually qualifies for public funding.³² The certificates system has developed into a complex financial system, akin to buying shares in a party’s electoral prospects, and wherein value increases or drops depending on polls. Numerous experts, including the TSE, have sought to eliminate the practice, which predates the 2009 Election Law and which is widely viewed as prone to exploitation as a means of laundering money from illicit sources.³³ Issuance of *certificados de cesión* must be declared in the same way as donations, and TSE preliminary figures for the 2026 election campaign indicate some €71.000 million were ceded through *certificados de cesión*, approaching double the total amount of public financing available.

Preliminary TSE figures for campaign spending during the campaign period indicate that PPSO spent the most – 2,724,389,041 colones (4.6 million euros) – more than double the next highest spending party, PLN, which declared campaign spending of 1,102,217,404 colones (1.9 million euros).³⁴ The CAC coalition and PUSC both spent about 1.5 million euros (897,087,399 colones and 884,843,373 respectively), while Frente Amplio reported 522,830,843 (close to 900,000 euros). These five parties qualify for public financing, based on the results of the elections. Also among the higher spenders, the *Partido Liberal Progresista* reported some 1 million euros in campaign costs, but is among the 19 parties whose election results do not qualify them for public financing.

The TSE is comparatively well-resourced, with a 50-strong department tracking compliance with reporting and credibility of donations.³⁵ The TSE may request lifting of banking secrecy in order to investigate. The TSE also monitors spending on paid propaganda, both in the streets and in media and social media, as part of its efforts to verify parties’ declarations. As such, the TSE is generally able to identify inaccuracies in party reporting. One of the most common enquiries undertaken by the TSE concerns evaluations of donors’ solvency, as a means of verifying compliance with rules on donations. To that end, the TSE requested solvency evidence from 70 registered donors and recipients of *certificados de cesión* to 12 parties, for sums amounting to €1,386,284,199 (2.3 million euros).³⁶ Thirty of these requests, corresponding to roughly half the total donated sums in question - are addressed to PPSO donors, while six and five donors to the CAC and PLN respectively must also respond to the

³⁰ Among the administrative requirements, the party must have renovated its internal party structure, and its statutes must specify what proportion of public funding will be destined to training and organisation outside of electoral periods. Reglamento sobre el financiamiento de los partidos políticos, decreto n.º 17-2009 y sus reformas.

³¹ Nueva República, which has six members in the outgoing assembly, obtained none in the elections, and will have to repay the advance.

³² <https://www.pressreader.com/costa-rica/el-financiero-costa-rica/20220122/281582359007898>

³³ <https://ameliarueda.com/noticia/monto-deuda-politica-elecciones-millones-partidos-colocaron-casi-el-doble-tse-noticias-costa-rica>

³⁴ Between 1 October 2025 and 31 January 2026

³⁵ Prior to the 2009 Electoral Code, monitoring of campaign finance was spread between the TSE and the Controloría. The TSE’s *Departamento de Financiamiento de Partidos Políticos* is now the principle monitor of party finance.

³⁶ As at 10 February 2026. The TSE did not rule out making further requests in following weeks, as it was yet to receive all financial declarations for January and February 2026.



TSE. Failure to respond with adequate evidence of income or capital may result in referral for prosecution.

The TSE has submitted a number of proposals to the Legislative Assembly to reform the framework for party and campaign financing, including options for a more equitable system which would provide part of public financing in the form of non-reimbursable advance funding, contingent on introducing higher thresholds for registering a party.³⁷ However, while several TSE proposals for enhancing campaign finance monitoring have been approved, others modifying the framework for financing have not made it past the legislative commission.

Notwithstanding the debate around a more wholesale reform of campaign finance, the provision of free airtime in broadcast media for all campaigning parties would provide an equitable baseline visibility for candidates. The TSE's proposal – never debated in the Legislative Assembly but supported by political analysts - included a proportion of airtime to be equally divided among all contestants, and another portion allocated in accordance with parties' representation in the Legislative Assembly.

Recommendation: Introduce media slots for electoral advertising for all contenders, paid for from the public contribution to political parties, to be distributed in an equitable manner.

X. MEDIA

Media Landscape

The Costa Rican media environment is diverse, with over 150 television, radio, print, and online outlets operating at national and regional levels. The public broadcaster SINART (*Sistema Nacional de Radio y Televisión*) operates TV Canal 13, national radio, and the SINART digital news platform. Major private outlets regarded as critical of the government include La Nación Group (La Nación and La Teja), Teletica Group (Canal 7, the most-watched TV channel), and the digital outlet CRHoy. EEM interlocutors described the relationship between the Executive and some critical media as confrontational. Extra Group (Extra newspaper and Extra TV), Repretel Group (Canal 6 and Radio Monumental), and Columbia Group (Radio Columbia) are generally perceived as more politically neutral. Multimédios Group (Canal 8 TV) and other outlets such as Trivision TV and OPA TV are regarded as supportive of the government. Universities, including the University of Costa Rica, as well as religious groups, also operate radio, television, and print outlets.

Television and social media are the primary sources of information for Costa Ricans.³⁸ A November 2025 survey found that, for the first time, social media had surpassed television news as the preferred source of information.³⁹ The same survey indicated that while most respondents viewed President Chaves as disrespectful of journalistic work and rejected the use

³⁷ The TSE has proposed that prospective parties be required to produce potential support (signatures from people who assert they would be join the party if registered) from 1 per cent of the voter register, somewhat higher than many OAS countries. Currently a prospective national party need only demonstrate potential support from 3000 registered voters, which at 0.08 per cent is lower than other OAS countries. One per cent would amount to some 37,000 signatures.

³⁸ [CIEP Public Opinion Survey Results Report, October 2025.](#)

³⁹ National Survey on [Freedom of Expression and Trust in the Media \(2025\).](#)



of state advertising to penalise critical editorial lines, seven out of ten believed that media outlets primarily serve the interests of their owners.

The rapid emergence of new online outlets, independent content creators and social media profiles presenting themselves as news sources has contributed to a more fragmented online information environment, characterised by the circulation of unverified claims and competing narratives, both supportive of and critical of the government.

Legal Framework for the media

The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, freedom of the press, access to information, and the right to privacy, both offline and online. The 1902 Press Law further regulates freedom of expression and press-related offences. Until February 2026, articles 7 and 8 provided for prison sentences of up to 120 days for libel or slander committed through the press.⁴⁰ Although rarely applied, these provisions had long been criticised by journalists and human rights advocates as inconsistent with international standards. In a positive development, on 4 February 2026, the Legislative Assembly repealed them, aligning domestic law with Inter-American Court of Human Rights jurisprudence.⁴¹ The reform was regarded as a historic step forward in protecting freedom of expression and the press.⁴²

Another positive development was the adoption in 2024 of the Framework Law on Access to Public Information, which establishes a legal framework governing access to state-held information, reinforcing transparency and accountability in line with international standards. The law guarantees a universal right to request public information and sets a maximum response time of 10 working days. Despite this change, some media interlocutors reported continuous obstacles in the implementation of the law, citing delays by public authorities and having to resort to costly and time-consuming administrative remedies.

The Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court has recently ruled on several cases in defence of freedom of expression and access to information.⁴³

Broadcasting licence auction

The 1954 Radio Law remains the primary framework regulating broadcasting frequencies. It establishes an annual broadcasting tax that many interlocutors described as outdated and insufficient, with broad consensus it should increase.⁴⁴ The 2008 General Telecommunications Law introduced new public competitive procedures for allocating concessions with the stated objective of modernising the spectrum framework. On 25 September 2025, the Executive announced an auction to reassign radio and television frequencies.⁴⁵ Media outlets and professional associations criticised the high base prices and demanding technical requirements, arguing that these would exclude smaller municipal, cultural and religious broadcasters and harm media pluralism.⁴⁶ Many outlets reported being unable to participate, and by the

⁴⁰ It also applies for acts deemed to “subvert the order” or “alter friendly relations with other States”.

⁴¹ https://elguardian.cr/asamblea-legislativa-aprueba-ley-que-elimina-carcel/#google_vignette

⁴² <https://iplexcr.org/costa-rica-da-un-paso-historico-por-la-libertad-de-prensa/>

⁴³ See below on 2023 Parque Viva and 2026 suspension of media frequency auction.

⁴⁴ The approximate cost is ₡3 000 colones, equivalent to 5 euros.

⁴⁵ This followed the expiry of existing concessions on 28 June 2024 (subsequently extended to September 2025 by decree law) and required broadcasters to bid for frequencies they were already using.

⁴⁶ COLPER, IPLEX, universities, the Episcopal Conference, and the Inter-American Press Association (IAPA) warned that the process could harm media pluralism and freedom of expression.



November 2025 deadline, bids had been submitted for only 25 of the 85 frequencies offered. On 7 May 2025, the TSE ordered the suspension of the licensing model until after the 2026 election results, citing risks to voters' access to electoral and political information. On 26 November 2025, the Constitutional Chamber suspended the process as a precautionary measure pending constitutional review. Some deemed the auction inconsistent with Inter-American standards which require clear, non-discriminatory and proportionate conditions.⁴⁷ They also stressed the need for a comprehensive review of the broadcasting framework to address outstanding media pluralism concerns, including formal legal recognition of community broadcasters and mechanisms to prevent concentration of frequencies in a small number of media groups. On 27 February 2026, the Constitutional Court annulled the auction, finding that using the highest economic bid as the sole criterion for allocating frequency concessions was incompatible with the state's duty to ensure media pluralism, and ordered the government to take measures to ensure service continuity while a new allocation model was developed.

Recommendation: Establish a legal framework for the allocation of broadcasting frequencies in line with Inter-American standards following objective, non-discriminatory criteria, and proportionate economic and technical conditions, to safeguard media pluralism, especially during elections.

Freedom of Expression

Costa Rica has fallen 31 places in the Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index since 2021, when it was 5th: after four consecutive annual drops in the ranking, it is now 36th, the country's second-lowest ranking on record, while remaining the highest-ranked country in Latin America.

Media representatives reported that, despite strong protections for press freedom, the stigmatisation of critical media by President Chaves and confrontational rhetoric have contributed to a more polarised media environment. They described intimidation and verbal attacks, including ridiculing and discrediting journalists and outlets that ask difficult questions or criticise the government, both offline and online. Government members have publicly labelled critical outlets like La Nación, CRHoy and Teletica–Canal 7 as '*prensa canalla*' (rogue press). This climate has contributed, in some cases, to self-censorship among journalists and individuals. Press associations and media representatives have condemned these practices and warned against attempts to intimidate, silence, or restrict critical reporting.⁴⁸ Some media outlets also reported refusals by the Executive to grant them interviews, which could be viewed as undermining access to information. While international standards recognise the importance of the media adhering to high ethical standards to inform accurately, they also emphasise that public officials must demonstrate a high level of tolerance toward critical scrutiny, recognising criticism of those in power as a legitimate democratic function of the press.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ IACHR, *Freedom of Expression Standards for Free and Inclusive Broadcasting: Regulation that restricts access to broadcasting frequencies must be compatible with Article 13 of the IACHR on Freedom of Expression*. [Inter-American Commission on Human Rights \(IACHR\) and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to protect human rights in the Americas](#).

⁴⁸ Incidents were reported to the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the IACHR.

⁴⁹ [UN, OAS, OSCE, ACHPR Joint Declaration on Media Freedom and Democracy](#): "Politicians and public officials should demonstrate high levels of tolerance towards critical journalistic reporting (...) critical scrutiny of those in positions of power is a legitimate function of the media in democracy".



Media interlocutors further alleged financial pressure on critical media.⁵⁰ In July 2022, the closure of Parque Viva, owned by La Nación Group, under an executive sanitary order, was ruled by the Constitutional Chamber to be ‘arbitrary and disproportionate,’ constituting an indirect restriction on freedom of expression under Article 13.3 of the American Convention.⁵¹ Journalists also indicated that fear of costly and lengthy civil defamation lawsuits contributes in some cases to self-censorship.

State advertising in the media

Media outlets and associations reported that the current distribution of state advertising disadvantages outlets critical of the government while benefiting media perceived as aligned with it.⁵² In 2023, the government announced its intention to ‘democratise’ state advertising by expanding access beyond large national media to smaller national and regional outlets. In the absence of a specific legal framework governing state advertising, critics argued that discretionary allocation risks influencing editorial independence, enabling the use of public funds to favour pro-government outlets. While some regional outlets consulted welcomed expanded access, press associations and journalists stressed the need for objective and transparent criteria to ensure public advertising funds are not used in ways that restrict freedom of expression, in line with Inter-American standards.⁵³ They also welcomed the idea of free electoral broadcast slots to guarantee equal media access for candidates and reduce campaign costs.

Recommendation: Adopt a clear legal framework for state advertising allocation in line with international standards, based on objective, non-discriminatory criteria, and managed by independent bodies, to guarantee media freedom and editorial independence during elections.

Media coverage of the election campaign

Despite tensions, media sustained efforts to provide open and balanced coverage. They operated freely and provided voters with access to diverse viewpoints, enabling them to make informed choices. Numerous debates were organised by public and private broadcasters and civil society, allowing candidates to enjoy fair and equitable access.⁵⁴ Political pluralism was reflected in the inclusion of all candidates or those leading in polls, and debates were conducted in a climate of respect. Between 9 and 12 January, the TSE hosted four presidential debates, featuring all 20 presidential candidates in groups of five, aired by the public broadcaster SINART. Additional electoral debates were organised by private media outlets and civil society organisations from 18 to 29 January, broadcast on television and across their digital platforms.

⁵⁰ In 2023, the government announced an investigation into a purported case of tax evasion involving a senior executive of CRHoy. The case was later dismissed, and the media executive described the allegation as politically motivated persecution.

⁵¹ The closure of the events venue, an income source for the group, occurred amid a series of public attacks by Chaves against La Nación following critical reporting concerning his work at the World Bank and an investigation into an alleged parallel campaign financing structure in the 2022 elections.

⁵² Interlocutors reported that media outlets like *La Nación*, Canal 7 and CRHoy no longer receive state advertising funds, while these are allocated to newly created online outlets deemed supportive of the government.

⁵³ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression (2000), Principle 13: “The use of public resources, including the arbitrary and discriminatory allocation of official advertising, with the aim of pressuring and punishing, or rewarding and privileging media outlets based on their editorial line, constitutes an interference with freedom of expression and must be expressly prohibited by law”.

⁵⁴ In addition to the TSE debates broadcast over four nights 09 – 12/01 and broadcast by SINART, debates were held by OPA (18/01), UCR (19/01), EXTRA (20/01), Trivisión (recorded on 21/01), Multimédios (22/01), Colegio de Abogados (23/01), Columbia (26/01), Monumental-Repretel (27/01), Teletica-Canal 7 (29/01).



