

THE
CARTER CENTER



**Carter Center Preliminary Statement on the
Second Round of the Peru Presidential Election (June 7, 2026)**

June 9, 2026

Executive Summary

The Carter Center Election Expert Mission (EEM) commends the electoral authorities for the overall orderly and calm conduct of the second round of the presidential election on June 7 and welcomes the high level of citizen participation in the process. The Carter Center EEM calls on the two presidential candidates, official institutions, media, and civil society to respect the process for determining results, especially considering the close margin between the candidates. As per the law, the declaration of final results will only be made after all polling station results from within Peru and overseas have been reviewed; recounts conducted when required; and potential challenges resolved. According to the National Jury of Elections (JNE), the process of finalizing the results is anticipated to conclude in July.

The Carter Center redeployed the EEM on May 21 to assess the conduct of the presidential runoff election. The mission first deployed for the April 12 general elections.¹ For the second round, the Carter Center EEM focused on key aspects of the electoral process, including the work of the election management bodies to prepare for the runoff, the results tabulation process, campaign finance, and voter education. While team members visited polling centers in Lima and Callao, the mission did not comprehensively observe election day processes.

The presidential runoff took place in the aftermath of logistical problems during the April 12 elections that delayed the opening of numerous polling stations and caused 187 polling stations in 13 voting centers in Lima to conduct voting a day later. These issues contributed to allegations of fraud – without evidence – by some candidates and media and led to the resignation of several high-ranking election officials, including the head of the National Office for Electoral Processes (ONPE). The ONPE and the JNE were therefore highly focused on ensuring that these issues would not be repeated for the presidential runoff. Their measures included improved coordination among electoral bodies, earlier delivery of polling station materials, discontinuation of the electronic results processing system (STAE), and increased access for party representatives to monitor election preparations.

In addition to preparing for the runoff, the electoral authorities continued to process results from April 12, which proceeded slowly. The first-round presidential results were not announced until May 17, and results for the legislative elections are still pending. The legal framework in 2025

¹ See the Carter Center's [preliminary statement](#) on the April 12 general elections

introduced recounts of polling station ballots in certain circumstances. This was a positive reform that promoted transparency and election integrity. Over 3,800 results protocols were sent for recounts, which were livestreamed. However, the recount workload for some JNE regional bodies was higher than expected, stretching resources and delaying the finalization of results.

The election campaign period was relatively low in intensity and conducted peacefully overall. Two debates provided voters with the opportunity to compare the policies of the presidential candidates. The campaign period was impacted to some extent by the slow announcement of the first-round results.

Election day appeared to proceed peacefully and in an orderly manner across the country, according to information from the electoral authorities and the domestic observer organization *Transparencia*. The previous logistical problems were effectively resolved, although a few delays were caused by the absence of polling station staff. There were isolated incidents of ballot tampering reported by the electoral authorities. Counting was concluded quickly in the presence of party representatives in most cases, and official results began to be available on the ONPE website, showing a razor-thin margin with results still to be transmitted and verified.

Introduction

The Carter Center redeployed a nine-member Election Expert Mission (EEM) to Lima on May 21, 2026, to observe the second round of the presidential election, held on June 7. The Carter Center presence for the second round, as well as the deployment for the April 12 general elections, was in response to an invitation from the Government of Peru. While team members visited a few polling centers in Lima and Callao, the mission did not comprehensively observe election day processes. The Carter Center EEM focused on key aspects of the election process: the work of the election management bodies to prepare for the runoff, the results tabulation process, campaign finance, and voter education, but due to its limited size it did not conduct a comprehensive assessment of the electoral process.

The Center is assessing the elections against the national legal framework and international standards for democratic elections and conducts its missions in accordance with the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation.² Following the conclusion of the election process, The Carter Center will release a final report with recommendations related to those aspects of the process it is observing.

