



University Institute
of Public Opinion

2026



Evaluation survey of **Nayib Bukele's** seventh year in office

77.4% of the population points security as country's most positive aspect, while economic concerns are reported as the main problem by 71 out of every 100 people.

The Ministries of Security and Education obtain the highest scores (8.60 and 8.16), while the Ministries of Economy and Housing rank lowest (6.65 and 5.80). The president receives a score of 8.24.

68.9% of citizens support the continuity of the state of exception, although 20.5% call for alternatives based on improvements to investigative processes and respect for human rights.

The Legislative Assembly obtains a score of 6.34, while the mayors' offices continue to fail with an average score of 5.10. 68.6% express little or no satisfaction with mayors' work, highlighting demands regarding street repair, access to drinking water and waste collection.

66% of the population shows interest in the February 2027 elections. The Nuevas Ideas party holds 34.2% of preferences and, overall, 67.3% of people believe that it should remain in power.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Survey conducted by: Iudop - UCA.

Valid responses: 1,271.

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: 2.75%.

Level of Confidence: 95%.

Methodology:

Individual face to face interviews conducted in respondents' homes.

Fieldwork dates: May 15th – 26th, 2026.

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INTRODUCTION

This report gathers the main results of the national poll conducted by the University Institute of Public Opinion (Iudop) of the Central America University in May 2026. The survey was conducted during the seventh year of Nayib Bukele's administration and less than a year before the February 2027 general elections.

The survey offers a comprehensive overview of public perception regarding the government's achievements and failures, the assessment of the institutions and the president, and the support for the state of exception, as well as the evaluations of legislative and municipal work.

This study also incorporates a preliminary look at the upcoming electoral process, which already reveals a marked political preference for the Nuevas Ideas party, although there are also expectations for new party options that show closeness to the population and provide solutions to economic problems.

Taken together, these results provide insights into the current political and social climate, as well as the governance challenges that will shape the outlook for the 2027 elections.

1. The best and worst country's aspects, according to the population¹

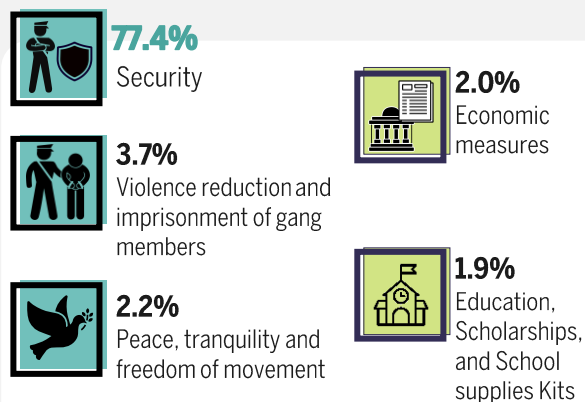
In this survey, the population was asked about the best thing currently happening in the country, and about the main problem. 77.4% of those interviewed believe that security remains the most widely recognized positive aspect in the country. This perception is accompanied by 3.7% who associate the best aspect of the country with the reduction of violence and the imprisonment of gang members, as well as 2.2% who mention that there are currently peace, tranquility and freedom of movement in the country.

Meanwhile, the economy is identified as the main problem by 37.3% of people. In addition to concerns about the economy, 15.3% of the population considers the high cost of living and inflation to be the biggest problem, 12.4% highlight unemployment and 5.7% points to poverty. In total, economic concerns are reported by 71 out of every 100 people in the seventh year of the administration.

This reflects a broad view of the population on the country's situation. When the analysis is deepened and people are asked directly about the main achievements and failures associated with the government's performance, the results, although they follow the general trend, reveal some specific detail:

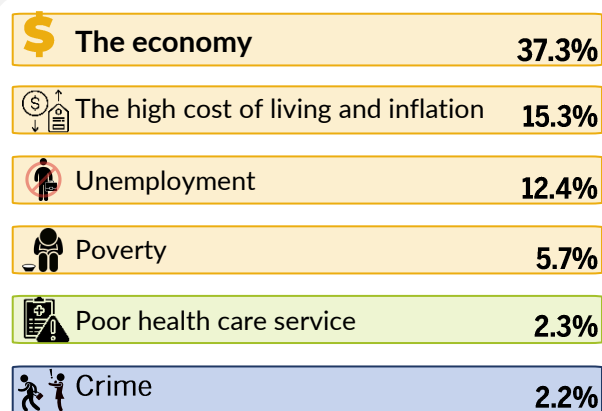
1. According to 47% of the population, **the government's main achievement** is security improvement, followed by 17.3% for whom the main achievement is the fight against gangs. In the seventh year of Nayib Bukele's administration, the public also highlights achievements around education: for 4.6%, the government's main achievement is the renovation of schools and improvement to infrastructure, and for 3.7% it is the distribution of school supply kits.

Figure 1 is the best thing currently happening in El Salvador?



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

Figure 2
Main problem currently facing El Salvador



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

¹ In the public opinion register in the seventh year of government, 6.5% of the population considers that there are no achievements to highlight by the government, while 37.6% of people do not find failures in management. This is an indicator that the government's performance for 2026 presents a positive balance from the perception of the citizenry.

- **The main failures** attributed to this administration are the economy, cited by 14.6% respondents; the high cost of living, mentioned by 8.3%; and unemployment reported by 5%. In the administration's seventh year, citizens also highlight setbacks in the healthcare system and the human rights situation: for 3.8% of people the main failure is associated with the healthcare system, the shortage of medications and layoffs in this sector, while 2.8% of people point to the imprisonment of innocent people and other human rights violations.