Private broadcasters also invited a wide range of candidates to different interview programmes. Having drawn criticism from her opponents for declining most debates, Laura Fernandez participated in three in the final campaign week.⁵⁵

Electoral Advertising

Political advertising in traditional and online media is not subject to legal spending limits. During televised debates, paid political advertising was dominated by candidates Claudia Dobles and Laura Fernández. According to TSE data, 77% of advertising expenditure was allocated to television, 7% to digital media, 6 %to radio and 4% to print. Dobles and Fernández accounted for 44% of the 2.347.356.504,01 colones (approx. 4.1 million euros) spent nationally. The Election Law regulates paid political advertising across media and social media platforms. It establishes that three days before the elections, and during the suspension of the campaign over Christmas (*veda electoral*), parties must cease paid political advertising in both offline and online media. Candidates may continue to express their views through non-paid formats such as interviews, debates or organic social media posts. The Election Law also requires open broadcast radio and television stations to allocate 30 minutes of free airtime per week to the TSE during the campaign period. The TSE monitored political party advertising expenditure on media and social media.⁵⁶ It also published updated advertising expenditure data on its website, contributing positively to transparency and financial accountability in the campaign.⁵⁷

XI. SOCIAL MEDIA

Costa Rica has a highly connected digital environment. Internet penetration reached 92.6 per cent by the end of 2025, with mobile internet serving as the primary means of access. Since 2010, internet access has been recognised as a fundamental right, and the country maintains one of the most open online environments globally.⁵⁸ Social media use is widespread, with approximately 4.06 million users. TikTok, YouTube and Facebook are the most popular platforms, followed by Instagram, LinkedIn and X.⁵⁹ In recent years, TikTok and Instagram have emerged as the fastest-growing platforms and played a significant role in engaging younger audiences during the electoral period.

Social media have become a primary source for political information. A national survey conducted in the context of the 2026 elections identified Facebook as voters' main source of election-related information, followed by television, YouTube and Instagram.⁶⁰ Presidential candidates relied heavily on Facebook for outreach and voter mobilisation.⁶¹ Political communication was highly personalised, with presidential candidates prioritising their individual accounts over institutional party channels.

⁵⁵ Trivision's recorded debate, broadcast on 29/01; Columbia and Repretel debates.

⁵⁶ The TSE contracts a private company to monitor advertising expenditure on television, radio, print media and billboards, while monitoring social media advertising directly via the Facebook Ads Library APIS.

⁵⁷ <https://www.tse.go.cr/fpp-fuentesfinanciamientoyutilizacion.html>

⁵⁸ [Freedom on the Net Costa Rica 2025](#).

⁵⁹ [Digital 2026 Costa Rica](#).

⁶⁰ National University of Costa Rica. [Political Culture and Electoral Participation Survey](#) among registered voters in the 2026 national elections (page 35).

⁶¹ As of January 2026, the largest Facebook followings were held by Fabricio Alvarado (262,000), Claudia Dobles (129,000) and Laura Fernández (92,000).



The online information environment was highly polarised and marked by frequent derogatory and hostile content. Monitoring by the Digital Observatory of Universidad Latina indicated that 80 per cent of online comments concerning presidential candidates were negative in tone, reflecting a confrontational digital space.⁶² Numerous Facebook pages presenting themselves as news outlets, alongside partisan groups and influencer-driven accounts, circulated narratives supportive of and critical of major political actors. The Observatory identified increasingly sophisticated coordinated troll activity⁶³, which made them more difficult to identify.⁶⁴ Such activity contributed to the amplification of confrontational rhetoric, personal attacks against candidates and their supporters, and distortions of the online political debate, negatively affecting voters' ability to form opinions free of manipulative interference.

Legal framework

The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, access to information and the right to privacy, both offline and online. The Election Law regulates political propaganda during the campaign, including restrictions on the promotion of government achievements and oversight of political advertising expenditure across traditional and online platforms.

In June 2025, the TSE clarified that the prohibition on promoting government achievements during the electoral period applied not only to traditional media but also to institutional websites and social media platforms, whether content was paid or organic. On 2 October 2025, ten government institutions launched the '*Cayó la Mordaza*' campaign on social media and official websites, alleging that the legal restrictions constituted a gag order by the TSE. Public backlash on social media forced the campaign to be withdrawn within hours. The Ombudsperson's Office (*Defensoría de los Habitantes*) subsequently referred the matter to the TSE for possible misuse of public resources and misrepresentation of the TSE's role.

The Election Law prohibits the publication of opinion polls during the three days preceding election day and on election day itself, both offline and online, with violations punishable by fines ranging from 10 to 50 base salaries. The law was generally respected but on the day before the elections, footballer Keylor Navas shared an Instagram story featuring a poll asking who would win the elections.⁶⁵ The TSE indicated it could initiate an ex officio investigation into a potential electoral offence.

Access to public information is fully protected, including through public social media profiles. In January 2026, an influencer filed a complaint with the TSE, alleging she was blocked by presidential candidate Laura Fernández on Instagram after criticising her during the campaign, citing potential violations of freedom of expression and of access to information online⁶⁶ The TSE ruled that blocking the user infringed the right to access electoral information and to exercise an informed vote.

⁶² Digital Observatory report between 1 December 2025 and 12 January 2026.

⁶³ Human-operated accounts (using real or fake identities) that deliberately post provocative, abusive or misleading content to disrupt electoral debate.

⁶⁴ Of 482,000 accounts monitored across Facebook, Instagram, X y Tik Tok, 17% were identified as trolls.

⁶⁵ <https://observador.cr/keylor-navas-se-expone-a-sancion-de-hasta-%E2%82%A123-millones-por-publicacion-en-instagram-advierde-el-tse/>

⁶⁶ <https://columbia.co.cr/laura-fernandez-atribuye-a-error-el-bloqueo-a-ciudadana-critica-de-su-campana>



Social media monitoring

Narratives targeting the TSE

In the months preceding the elections, the TSE was the target of online narratives questioning its impartiality and credibility. The EEM observed sustained messaging aimed at undermining trust in the TSE and the integrity of the electoral process, primarily within pro-government pages and groups, although overall reach appeared limited.

Hashtags such as #NoConfioEnElTSE, allegations of bias towards the PLN, claims of a ‘gag order’, assertions of an attempted coup against President Chaves, and accusations that elections could be ‘rigged’ circulated across platforms.⁶⁷ EEM monitoring indicated that engagement with these narratives peaked following public statements by President Chaves or government figures questioning the TSE’s credibility.⁶⁸ Although intensity later declined, such narratives continued within supporter groups and comment sections, with the potential to erode public confidence in the electoral administration.

On election day, unverified claims regarding voting results abroad and allegedly pre-marked ballots circulated online, though dissemination remained limited. After the elections, misleading allegations of irregularities in polling station results forms were observed. A misleading headline by the media outlet Trivisión, based on a misinterpretation of the OAS mission’s findings on results transmission, triggered a further wave of online disinformation and attacks against the TSE.⁶⁹

The TSE maintained an active online communication strategy aimed at informing voters and countering disinformation, including through a dedicated webpage (*‘Que no lo engañen’* - Don’t be fooled) disseminating regular statements and videos.⁷⁰ It operated a dedicated social media monitoring unit and cooperated with UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) through the eMonitor tool to identify disinformation and hate speech. These measures reflected a proactive institutional effort to enhance transparency and safeguard the integrity of the online campaign environment.

Electoral disinformation and derogatory content

Interlocutors identified misleading or inaccurate content attributed to political actors, including government officials, as a growing concern. Narratives portraying the country’s situation, journalists, media outlets, institutions and electoral authorities in distorted terms were reportedly amplified by politically aligned media outlets, social media pages and influencers.

The EEM observed a highly polarised online environment in which networks of partisan pages, social media profiles and influencers disseminated narratives supportive of and critical of the government, including unverified claims. Pro-incumbent pages questioned the integrity of

⁶⁷ The allegations of an attempted coup sprung from the Legislative Assembly vote on whether to lift President Chaves’ immunity.

⁶⁸ See social media monitoring annex. EEM monitoring showed that the narrative *I don’t trust the TSE* peaked on 9 October, following media coverage of President Chaves’ statements during a radio Columbia interview: “One of the pillars of democracy is tainted; I no longer trust the magistrates of the TSE”.

⁶⁹ <https://radios.ucr.ac.cr/2026/02/doblecheck/trivision-dudas-infundadas-sobre-resultados-electorales/>

⁷⁰ TSE webpage, <https://www.tse.go.cr/que-no-lo-enganen.html>



institutions and the electoral process, alleging corruption and electoral fraud, while portraying opposition actors as corrupt or criminal networks. Pages critical of the government spread allegations of electoral procedure manipulation by the ruling party, including claims that PPSO polling station members would mark ballots in its favour. Circulating across Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, such narratives distorted online political debate and risked undermining voters' ability to form opinions free from manipulation.

The EEM observed troll activity supporting major political blocs, particularly on Facebook and X, contributing to the escalation of hostile rhetoric and personal attacks. Influencers with significant followings actively campaigned for and against leading parties, further amplifying polarising narratives and, at times, unverified information.⁷¹ Online engagement during televised debates was high, particularly on Facebook and X, where debates trended in real time. Fact-checkers, media outlets and individual users countered falsehoods during these events.

Disinformation was disseminated through memes, text-based images and short-form videos — formats that migrated easily across platforms and are more difficult to moderate. The use of AI-manipulated content was limited and generally unsophisticated. Observed cases included fabricated endorsements, edited images and sexualised or defamatory material targeting presidential candidates.⁷² While reach appeared limited, such content contributed to a confrontational tone in online discourse. As election day approached, Laura Fernandez warned of an online campaign aimed to mislead her followers with wrong voting instructions that could invalidate their ballots.⁷³

The EEM observed frequent derogatory language, insults, mockery, personal attacks and body-shaming targeting all presidential candidates.⁷⁴ The prevalence of hostile and demeaning content lowered the quality of online political debate. Troll accounts further intensified hostile exchanges, discouraging constructive political participation and undermining informed choices.

Counter-disinformation efforts

Ahead of the elections, civil society and media actors strengthened counter-disinformation initiatives. Fact-checking organisations such as *Doble Check* published regular debunks.⁷⁵ The Digital Observatory of Universidad Latina issued periodic analyses of online narratives.⁷⁶ Media outlets including *La Nación* (#NoComaCuento) and *CR Hoy* (FactTok) flagged misleading content during the campaign.

In October 2025, media and civil society organisations launched the National Agreement Against Disinformation and Hate Speech (#OjoConLaDesinformación #Beware of disinformation)⁷⁷. Although aligned with international good practice, the initiative did not

⁷¹ Some influencers posted unverified claims that their Instagram stories were deleted by the government after criticising the official candidate.

⁷² Examples included an AI-generated video falsely depicting Nicolás Maduro calling on voters to support Ariel Robles, a sexualised video of Laura Fernandez or an edited image falsely depicting Robles sniffing drugs instead of coffee beans.

⁷³ On 22 January 2026, Laura Fernandez posted: "[Watch out, jaguars, the usual actors are confusing voters](#)".

⁷⁴ See social media monitoring annex.

⁷⁵ The Doble Check project receives support from the European Union.

⁷⁶ <https://www.ulatina.ac.cr/area-de-investigacion/grupos-de-investigacion/observatorio>

⁷⁷ <https://ojoconladesinformacion.org/>



secure unanimous political endorsement. Half of the presidential candidates and 39 legislative candidates signed the agreement, while no candidate from Pueblo Soberano joined.

Despite these efforts, the mission noted that limited resources constrained the capacity of fact-checkers and media organisations to systematically counter disinformation at scale and in real time. In the digital age, strengthened media literacy and robust verification initiatives remain important safeguards for the integrity of electoral processes.

Recommendation: Strengthen independent fact-checking initiatives, and media and digital literacy programmes to effectively address online information manipulation, including AI-generated content, especially during electoral processes.

Use of social media by electoral contestants

Most presidential candidates actively used social media platforms to campaign. EEM analysis of presidential candidates' official accounts on Facebook, X, Instagram, Tik Tok and YouTube indicated that Facebook remained the dominant campaign platform.⁷⁸ During the monitored period, nearly half of the highest-reach posts originated from Laura Fernández's Facebook page (46.8%), followed by Fabricio Alvarado's Facebook page (25.6%). Most posts by Laura Fernández (91%) featured images and videos of campaign events, while 5 % criticised other parties, the judiciary, and the media. Fabricio Alvarado's posts displayed a more confrontational tone, with nearly 50% containing criticism or discrediting of political opponents, particularly targeting Ariel Robles, his party and the left-wing in general. Some 10% of the highest-reach posts were by Alvaro Ramos, followed by Ariel Robles with 4.4%. They were among the opposition candidates who framed political continuity as a threat and called for the defence of democracy.⁷⁹

Online political advertising is not subject to spending limits. Political parties must report social media campaign expenditure to the TSE, which directly monitors and cross-verifies spending on Facebook and Instagram through Meta's Ad Library API available in Costa Rica, enhancing transparency and financial accountability. However, the absence of Google's Ads Transparency tool in the country limits independent verification of advertisers and expenditure on Google and YouTube, limiting oversight.

According to TSE data, political parties spent 168,939,005 colones (€301,000 approx.) on advertising in digital media. EEM monitoring showed that between 27 October 2025 and 1 February 2026, José Aguilar (Avanza) recorded the highest social media advertising expenditure (€96,880), followed by Alvaro Ramos, PLN (€79,214), Fabricio Alvarado, NR (€78,000), and Claudia Dobles, CAC (€65,117). Laura Fernández, PPSO, ranked seventh with €35,085.⁸⁰

XII. WOMEN IN ELECTIONS

In addition to Costa Rica electing its second woman President, the 2026 elections marked a record outcome for women's access to elected office in Costa Rica, as 30 women won seats in

⁷⁸ The EEM analysed the 250 highest-reaching posts from presidential candidates between 01/11/25 and 01/02//26 across Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube using the social listening tool SentiOne. See social media monitoring annex.

⁷⁹ See social media monitoring annex.

⁸⁰ Amounts are approximate. See social media monitoring annex.



the Legislative Assembly, surpassing for the first time the number of men elected, 27. These results reflect the cumulative effect of a robust legal and institutional framework that promotes and enforces gender parity, combining constitutional equality guarantees, a prescriptive Election Law, constitutional jurisprudence, and electoral enforcement by the TSE - which is widely regarded as an international best practice.

The Election Law defines women's and men's political participation as a human right, establishes mandatory parity and alternation in candidate lists, party bodies, and delegations; requires political parties to guarantee parity and alternation in their statutes and internal structures, and grants party members an explicit right to equitable participation by gender. This framework places Costa Rica among a limited number of jurisdictions worldwide with strict and enforceable gender parity requirements.

In 2015, the Constitutional Chamber confirmed that gender parity applies both vertically and horizontally (*encabezamientos*).⁸¹ Vertical parity requires alternation of women and men within each candidate list under a zipper system. Horizontal parity regulates list leadership: political parties must distribute the top positions of their legislative lists equally between women and men, with any difference limited to one where the number of lists is odd. In the 2026 elections, only three of the 20 parties that contested in the 7 provinces had women heading four provincial lists and men three.⁸² The TSE integrated this interpretation in resolutions in 2016 and 2017, making horizontal parity binding for legislative elections at the candidate-registration stage.⁸³ Cumulatively, these measures have contributed to a sustained increase in the number of women elected to the Legislative Assembly over successive electoral cycles.

In 2021, the TSE clarified that the presidential ticket must also respect overall gender parity and must include persons of different sexes.⁸⁴ In 2026, five women competed for the presidency, marking the sixth national election in which women have run for the highest executive office.⁸⁵

Applied nationwide for the first time in the 2026 elections, a complementary pillar of the parity framework is legislation addressing violence against women in politics, introduced by Law No. 10235 (2022). The Election Law prohibits propaganda that undermines women's political rights or incites gender-based political violence, requires political parties to establish internal complaint mechanisms, sanctions, and preventive measures and allows such conduct to be challenged through electoral *amparo* when it affects the effective exercise of political rights (art. 225).

