



Published: 07.17.2006

1 million Mexicans demand recount

By Kevin Diaz

MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

MEXICO CITY — Blaring horns and beating drums, an estimated 1 million protesters from all over Mexico converged on the capital Sunday to call for a recount in the country's still-undecided July 2 presidential election.

The outpouring was by far the largest demonstration yet in support of former Mexico City mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a left-leaning populist who cites fraud in his narrow loss to conservative ruling party candidate Felipe Calderón.

The Roman Catholic Church canceled Mass at the downtown cathedral as protesters overwhelmed the massive central plaza and spilled for blocks down nearby streets, The Associated Press reported. Protesters filling the Zócalo square and side streets numbered about 1.1 million, making it the second-largest protest in the city's history, Ricardo Olayo, the chief spokesman for Mexico City police told Bloomberg News.

Organizers of López Obrador's Party of the Democratic Revolution, known as the PRD, distributed copies of newspaper editorials worldwide calling for a recount, if not for López Obrador then to affirm Mexico's nascent democracy and Calderón's victory.

López Obrador asked his followers to continue a campaign of "passive civil resistance in the defense of democracy." The protests will end, he said, when there's a recount.

Calderón denies any fraud and opposes a recount, saying that recent elections in Germany and Italy were closer than his. Uncertified results give him a margin of victory of fewer than 244,000 votes out of 41 million.

Despite concerns about possible violence and social unrest, police reported no serious incidents among the festive columns of marchers converging on the Zócalo, Mexico City's historic central square.

"Demanding a recount of every vote is not violence, it is democracy," said Mexican actress and political activist Jesusa Rodriguez, one of the leaders of the march. "It is those who oppose a recount who are complicit in violence."

The demonstration was a massive reprise of a rally last weekend that brought some 300,000 people to the Zócalo.

All content copyright © 1999-2006 AzStarNet, Arizona Daily Star and its wire services and suppliers and may not be republished without permission. All rights reserved. Any copying, redistribution, or retransmission of any of the contents of this service without the expressed written consent of Arizona Daily Star or AzStarNet is prohibited.