

Directions: Read the article.

A Democracy Divided

Fireworks erupted after the announcement that Felipe Calderón would be Mexico's next president. Upon hearing the news, demonstrators in Mexico City raised their fists, waved signs, and shouted slogans. Their words were angry. The fireworks were not celebratory.

Calderón was declared the winner two months after Mexico's presidential election on July 2, 2006. He won the vote by less than one percent. Losing candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the former mayor of Mexico City, immediately challenged the results, saying that the election had been rigged.

Two months later, though, the country's top electoral court ruled that the election had been fair. The Federal Electoral Tribunal came to its decision by reviewing campaign tactics and recounting some of the votes. The court found some irregularities, but said that there was not enough evidence to change the results.

The court's president, Leonel Castillo González, urged Mexicans to unite behind Calderón. "I hope we conclude this process leaving confrontation behind," he said.

The Challenge Ahead

The election exposed a deep divide between Mexico's rich and poor. Almost half the population of 106 million lives in poverty. López Obrador won widespread support among Mexico's disadvantaged. Many did not trust what they view as Calderón's pro-business policies.

The country's electoral system has a history of fraud. For decades, fixed elections allowed one party to stay in power.

López Obrador vowed not to accept the court's ruling. He said he would set up an "alternative government." He also threatened to organize mass protests on September 16, Mexico's Independence Day.

As he prepared to take office on December 1, Calderón needed to address the issues raised by the election. He reached out to López Obrador, saying he would sit down for negotiations. He also promised to create jobs and fight corruption. "I am going to be a president for everyone," he said, "a president driven by fairness and equality."

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