XIII. PARTICIPATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Indigenous peoples in Costa Rica are constitutionally recognised as part of a multi-ethnic and pluricultural state following the 2015 amendment to Article 1 of the Constitution. According to official census data, indigenous persons represent approximately 2 - 2.5 per cent of the

⁸¹ Judgment No. 15-16070, Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice

⁸² Partido Unión Costarricense Democrática, Partido Liberal Progresista and Partido Avanza.

⁸³ Resolution No. 3603-E8-2016, 1532-E1-2017 and 4582-E8-2017, TSE

⁸⁴ Resolution No. 4757-E8-2021, TSE

⁸⁵ Although women were granted the right to vote and to be elected in 1949, it took 45 years for a woman to run for the presidency for the first time, which occurred in 1994.



population and comprise eight legally recognised peoples - Bribri, Cabécar, Ngäbe, Maleku, Brunca (Boruca), Chorotega, Huetar and Teribe - living in 24 indigenous territories. These territories are mainly located in Limón and Puntarenas, with additional presence in Guanacaste, Alajuela, Cartago and Heredia. Spanish is the sole official language of the Republic (Constitution, art. 76); however, the Constitution mandates the state to protect and promote indigenous languages, reflecting recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity. Costa Rica is a member of the International Labour Organization ILO and has ratified ILO Convention No. 169, reinforcing state obligations to guarantee indigenous peoples' political participation and non-discriminatory access to public services.

The interests and concerns of indigenous peoples did not feature noticeably as a subject in the national campaign. Three political parties - Coalición Agenda Ciudadana (CAC), Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN) and Frente Amplio (FA) - included indigenous candidates in their legislative lists, however, none was elected.

In the context of the 2026 general elections, the TSE adopted measures to enhance inclusiveness, particularly in geographically remote areas. These included reinforced civil registry services, the translation of electoral materials into five indigenous languages, as well as hiring translators for languages with an oral tradition or limited written use in areas of higher indigenous presence. Voter information in Spanish and indigenous languages was further disseminated through radio spots (*cuñas*) and civic education initiatives coordinated by the TSE. In total, 117 polling stations (JRVs) were located in indigenous territories - including 18 polling locations classified as difficult to access - covering 44,548 registered voters.

While indigenous organisations and representatives met by the EU EEM welcomed the TSE's efforts to improve accessibility, they highlighted persistent logistical challenges. In Alto Chirripó, for example, some voters reportedly had to walk up to six hours to reach polling stations, with adverse weather conditions on election day further hindering access.

Recommendation: Further strengthen efforts to bring polling stations closer to geographically challenging areas, in order to further reduce access barriers to the participation of indigenous people.

XIV. PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Constitution enshrines equality before the law and universal, direct and secret suffrage and the Election Law requires the TSE adopt the necessary measures to facilitate voting for persons who require support, while protecting freedom of suffrage and, as far as possible, the secrecy of the vote. These domestic guarantees comply with Costa Rica's international commitments, notably to the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol, which requires states ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life, including the right to vote and be elected.

The 2026 electoral process reflected growing visibility of persons with disabilities in political life. PLN presidential candidate Alvaro Ramos is hearing-impaired and has publicly described his experience with deafness as part of his personal trajectory and public service commitment.



In line with accessibility commitments, all official presidential debates and broadcast nationally included sign language interpretation, for inclusion of viewers with hearing disabilities.

On election day, the TSE implemented a range of practical measures to facilitate participation. In addition to ordinary polling stations, voting was organised in 58 long-stay homes (*hogares de larga estancia*) for elderly and persons with disabilities, covering 2,743 registered voters. These arrangements aimed to bring the vote closer to individuals who might otherwise face significant mobility barriers. Across polling stations, electoral kits included support materials such as magnifiers, Braille templates, adapted crayons to facilitate grip, signature guides, communication boards for persons with hearing impairments, anti-slip ballot supports and mobile voting screens. Assisted voting and, upon explicit request, public voting modalities were regulated to ensure that voters requiring support could exercise their right freely and in accordance with their will. A notable innovation in 2026 was the introduction, on a pilot basis in approximately 200 voting centres, of a TSE accessibility support staff to assist voters with disabilities and older persons in navigating the voting process. This initiative complemented existing measures and was assessed positively by voters and observers.

The *Defensoría de los Habitantes*'s election observation focused on accessibility and equal participation, deploying hundreds of trained youth observers across ordinary and special polling centres. It found that the vast majority of polling stations had the support materials available and most had physical spaces adapted for persons with reduced mobility. Conversely, it found insufficient implementation of protocols for transferring residents from long-stay facilities to polling sites. The *Defensoría* indicated that these findings would be reflected in a formal report to the TSE, including recommendations aimed at further improving accessibility in future electoral processes.

XV. NATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION

Election observation is provided for by the Election Law, and for the 2026 elections, the largest ever national election observation mission was launched.⁸⁶ The *Defensoría de los Habitantes* received over 2000 applications from citizens aged between 18 and 35 from around the country to observe polling and counting and ultimately had 683 volunteers accredited.⁸⁷ Funding for the project was approved by the Legislative Assembly within the national budget in November 2025, but the Ministry of Finance never disbursed any funds, limiting the *Defensoría*'s ability to ensure transport or subsistence to its volunteers, as well as its geographical coverage, as not all accredited volunteers were able to participate. The *Defensoría* election observation mission trained its volunteers and created reporting tools, establishing a significant national initiative, which could serve as a springboard for further citizen election observation projects.

The *Defensoría* focused its observation on vulnerable communities, including elderly voters living in retirement residences, and voters with disabilities, as well as voters in prison. To that end, its observers attended voting in 297 standard voting centres, as well as in polling stations established in 23 residences, and in three prisons, including the country's only women's prison. They also attended residences for the elderly or people with disabilities which did not have a dedicated voting centre, to observe facilities for their access to voting nearby. The *Defensoría*

⁸⁶ In 2022, the *Colegio de Abogados y Abogadas de Costa Rica* deployed some 200 election observers.

⁸⁷ The EU Delegation contributed some support to the project.



observed opening, voting and closing procedures with a view to reporting on the respect of vulnerable voters' right to participate freely and independently.

The TSE accredited more than 850 national observers, including 91 from the *Universidad de Costa Rica*, 50 from the *Consejo Nacional de Personas con Discapacidad*, and others from *Universidad para la Paz* and the *Fundación Taller Internacional de Servicios*.

Given the new context for elections in Costa Rica, it would be a useful contribution to public knowledge about the electoral process for civil society organisations to report on the overall respect for key rights on election day for voters, as well as the safeguards for secrecy, transparency and respect of the will of voters.

Recommendation: Foster civil society initiatives for independent non-partisan election observation, and facilitate capacity building to help enable comprehensive election observation and communication of findings to the public.

XVI. POLLING AND COUNTING

Election day unfolded in a well-organised and peaceful manner, according to participating political parties as well as national and international observer organisations. The TSE reported that all 7,154 polling stations (*Juntas Receptoras de Voto- JRVs*) opened on time, with an adequate number of staff. This was largely confirmed by the *Defensoria's* 400-strong observation mission, which reported 92 per cent of JRVs opened at 6am exactly. The Organisation of American States' election observation mission shared that voting and counting went smoothly.

In addition to ensuring there were three trained TSE poll workers (*auxiliares*) on hand in each polling station, to complement or act in lieu of political *Integrantes de Junta Receptora de Voto* (IJRV), the TSE deployed '*personas encargadas de centro de votación*' to all voting centres with more than five polling stations, to provide support to polling staff, oversee materials distribution and preparation of the rooms, help voters find their JRV, and oversee transmission of results.

Well-designed election materials assisted both voting and counting: clear ballots with candidate photos and party symbols, and a bright orange crayon for marking votes, as well as well-designed results forms, for which carbonless copy paper was provided, to efficiently ensure sufficient copies for all records. Provisional results would later show that of the 2,494,611 ballots cast, just 27,264 were blank or annulled, constituting just over 1 per cent, consistent with clear voting and counting procedures and good materials.

The TSE provided polling stations with several tools to assist voters with disabilities, including a magnifying glass and braille stencils to place over ballots for voters with reduced or no sight, and a crayon holder and non-slip ballot support for those with motor disabilities. In addition, the cardboard secrecy screen, placed on a table for most voters, could be moved to any practical location, including for wheelchair users. Voters who require assistance may receive it from a relative or person of their choice, or have recourse to a public vote, wherein they tell the polling staff how to mark their ballot. This option, while rooted in custom, is such a broad breach of secrecy of vote that it may be best jettisoned, considering the other options now available.



The TSE implemented flexible and reasonable procedures for registration of candidate representatives (*fiscales*), openly aware that they are a key part of transparency. Parties could nominate representatives to specific polling stations – one from each party may be present at any one time – and also ‘general’ representatives, who were free to attend a variety of polling stations, a practical option that facilitated deployment for parties.⁸⁸ The TSE created a database with registered *fiscales*, which polling staff could check, before providing an identifying wristband. This system eliminated the common challenge of distributing credentials. Since 2022, the TSE has provided training to *fiscales*, clarifying their role and channels for presenting any complaints. Although voluntary, the TSE reports interest, with a growing number choosing to obtain certification.⁸⁹

A total of 53,251 *fiscales* were accredited, although according to the TSE, far fewer are actually deployed on election day.⁹⁰ The party with most *fiscales* accredited was the PUSC (12,472), followed by PPSO (11,524) and PLN (10,449). The CAC has 4,143 and *Frente Amplio* has 2,843.

Voting from abroad proceeded without any reported incidents. Difficulties in returning the election materials from Cuba, given the US fuel embargo, delayed the conclusion of the official results, which is based on revision of polling station documentation.

XVII. RESULTS PROCESSING AND PUBLICATION

Transmission of provisional results

Provisional results were communicated to the TSE from polling stations, in a procedure for which five nationwide rehearsals were held before election day. Transmission was carried out by TSE staff - in smaller voting centres, by *auxiliares*, hired to complement political party polling staff, and in centres with at least five polling centres, by ‘*encargados de centro*’. Results were communicated either by phone (38 per cent, 2,732 JRVs), or through a private app on a phone provided by the TSE (62%, 4,422 JRVs).⁹¹ Transmitted data was entered by operators working from three data centres.

Just as polls were closing at 6pm, the TSE publicly set the transmission data to zero, to show that none of the rehearsal data remained in the system. As is customary in Costa Rica, provisional results were first announced by the TSE at 8.45 pm. At that stage, more than 30 per cent of results for both elections were made public, and over the following three hours, transmission reached past 90 per cent. By noon the next day, it had reached 96.87 per cent. Provisional results were published on the TSE website as well as its phone app.⁹² The TSE website provided detailed and varied information on the provisional results, which could be

⁸⁸ An option also exists to nominate a representative to see any part of the TSE’s work, however only the PLN has nominated anyone for this purpose.

⁸⁹ Some 1,500 obtained certification, but more attend sessions without sitting a test. In 2022, 800 were certified.

⁹⁰ In 2022, 86,000 were accredited but just 13,000 performed on election day. The final number of *fiscales* present on election day is only confirmed after manual verification of the ‘Padrón Registro’ from each JRV, some months after elections.

⁹¹ Results from abroad were received by telephone, and kept aside until 6pm if they arrived earlier.

⁹² <https://www.tse.go.cr/SVR2026/>



viewed down to individual polling station results. Any selection of results could also be downloaded in several exploitable formats as well as in pdf.⁹³ Lastly, the TSE website enabled viewing and downloading of pictures of polling station results forms.⁹⁴

Escrutinio

The final, official results are recorded after *escrutinio* process, which provides exceptional security and transparency. It was undertaken under the responsibility of the TSE magistrates in San José and began upon reception of election materials, two days after voting. Polling stations' documentation was reviewed: results forms, records of who was present, potential incident forms, and the record of reasons for invalid votes and assisted voting.⁹⁵ This evaluation led to results being confirmed or triggered a recount of a polling station's ballots, carried out by TSE staff, in the presence of party representatives and election observers.⁹⁶ The Election Law specifies the circumstances in which a recount must take place, including where results forms present inconsistencies, where paperwork is missing or incomplete, or, crucially, where at least two political parties were not present during the count.⁹⁷ Whether or not a recount takes place, an *escrutinio* form is produced and published online, displaying final results and specifying if and why a recount took place.⁹⁸

The *escrutinio* of presidential results concluded on 12 February.⁹⁹ Of the 7436 JRVs, 3814 had their results confirmed without a recount, while the remainder (49 per cent) did undergo a recount of ballots, in the presence of party representatives.¹⁰⁰ The majority of recounts (1,936) were triggered by the records showing that during counting, there were not representatives of at least two political parties (whether as polling staff members or as *fiscales*) and the next biggest category of recounts (1,448) were due to evident errors or inconsistencies in the JRV results forms. Further, 180 recounts were triggered by blank results forms, and 55 by the JRV

⁹³ Exploitable data such as .csv, xlxs formats (both of which were provided by the TSE) enables political parties, media, civil society and any interested citizen to carry out the verifications and analyses they wish.

⁹⁴ These were swiftly available from the polling stations which sent results by app, while JRVs reporting by phone had their results forms scanned and published once their materials reached TSE San José. All details and formats of provisional results are published on <https://www.tse.go.cr/VR2026/#/presidenciales> and <https://www.tse.go.cr/VR2026/#/legislativas>

⁹⁵ All polling station documentation is contained in a *Padrón Registro*

⁹⁶ Political parties may nominate up to 15 observers each for the *escrutinio*, and up to five – one per counting table – may be present at any time. Media may also enter the recount area and the process is broadcast on TSE social media channels.

⁹⁷ Article 197 of the Election Law calls for a polling station to be recounted when a complaint or call for annulment has been submitted, where the results forms contain evident arithmetical or other inconsistencies; when, during the count, there were not at least two political party representatives, whether as IJRV or as *fiscal*, or where the *Padrón Registro* is missing, unused, or has recorded incidents or observations which merit review. In addition, in the case of presidential elections, a total recount is provided for in case of less than 2 points difference between winner and second, or second and third, in case of a run-off. Finally for national elections, a recount of the province in question is prescribed when there is a difference of less than 500 votes in the attribution of assembly seats.

⁹⁸ <https://www.tse.go.cr/2026/docus/escrutinio/boletas/search.asp>

⁹⁹ Barring the 91 polling stations from the vote abroad, as materials from Cuba and Shanghai had not yet been returned, and the TSE decided to conclude the process on their arrival.

¹⁰⁰ All parties were entitled to up to one representative for each of the 5 recounting tables. During the *escrutinio* for presidential elections, five PPSO *fiscales* were present during every session, as were between 2 and 5 PUSC *fiscales*, 2 to 5 PLN *fiscales*, between 1 and 5 FA *fiscales*. Avanza *fiscales* were present in most sessions, and CAC *fiscales* in some.



paperwork including comments. Lastly, two recounts were carried out following complaints or appeals, and one because the paperwork booklet (*Padrón Registro*) was missing.¹⁰¹

A November 2024 reform of the Election Law provides for a recount of legislative results in an entire province if there is a difference of less than 500 votes between candidates, and the difference would determine assignment of the seat.¹⁰² The TSE had advised against this reform but once enacted, it issued a resolution outlining that under the proportional system, the complex assignment of assembly seats is never undertaken until after the *escrutinio* in any case, and that in order to ensure compliance with the new legal provision, the most straightforward approach would be to carry out a recount of every polling station's legislative results.¹⁰³ The recount of all legislative results began on 16 February and was finalised on 27 February.

