

# López Obrador pushes for full recount

The Miami Herald  
Aug. 09, 2006

**MEXICO CITY** - Authorities are set to start today on a partial recount of ballots cast in Mexico's tightest presidential election in history, heightening the political tumult that has pervaded the country since the divisive July 2 vote.

One hundred twenty-seven magistrates will supervise the recount of votes in 9 percent of the country's polling places, as second-place candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador continues to press for a full recount with widening public protests.

On Tuesday morning, his supporters blocked motorists from paying tolls on five highways leading out of the capital city for about four hours. On Monday, his followers launched a campaign to heckle President Vicente Fox at his public appearances, yelling "traitor" as he inaugurated a highway in Puebla.

Thousands of protesters camping in tents have blocked Mexico City's Paseo de la Reforma and historic downtown for the past 10 days and show no signs of tiring, much to the ire of residents and businesses.

López Obrador has vowed to continue his "peaceful civil resistance" measures until a full recount is realized. He maintains that error and fraud cost him the election, which was won by the National Action Party's Felipe Calderón by only 244,000 votes -- a margin of 0.6 percentage points.

Analysts say López Obrador, a leftist former mayor of Mexico City, is unlikely to get a full recount or overturn the outcome unless widespread irregularities are detected. The election was certified by international observers as free and fair.

More than half of the 11,839 precincts under scrutiny are in northern states, such as Jalisco, Baja California, Tamaulipas, Sonora and Chihuahua, where the conservative Calderón won by a large margin. The recount, which must be concluded by Sunday, will be carried out by judges and their staff with representatives of political parties present. Parties can challenge votes, with the final ruling up to the Federal Electoral Tribunal in the case of major disputes.

"I don't see a major change in vote counts," said Jeffrey Weldon, a political-science professor at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México. "López Obrador just can't believe he lost."