Figure 3
Government's main achievements

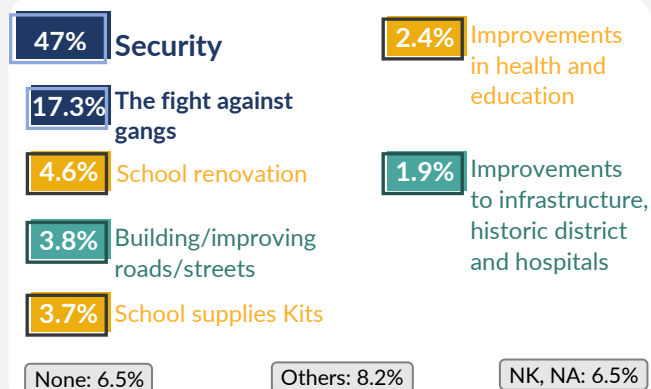
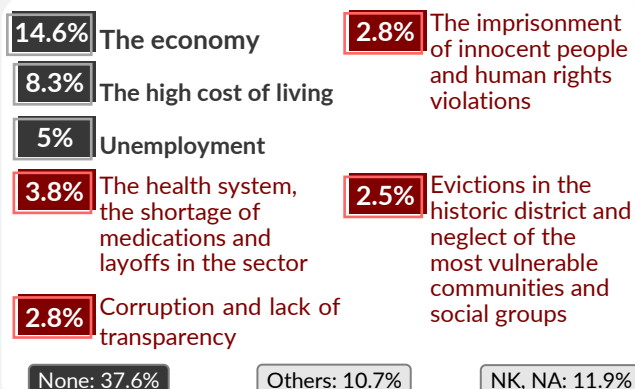


Figure 4
Government's main failures



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

When assessing the achievements and failures of El Salvador's government, 3.8% of the population also mentions the construction and improvement of some streets and highways as a positive aspect, while 2.5% of respondent highlight the situation of evictions in the Historic district of San Salvador and the neglect of some social groups.

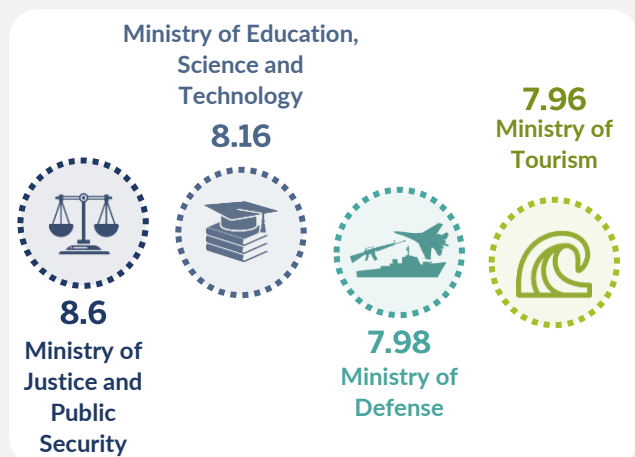
This analysis shows how citizens recognize advances in security but continue to have serious concerns regarding economic and social issues, which set the stage for analyzing the ratings given to the president and the government institutions.

2. Score to government institutions and the president

At the end of the seventh year of this administration, citizen perception is well reflected in the scores given to the various agencies responsible for the key priorities of the country and the provision of public services.

Consistent with the favorable opinion on citizen security, the fight against crime, and improvements in education, the highest-rated institutions of the seventh year are the Ministry of Justice and Security with a score of 8.60 and the Ministry of Education with a score of 8.16.

Figure 5
Top rated public institutions
(Scale 0 -10)

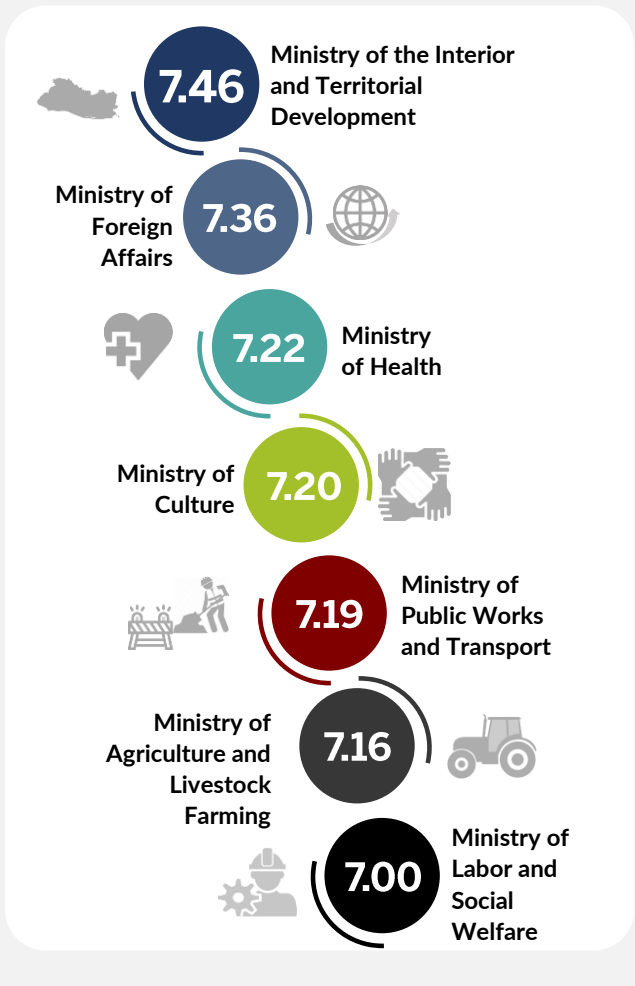


Also, among the highest-rated institutions are the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Tourism, with scores of 7.98 and 7.96 respectively.

In the second group of institutions that enjoy a positive rating, the Ministry of the Interior and Territorial Development and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stand out with scores of 7.46 and 7.36 respectively. It's worth noting that, despite the Salvadoran public's dissatisfaction with the state of the healthcare system and unemployment, the government agencies responsible for these areas remain in this group of well-rated institutions, with a score of 7.22 for the Ministry of Health and 7.0 for the Ministry of Labor and Social Security.