The *escrutinio* process was methodical, thorough and transparent. Nonetheless, it took place amid a continuous murmur of allegations of fraud by the TSE, specifically by PPSO supporters online who believed that their party should have obtained more seats in the assembly. While the PPSO issued a call for patience and recalled its representatives were present during the *escrutinio*, some party figures fuelled expectations of a change in results. In this context, it should be noted that in addition to political parties' presence during the *escrutinio*, the TSE published all necessary information for the public to cross-check provisional and final results. Nonetheless, the publication of polling stations results forms and *escrutinio* forms in the same internet page would could be made easier for the public to consult.

Recommendation: Publish polling stations results forms and escrutinio forms together, to facilitate easy consultation of the full process for each polling station, particularly for citizens. Provide user-friendly navigation on TSE website to facilitate awareness and access to the information the TSE publishes.

XVIII. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Electoral dispute resolution mechanisms are generally in line with international standards and best practices. The right to an effective remedy is guaranteed at all stages of the electoral process and the system provides due-process safeguards. Electoral justice is concentrated within the electoral authority excluding parallel jurisdiction or review by the ordinary judiciary or the Constitutional Chamber as the Constitution entrusts the TSE with exclusive authority over the adjudication of electoral matters, and its decisions are final and binding.

Decisions, actions or omissions of lower electoral authorities—polling station boards and cantonal electoral boards—may be challenged by voters, political parties or candidates through complaints (*quejas*) or electoral appeals (*recursos de apelación electoral*), to address immediate operational irregularities or to review formal electoral decisions. In both cases, the TSE decides either as sole or second instance, and its decisions are immediately enforceable.

¹⁰¹ Anyone may call for a recount or for results to be cancelled, within three days of the election materials reaching the TSE, or within three days of their being opened for the *escrutinio*.

¹⁰² This reform was not supported by the TSE but was unanimously approved by the Legislative Assembly in October 2024.

¹⁰³ https://www.tse.go.cr/juris/relevantes/3388-E8-2025.html?zoom_highlight=referente



Amparo electoral is regulated by Election Law and is constitutionally grounded in the mandate of the TSE to safeguard fundamental political-electoral rights, such as the right to vote, to stand for election, to participate in party processes, to hold public office and to be free from political violence. It may be filed by any person against acts or omissions by public authorities, political parties or private actors that violate or threaten political-electoral rights, including cases of political violence against women. The TSE acts as sole and final instance not subject to appeal.

The Election Law also regulates a comprehensive system of electoral offences, distinguishing between electoral crimes (*delitos electorales*) and non-penal electoral infringements (*faltas electorales*), each subject to distinct sanctioning regimes. Electoral crimes include conduct directly affecting the integrity of elections, such as multiple voting, voter impersonation, obstruction of electoral bodies, falsification or retention of electoral documents, and interference with polling stations. These offences are punishable by imprisonment ranging from two months to six years. When committed by public officials in connection with their duties, additional sanctions apply, including dismissal and disqualification from holding public office for two to eight years. Criminal prosecution is conducted by the ordinary criminal courts following referral by the TSE.

Faltas electorales do not give rise to criminal liability and include breaches of campaign rules, unlawful publication of opinion polls, misuse of identity documents, dissemination of electoral misinformation, and refusal to provide information requested by electoral authorities. They are investigated by the Electoral Inspectorate of the TSE (Inspección Electoral) and sanctioned by the TSE through an administrative procedure governed subsidiarily by the *Ley General de la Administración Pública* (Law No. 6227), which ensures extensive procedural guarantees. Sanctions range from fines of two to twenty base salaries to retention of public campaign funding, civil liability of political parties, and, where applicable, dismissal and disqualification from public office (*inhabilitación*). *Beligerancia política* constitutes a specific *falta* electoral grounded in the constitutional principle of state neutrality in elections. It prohibits public officials from favouring or opposing parties or candidacies through the use of public office, authority or institutional resources.

The system provides strong safeguards for rights and procedurally robust, but proceedings are often lengthy. There are no shortened electoral deadlines for the resolution of administrative sanctioning procedures, even during electoral periods. As a result, cases may remain pending for extended periods well beyond the electoral cycle when they occurred; according to information provided, some open proceedings date back to 2020, and cases arising from the 2022 and 2024 elections continue to be investigated. On average, an administrative sanctioning case may take approximately one year to reach a final decision.

A total of 27 complaints for breaches of electoral rules were filed with the TSE before election day. All remain under administrative investigation. At the time of reporting, no case had been referred to the Public Prosecutor's Office, and no final sanctions had been imposed.

Of these, 12 cases concern alleged *beligerancia política* involving civil servants and municipal officials. The investigation concerning the President was suspended after the Legislative Assembly rejected lifting his immunity from prosecution (see Legal Issues section). Four cases relate to the alleged unlawful dissemination of opinion polls without TSE authorisation. Other matters involve alleged propaganda during the electoral silence period (*veda electoral*),



unauthorised political advertising in public or urban spaces, alleged alienation of identity cards, and alleged impersonation. Three cases concern alleged religious electoral propaganda¹⁰⁴.

The TSE admitted an electoral call for redress (*amparo*) filed by a content creator who alleged that she was blocked from Laura Fernández's official Instagram account after criticising the candidate's refusal to attend debates. The case was admitted for review on the grounds of freedom of expression and equal access to campaign-related digital communication; a similar complaint by another citizen is pending admissibility.

Overall, while the system provides strong procedural safeguards and comprehensive remedies, its length and the absence of expedited timelines during electoral periods may limit the immediate corrective effect of sanctions within the same electoral cycle.

Recommendation: consideration could be given to introducing shortened procedural deadlines for election-related cases, with a view to ensuring that allegations are resolved within the relevant electoral cycle, while preserving due process guarantees.

¹⁰⁴ On 19 January 2026, the TSE issued a preventive order (*medida cautelar*) requiring presidential candidates Laura Fernández and Fabricio Alvarado (PPSO), as well as associated religious actors, to cease religiously based electoral appeals following reports of religious leaders promoting voting through religious messages, potentially contrary to constitutional and statutory provisions (Electoral Code, arts. 136, 138, 270 and 283).



XIX. RECOMMENDATIONS

No.	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	KEY INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL OBLIGATIONS / GOOD PRACTICE
ELECTION ADMINISTRATION					
1	<p>The method for composing polling station staff is out-dated given current multi-party landscape. It is difficult for most political parties to deploy polling staff, resulting in imbalances which fuel apprehensions. Further, the TSE cannot oblige political IJRV to attend training, and already hires staff (<i>auxiliares</i>) in order to ensure oversight of voting and counting. Lastly, the guarantees for political representatives (<i>fiscales</i>) make the political composition of polling station staff obsolete.</p> <p><i>Final report, page 12</i></p>	<p>Simplify and de-politicise (ciudadanizar) the system for selecting polling station staff, ensuring all are under the authority of the TSE and required to attend training. One option could be to select polling staff from the Voter Register.</p>	Election Law	Legislative Assembly	<p>RIGHT AND OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS</p> <p>UN (CCPR): General Comment No. 25: The Right to Participate in Public Affairs, Voting Rights and the Right to Equal Access to Public Service (Article 25), para. 20</p> <p>“An independent electoral authority should be established to supervise the electoral process and to ensure that it is conducted fairly, impartially and in accordance with established laws which are compatible with the Covenant.”</p>
2	<p>The TSE published and broadcast a variety of information on the electoral process, including existing security and transparency measures regarding materials, counting, results</p>	<p>Increase communication about existing technical safeguards and transparency guarantees throughout the electoral</p>	No legislative change required	<p>TSE Civil society organisations Media</p>	<p>CONFIDENCE IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS</p> <p><i>UN (CCPR): General Comment No.</i></p>



No.	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	KEY INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL OBLIGATIONS / GOOD PRACTICE
	<p>transmission and the escrutinio, final results process.</p> <p>Media and civil society organisations also contributed to this effort. However, the information’s reach was insufficient, in part because it was disseminated late in the process.</p> <p><i>Final report, page 10</i></p>	<p>process, and in particularly regarding counting and the official results process (escrutinio).</p> <p>While the TSE should continue to take the lead, other organisations could also increase this public information service, which could be launched substantially before elections, with a view to optimising its reach.</p>			<p><i>25: The Right to Participate in Public Affairs, Voting</i></p> <p><i>Rights and the Right to Equal Access to Public Service (Article 25), para. 20</i></p> <p>There should be independent scrutiny of the voting and counting process and access to judicial review or other equivalent process so that electors have confidence in the security of the ballot and the counting of the votes. (...)</p> <p>Electors should be fully informed of these guarantees.</p>
3	<p>The TSE publishes detailed election results, including in downloadable exploitable form, considered best practice for enabling analysis of accuracy for political parties.</p> <p>The TSE also publishes images of both polling station results forms (<i>actas</i>) and <i>actas de escrutinio</i>, which detail whether or not a recount took place and why. Political parties have the necessary information to trace results. However, it would be useful to publish all results information on the same webpage, to help ensure citizens can see the full traceability provided.</p> <p>More generally, the TSE website</p>	<p>Publish polling stations results forms and final results (<i>escrutinio</i>) forms together, to facilitate easy consultation of the full process for each polling station, particularly for citizens.</p> <p>Provide user-friendly navigation on TSE website to facilitate awareness and access to the information the TSE publishes.</p>	No legislative change required	TSE	<p>CONFIDENCE IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS - ACCESS TO INFORMATION</p> <p><i>UN (CCPR): General Comment No. 25: The Right to Participate in Public Affairs, Voting</i></p> <p><i>Rights and the Right to Equal Access to Public Service (Article 25), para. 20</i></p> <p>There should be independent scrutiny of the voting and counting process and access to judicial review or other equivalent process so that electors have confidence in the security of the ballot and the counting of the votes. (...)</p> <p>Electors should be fully informed of</p>



No.	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	KEY INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL OBLIGATIONS / GOOD PRACTICE
	<p>publishes a wide range of technical and procedural information but the website and navigation design make it hard to find.</p> <p><i>Final report, pages 31 and 10</i></p>				<p>these guarantees.</p>
CAMPAIGN FINANCE					
4	<p>The campaign finance regime includes a public contribution, but makes it difficult to obtain advances, heightening recourse to private donations and loans, including through the complex system of <i>certificados de cession</i>, and leaves some candidates with few funds to communicate to the electorate.</p> <p>Pending a holistic evaluation of the campaign finance system, the introduction of publicly-paid media slots for all candidates could ensure one area of equitable resources.</p> <p><i>Final report, page 17</i></p>	<p>Introduce media slots for electoral advertising for all contenders, paid for from the public contribution to political parties, to be distributed in an equitable manner.</p>	<p>Election Law</p>	<p>Legislative Assembly</p>	<p>FAIRNESS IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN – ACCESS TO INFORMATION</p> <p>Article 5, Inter-American Democratic Charter</p> <p>The strengthening of political parties and other political organisations is a priority for democracy. Special attention will be paid to the problems associated with the high cost of election campaigns and the establishment of a balanced and transparent system for their financing.’</p>
MEDIA					
5	<p>There is broad consensus that the provisions for assignation of broadcast frequencies are outdated and prices</p>	<p>Establish a legal framework for the allocation of broadcasting frequencies in</p>	<p>Telecommunications Law</p>	<p>Legislative Assembly</p>	<p>FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION – ACCESS TO INFORMATION</p>



No.	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	KEY INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL OBLIGATIONS / GOOD PRACTICE
	<p>should increase, however the government’s planned auction excluded many existing media due to high base prices and technical requirements, and Constitutional Court annulled the auction, finding it was with the state’s duty to ensure media pluralism.</p> <p><i>Final report, page 19</i></p>	<p>line with Inter-American standards following objective, non-discriminatory criteria, and proportionate economic and technical conditions, to safeguard media pluralism, especially during elections.</p>	<p>Radio Law</p>		<p><i>Inter American Convention on Human Rights (IACHR). Art 13. 1. “Everyone has the right to freedom of expression”. 13.3. “The right of expression may not be restricted by indirect methods or means.”</i></p> <p><i>IACHR Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression. 12. Monopolies or oligopolies in the ownership and control of the communication media must be subject to anti-trust laws, as they conspire against democracy by limiting the plurality and diversity which ensure the full exercise of people’s right to information. In no case should such laws apply exclusively to the media. The concession of radio and television broadcast frequencies should take into account democratic criteria that provide equal opportunity of access for all individuals.</i></p> <p><i>ICCPR Art.19: “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.”</i></p>



No.	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	KEY INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL OBLIGATIONS / GOOD PRACTICE
6	<p>In the absence of a specific legal framework governing state advertising, discretionary allocation of state advertising in the media risks influencing editorial independence.</p> <p><i>Final report, page 20</i></p>	<p>To adopt a clear legal framework for state advertising allocation in line with international standards, based on objective, non-discriminatory criteria, and managed by independent bodies, to guarantee media freedom and editorial independence during elections.</p>	<p>New law on state advertising or specific provisions in another relevant law.</p>	<p>National Assembly</p>	<p>FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION - ACCESS TO INFORMATION</p> <p><i>Inter American Convention on Human Rights (IACHR). Art 13. 1.</i> “Everyone has the right to freedom of expression”. 13.3. “The right of expression may not be restricted by indirect methods or means, such as the abuse of government or private controls over newsprint, radio broadcasting frequencies”.</p> <p><i>IACHR Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression. 13:</i> “The exercise of power and the use of public funds by the state, (...), the arbitrary and discriminatory placement of official advertising and government loans (...) with the intent to put pressure on and punish or reward and provide privileges to social communicators and communications media because of the opinions they express threaten freedom of expression, and must be explicitly prohibited by law.”</p> <p><i>ICCPR Art.19 (2):</i> “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his</p>



No.	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	KEY INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL OBLIGATIONS / GOOD PRACTICE
					choice.”
SOCIAL MEDIA					
7	<p>Limited resources constrained the capacity of fact-checkers and media organisations to systematically counter disinformation at scale and in real time. In the digital age, strengthened media literacy and robust verification initiatives remain important safeguards for the integrity of electoral processes.</p> <p><i>Final report, page 24</i></p>	<p>Strengthen independent fact-checking initiatives, and media and digital literacy programmes to effectively address online information manipulation, including AI-generated content, especially during electoral processes.</p>	<p>No legislative change required</p>	<p>Civil society including academia Media</p>	<p>ACCESS TO INFORMATION - FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION – FAIRNESS IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN – TRANSPARENCY</p> <p><i>ICCPR. Art 19 (1):</i> “Everyone has the right to hold opinions without interference.</p> <p><i>ICCPR Art. 25; CCPR GC 25, Para 19:</i> “Voters should be able to form opinions independently, free of violence or threat of violence, compulsion, inducement or manipulative interference of any kind.”</p> <p><i>UN, OSCE, OAS, ACHPR Joint declaration on freedom of expression and “fake news”, disinformation and propaganda, (6a):</i> “All stakeholders – including intermediaries, media outlets, civil society and academia – should be supported in developing participatory and transparent initiatives for creating a better understanding of the impact of disinformation and propaganda on democracy, freedom of expression, journalism and civic space, as well as appropriate responses to these phenomena.”</p>



