



FORTALECEMOS
LAS DEMOCRACIAS
DE AMÉRICA LATINA

STRENGTHENING
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IN LATIN AMERICA

April 2025

Runoff Election in Ecuador Pre-Election Report



Key Points of the Election



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1 On April 13, Ecuadorians will head back to the polls to decide, in a runoff election, who will assume the presidency for the 2025–2029 term. The race pits current president Daniel Noboa, of Acción Democrática Nacional (ADN), against Luisa González of Revolución Ciudadana (RC), the candidate representing the *correísmo* movement. The winner will be the one who obtains a simple majority of valid votes and will take office on May 24.

2 Both candidates previously faced off in the 2023 snap elections, which were called following the dissolution of the National Assembly and the resignation of then-president Guillermo Lasso. At the time, Noboa emerged as an outsider with a renewal-focused narrative and managed to defeat González with 52% of the vote to her 48%, taking office on November 23, 2023.

3 This second round revisits the previous matchup, but under a more complex social backdrop. Ecuador is now choosing between two sharply contrasting political and economic models. Noboa stands for continuity, promoting a technocratic style of governance backed by the business sector. In contrast, González seeks to restore *correísmo*, advocating for a more interventionist agenda in which the State plays a central role in driving development.

Key Points of the Election

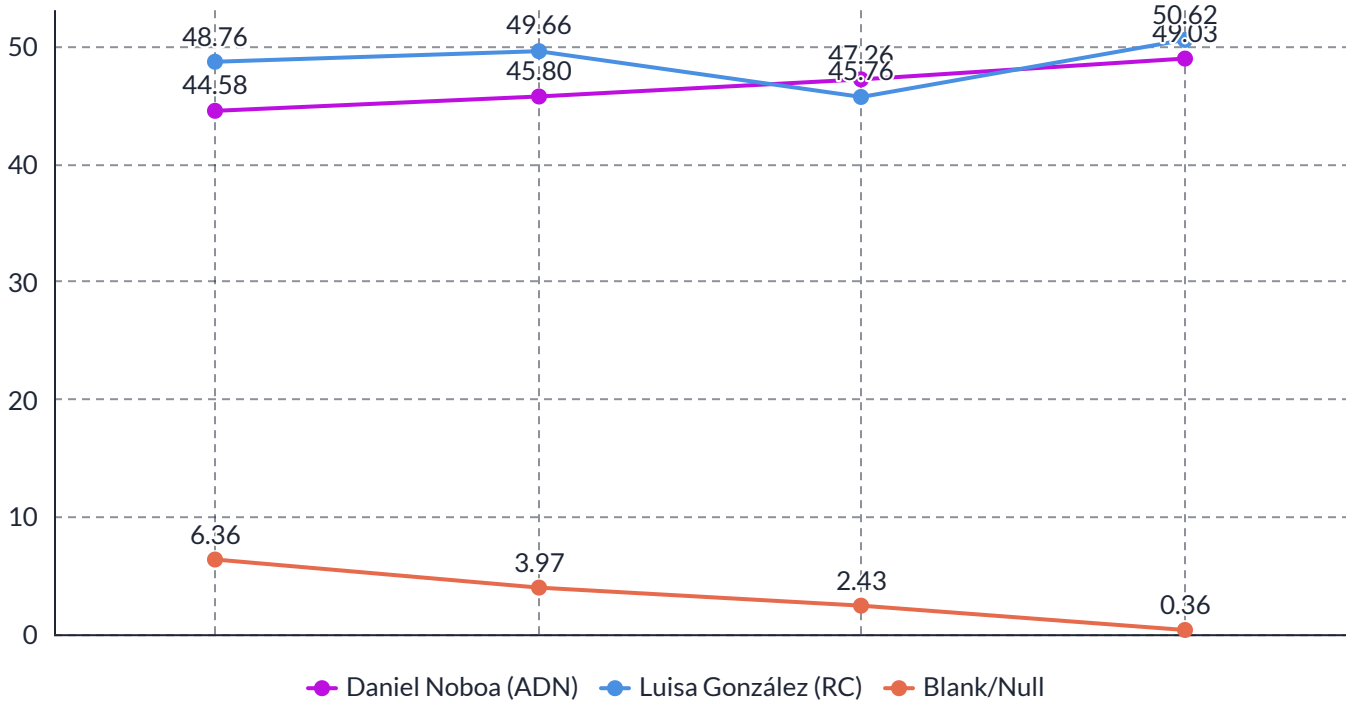
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The slim difference between the two candidates in the first round—Noboa with 44.17% and González with 44%—alongside polls that indicate a neck-and-neck race, sets the stage for a highly contested runoff. The final result will hinge on each campaign's ability to mobilize support on the ground and appeal to voters who backed other candidates in the first round. In the end, success will depend on who can win over an electorate that is fragmented, disillusioned, and worn down by ongoing political instability.

