

Nationalist Ahead in Peru, but Faces Runoff

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By Juan Forero

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LIMA, Peru, April 9 — Ollanta Humala, a former military officer and fierce nationalist, received the most votes in the presidential election on Sunday, edging out a pro-globalization candidate, a former president and 17 other candidates by pledging to guide Peru away from Washington-backed market reforms.

By Sunday night, unofficial results showed that Mr. Humala, 43, was far from securing the majority needed to win the vote outright and avoid a runoff. But Apoyo, a Lima polling firm, and independent electoral monitors said that highly accurate samples from across the country showed he had received nearly 30 percent of the vote.

"The Peruvian people have expressed their desire for change in this country," Mr. Humala said Sunday night, speaking to supporters from the balcony of his campaign headquarters in Lima.

As of 9 p.m., the unofficial tallies put him ahead of his challengers, Lourdes Flores and Alan García, who remained tied for second. Mr. Humala will face one of the two in a second-round election which is likely to be scheduled for late next month.

Polls have shown that Ms. Flores, a market-friendly former congresswoman, would beat Mr. Humala, but that a race between Mr. Humala and Mr. García, who was president from 1985 to 1990, would be too tight to call.

If Mr. Humala triumphs in a second round, Peru would join a continentwide political shift in which populist candidates have won office by proposing a break with the economic policies long advocated by the United States in Latin America. Mr. Humala, whose first name means the "warrior who sees all," has openly expressed his admiration for Venezuela's populist president, Hugo Chávez, who in turn has praised Mr. Humala.

The campaign has featured vastly different philosophies and styles. Mr. Humala promised to crack down on foreign multinational companies he said have plundered the country. He has promised to spread the wealth among the country's 27 million people, half of whom live in poverty.

Ms. Flores, 46, a lawyer, cast herself as Peru's Michelle Bachelet, the socialist who was elected in neighboring Chile in December, and has an image of being honest, capable and progressive. The third major candidate was Mr. García, 56, whose presidency ended in economic tumult and violence but who captivates many Peruvians with his oratory.

Mr. Humala promised a drastic break from the policies of the current government of President Alejandro Toledo. A former shoeshine boy of indigenous descent who became a World Bank

consultant, Mr. Toledo guided an economy that, in four years, grew by an average of 5 percent annually and recorded a dramatic rise in exports, particularly of minerals, which more than tripled in value since 2001.

But personal scandals coupled with widespread disillusionment that strong economic data did not translate into prosperity made Mr. Toledo the most unpopular president in Latin America, with approval ratings in single digits for much of his five-year term. His government, which faced high expectations after the 10-year quasi-dictatorship of Alberto Fujimori, also failed to reform the military and the judiciary or to make big gains against corruption.

"He didn't know how to reach the people," said Myles Frechette, a former United States diplomat in Latin America. "He didn't know how to sell his programs."

Still, Mr. Toledo, a constant target of Mr. Humala's campaign, has emphasized that his government laid the groundwork for the country's growth. Though he avoided using Mr. Humala's name, Mr. Toledo warned Peruvians that voting for Mr. Humala would hurt the country.

To be sure, the possibility that Mr. Humala would win has worried many investors and the middle and upper classes in Lima. The Peruvian stock market dipped as Mr. Humala's popularity spiked in recent weeks, while Peru's currency, the sol, has lost value against the dollar.

When Mr. Humala arrived to vote on Sunday morning at a local university in Lima, angry protesters prevented him from leaving until a police escort and representatives of the Organization of American States were able to rescue him. "It reminded me of my days as a fullback," said Lloyd Axworthy, a Canadian who heads the O.A.S. mission, after helping lead Mr. Humala to safety.

While infuriating to some, Mr. Humala's message has resonated with voters who feel that Peru has stagnated under Mr. Toledo.

"I'm 70, I've voted in 10 elections and I'm tired of politicians who fool us," said Augusto Valle, a retired technician, after casting his ballot in Lima. "I want a nationalist politician who will take us on a new path, so I'm voting for the military man named Ollanta Humala."

Mr. Humala, who grew up in comfort in Lima, is hard to characterize politically on the left-right spectrum. He expresses pride in his military service, though the Peruvian army was notorious for its rights abuses and he has been accused by a handful of families of ordering murders and torture during a conflict with Shining Path, a Maoist rebel group.

His father founded an ultranationalist movement, *etnocacerismo*, that celebrates the superiority of the Indian race over those Peruvians descended from the Spanish. His mother has called for gays to be shot and a brother, Antauro, led a rebellion against the government last year.

Ollanta Humala has distanced himself from his family and tried to stress his message of a new economic direction for Peru. He has provided little detail, saying his plans are similar to those in countries like Venezuela, Bolivia and Argentina, where leftists have won office.

But political analysts in Peru have noted that Mr. Humala built his campaign on criticism of the existing system while offering scant insight into how he would govern.

"The people do not see a future and it's a vote that's more about protest than based on hope," said Fritz Du Bois, director of the Peruvian Economic Institute, a free-market research organization in Lima. "What has helped Humala more than anything else is the inability of other candidates to generate hope."