No.	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	KEY INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL OBLIGATIONS / GOOD PRACTICE
					<p><i>UN, OSCE, OAS Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression and Elections in the Digital Age. Restrictions on Freedom of Expression/Media freedom During Elections (i): “States should consider supporting positive measures to address online disinformation, such as the promotion of independent fact-checking mechanisms and public education campaigns, while avoiding adopting rules criminalising disinformation.”</i></p>
CIVIL SOCIETY					
8	<p>Over 850 Costa Rican election observers were accredited, evidencing engagement with the electoral process. In particular, the <i>Defensoria de los Habitantes</i> deployed the biggest observation mission to date and sought to ensure training, geographical coverage and reporting mechanisms to ensure public awareness of their findings. This initiative could serve as a precedent for a comprehensive national election observation, to contribute to public knowledge about the electoral process.</p> <p><i>Final report, page 28</i></p>	<p>Foster civil society initiatives for independent non-partisan election observation, and facilitate capacity building to help enable comprehensive election observation and communication of findings to the public.</p>	<p>No legislative change required</p>	<p>Civil society</p>	<p>CONFIDENCE IN THE ELECTIONS</p> <p>CITIZEN ELECTION OBSERVATION</p> <p>Non-partisan citizen election observation - good practice that enhances the principles of public oversight, accountability and public confidence in elections.</p> <p>Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations, preamble:</p> <p>Non-partisan election observation and</p>



No.	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	KEY INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL OBLIGATIONS / GOOD PRACTICE
					monitoring by citizen organizations has a distinct role to play in the independent scrutiny of electoral processes.
PARTICIPATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES					
9	<p>Although the TSE has made substantial efforts to facilitate participation of Costa Ricans from indigenous communities, structural and geographic constraints continue to affect effective access in certain territories, where it took some voters from indigenous communities some 6 hours to reach their voting sites. enjoyment of voting rights under conditions of equality.</p> <p><i>Final report, page 27</i></p>	<p>Further strengthen efforts to bring polling stations closer to geographically challenging areas, in order to further reduce access barriers to the participation of indigenous people.</p>	<p>No legislative change required</p>	<p>TSE</p>	<p>RIGHT AND OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE/ THE STATE MUST TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO GIVE EFFECT TO RIGHTS ICCPR, Art. 2.2 “...each State Party...undertakes to take the necessary steps...to adopt such laws or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to the rights recognised in the present Covenant.</p> <p>ICERD, Article 5 “...States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably</p>



No.	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	KEY INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL OBLIGATIONS / GOOD PRACTICE
					<p>...(c) Political rights, in particular the right to participate in elections – to vote and to stand for election – on the basis of universal and equal suffrage...”</p>
ELECTORAL JUSTICE					
10.	<p>The system gives precedence to fundamental rights and is procedurally robust, however proceedings are often lengthy. No shortened electoral deadlines apply to administrative sanctioning procedures. As a result, cases may remain pending well beyond the relevant electoral cycle; some open proceedings date back to 2020, and cases from the 2022 and 2024 elections are still being processed. The law does not establish the time the TSE has to decide.</p> <p><i>Page 33 of final report</i></p>	<p>Consideration could be given to introducing shortened procedural deadlines for election-related cases, with a view to ensuring that allegations are resolved within the relevant electoral cycle, while preserving due process guarantees.</p>	Electoral Law	Legislative Assembly	<p>THE RIGHT TO A TIMELY AND EFFECTIVE REMEDY</p> <p>ICCPR, article 2.3 obliges states to ensure that any person whose rights or freedoms are violated shall have an effective remedy. “To ensure that any person whose rights or freedoms as herein recognised are violated shall have an effective remedy, notwithstanding that the violation has been committed by persons acting in an official capacity.”</p> <p>ACHR, Article 25. Establishes the right of everyone to a simple, prompt and effective recourse before a competent court or tribunal for protection against acts that violate fundamental rights. This is the core “effective remedy” provision in the Inter-American system.</p>

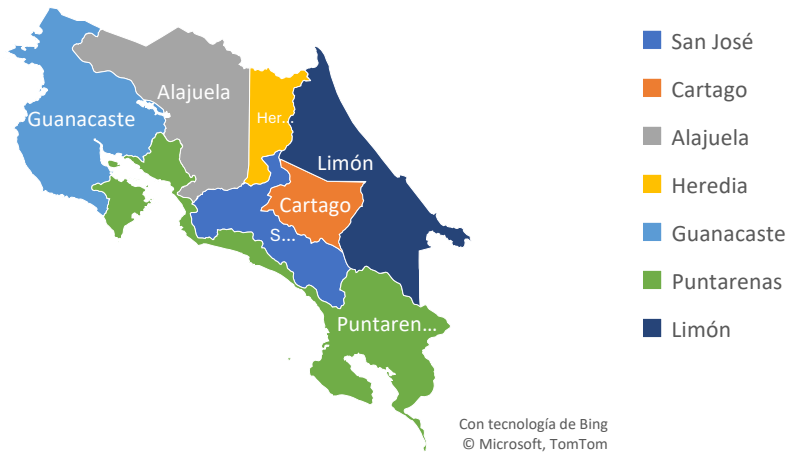


No.	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	KEY INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL OBLIGATIONS / GOOD PRACTICE
					ACHR, Article 8. Requires due process and resolution within a reasonable time by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal.

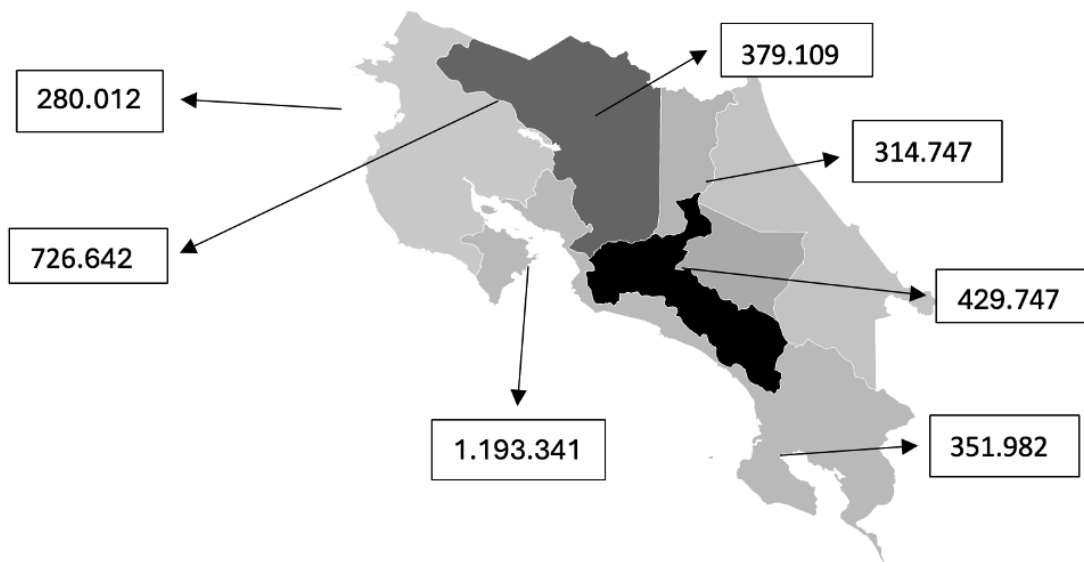
XX. ANNEXES

ANNEX I - ELECTORAL DATA

Costa Rica provinces (legislative constituencies)



Registered voters per province

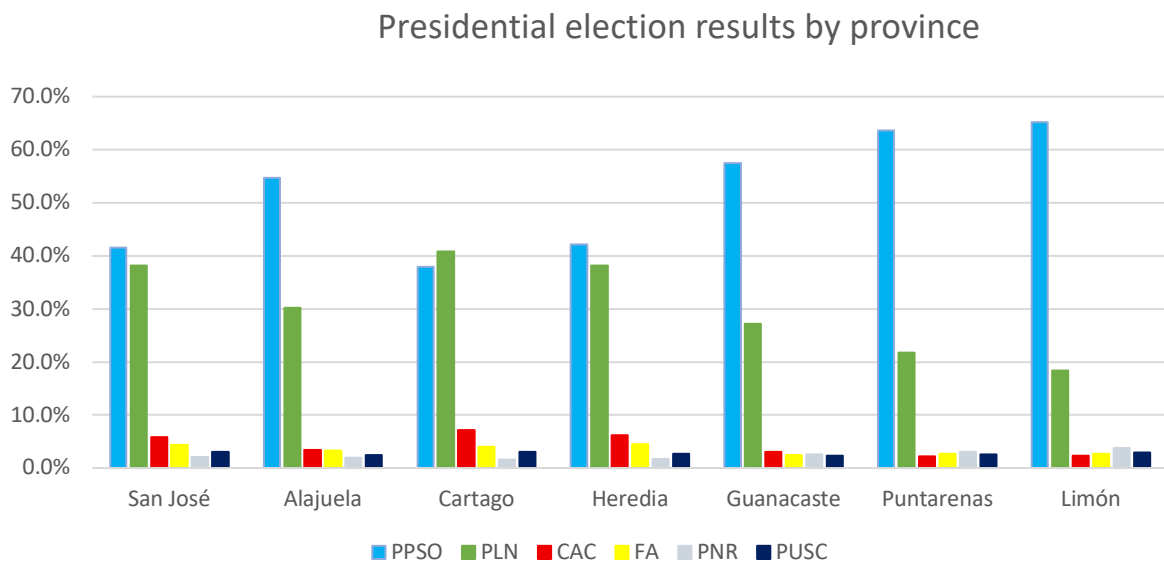
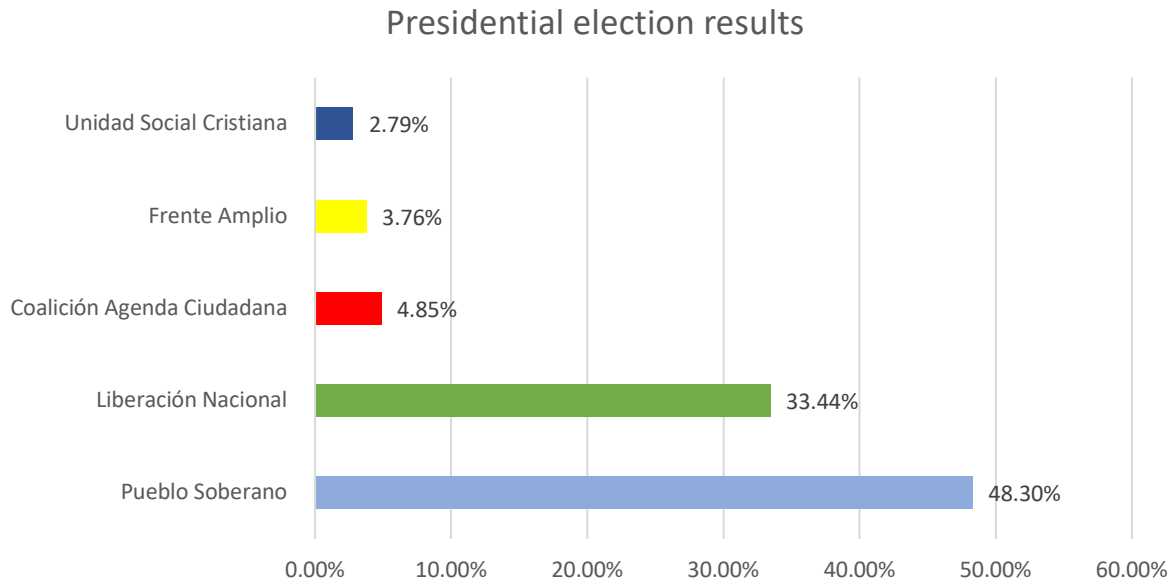




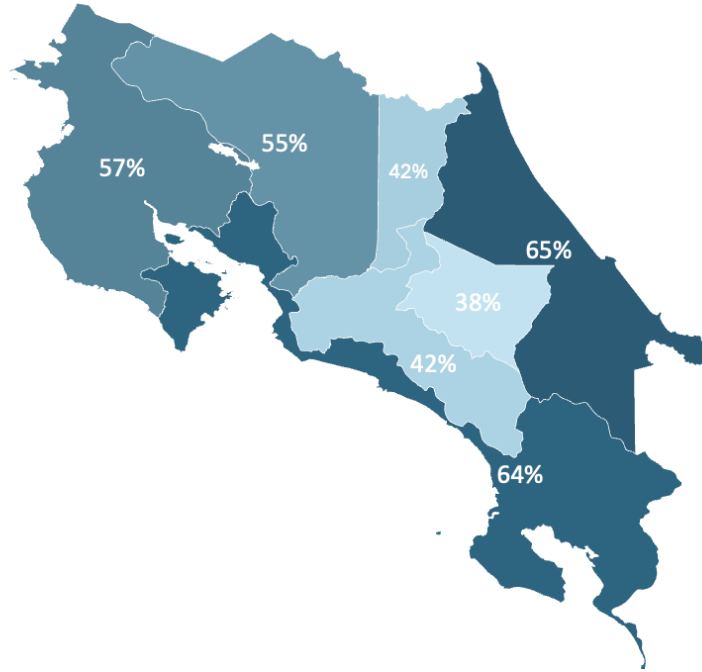
ANNEX II ELECTION RESULTS

All figures are based on TSE provisional results.

