

Press release
Year XXXIX, No. 2

Evaluation survey of Nayib Bukele's sixth year in office

Nayib Bukele maintains a good rating among the population, but with growing and diverse economic and social challenges.

The economy remains as the main Achilles' heel of the Government of El Salvador, with significant unrest among the population in the housing issue.

Local government work has a generalized reprobation by the population, at a moment in which the mayors must maneuver with limited financial resources.

The Salvadoran population begins to mention explicitly its concern about arrests, imprisonment and human rights violations in the country.



Instituto Universitario
de Opinión Pública

Technical Details

Survey conducted by: Iudop - UCA.

Valid responses: 1,272.

Sampling design: Multi-stage stratified sample design by quotas, which guarantees national representativeness in urban and rural areas. The sample is distributed by department, sex, and age groups, following the principle of probability proportional to size (PPS), based on the official population structure.

Sampling Error: $\pm 2.75\%$.

Level of Confidence: 95%.

Methodology:

Individual face to face interviews conducted in respondents' homes.

Fieldwork date: May 14 - 24, 2025.

Writing and analysis:

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Review and contributions to the report:

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Design: Catherine Márquez.

Introduction

Six years after taking office, President Nayib Bukele continues to receive positive evaluations from the majority of the Salvadoran population. However, this favorable perception coexists with diverse citizen concerns about the economic, social, and institutional challenges facing the country.

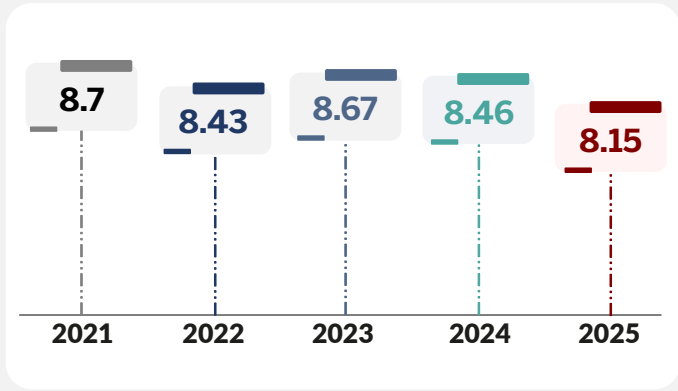
This report gathers the most relevant opinions expressed by citizens regarding the president, the performance of his government, public institutions, local government in their first year of administration, and respect for human rights. Both perceived achievements and areas that generate discontent or disapproval are evident in the data and assessments.

Security continues to be the most highly valued aspect, while issues such as the economy, access to housing, the work of local governments, and arbitrary arrests emerge as critical points in public perception. This snapshot of public opinion provides a better understanding of the social mood and the challenges the country will have to face in the short and medium term.

High approval, but with challenges ahead

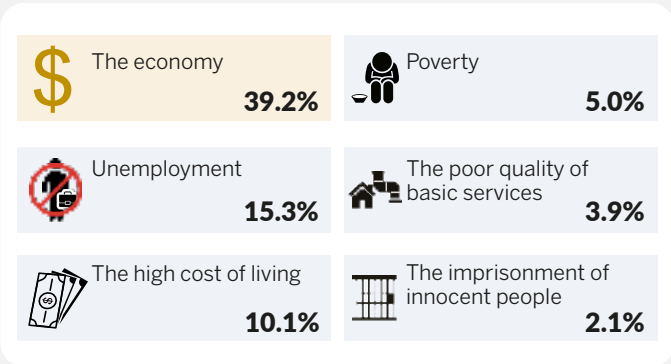
The Salvadoran population gives President Nayib Bukele a score of 8.15 in his sixth year in office. The rating is down 0.3 points from the 8.46 the population gave him in 2024. The score is consistent with the fact that 67.3% of people say they have a lot or some confidence in the president and with the opinion, held by 75.2% of the population, that security is the best thing currently happening in El Salvador.