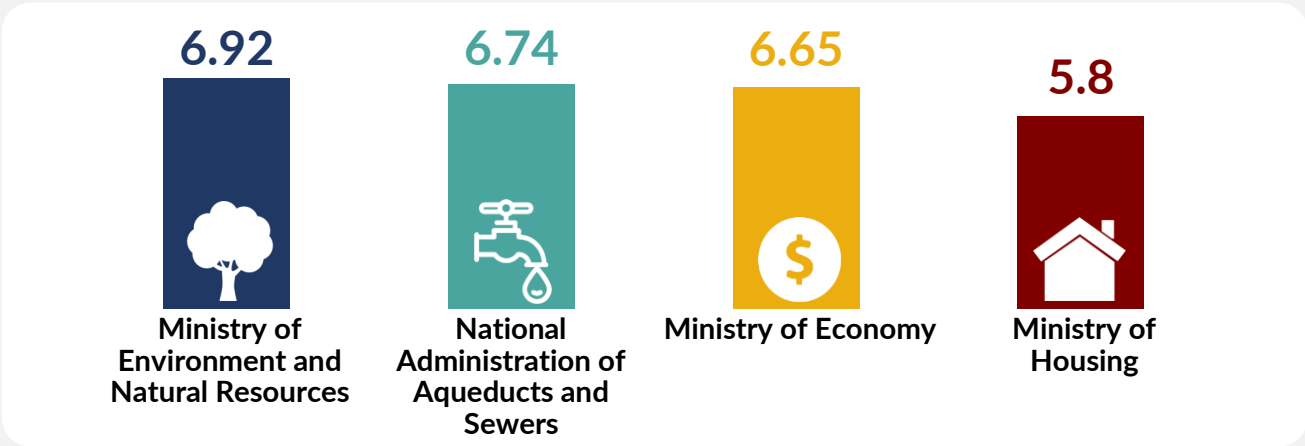
Finally, consistent with the public's main concerns and the major perceived failures in the government's work, the lowest-rated institutions are the Ministry of Economy, with a score of 6.65, and the Ministry of Housing, which has maintained a failing score of 5.80 throughout the seventh year of administration. The National Administration of Aqueducts and Sewers (ANDA) and the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources stand out in this group of lowest-rated institutions, although they remain close to the threshold for a passing score.

Figure 6
Public institutions with positive evaluation
(scale 0 – 10)

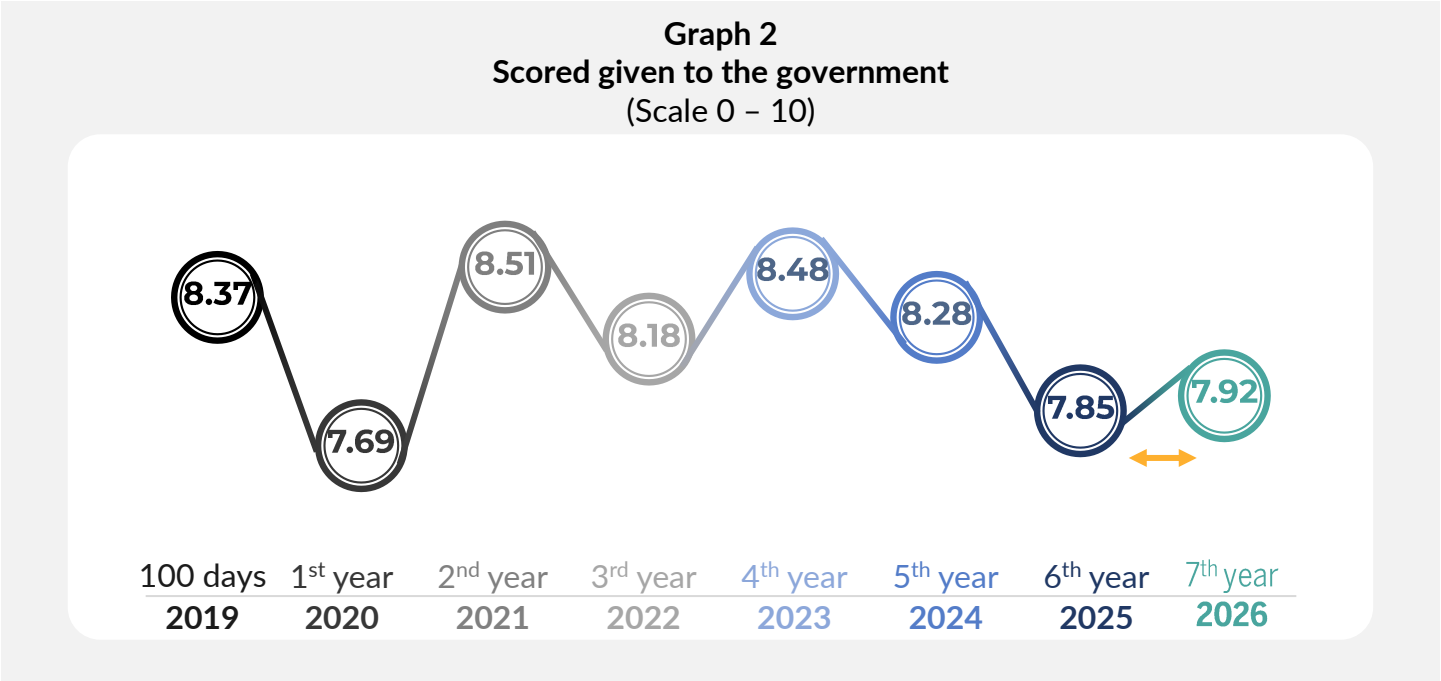


*For further information, see the General Results document (only available in Spanish).