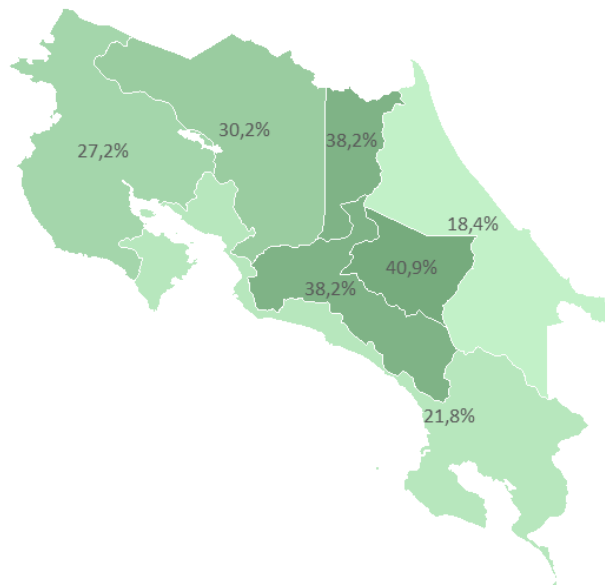
1. Presidential election results



Presidential election results -Partido Pueblo Soberano



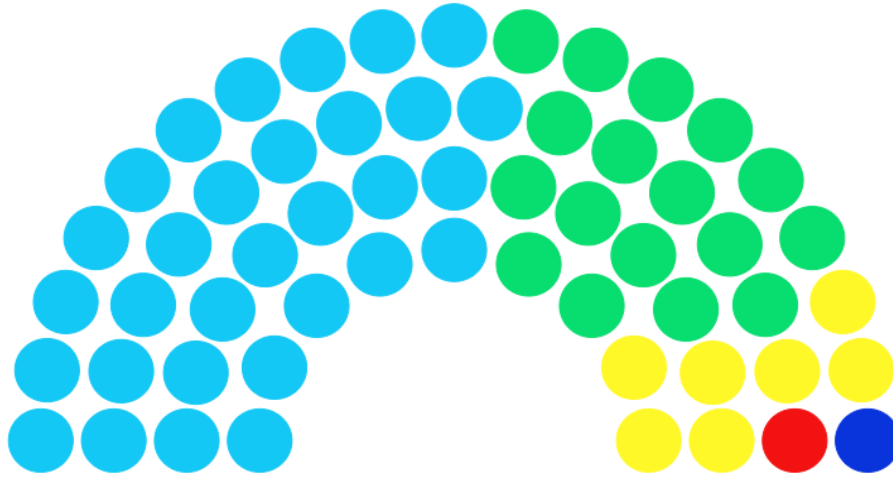
Resultados elecciones presidenciales - Partido Liberación Nacional



Con tecnología de Bing
© Microsoft, TomTom

2. Legislative election results

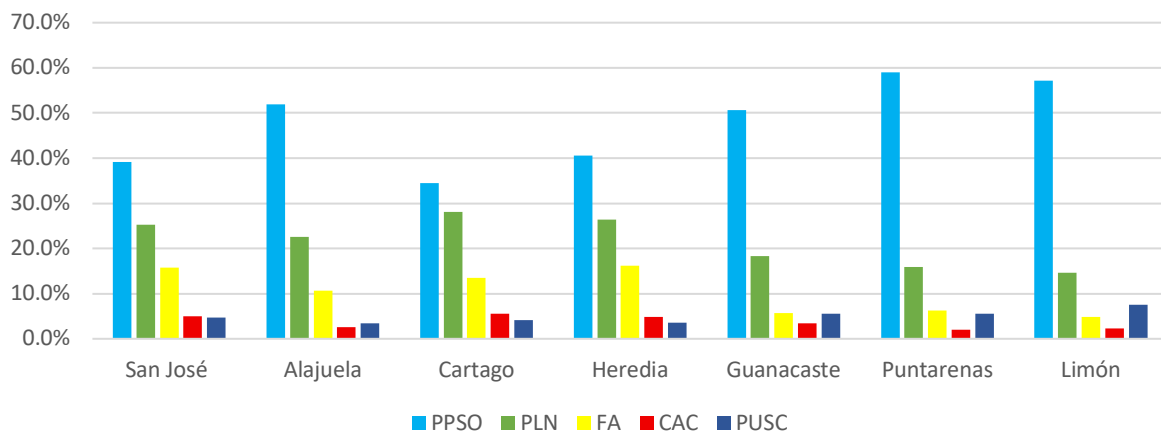
Asamblea Legislativa 2026



Partido	2026
● Pueblo Soberano	31
● Liberación Nacional	17
● Frente Amplio	7
● Coalición Agenda Ciudadana	1
● Unidad Social Cristiana	1

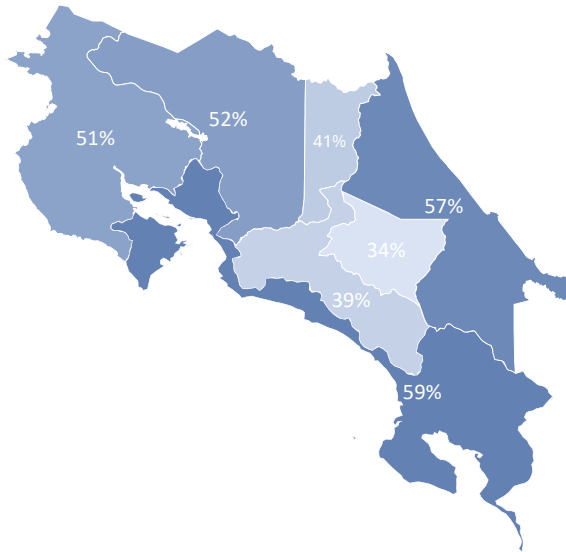
Based on TSE provisional results

Legislative Assembly election results by province



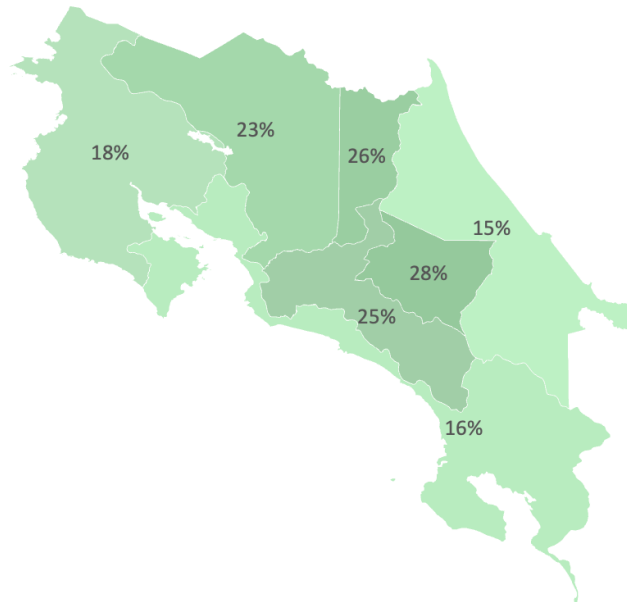


Legislative Assembly election results - Partido Pueblo Soberano



Con tecnología de Bing
© Microsoft, TomTom

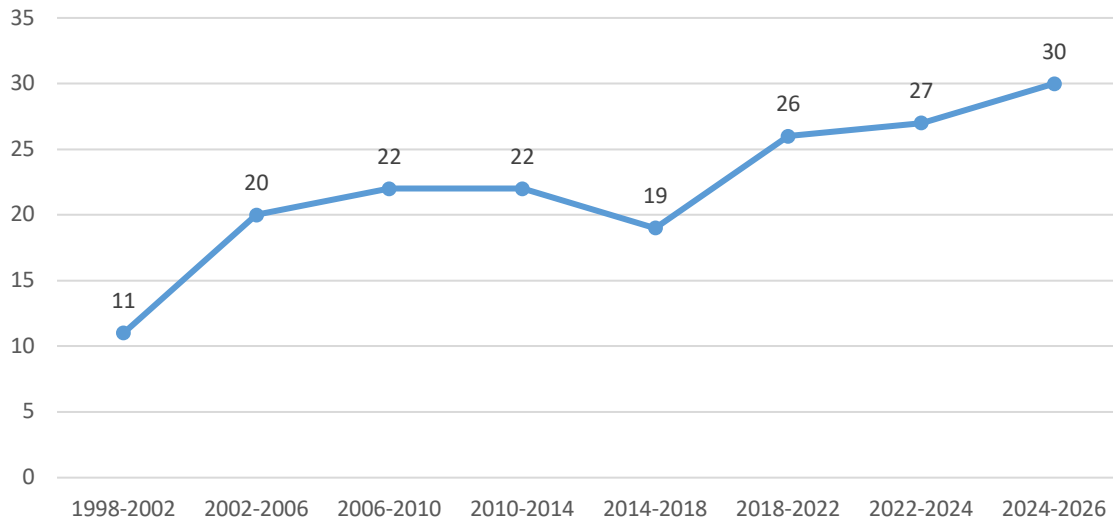
Legislative Assembly election results- Partido Liberación Nacional



Con tecnología de Bing
© Microsoft, TomTom

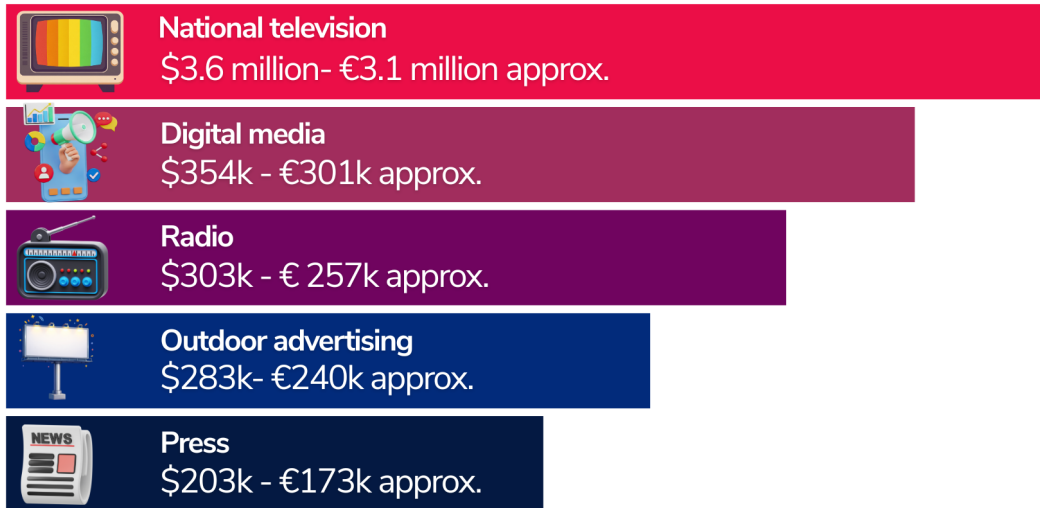


Women elected to the Legislative Assembly



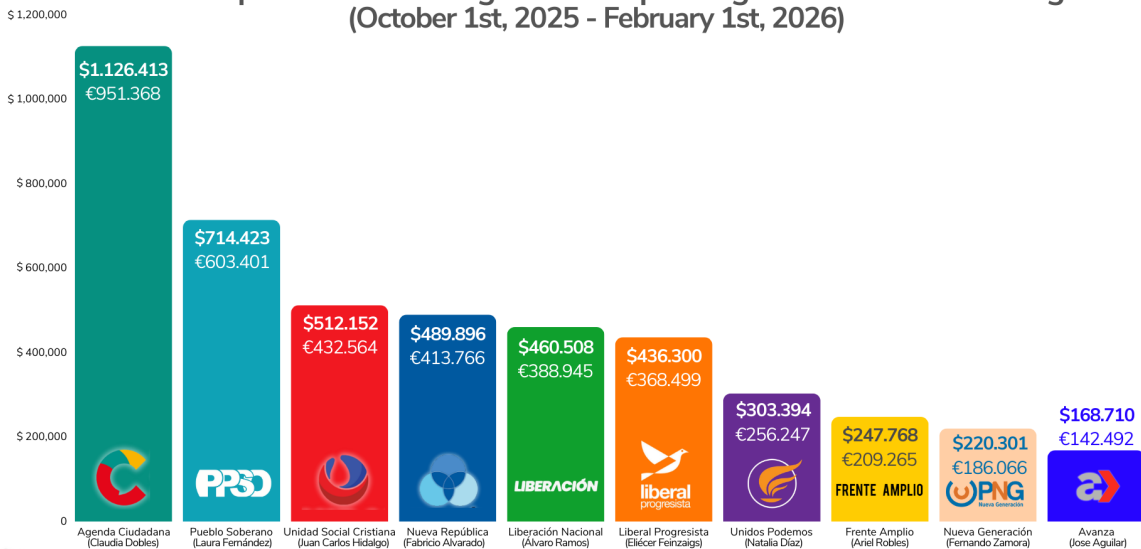
ANNEX III MEDIA

Political advertising expenditure in traditional and online media (October 1st, 2025 - February 1st, 2026)



Source: Department of Political Party Financing, Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), Costa Rica.

Political parties with the highest total spending on electoral advertising (October 1st, 2025 - February 1st, 2026)



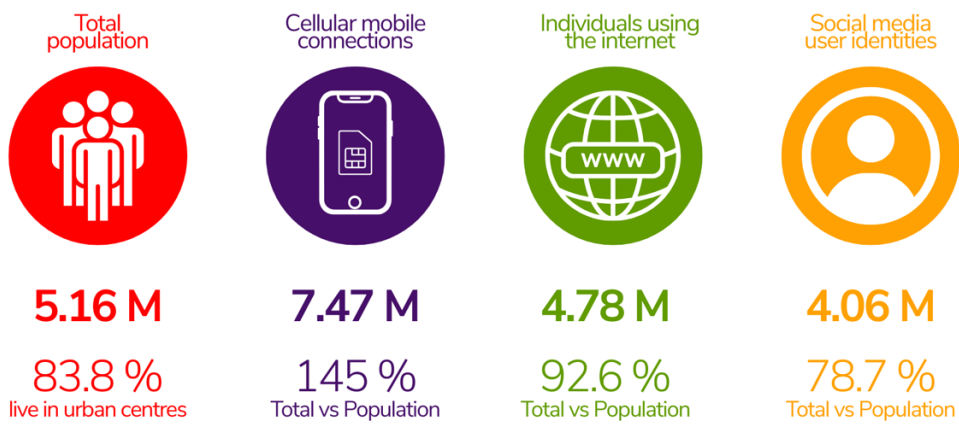
Source: Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), Costa Rica.

ANNEX IV SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING FINDINGS

1. Social media and internet landscape

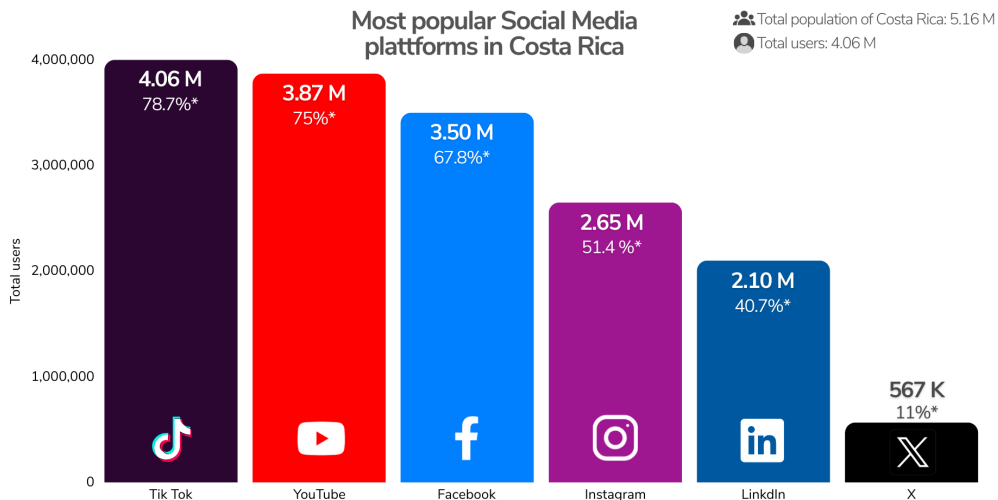
By the end of 2025 and the beginning of 2026, Costa Rica had 4.78 million internet users out of a total population of 5.16 million, with an internet penetration rate of 92.6%. Social media use was widespread, with 4.06 million users (78.7% penetration), highlighting the central role of these channels in information consumption and political communication. TikTok, YouTube and Facebook were the most popular platforms, followed by Instagram, LinkedIn and X.

Internet Penetration in Costa Rica



Fuente: DataReportal Digital 2026, Costa Rica.

Most popular Social Media platforms in Costa Rica



Source: DataReportal Digital 2026, Costa Rica.
 *Percentages based on the total population of Costa Rica.

2. Online mentions of presidential candidates

The EEM systematically monitored online mentions of the six presidential candidates who led the January 2026 CIEP electoral poll. Using the Sentione tool, keyword-based monitoring projects were created for each candidate, tracking their mentions across Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube throughout the campaign period.