Graph 1
Score given to President Nayib Bukele
(Comparison 2021-2025 - Scale 0-10)



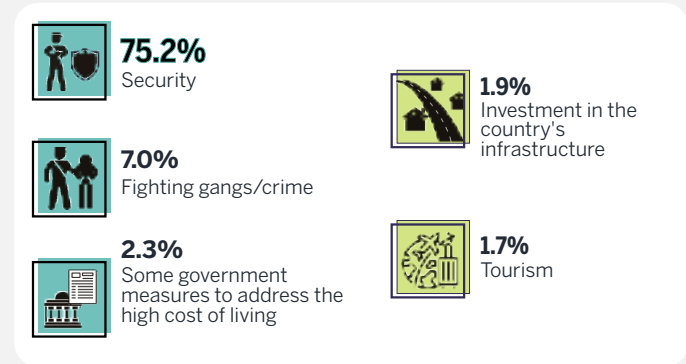
This should be contrasted closely with the main problems the country currently faces, according to the population surveyed. The economy, unemployment, and the high cost of living are among the main concerns of 64.6% of the population. Poverty and the poor quality of basic services also stand out among the problems mentioned in this study.

Figure 1
Main problem currently
faced by El Salvador



*For further information, see the General Results document (only available in Spanish).

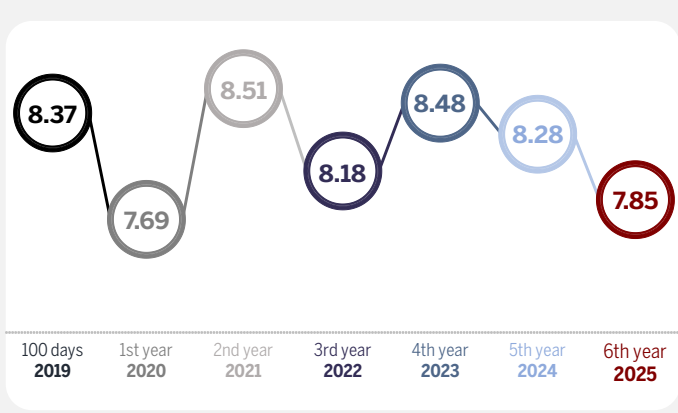
Figure 2
What is the best thing currently
happening in El Salvador?



Housing, the government's weakest point

When asked about the performance of President Nayib Bukele's government, the population's evaluation is more critical than when evaluating the president himself. On average, Salvadorans give the government of El Salvador a score of 7.85, the lowest rating since the 7.69 given in 2020 (the year of the COVID-19 pandemic).

Graph 2
Score given to Nayib Bukele's government
(Comparison 2019-2025 - Scale 0-10)



One indicator of the population's perception regarding the government's work is the evaluation of the performance of national institutions. Among the most favorable ratings are those given by the population to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP) and the Ministry of Tourism (MT) in the areas of security and economy, with 8.43 and 7.98, respectively.

On the other hand, low ratings given by the population to institutions such as the Ministry of Economy (6.68), the Ministry of Health (6.76), and the Ministry of Housing (5.97) in the areas of economy and social and urban development may be pushing the government's rating down.

The Ministry of Housing stands out as the only institution disapproved of by the Salvadoran population in this sixth year. Of every 100 people, 87 believe that accessing a home (owned or rented) in El Salvador is difficult or very difficult. This places the problem of access to housing as one of the issues that most affects the quality of life of the population.

Have local authorities let their communities down?

On average, the work of local governments is the worst rated by the population, with a failing grade of 5.13. This rating is directly related to the fact that 78 out of every 100 people believe that the mayor or municipal council of their locality have not fulfilled their campaign promises in this first year of administration.

It is important to mention that local governments have been facing cuts to their financial resources for several years.¹ In 2025, the Iudop consulted the Salvadoran population about the repeal of the Municipal Support Fund (FAM), which had allowed the payment of some basic services and scholarships or family assistance programs, and 46.6% of respondents agreed that the work of local governments has been very or somewhat affected by this type of reduction in funding.