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The next administration's ability to govern will also rely on the alliances it manages to form within the National Assembly, which will be sworn in on May 14 and is expected to be highly fragmented and polarized. In this scenario, building consensus will be essential to prevent institutional deadlock and repeated episodes of social unrest.

What Are the Polls Saying?



*Source: created by the author based on an average of external surveys conducted from February to April.

Surveys point to a scenario of virtual parity ahead of Ecuador’s presidential runoff. Luisa González currently holds a slight edge with 50.62% of voting intentions, just ahead of incumbent president Daniel Noboa, who stands at 49.03%. The narrow gap signals a wide-open race, where even minor shifts in voter behavior during the final stretch could prove decisive.

Given how tight the contest is, the final result may be shaped by key dynamics such as turnout among Ecuadorians living abroad, the campaigns’ ability to mobilize voters on the ground—particularly in rural areas and the central-southern Sierra—and the rate of abstention, along with the influence of blank and null votes, which accounted for 6.8% and 2.16%, respectively, in the first round.

Daniel Noboa (Acción Democrática Nacional)

His Proposals



A businessman linked to the banana sector, he became president of Ecuador in 2023 after winning the early elections triggered by the “muerte cruzada” decree issued by then-president Guillermo Lasso.

His government plan includes the following key proposals:

- Promote economic diversification by fostering tourism, agroindustry, digital economy, creative economy, and knowledge economy.
- Ensure a macroeconomic and regulatory framework that supports investment and sustainable growth.
- Enhance financial inclusion through the strengthening of electronic channels and access to digital banking services.
- Improve logistics infrastructure to boost trade efficiency and the country's competitiveness.
- Tackle tax evasion and avoidance through robust control and oversight mechanisms.
- Implement a National Circular Economy Strategy aimed at promoting sustainability and the efficient use of resources.
- Adopt labor formalization policies that facilitate the transition of workers into the formal employment sector.

Luisa González (Revolución Ciudadana)

Her proposals



A lawyer and former member of the National Assembly, she is a prominent leader in the progressive left-wing movement linked to former president Rafael Correa. Throughout his administration (2007-2017), she served in various ministerial roles, holding high-level positions in public administration.

Her government plan highlights the following priorities:

- Encourage the formalization of micro and small enterprises through simplified tax regimes and fiscal benefits, easing their integration into the formal market.
- Conduct a comprehensive audit of public debt since 2017, analyzing its sustainability, transparency, and repayment conditions.
- Enhance the state's role in agrarian development by fostering a diverse productive structure that integrates various forms of organization.
- Reassess and realign subsidy policies with equity and efficiency criteria, prioritizing strategic sectors such as agriculture and transportation.
- Ensure the right to food through initiatives like exempting VAT on all basic staple products for children in their early years.
- Center labor rights within the economic model, guaranteeing their protection both at an individual and collective level.

Potential Scenarios and Likely Outcomes

The runoff election will not only determine who will assume the presidency, but also the political, economic, and institutional direction of Ecuador, set against a backdrop of urgent citizen demands. The post-election scenario will be shaped by the leadership that emerges and its ability to build legislative majorities, manage conflicts, and respond with legitimacy to structural challenges.

→ Daniel Noboa's Victory: Strategic Continuity and Institutional Redesign



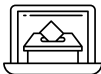
A second term could solidify an agenda focused on security. Since taking office in 2023, Noboa has implemented an exceptional security strategy, which includes the militarization of high-risk areas, harsher penalties, and designating criminal gangs as terrorist groups. While these measures have had some success in curbing violence, significant structural challenges remain in the state's ability to fully control its territory.



In foreign policy, a strengthening of ties with the United States, multilateral organizations, and regional allies is expected, with the aim of boosting cooperation on security, energy, and trade. The focus on attracting investments and consolidating strategic alliances reflects an approach aimed at positioning Ecuador as a reliable actor on the international stage.



However, the government's ability to implement reforms will depend on the new balance of power in a fragmented National Assembly. In this context, governability will be subject to ongoing negotiation and the Executive's ability to build consensus.



Simultaneously, Noboa has suggested the possibility of calling a Constituent Assembly to either reform or eliminate the Council for Citizen Participation and Social Control (CPCCS), which has faced criticism for its inefficiency and political bias. This initiative could pave the way for a rethinking of the process for appointing authorities to oversight institutions, sparking a debate on the redistribution of powers and institutional redesign as a means to enhance state efficiency and reduce partisan influence.

Potential Scenarios and Likely Outcomes

→ Luisa González's Victory: A Return to Correísmo and Geopolitical Shift



A win for González would mark the return of correísmo to power, bringing back a model that favors more state involvement in the economy, increased public spending, and a stronger focus on social programs. Her government would push for a progressive agenda, prioritizing social justice, regional sovereignty, and the restoration of state institutions.