Online mentions of presidential candidates (October 1st, 2025 - February 1st, 2026)



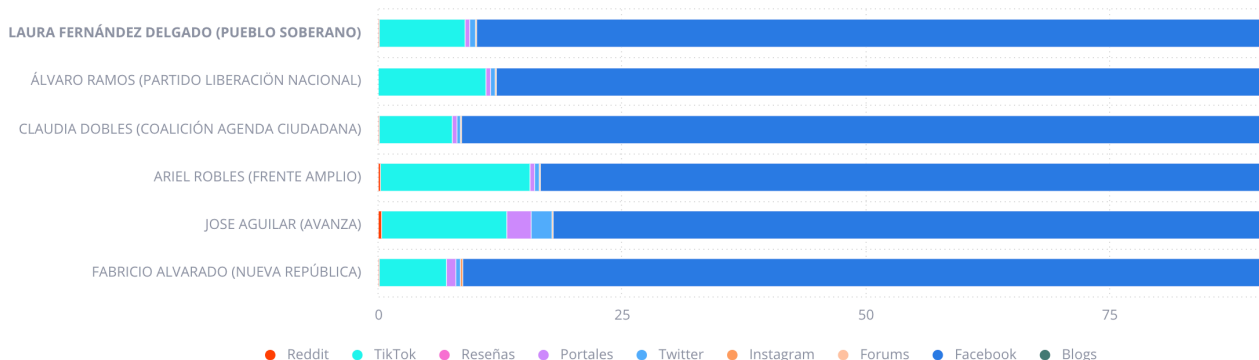
Source: SentiOne. EEM Costa Rica, 2026.

Online mentions across platforms

During the electoral campaign, Facebook was the most dominant platform for mentions, followed by TikTok.

Comparación de fuentes

01/10/2025 - 01/02/2026 LAURA FERNÁNDEZ DELGADO (PUEBLO SOBERANO) - ÁLVARO RAMOS (PARTID...



3. Presidential candidates use of social media

The EEM systematically monitored the official accounts of the 20 presidential candidates on Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube using Sentione to assess how digital platforms were used for campaigning. To identify the main themes, actors, and trends, a qualitative and quantitative analysis was conducted on:

- 250 highest-reach posts throughout the entire electoral campaign;
- 50 highest-reach posts on election day.

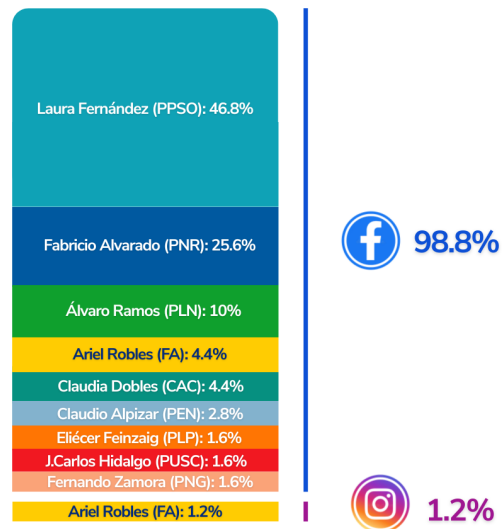
Electoral campaign

Highest-reach social media posts of presidential candidates
(October 1st, 2025 - January 31th, 2026)

Platform distribution

A content analysis of the 250 highest-reach posts across the social media profiles of the 20 presidential candidates revealed that 98.8% of these posts were on Facebook, and 1.2% on Instagram.

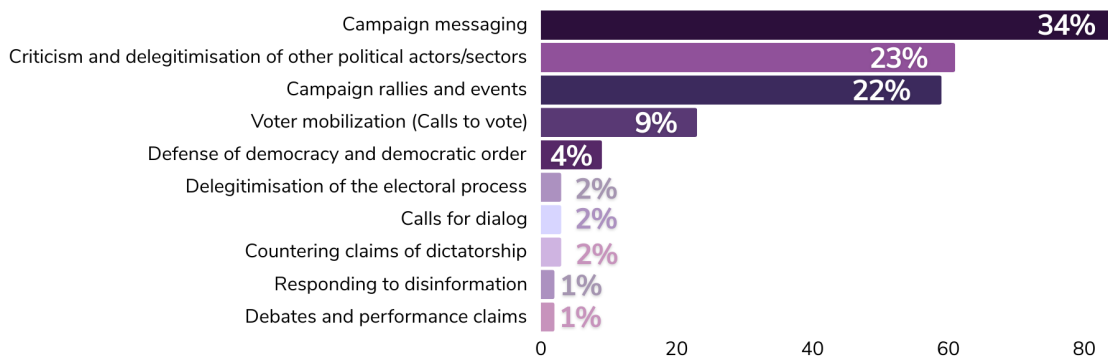
Laura Fernández and Fabricio Alvarado accounted for the largest share of high-reach posts on Facebook, while Ariel Robles had the greatest reach on Instagram.



Source: SentiOne. EEM Costa Rica, 2026.

The EEM analysed the 250 highest-reach posts across the Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube accounts of all 20 presidential candidates, using the tool Sentione.

Main topics in presidential candidates' highest-reach social media posts
(October 1st, 2025 - January 31th, 2026)

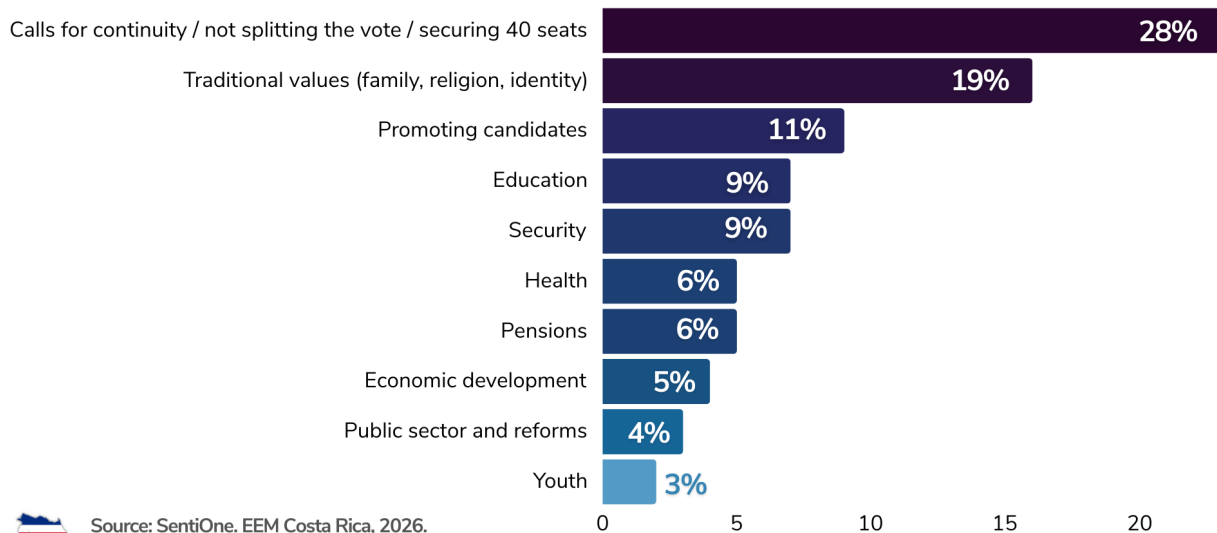


Fuente: SentiOne. EEM Costa Rica, 2026.

La EEM analizó las 250 publicaciones con mayor alcance en las cuentas de Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, y YouTube de los 20 candidatos presidenciales, usando la herramienta SentiOne.

Most posts in the analysed sample centered on campaign messages and rallies (56%), and calls to vote (9%), with a significant portion featuring criticism and delegitimation of other political actors (23%). Fabricio Alvarado accounted for more than half of these posts, adopting the most confrontational tone, followed by Claudio Alpízar. Alvarado directed his criticisms at Laura Fernández, the PPSO, and the government, as well as at the opposition (Frente Amplio, Ariel Robles, the left, the CAC, Claudia Dobles, the PLN, Álvaro Ramos) and the media. Altogether, 60% of the critical messages targeted Laura Fernández, the PPSO, the government, and President Chaves. Some opposition candidates called for dialogue (2%) and the defense of democracy (4%). Laura Fernández expressed support for President Chaves during his immunity hearing using the hashtag #noalgotpedeEstado "No to the coup", (2%) and countered accusations of dictatorship (2%).

Subtopics of “Campaign messaging” in presidential candidates’ highest-reach posts (October 1st, 2025 - January 31st, 2026)

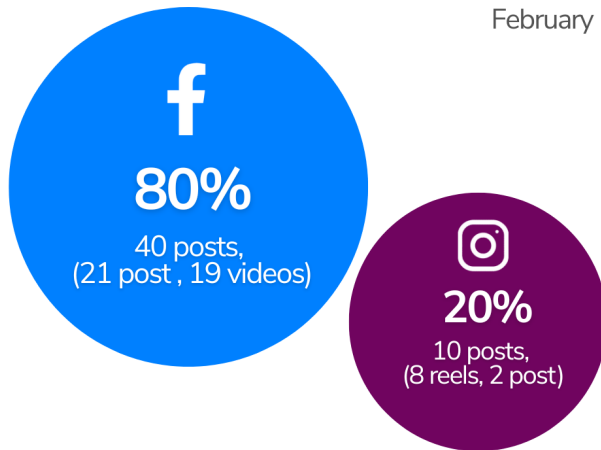


Source: SentiOne. EEM Costa Rica, 2026.
The EEM analysed the 250 highest-reach posts across the Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube accounts of all 20 presidential candidates, using the tool Sentione.

Among the key campaign messages, Laura Fernández highlighted calls for continuity, urged voters not to split their vote and to secure 40 seats in the National Assembly. References to traditional values, such as family, religion, and Costa Rican customs, were common across candidates. Topics such as security, education, pensions, and healthcare were central in the political discourse.

Election Day

Highest-reach social media posts of presidential candidates – Election Day February 1st, 2026



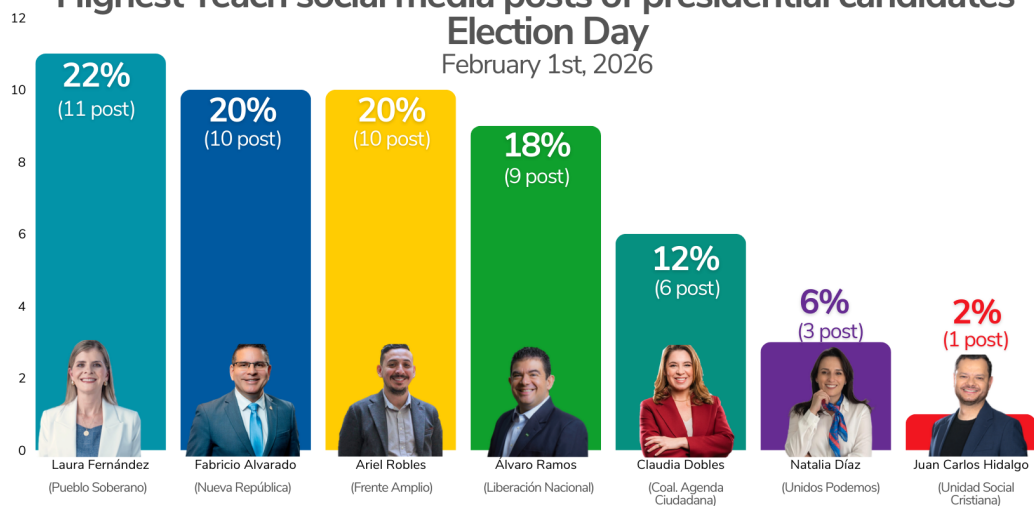
An analysis of the 50 highest-reach posts by the 20 presidential candidates on election day across Facebook, X, TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube showed that 80% were published on Facebook and 20% on Instagram.

Laura Fernández and Fabricio Alvarado led on Facebook, while Ariel Robles had the greatest reach on Instagram.



Source: SentiOne. EEM Costa Rica, 2026.
 The EEM analysed the 50 highest-reach posts across Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube accounts of all 20 presidential candidates, using the tool Sentione.

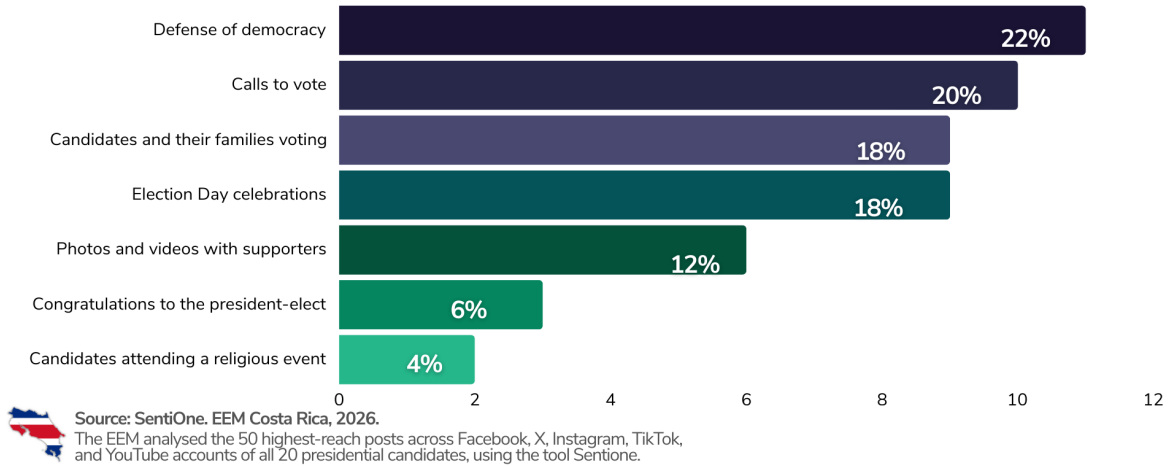
Highest-reach social media posts of presidential candidates - Election Day February 1st, 2026



Source: SentiOne. EEM Costa Rica, 2026.
 The EEM analysed the 50 highest-reach posts across Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube accounts of all 20 presidential candidates, using the tool Sentione.

Of the 50 highest-reach posts on election day, Laura Fernández and Fabricio Alvarado once again dominated on Facebook, with eleven and ten posts, respectively. In the case of Ariel Robles, all ten of his posts were shared on Instagram.

Topics of presidential candidates' highest-reach posts - Election day February 1st, 2026



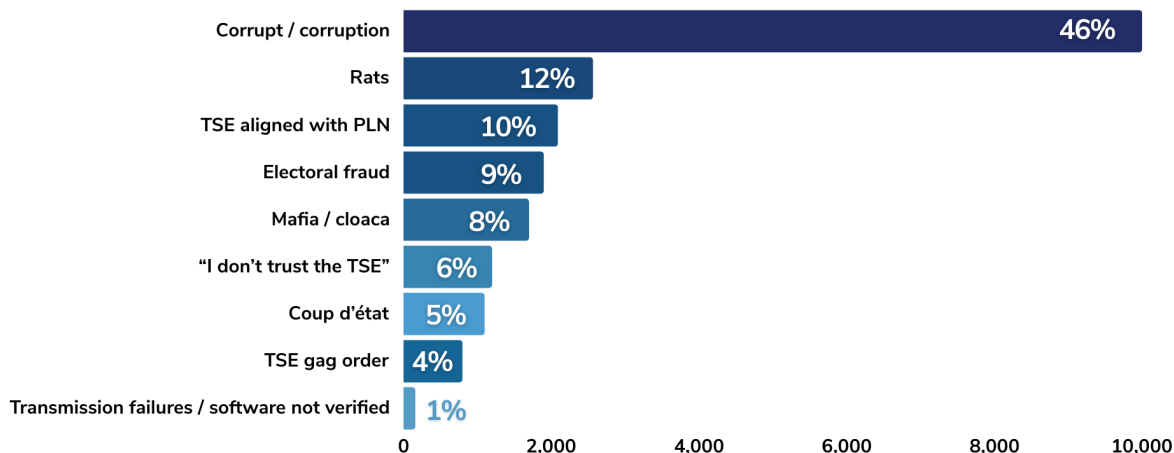
On election day, posts focused largely on defending democracy (22%) and encouraging voter participation (20%). Visual content, such as photos and videos of candidates voting (18%), interacting with supporters (12%), and celebrating the elections (18%), was also prevalent.