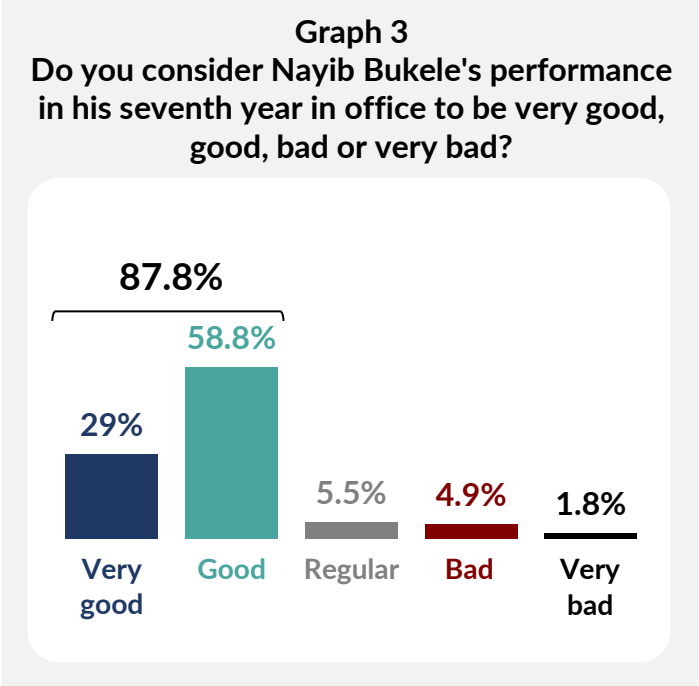
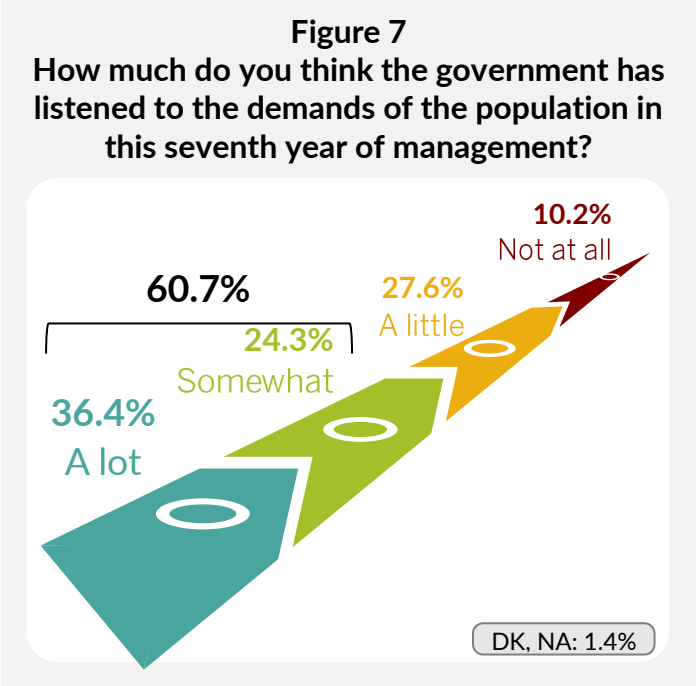
Graph 1
Lowest-rated public institutions
(Scale 0 – 10)



This overview allows us to move towards citizen appreciation of the work of ministries and institutions. When evaluating the seventh year of administration, the scored given to the government of El Salvador reaches an average of 7.92, a result that remains practically stable compared to the 7.85 obtained in the sixth year. This continuity reflects a sustained perception of approval, in which the advances and limitations noted are balanced in favorable scores from the population.



In addition to government’s overall score, the survey includes a specific evaluation of the president’s individual work. The results show that 60.7% of citizens consider that the government has listened a lot or somewhat to the demands of the population, and an even higher percentage – 87.8% – rate Nayib Bukele’s performance as very good or good during this year in office.



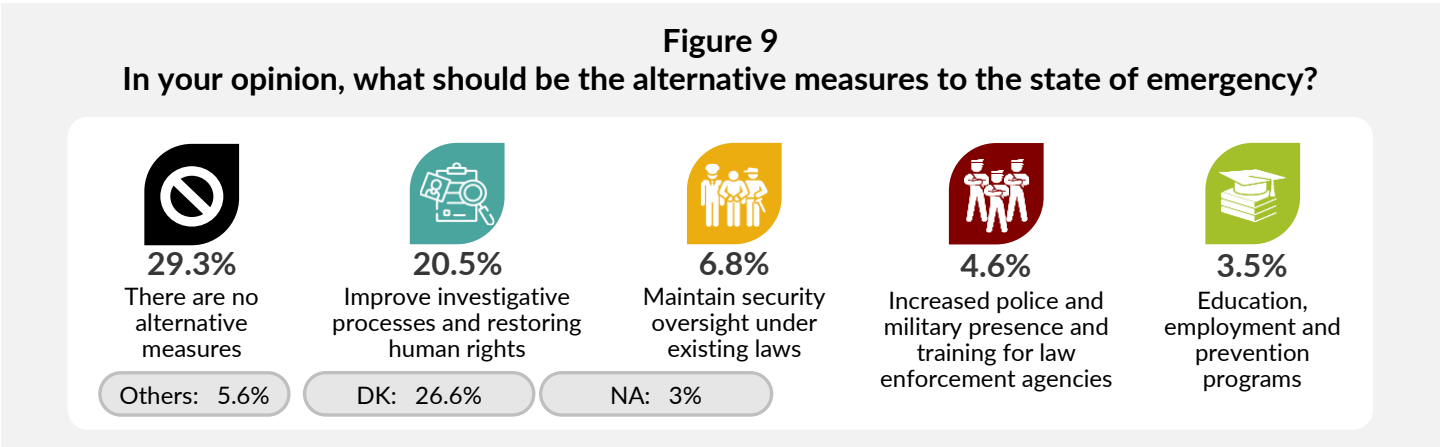
Consistent with this perception, the score given to the president reaches an average of 8.24 in his seventh year in office, very close to the 8.15 recorded in 2025. The difference between the scores given to the president, on the one hand, and to his government, on the other, shows that the public tends to rate the president more favorably than his cabinet. This suggests that presidential approval ratings should be interpreted as an important indicator of public assessment.

On the other hand, regarding public opinion on the state of emergency, this is the security measure most widely recognized by the public and it constitutes a fundamental pillar in the perception of achievements during the current term.

3.The state of exception

As of the date of this survey, the state of exception has been extended for more than 50 months and, according to the officials in charge, this measure will remain in effect until the gangs are eliminated. When asked about the sustainability of this measure, 68.9% of the population believe that the state of exception should be extended further, while 28.6% believe that it is necessary to explore different approaches to the issue.

In addition, this year citizens were asked which things, in their opinion, constituted alternative measures to the regime, and the following were the most common responses: 20.5% of the population believes that investigation processes should be improved to prevent the arrest of innocent people and restore human rights; 6.8% think that crime control and security should be maintained through existing laws; and 4.6% advocate for greater police and military presence.