Figure 3
Rating of the work of government institutions
(Management area: economy - Scale 0-10)

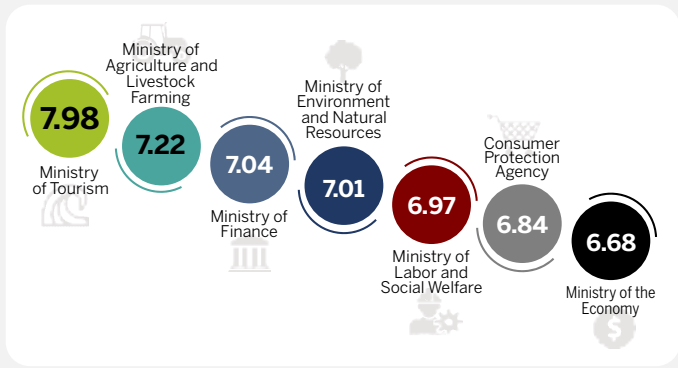
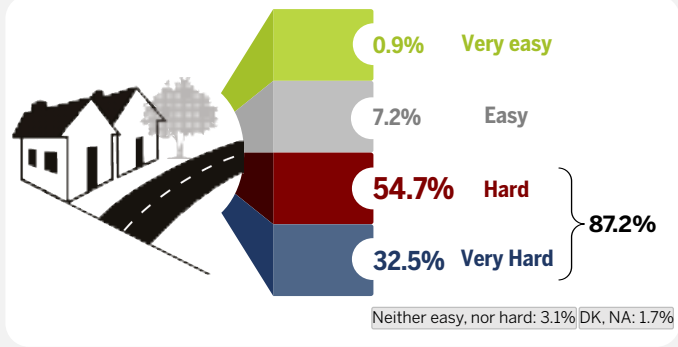
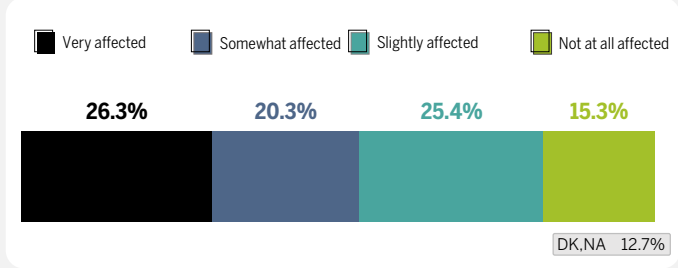


Figure 4
How would you rate access to housing (owned or rented) in the country?



Graph 3
In January of this year, the Municipal Support Fund (FAM) was repealed. This fund had allowed local government to pay for some basic services or programs related to scholarships or family assistance, such as the purchase of coffins. To what extent do you think the work of local government is being affected by the FAM repeal?

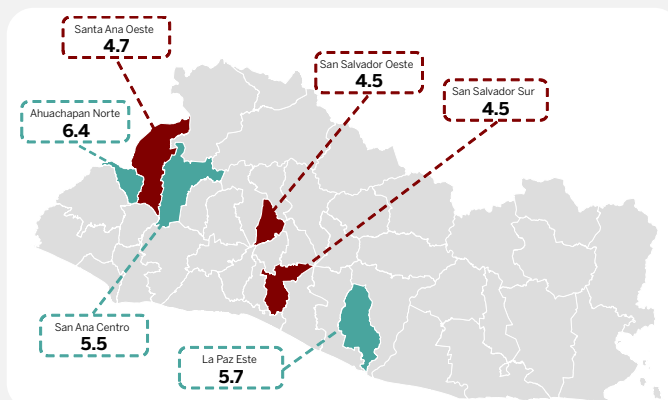


¹ "The members of the Legislative Assembly repealed the Municipal Support Fund (FAM) designed to channel state resources to small municipalities after the reduction of the Economic and Social Development Fund (FODES) in November 2021" (La Prensa Gráfica, January 14, 2025).

Finally, in the local government evaluation², Ahuachapán Norte municipality stands out as the one with the highest approval from the population, with a score of 6.4. It is closely followed by La Paz Este (5.7) and Santa Ana Centro (5.5).

The municipalities with lowest evaluations are Santa Ana Oeste with a score of 4.7, San Salvador Sur and San Salvador Oeste, both of which received a score of 4.5.

Map 1
Citizen evaluation of the work of city councils



*For this analysis, only local governments in which more than 40 people were surveyed were taken into account.