4. Information Manipulation

Online Narratives on Electoral Fraud and the Credibility of the TSE

The EEM conducted systematic keyword-based monitoring on SentiOne to track negative narratives related to accusations of electoral fraud and challenges to the credibility of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE). Monitored keywords included: “TSE” and “fraud”, “I don’t trust the TSE”, “corrupt”, “coup d’état”, “censorship”, “gag”, “mafia”, “TSE aligned with PLN”, “transmission failures” and “the TSE did not verify the software”. The observation period covered pre-election, election day, and post-election stages, from 1 October 2025 to 8 February 2026. A total of 45,900 keyword matches were recorded across Facebook, X, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, Reddit and blogs.

Online narratives questioning the credibility of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) (October 1st, 2025 - February 8th, 2026)



Source: SentiOne. EEM Costa Rica, 2026.

Categories are not mutually exclusive, and percentages are not acumulative. A single post may contain multiple keywords and therefore be recorded in more than one category.

The EEM identified two main types of narratives: (1) accusations of electoral fraud and challenges to the integrity of the process; and (2) institutional delegitimation questioning the credibility and neutrality of the TSE and its magistrates. The most recurrent narratives included unverified accusations of corruption (46%) and political bias in favour of the PLN (10%), claims of electoral fraud (9%), expressions of institutional distrust such as “I don’t trust the TSE” (6%), and allegations of a possible coup d’état (5%). Additionally, there were calls for citizen vigilance, reflecting distrust toward electoral institutions. After the elections, mentions arose regarding possible transmission failures, although their online circulation did not increase significantly.

Overall, the online debate about the TSE was dominated by unverified accusations of corruption, political manipulation, and challenges to the integrity of the electoral process. Media coverage of statements by political actors and public officials contributed to amplifying these narratives on social networks.

Peaks in narratives



During the monitoring period, several spikes in the circulation of narratives coincided with specific events: On October 1, 2025, claims that the TSE had imposed a “gag order” on the government triggered the spread of the “gag order” narrative. Between October 6 and 9, 2025, following President Chaves’ statements expressing distrust in the TSE, the message “I don’t trust the TSE” gained traction. Although both narratives persisted throughout the campaign, they gradually declined over time.

On 12 November 2025, media coverage of President Chaves referring to the TSE and lawmakers as a “mafia” fuelled the narrative online. On 28 November 2025, media coverage of Laura Fernández’s comments calling the TSE’s “gag shameful” reignited accusations of corruption and political bias online.

On 22 December 2025, after the TSE ruled that Chaves’ campaign slogan ‘Cayó la mordaza’ (“The Gag Order Fell”) was “information distortion”, claims of political persecution and electoral fraud resurfaced. This sparked increased online calls for citizen vigilance to prevent electoral fraud and for institutional reforms. These narratives intensified again during the last week of January 2026, with renewed accusations of political bias in favor of the PLN and challenges to the integrity of the electoral process.

Online Trolling

According to the Digital Communication Observatory of ULA, approximately 17% of active accounts in the online debate exhibited behaviours consistent with trolling. The EEM observed accounts repeatedly posting identical messages both supporting and opposing candidates, as well as insults and harassment directed at political actors and institutions. While these behaviours contributed to amplifying negative narratives and polarisation, no evidence was found of large-scale coordinated campaigns or systematic automation.

5. Derogatory and violent online content

Percentage of derogatory comments and insults against candidates relative to total mentions

October 1st, 2025 - February 8th, 2026

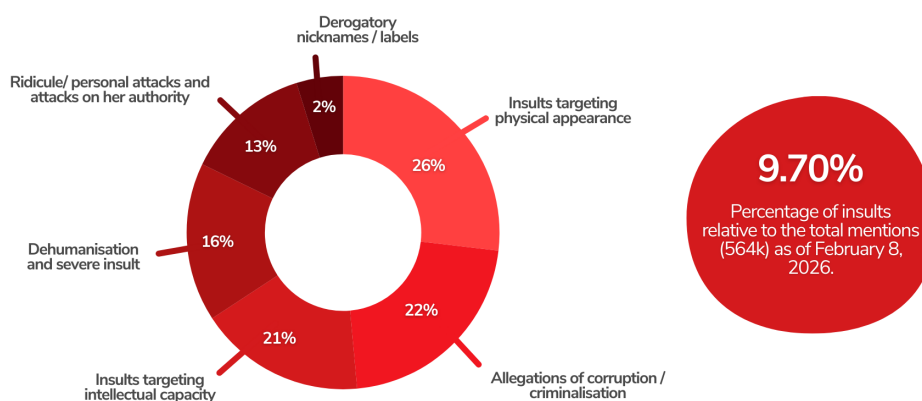


Source: SentiOne. EEM Costa Rica, 2026.

The EEM identified numerous insults and derogatory comments online targeting all presidential candidates, as well as the TSE and its magistrates, reflecting a highly polarised and hostile online environment. Data from the Digital Observatory indicated that Claudia Dobles and Ariel Robles received the highest share of negative online comments, followed by Álvaro Ramos and Laura Fernández.

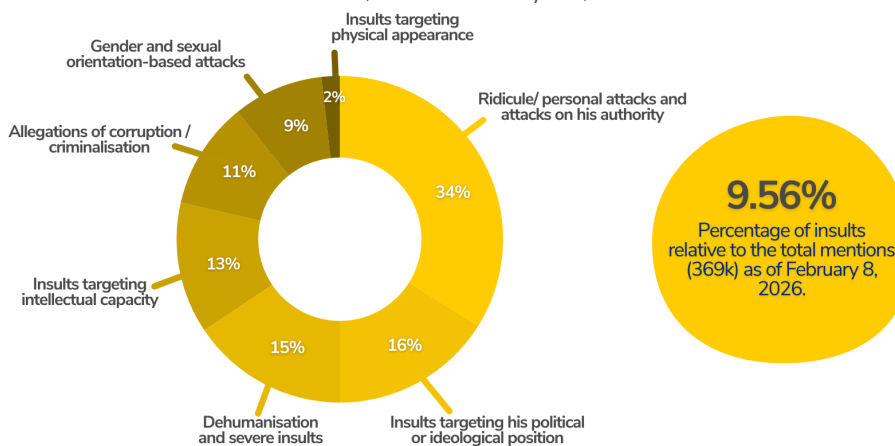
The EEM systematically monitored insults and derogatory content directed at presidential candidates using Sentione, covering the pre-election, election day, and post-election periods from 1 October 2025 to 8 February 2026. Candidate-specific keyword sets were developed based on commonly observed insults and data was collected from Facebook, X, TikTok, Instagram and YouTube. The collected data was later categorised to identify the types of attacks directed at each candidate¹⁰⁵. To assess the relative level of online hostility, the proportion of insult-related mentions was calculated in relation to each candidate’s total online mentions.

Online Attacks and Insults Targeting Candidate Claudia Dobles (CAC) October 1st, 2025 - February 8th, 2026



Source: SentiOne. EEM Costa Rica, 2026.
The EEM Costa Rica conducted keyword searches on the Sentione platform using 46 terms associated with insults observed online targeting the candidate, identifying a total of 54,750 mentions.

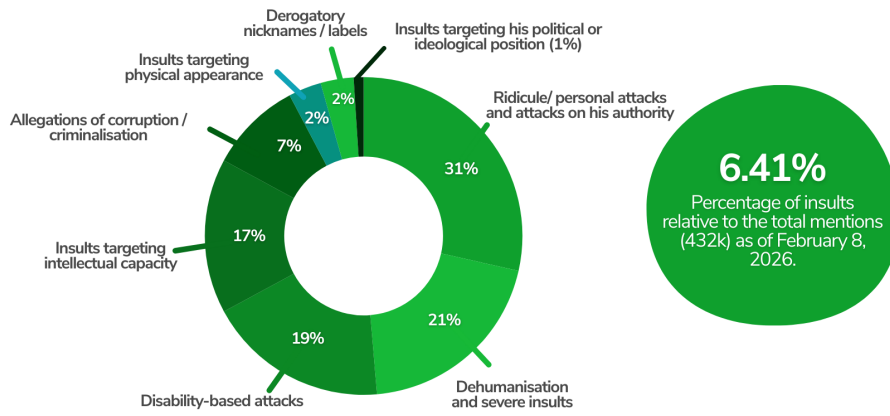
Online Attacks and Insults Targeting Candidate Ariel Robles (PFA) October 1st, 2025 - February 8th, 2026



Source: SentiOne. EEM Costa Rica, 2026.
The EEM conducted keyword searches on the SentiOne platform using 50 terms associated with insults observed online targeting the candidate, identifying a total of 35,226 mentions.

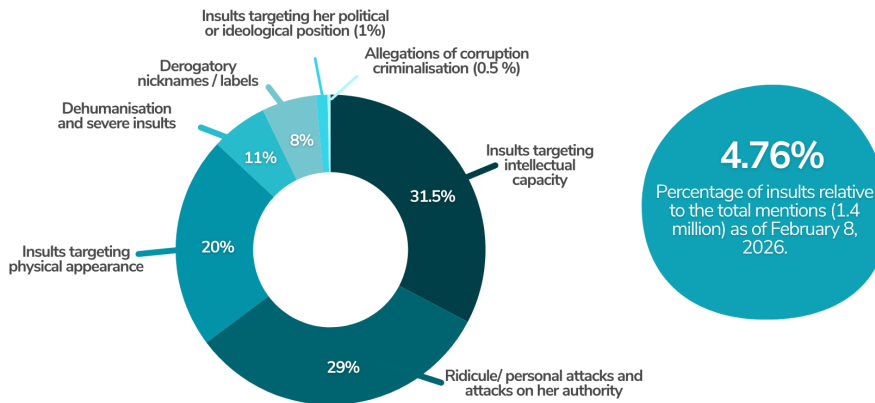
¹⁰⁵ **Intellectual capacity** (e.g. necio/a, estúpido/a); **ridicule and personal attacks** (e.g. títere, marioneta); **physical appearance** (e.g. feo/a, gordo/a); **dehumanization and severe insults** (e.g. rata and severe insults); **derogatory nicknames/labels** (e.g. laburra); **ideological insults** (e.g. basura izquierdista); **accusations of corruption/criminalization** (e.g. corrupto/a, mafia); **insults based on sexual orientation** (e.g. gay), **disability-based attacks** (e.g. mudo).

Online Attacks and Insults Targeting Candidate Álvaro Ramos (PLN)
 October 1st, 2025 - February 8th, 2026



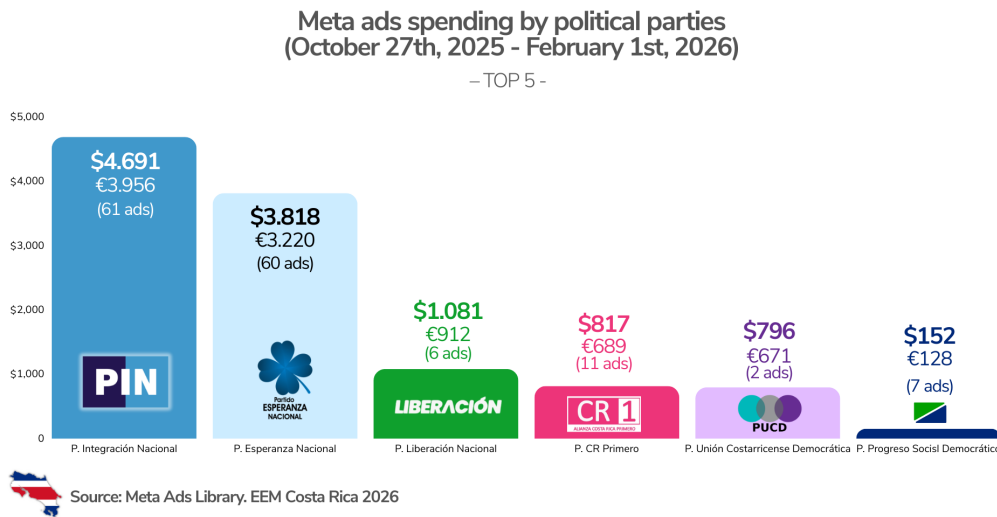
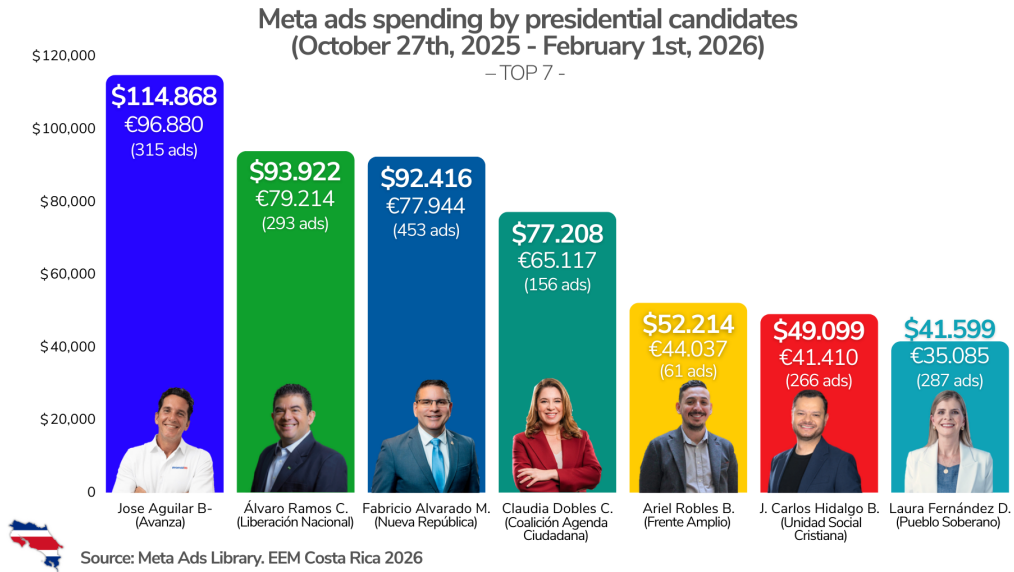
Source: SentiOne. EEM Costa Rica, 2026.
 The EEM conducted keyword searches on the SentiOne platform using 52 terms associated with insults observed online targeting the candidate, identifying a total of 27.699 mentions.

Online Attacks and Insults Targeting Candidate Laura Fernández (PPSO)
 October 1st, 2025 - February 8th, 2026



Source: SentiOne. EEM Costa Rica, 2026.
 The EEM Costa Rica 2026 conducted keyword searches on the Sentione platform using 39 terms associated with insults observed online targeting the candidate, identifying a total of 71.245 mentions.

6. Paid political advertising



Meta ads spending comparison — Total candidates vs. parties
(October 27th, 2025 - February 1st, 2026)