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

Graph 4
Score assigned to Nayib Bukele
(Scale 0 - 10)

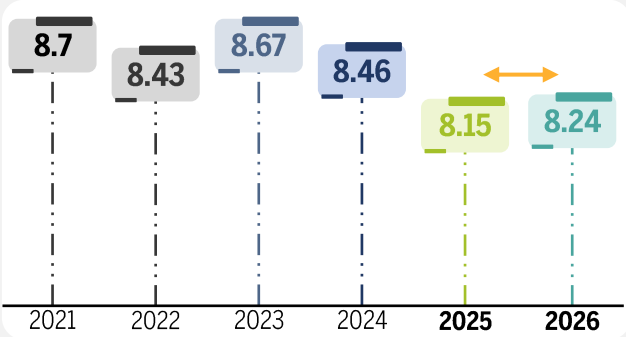
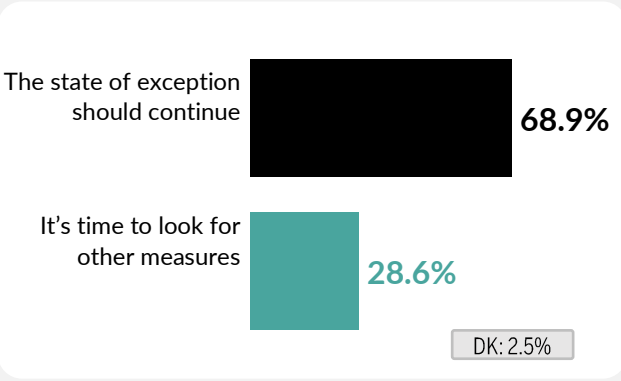


Figure 8
Perspectives on the continuity of the state of emergency



At this point, it is important to mention that 56 out of 100 people believe there are no alternative measures or do not have a specific answer to this question. The notion of "restoring human rights" expressed by the population is striking, as in the fact that the percentage of people who think there should be greater police and military presence also believe that law enforcement agencies should receive more training.

Public opinion confirms the state of exception continues to be the most widely recognized security measure of the period, with a score of 8.12 out of 10 in 2026, a rating that reflects broad support and reinforces its central role in the public's perception of the government's achievements.

4. Work of the Legislative Assembly and local governments

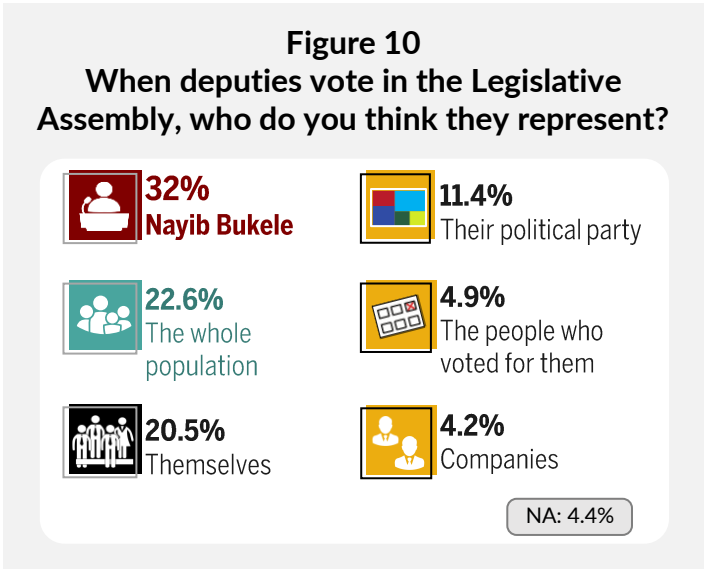
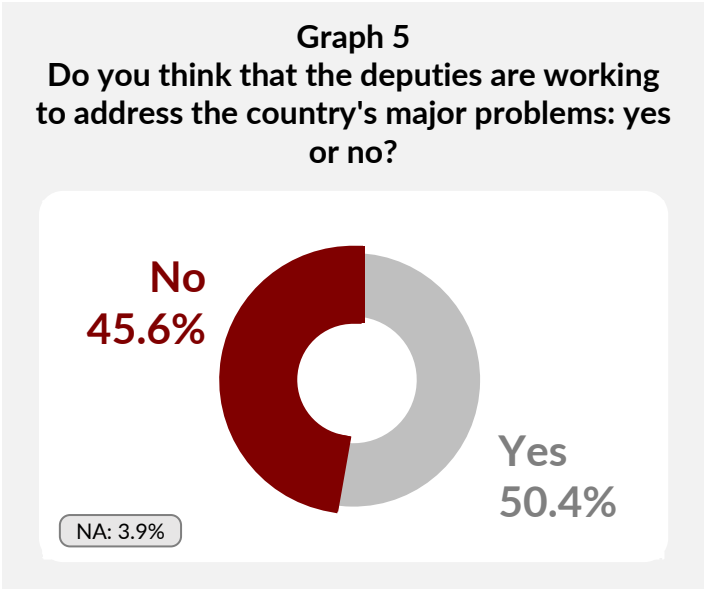
The analysis of national governance is not limited to the executive branch: the survey also gathers opinions on other levels of public administration, in particular the performance of local governments and the Legislative Assembly.

Legislative Assembly

In its second year in office, opinions are divided regarding the work of the current Legislative Assembly: 50.4% of respondents believe that deputies are working to address the country's major problems, while 45.6% hold the opposite view. In terms of ratings, the Assembly received an average score of 6.34 in 2026, which represents a slight improvement over the 6.02 recorded in 2025.

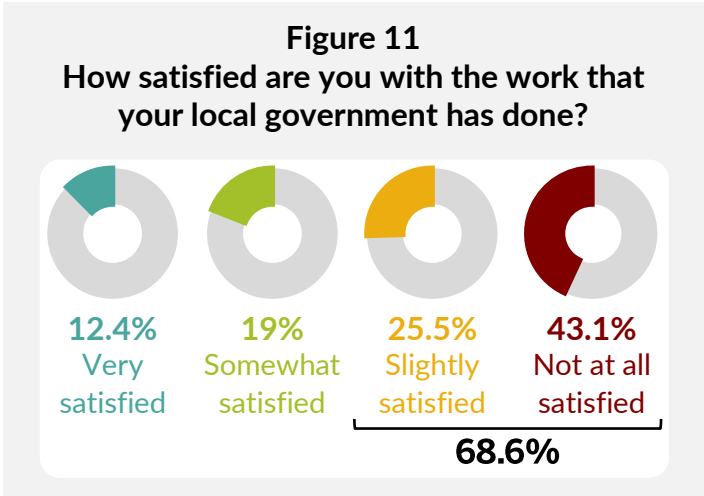
Meanwhile, 32% of the citizens think that votes cast from the Legislative Assembly to approve laws and decrees primarily represent the interests of Nayib Bukele, while 22.6% believe that the decisions reflect the interest of the whole population, and 20.5% think that deputies vote in pursuit of their own interests.

Compared to the first year of the current legislature, the perception that the Legislative Assembly acts primarily in the president's interests has decreased, while there has been an increase in the view that deputies look out above all for their own interests or for the population's interests.

