

Guatemala Election Watch #1, July 3, 2023

Real democracy in Guatemala? Semilla Party now favored to win Presidential election August 20th

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/real-democracy-in-guatemala-1>

Despite decades of systemic repression and corruption in Guatemala, the Semilla Party has a real chance to win the Presidential election on August 20, 2023.

"We call on the people of Guatemala to prepare to defend hope".

Bernardo Arevalo, presidential candidate of the Movimiento Semilla party

- Below: Prensa Comunitaria article

Despite the prognosis of Rights Action and others, the Movimiento Semilla party won enough votes in the first round of elections in Guatemala –June 25– to force a run-off vote on August 25.

After a day of stunned surprise in Guatemala, even more people and organizations across the country feel hope for the first time in decades –for many, going back to 1954– that the electoral system might finally work democratically and provide the majority population with an actual good government.

Now, people and organizations are mobilizing to educate widely about what is the Semilla party, who they are, and what they are proposing. There are predictions of a massive voter turnout on August 25.

At the same time, there is real fear about how the ‘Covenant of the Corrupt’ traditional economic, military and political elites – long backed by the U.S., Canada and so-called “international community” – will react to this very real threat of democracy.

Stay tuned.

Bernardo Arevalo: “The corrupt are afraid of the will of the people”

June 30, 2023, By Francisco Simón Francisco, Community Press

<https://prensacomunitaria.org/2023/06/bernardo-arevalo-los-corruptos-le-tienen-miedo-a-la-voluntad-popular/>

Regarding the disinformation that has been generated in social networks regarding his candidacy and the work plan of the Seed Movement party, Bernardo Arevalo assured that "they are symptoms of desperation". "As they have no arguments they are resorting to lies and inventions".

"The success of our movement in the general elections, has awakened the fear of the corrupt who intend to continue controlling our country", said this afternoon in a press conference, Bernardo Arevalo, the presidential candidate of the Seed Movement who will dispute the second round on August 20.

Arévalo, accompanied by Karin Herrera, the vice-presidential candidate, and some of the deputies elected in the first round of elections held on Sunday, June 25, said he will defend the will of the people of Guatemala.

"I assure you that we will not be intimidated. Together, as Guatemalans committed to democracy, we will defend our right to freely choose our destiny," he said.

He mentioned that more than 14 parties, who are exactly the same, and who have governed with total impunity, are trying to discredit the results that respond to the will of the people.

"The parties that are asking for the recount of votes are doing so without legal backing, because they know they do not have the support of the people. This is a pure intimidating action that destroys the will of the hopeful change demanded by the majority of the population", stated Arevalo.

Regarding the results obtained, which placed them in second place, behind Sandra Torres of the National Unity of Hope (UNE), he said: there is a difference of more than 200 thousand votes between the results of Semilla and those of its immediate competitors, an unquestionable proof of the will of the people and of our passage to the second round.

We cannot allow the same old parties, frustrated and disappointed by their poor results in the first round, to tarnish and call into question the free decision of thousands of Guatemalans who voted for a different future.

We call on the people of Guatemala to prepare ourselves to defend hope, he concluded.

Questions from the press

Bernardo Arévalo was born in Uruguay, during the exile of his father, the former president of the first stage of the October Revolution, Juan José Arévalo Bermejo. However, Sandra Torres criticized, last June 27, his nationality, calling him "the Uruguayan citizen" and that was one of the questions of the presidential candidate.

"The truth, someone who intends to lead the country should start by reading the Constitution. Article 144 is clear and transparent. Guatemalans of origin are the people born within the national territory and the people born abroad, children of Guatemalan mother or father. It is also necessary to place in the context that my birth in Uruguay is the result of the exile to which my father was forced, starting in 1954", he answered.

He also responded to the attacks of the presidential candidate, Sandra Torres, with whom he will compete in the second electoral round on Sunday, August 20, and this he said:

"Mrs. Sandra Torres has entered into a campaign and what she is doing with other people is trying to raise fear. It is a campaign of fear to scare people, to try to go in an election with such absurd arguments.

"We are not going to fight the fear campaign. We are going to make our own campaign, it is a campaign of illusion, of future, it is a campaign that we are betting that Guatemala will not continue in the same situation as always".

He was asked about possible alliances and with whom, to which he responded that it will be with the people of Guatemala, with all political, social or individual actors who share the same principles, aspirations or the desire for a decent country, the conviction of the need for a firm rule of law, a country where there is freedom and justice.

Although he did not mention names, the presidential candidate said that they already have a government cabinet defined through "a consultative process with different sectors of society", mainly in the areas of health, education, finance and economy.

Regarding the disinformation that has been generated in social networks about his candidacy and the work plan of his party, Semilla assured that "these are symptoms of desperation". "And as they have no arguments they are resorting to lies and inventions," he added.

YouTube press conference

- <https://youtu.be/iSfq70O03bl>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSfq70O03bl&ab_channel=PrensaComunitariaKm169

First round

Bernardo Arévalo, the presidential candidate of the Movimiento Semilla party, caused a surprise on June 25 when, against all odds, he won second place with more than 11.80% of the votes.

Arévalo, son of former president Juan José Arévalo (1945-1951) will dispute the second round with Sandra Torres, candidate of the UNE, who for the third time participates in a presidential election obtaining 15.7% of the votes.

Neither in the media nor in the polls did Arevalo and the Seed Movement seem to have a chance, political analysts and academics did not visualize him going to the second round either, according to a Prensa Comunitaria note.

Movimiento Semilla

www.moviemientosemilla.gt

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