Electoral Context

The president and two vice presidents are elected on a single ticket by an absolute majority of valid votes. Since no presidential ticket obtained more than half the valid votes in the first round, a second election was held between the two candidates who received the highest number of

² The Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, launched at the United Nations in 2005 and endorsed by 54 intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations, establishes the foundation for professional and credible international election observation. See <https://dop-elections.org/>. Other organizations endorsing the Declaration of Principles with observation missions in Peru included the Organization of American States, the European Union, and the European Parliament.

votes: Keiko Fujimori of *Fuerza Popular*, who received 17.2%, and Roberto Sánchez of *Juntos por el Perú*, who received 12%. The relatively low levels of support for both candidates reflect the fragmented nature of the political party system.

The period following the April 12 general elections was tense and closely scrutinized. Logistical problems in the first round and the close results in the presidential election led to accusations of fraud from some candidates, including third place finisher Rafael López Aliaga, who challenged the legitimacy of the electoral process and encouraged public mobilization against the electoral institutions and leaders, including with violent language. Official investigations into the logistical shortcomings of the April 12 elections led to resignations of senior electoral officials, including the head of the National Office for Electoral Processes (ONPE). Preparations for the runoff elections therefore took place under difficult circumstances, as electoral authorities faced the simultaneous challenges of finalizing the results of the first round of the presidential election, defending the integrity of the process, resolving an unprecedented number of electoral disputes, and conducting hundreds of recounts.

The electoral authorities repeatedly denied allegations of fraud. Similarly, the domestic observer organization *Transparencia*, the Ombudsman's Office, and the Comptroller's Office stated that they found no evidence of systematic electoral fraud. The Carter Center EEM and international observation missions from the European Union and the Organization of American States (OAS) also saw no indications of fraud. In addition, the National Jury of Elections (JNE) publicly affirmed that the more than 500 annulment petitions submitted during the post-electoral period did not demonstrate the existence of widespread irregularities. Nevertheless, the combination of slow results, uncertainty over which candidates would advance to the runoff, institutional tensions, and sustained political attacks on the electoral authorities contributed to a further deterioration of public confidence in Peru's electoral process.

On May 17, more than one month after election day, the JNE officially certified the results of the presidential election. The final results for the Chamber of Deputies and Senate have yet to be finalized. This may add challenges in declaring the results of the runoff election.

Election Administration Preparations for the Runoff

The changes in ONPE's leadership added institutional strain at a sensitive stage of the electoral process. The acceptance of the ONPE Chief's resignation raised concerns among interlocutors regarding compliance with the legal framework and the precedent it may establish for the stability and independence of electoral authorities. A senior ONPE official was appointed as interim chief, ensuring continuity while the National Board of Justice initiated the selection of a permanent replacement.

Despite the leadership transition and ongoing investigations, ONPE continued implementing nationwide operations for the runoff without interruption. Existing electoral calendars and operational procedures remained in force. ONPE focused attention on logistical operations to improve the deployment of electoral materials, which were distributed across Peru and abroad under enhanced security measures. Poll workers from April 12 were retained for the runoff, and

nationwide training programs were improved to reinforce preparedness. The June 7 runoff used the same voter register as the first round, both in Peru and abroad.

New Measures Introduced for the Runoff Election

In response to the first-round logistical issues, the electoral authorities introduced several transparency and oversight measures aimed at reinstating trust in the integrity of the process and ensuring success in the electoral operations, particularly the transport of electoral materials. ONPE made efforts to ensure that materials would be distributed to all polling centers in the early hours of Saturday afternoon.

To enhance transparency, political parties and observers were granted greater access to ballot production, distribution, and vote-processing procedures. The JNE stated that they had increased their monitoring of the election process and had streamlined procedures for accreditation of party agents to facilitate their access to polling stations. Significantly, ONPE agreed with the presidential campaigns' request to allow party representatives to record vote-counting under regulated conditions. ONPE established monitoring centers in its headquarters to let the two presidential campaigns monitor the operational preparations. ONPE also decided to open polling centers to the public at 6 a.m. following complaints during the first round, where voters were not allowed to enter polling centers until all polling stations had been opened.