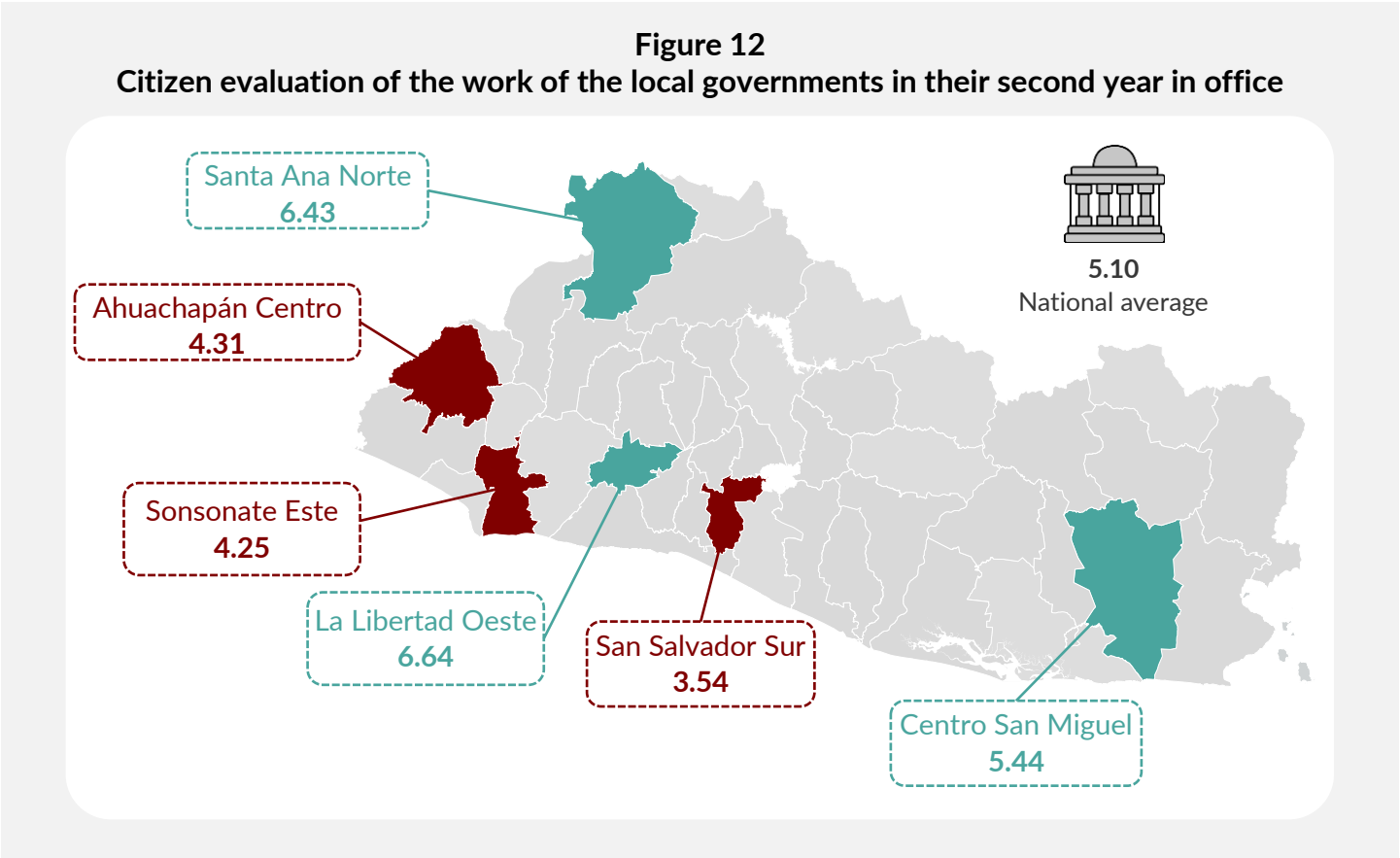


Local governments

The performance of municipal governments continues to generate high levels of dissatisfaction among residents, and, in general, local administrations receive failing evaluating from the public. In their second year in office, 68.6% of respondents report being slightly satisfied or not satisfied at all with the work carried out by their local government.



Overall, local governments performance receives a failing score, with an average grade of 5.10. Among the municipalities evaluated in this survey, the highest rated are La Libertad Oeste (6.64), Santa Ana Norte (6.43) and San Miguel Centro (5.44). Meanwhile, the municipal governments rated lowest by the population surveyed, during this second year in office, are – based on this survey – Ahuachapán Centro (4.31), Sonsonate Este (4.25) and San Salvador Sur (3.54).²



² This analysis only considered the local governments that were part of the survey sample and in which more than 40 people were surveyed. The sample had a scope of 28 municipalities.

It is clear that local governments continue to receive a low rating from citizens: although some mayors' offices receive better reviews within their jurisdictions, none of them reach outstanding levels.

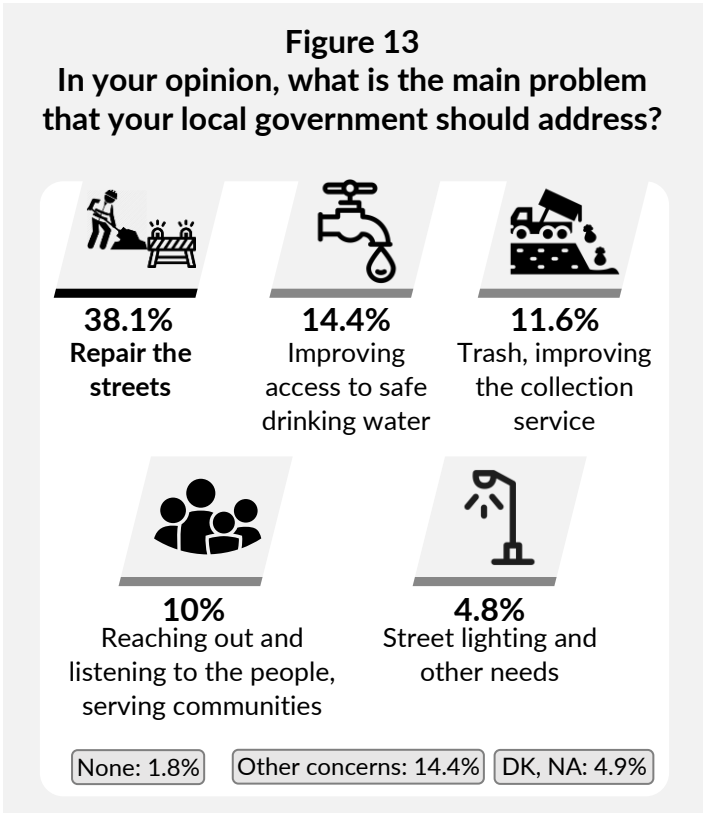
In their second year in office, widespread dissatisfaction is reported alongside specific needs of the population, which is demanding action primarily in the repair of streets (38.1%), improvements in access to drinking water (14.4%), addressing the problem of trash and waste collection (11.6%), greater closeness to and responsiveness toward communities (10%) and improvements in street lighting and other basic services (4.8%), among other concerns.