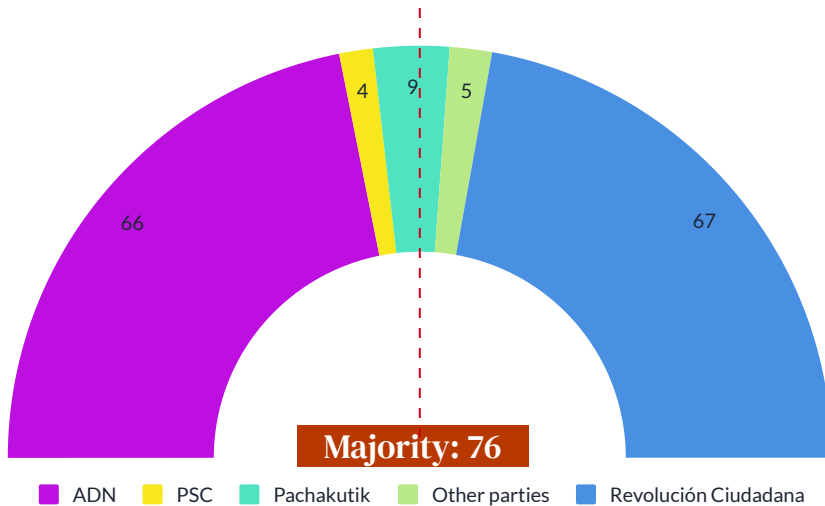
On the global stage, González aims for a change in foreign policy, shifting focus toward regional integration by boosting organizations like UNASUR and CELAC. She also wants to revive the New Regional Financial Architecture — including the Bank of the South, the South Reserve Fund, and a regional payment system — to push for greater economic sovereignty.



The main challenge of her proposal lies in its fiscal feasibility. Implementing an expansionary spending policy amid economic contraction, high debt levels, and limited fiscal space will require finding new sources of funding. This could involve tax reforms, spending restructuring, or greater reliance on external debt.

Executive-Legislative Dynamics

National Assembly 2025-2029



Source: own elaboration based on results obtained from the National Electoral Council (CNE)

The relationship between the Executive and the new National Assembly will be shaped by deep polarization, which will make it tough to push any government agenda during the next presidential term.

The February 2025 elections resulted in a divided legislature, with no clear majorities. The two main political forces, Revolución Ciudadana (RC) and Acción Democrática Nacional (ADN), each control the legislature almost equally: RC has 67 seats, while ADN has 66, out of a total of 151.

Neither party has the 76 votes needed for a quorum to pass regular laws, let alone the 101 votes needed for constitutional reforms or organic laws, meaning forming multiparty alliances will be a must.

This new balance of power limits the Executive's flexibility, requiring it to build shifting majorities through agreements with intermediary forces such as Pachakutik (9 seats), the Partido Social Cristiano (4 seats), and independent blocs. Parliamentary dynamics will be dominated by case-by-case negotiations, bill by bill.

In the event of re-election, Daniel Noboa's reform agenda, which includes changes in security, the economy, and justice, will require significant political skill to avoid legislative gridlock and prevent potential cross-party vetoes, as has already occurred with fiscal and security-related projects. If González assumes the presidency, she will do so with the largest legislative minority. Nonetheless, she will need to advance her government program by moving away from the recurring partisan logic of unilateral imposition and building agreements with actors who have historically been critical of *correísmo*.

In either scenario, governability will be conditioned by the Executive's ability to manage a smooth, pragmatic, and non-confrontational relationship with the Legislative, avoiding the risk of further representation crises or institutional paralysis.

Projections and Challenges for the Next Government



- The presidential runoff in Ecuador will determine not only who will take power but also the political and institutional direction of the country, amid a context of legislative fragmentation, citizen distrust, and accumulated social demands. The next government will face structural challenges surrounding governability, institutional stability, foreign policy, and the rebuilding of democratic legitimacy.
- In the face of a polarized National Assembly, the next president will need to combine leadership, the ability to manage a multiparty system, and political will. The absence of majorities to pass bills without negotiation makes a relationship based on institutional respect, dialogue, and the construction of lasting agreements an unavoidable requirement to avoid stagnation.
- Alongside political restructuring, the next government will confront an urgent agenda in terms of citizen security, the energy crisis, economic decline, and unemployment. The region's highest homicide rate, the lack of structural planning in the electrical system, and the growth of informal labor reflect a sustained loss of state capacity. Addressing these challenges will require not only political will but also technical effectiveness, transparency in management, and a comprehensive short- and medium-term strategy.
- Finally, the recovery of democratic legitimacy will be central to ensuring the sustainability of the new political cycle. The erosion of trust in institutions and disillusionment with the democratic system's functioning require leadership that fosters dialogue and exercises power responsibly. Governing in a fragmented context will no longer be possible from a logic of imposition, but from the real capacity for political articulation and openness to consensus.

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Directorio Legislativo is an independent, nonpartisan organization that, for 15 years, has been working to strengthen legislative powers and consolidate democratic systems across Latin America. It does so through transparency, access to public information, and dialogue with public, private, academic, and civil society actors.

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