ONPE decided not to use the STAE (*Solución Tecnológica de Apoyo al Escrutinio*) results processing support system used in the Lima/Callao region on April 12, relying instead on its conventional processing system for all polling stations. This was partly in reaction to problems experienced with the system in some polling stations during the first round.

At the recommendation of the security forces, ONPE also implemented contingency plans to address logistical and security risks. In particular, 549 open-air polling stations in 44 polling centers were relocated to nearby locations, of which 254 polling stations in 19 polling centers were in Lima.

In response to operational difficulties abroad during the first round, the JNE adopted special measures for overseas voting in the runoff, including more flexible staffing rules for polling stations, allowing consular officials to supplement polling staff when necessary, and easing requirements for validating results protocols. The Foreign Ministry decided not to transmit the overseas results electronically but to only transport the ballots and *actas* to Lima for tabulation.

Finally, the JNE, ONPE, RENIEC, security forces, and oversight bodies appeared to intensify coordination ahead of the runoff. Joint efforts focused on safeguarding electoral materials, facilitating overseas voting, strengthening observation mechanisms, and improving public communication. In some provinces, electoral authorities made efforts to ensure a harmonious and collaborative public image.

Simulations of results transmission and system stress tests

In the week before election day, ONPE organized both a simulation of the results transmission process and a series of stress tests to verify the proper functioning of the IT systems. In the May 31 simulation, which was a public event, the 126 ONPE regional offices (ODPEs) throughout the country processed a sample of 20 results forms (*actas*), scanning, transcribing, and transmitting results to ONPE's central data center. One ODPE was randomly selected to verify the integrity of the results (votes from simulated *actas* input at the ODPE must match results received at ONPE).

The ONPE also ran a series of system stress tests. During the exercise, ODPEs processed the full number of *actas* expected on election day to test the system and train the ODPE data center staff throughout the country for the expected workload. Both the simulation and stress tests were reportedly completed successfully.

Legal and Regulatory Issues

The post-election day period following April 12 generated a significant procedural workload and placed pressure on the electoral dispute-resolution system. The Special Electoral Juries (JEEs), as first-instance electoral justice bodies, had to review and resolve a high volume of results protocols flagged for review by ONPE (*actas observadas*), conduct vote recounts where necessary, and adjudicate an unprecedented number of annulment petitions.³ This placed a substantial burden on many JEEs, particularly in jurisdictions where recount procedures were concentrated.

The recount mechanism, newly established by law for the April 12 general elections, provided an additional safeguard for electoral integrity. However, its implementation across five concurrent elections introduced complexity and contributed to delays in the certification of results. This underscores the importance of ensuring that legal safeguards are matched by sufficient procedural capacity.

During the post-election day phase, the JNE adopted a series of measures to expedite the resolution of *actas observadas* and vote recounts and to enhance transparency. These included streamlining recount procedures, setting deadlines for JEEs to conduct recounts, livestreaming recounts, and publicizing explanatory materials. These decisions helped minimize delays and improve public understanding of this stage of the process. However, they did not fully address the slow pace of certification of results for the congressional elections.

Election Campaign

The legal framework does not establish an official start date for the presidential runoff campaign. However, the slow confirmation of the results affected the conditions under which the campaign unfolded. Given the clear margin between the first-place candidate and the remaining contenders, the first-place candidate Keiko Fujimori was able to begin preparations shortly after election day, while the second candidate was not officially confirmed until May 17, following the completion

³ Following the April 12 general elections, 68,520 *actas* required review, and 3,830 were sent for a recount, including 891 presidential election *actas*. In addition, there were 546 petitions requesting election annulments.

of post-electoral adjudication and the proclamation of presidential results. As a result, Roberto Sánchez's effective campaign period was compressed.