Concern over arrests and abuses of power

When asked how likely it is that a person or institution might suffer negative consequences for expressing critical views of the president or the government, 57.9% of respondents said it is somewhat or very likely.

In this year's Government Evaluation Survey, IUDOP delved into which negative consequences people believe could result for expressing critical opinions, and 48 out of every 100 citizens believe that a person who criticizes the government or the president could be detained or imprisoned.

It is also noteworthy those who say that critics might receive warnings, reprimands, or fines, and those who believe they could face problems at work or be fired.

The perception that speaking out critically entails negative consequences is reinforced by the fact that 2.1% of the Salvadoran population express that the imprisonment of innocent people and other human rights violations are among the country's main current problems³.

Graph 4

How likely is it that a person or institution may suffer negative consequences for expressing critical views of the government and the president on social media or through other media outlets?

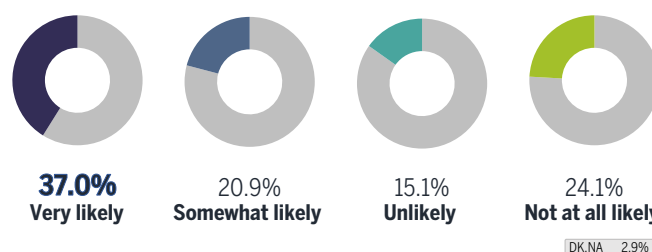
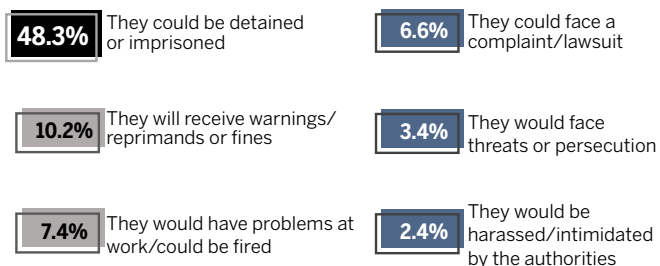


Figure 5

What do you think could happen to a person or institution that expresses a critical opinion about the government and the president on social media or through other means of dissemination?

n=921



*For further information, see the General Results document (only available in Spanish).

² The data for these local governments are not representative, but are based on a sufficient number of cases to show a trend.

³ See Figure 1 for the main challenges currently faced by El Salvador.

Other relevant findings

President Nayib Bukele continues to arouse positive emotions among the Salvadoran population: when asked which emotion best describes how they feel when they think of Nayib Bukele, 72.5% of the population refers to emotions such as trust, hope, and admiration. However, 15% of people say that, in his sixth year, the president inspires disappointment or mistrust, while 10.9% of the population expresses indifference.

The population perceives that the Legislative Assembly primarily represents its own interests and those of the government: Salvadoran population rated the Assembly's performance in its first year of the administration at 6.02, very close to last year's rating of 6.07. However, when asked whose interests deputies represent when they vote, 38.2% said that these decisions represent the president, and 19.9% believe deputies represent their own interests.

These data show a reconfiguration in the population's perception of this issue, since in 2024, only 20.5% considered that deputies mainly represented the president, while 30.3% believed that they represented their own interest.

The work of the Supreme Court of Justice is virtually unknown to the Salvadoran population: in this evaluation survey, ludop explored how familiar the Salvadoran population is with the work of the Supreme Court, and, in a worrying revelation, 82 out of every 100 respondents said they were unfamiliar with the work carried out by the judges of the Supreme Court.

Among the small percentage who said they know about the work of this institution (17.2%), half consider that work to be good or very good.

Figure 6
Emotion that best describes how people feel when they think about Nayib Bukele, in his sixth year in office

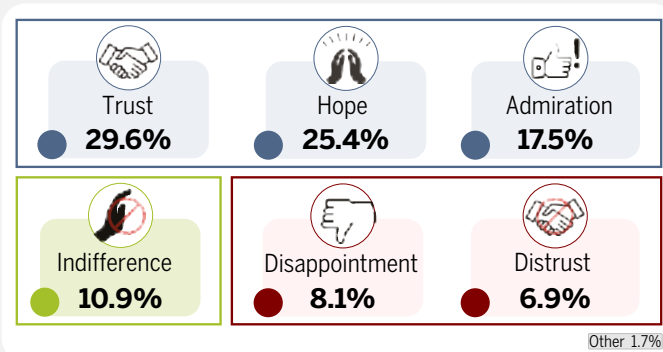


Figure 7
When members of the Legislative Assembly vote, who do you think they represent?

