

U.S. Claims Venezuelan Elections Not 'Free and Fair'



New York, October 18 (RHC)-- U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, tried to cast doubt on the results of Venezuela's Regional Elections where candidates from the governing Socialist Party won a vast majority of seats, claiming the vote was not "free and fair." In a statement issued by the U.S. Mission to the UN, Haley said: "An election is only legitimate if it is free and fair, and from the start, this was neither" -- without providing any evidence.

Prior to the vote, the U.S. State Department issued a statement questioning what it called the "fairness of the electoral process" in Venezuela, and expressing "great concern that the regime will not permit the presence of independent international electoral observers." Over 1,300 national and international observers, including opposition appointed auditors, were on hand for the October 15th vote. An audit of the vote will also be held, election officials have confirmed.

Meanwhile, the U.S.-backed opposition has stated they would not recognize the results that have been reported by the head of the National Electoral Council (CNE), Tibisay Lucena. Opposition coalition MUD campaign chief Gerardo Blyde said the results are not reflective of those being tracked by his party. He also accused the electorate of misrepresenting the location of the polling stations in a bid to confuse voters.

Despite the statements from Blyde and MUD leaders, elected opposition recognized the results that will

see them take office. "I can only recognize what I have in my hands, and in Tachira, I recognize that the people spoke," Leidy Gomez, the MUD candidate who won the elections for governor of the border state, told teleSUR.

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