The campaign period effectively lasted just over three weeks and remained generally low in intensity, with limited visibility and modest mobilization efforts nationwide. At the same time, the broader online information environment remained active, including efforts by some to encourage voters to cast invalid or blank ballots, anti-Fujimori and anti-Sánchez messaging, and continued questioning of the electoral process, although the latter narrative appeared to dissipate over time.

The Fujimori and Sánchez campaigns participated in two televised debates organized by the JNE: one between their advisors and one with the candidates themselves. The debates addressed issues such as security, the strengthening of state institutions, education, health, and employment.

Women's rights received limited attention in the runoff campaign, with little emphasis from either presidential campaign and no dedicated discussion in the two presidential debates. The Carter Center EEM's social media monitoring also found that women's participatory rights were largely absent from the three election management bodies' public communications during April and May. In addition, the monitoring identified sexist and racist comments on social media targeting Keiko Fujimori and the two vice-presidential candidates running with Sanchez, both of whom are women. This illustrates the persistent barriers faced by women in political life, particularly Indigenous and rural women.

Election Day and Tabulation of Results

While team members visited a few polling centers in Lima and Callao, the mission did not comprehensively observe election day processes. Voting for the presidential runoff appeared to proceed peacefully and in an orderly manner across the country, according to information from the electoral authorities and the domestic observer organization *Transparencia*. Logistical improvements largely resolved the delays in the distribution of materials that had affected some polling centers on April 12. While a small number of polling stations experienced delays in opening due to the absence of designated polling staff, all polling stations were reported by ONPE and the JNE as opening by noon. However, varying information presented by different authorities as to how many polling stations had opened caused some confusion for the public and the media during election day.

No major incidents were reported during the day, and authorities quickly addressed isolated instances of alleged ballot tampering. Security forces, including the military, maintained a visible presence. Representatives from both candidates' campaigns were present in 88.5% of polling stations during counting, according to the *IPSOS-Transparencia* quick count.

Voting is obligatory in Peru for citizens from ages 18 to 70. Citizens who are unable to vote may request an exemption from the JNE. Thousands of citizens were unable to vote in the presidential runoff due to their participation in the process, including election staff, police, military, and

others.⁴ Voter turnout was estimated at approximately 72% by *IPSOS-Transparencia*, pending finalization of results.

After the closing of polling stations at 5 p.m., polling officials began counting ballots and preparing the official *actas* for transmission to the regional ONPE offices. Official results, including copies of *actas*, began to be posted on the ONPE website on election night, disaggregated by polling station as per international good practice.

Before the official proclamation of results can take place, all remaining polling station results, including from overseas, must be transmitted to ONPE. The JNE must review contested *actas* through its 60 regional offices (JEEs). If necessary, the JEEs conduct recounts of votes at polling station level, an innovation put in place before the April 12 general elections. The JNE must also resolve any appeals or annulment petitions submitted to them. After these steps are finalized, the results will be formally proclaimed. The JNE has stated that this process could take until mid-July. The candidate who receives the highest number of valid votes will be officially declared president-elect and assume office on July 28.

Early exit polls and two quick counts by *IPSOS-Transparencia* and *Datum* pointed to an exceptionally close contest, with the results within their margins of error. As the official results at the time of publication of this preliminary statement show only a narrow margin separating the candidates, neither Keiko Fujimori nor Roberto Sánchez has yet secured a definitive victory. Some polling station results are still to be transmitted to ONPE (including from overseas), and some polling station results and challenged ballots are under review. The electoral authorities have indicated that certification of the final results could take several weeks. The Carter Center urges all stakeholders to respect the process.

A not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization, The Carter Center has helped to improve life for people in over 90 countries by resolving conflicts; advancing democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity; preventing diseases; and improving mental health care. The Carter Center was founded in 1982 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, in partnership with Emory University, to advance peace and health worldwide.

⁴ In the 2022 regional and municipal elections, 226,544 citizens were excused from voting due to their work in the elections. The numbers for the 2026 elections are not yet available.