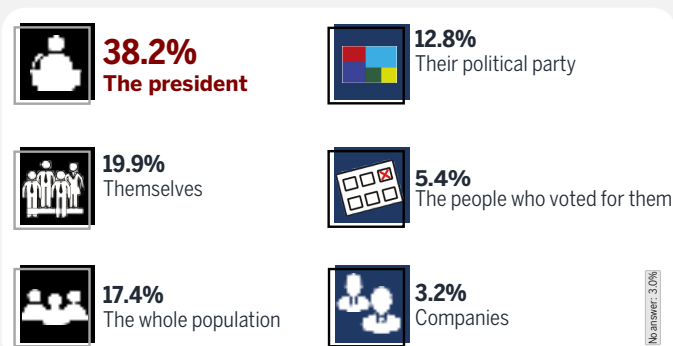
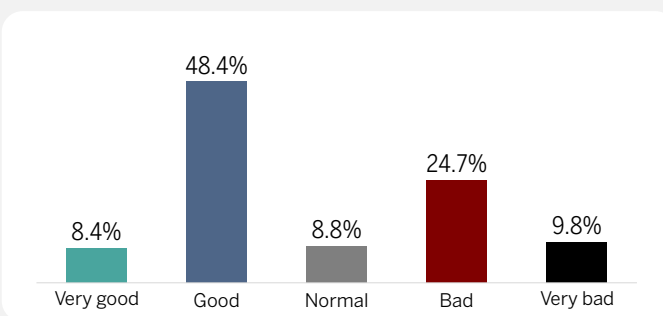


Figure 8
Are you familiar with the work carried out by the judges of the Supreme Court of Justice?

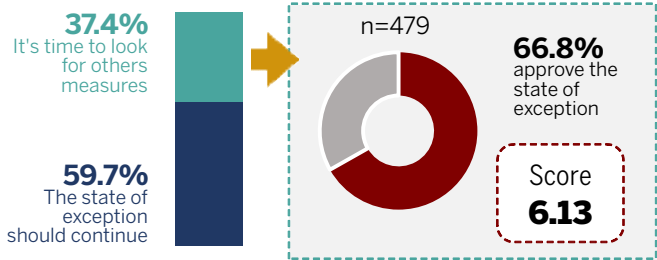


Graph 5
How would you rate the performance of the current Supreme Court justices?