These assessments show that, unlike the central government in its seventh year, legislative work and municipal work are facing greater scrutiny in their second year in office. This contrast broadens the understanding of the different levels of governance and, at the same time, highlights the importance of this year's citizen opinion poll as a preliminary look toward the February 2027 elections.

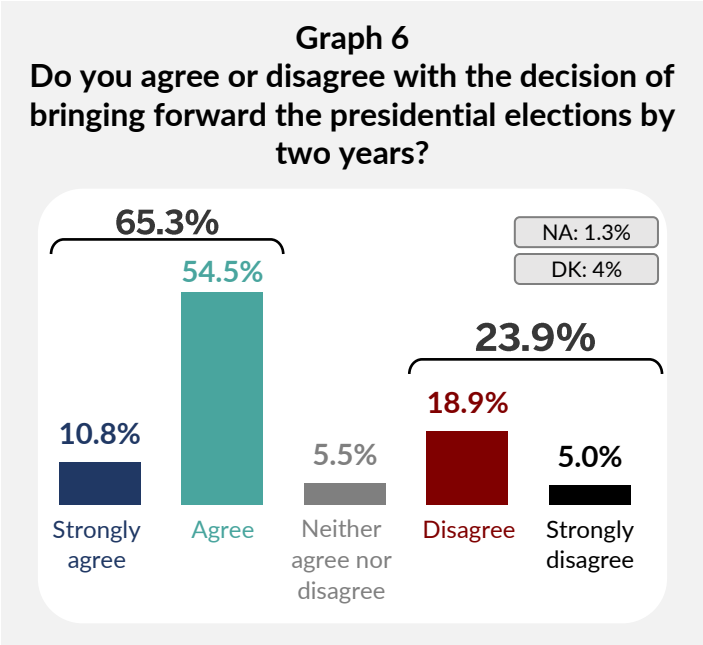
In this scenario, in addition to the election of local and legislative officials, the presidential election is anticipated, making these perceptions a key factor to understanding the current political climate.

5. Looking at the next electoral process

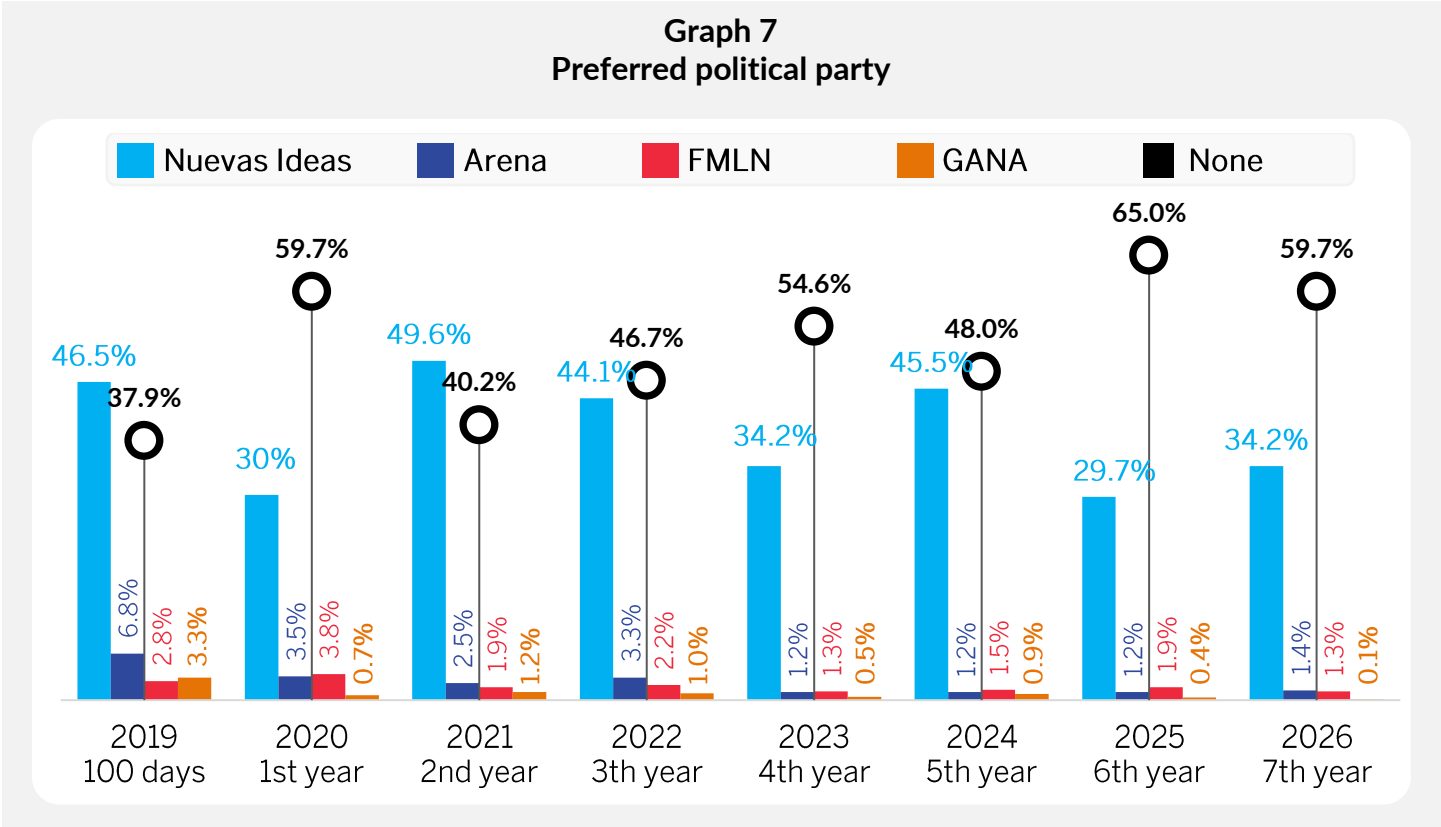
In May 2026, 66% of the population surveyed said they were somewhat or very interested in the elections of February 28, 2027. In this context, people were asked for their opinion on recent changes in the electoral rules and, specifically, about bringing forward the presidential elections: 65.3% of the population said they agreed or strongly agreed with the decision of bringing the election forward by two years, while 23.9% said they disagreed or strongly disagreed with this change.



