

Bellwether Mexico Election Goes Smoothly

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TIJUANA, [Mexico](#), Aug. 5 — Voters went to the polls on Sunday in Baja California to decide between a conservative economist from the president's party and a colorful tycoon who owns betting parlors and comes from a storied political family in the once dominant Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI.

Both candidates — José Guadalupe Osuna Millán, 51, of the president's National Action Party, and Jorge Hank Rhon, 51, the PRI candidate and former mayor of this city — ran campaigns promising to rid this economically vibrant state across from California and Arizona of the organized crime that has hampered its development and taken scores of lives in the past two years.

Despite dire warnings before the election that there would be fraud on both sides, the polling went forward with few problems or incidents, though some polling places opened late or not at all.

At 6:30 p.m., barely a half hour after polls closed, the National Action party chairman, Manuel Espino, and Mr. Osuna Millán appeared at a hotel to declare victory on the strength of three exit polls that, he maintained, showed him winning the race by between 4 and 6 percentage points.

Still, there were no official results and Mr. Hank did not concede defeat.

A few voters complained to a local radio station that they witnessed PRI members trying to buy votes. And there were isolated reports of shots fired near polling places in the town of Rosarito, radio reports said.

In general, however, the voting was peaceful and turnout was low.

Through the campaign, Mr. Osuna and his supporters never missed a chance to mention he had no links to organized crime, and to point out that Mr. Hank has been dogged by allegations of corruption and even murder, though he has never been charged.

Ramón Oropeza, a civil engineer, said questions about Mr. Hank's past persuaded him to vote for the National Action Party. "He has a very dark past," Mr. Oropeza said. "Full of conflicts."

Mr. Hank has dismissed the allegations against him as lies and pointed to his record of giving the Tijuana police department the equipment it needs to fight crime.