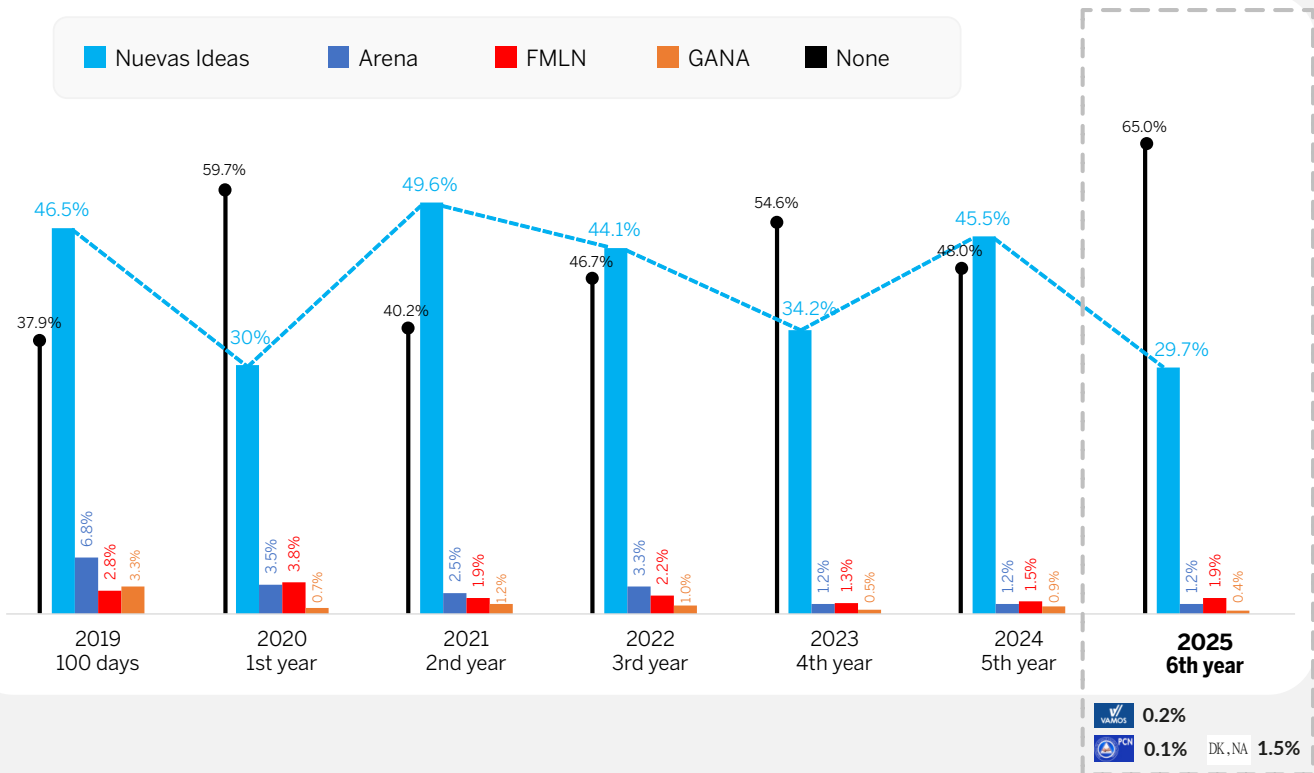
The state of exception continues to be well regarded, yet the population continues to express the need to move forward with new measures: after more than three years in effect, almost 4 out of 10 people consider that it is necessary to look for other measures different from the state of exception. This does not mean that this group disapproves of the measure: 66.8% approve of the state of exception and give it a score of 6.13.

Graph 6
Perspectives on the continuation of the state of exception



Preference for the ruling party declines: Between June 2024 and June 2025, the share of respondents who said they prefer Nuevas Ideas (the government party) fell sharply from 45.5% to 29.7%. This decline is a typical behavior in a non-electoral year, however two points stand out in the analysis: first, preference for the ruling party is at its lowest since 2020, when it stood at 30%, and second, the share of respondents who report they have no party preference rose to 65%, the highest since the 59.7% recorded in the 2020 pre-election period.

Graph 7
Preferred Political Party



*For further information, see the General Results document (only available in Spanish).

Final Thoughts

The evaluation survey of President Nayib Bukele's sixth year in office reflects a citizenry that, while maintaining high levels of approval for the president, is beginning to express more clearly its concerns about structural issues in the country.

Security remains the strongest pillar of support for the president's approval, but unfavorable assessments of the economy, access to housing, local government performance, and respect for human rights are emerging as issues that erode the overall positive perception.

The contrast between the president's positive image and the lower ratings for the government institutions, and local governments suggests that citizens differentiate between leadership and management. This distinction may be key to understanding shifts in public opinion in a context where political support for the president does not necessarily translate into uniform approval of public policies or measures promoted in the country.

In addition, growing concern about arbitrary detentions and perceived restrictions on freedom of expression indicate that the population is more attentive to and critical of abuses of power. This poses a significant challenge to the sustainability of social support in the medium term.

In this scenario, the government faces the challenge of sustaining its legitimacy not only through security, but also through effective responses to the social, economic, and institutional demands of the population.

Public opinion, as this survey shows, is not static: it evolves, becomes more complex, and increasingly demands concrete results and respect for fundamental rights.

Antiguo Cuscatlán, June 19, 2025.

2025

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Feature photo: Iudop-UCA

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