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

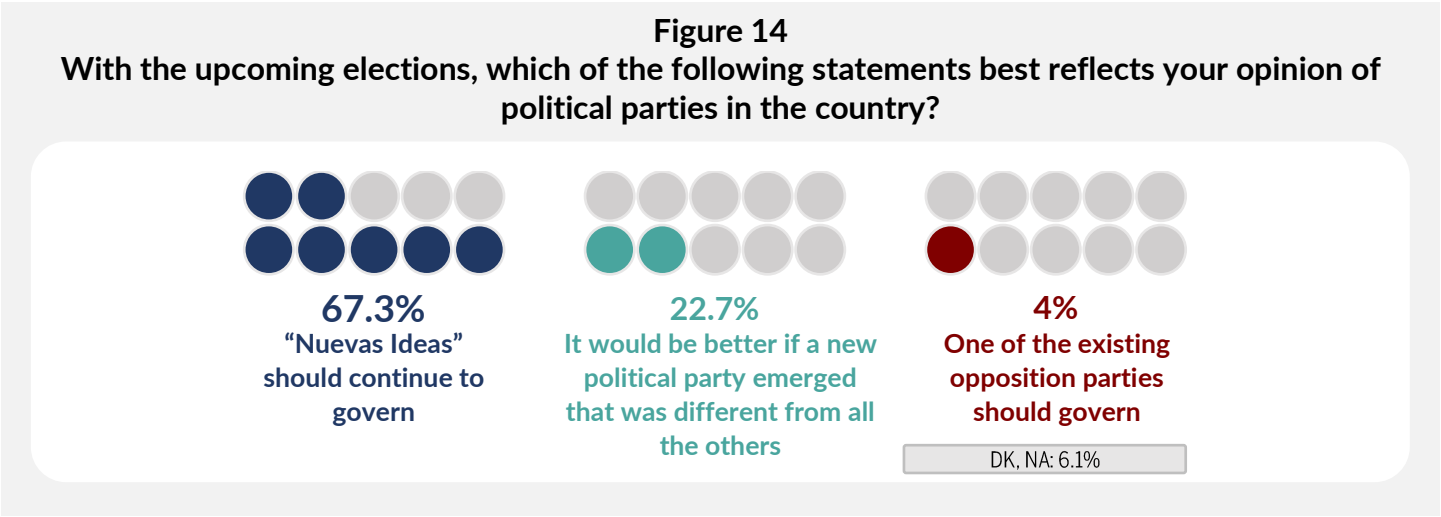


Meanwhile, current political party preferences show significant support for the “Nuevas Ideas” party with 34.2% of preferences, followed far behind by ARENA, the FMLN and Vamos, with 1.4%, 1.3% and 0.5% of preferences, respectively. By 2026, the segment of the population that says it has no party preference is 59.7%, a decrease in respect to 65% who had no preference in 2025.



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

On the other hand, when asked about the scenario which best reflected their views regarding the upcoming elections, the results showed that 67.3% of respondents believed that the Nuevas Ideas party should continue to govern. In this same question, 22.7% of respondents believed it would be better for a new political party to emerge – one different from all the others -, and 4% said that one of the existing opposition parties should govern.



Finally, in order to gain deeper understanding of Salvadorans' political views, respondents were asked about the main characteristic that a new political party should have. The most common responses described a party that *looked out for the well-being and needs of the population and that was close to the people; one that emerged from the citizenry and represented a political balance; and one that worked for the poor and solved economic problems.*

Table 1
What would be the most important characteristic that this new political party should have?
n = 286

	Closeness to the people/concern for the needs and well-being of the population	47.9%
	It should emerge from citizens and represent political balance	10.8%
	It should work for the poor and solve economic problems	5.6%
	Honesty	5.2%
	It should respect human rights and the Constitution of the Republic	4.9%

Another characteristic: 19.9% DK: 5.6%

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

These perceptions provide a preliminary insight into the electoral climate, in which the municipalities and legislative elections - along with the early presidential election and the debate over reelection - form a key framework for understanding the dynamics of governance and representation in the country.

6. Conclusions and assessments

The survey's results show that the Salvadoran population distinguishes between the country's overall situation and the government's performance. Nationally security is the most highly valued aspect, while the economy and the high cost of living are the main sources of concern.

When evaluating the government directly, the public reaffirms security and the fight against gangs as its main achievements, but points to the economy, unemployment, and irregularities in the healthcare system as significant failures, along with a more evident critical stance on the human rights situation.

In the seventh year of Nayib Bukele's administration, the citizens also express a differentiated assessment, in their ratings of public institutions. Ministries linked to security, education and tourism received the highest scores, consistent with the country's best rated areas. In contrast, ministries related to the economy and housing receive the lowest ratings, in line with concerns about the cost of living and social difficulties. When distinguishing between the government and the president, the public gives the president a higher rating.

The survey shows that the state of exception continues to have broad support among the population; however, opinions are also emerging that highlight the need for alternatives to this measure, primarily aimed at strengthening investigations and restoring human rights, along with proposals for greater crime control and police presence.

In its second year in office, the Assembly receives mixed reviews and a grade barely above the passing threshold, with perceptions ranging between those who believe deputies are addressing national problems, and those who think they are guided by particular interests. For their part, local governments maintain a failing average score, reflecting widespread dissatisfaction and specific demands from the public, centered on street repairs, access to drinking water, waste management, and basic services.

Finally, the strong preference for the Nuevas Ideas party, along with the perception that it should continue to govern, points to a scenario of political continuity. However, there are also expectations around new political options that show closeness to the population and that address economic problems.

Antiguo Cuscatlan, June 24th, 2026.