



Transparencia  
Electoral



# **Argentina's election authorities must guarantee the right to a universally accessible secret vote**



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Privacy International  
62 Britton Street, London EC1M 5UY, United Kingdom  
Phone +44 (0)20 3422 4321

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## About the authors

Privacy International and Transparencia Electoral were both in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in the days leading up to, and of, the October 2025 election. They participated in an International Visitor's Programme run by Transparencia Electoral which included meetings with electoral authorities and a visit to polling stations, including a voting centre in the Vicente Lopez Municipality of Buenos Aires whilst the vote was being conducted on 26 October 2025.<sup>3</sup> The visit was facilitated by the local ombudsperson, Celeste Vouilloud, whose office hosts a Permanent Electoral Observatory.<sup>4</sup>

Privacy International is a London based non-profit, non-governmental organisation that researches and advocates globally against government and corporate abuses of data and technology. Transparencia Electoral is an international civil society organisation based in Buenos Aires, Argentina, that promotes election integrity and democratic values, and carries out non-partisan election monitoring in the region and around the world.

## Acknowledgements

The authors thank for their contributions to the compilation of this report Asociación Tiflonexos, Asociación por los Derechos Civiles (ADC), Asociación de Ayuda al Ciego (ASAC), the Ombudsperson of Vicente Lopez, the National Electoral Directorate and the General Direction of Political and Electoral Affairs of the Government of the City of Buenos Aires.

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1 Transparencia Electoral, "Transparencia Electoral celebró un Programa Electoral en el marco de las Elecciones Legislativas Argentina 2025", October 2025 <https://transparenciaelectoral.org/blog/transparencia-electoral-celebro-un-programa-electoral-en-el-marco-de-las-elecciones-legislativas-argentina-2025/>

2 *Ibid.*

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## **Argentina's election authorities must guarantee a universally accessible secret vote in 2027, not guaranteed in 2025 mid-terms**

The rights to secrecy of the vote, privacy, political participation and non-discrimination were undermined in Argentina's recent mid-term legislative elections in October 2025, Privacy International and Transparencia Electoral find. Federal election authorities failed to ensure universal accessibility to a secret vote in the election, and the fundamental human rights of certain people, including those who are blind and with low vision, were thus infringed upon throughout the Argentine electorate.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.a. Electoral stakes and introduction of a new voting system

Argentinians went to the polls on Sunday 26 October 2025 to vote in a historic mid-term legislative election, upon which hinged a critical portion of both Chambers of Argentina's Legislative Branch, which is comprised of the Lower House and the Senate. The vote saw 127 out of 257 seats in the former and 24 out of 72 seats in the latter chamber renewed, with the power of the Executive resting in the balance.<sup>3</sup>

Despite tight polls in the run up to the election placing the governing party, La Libertad Avanza led by incumbent president Javier Milei, neck-and-neck with the opposition coalition of mostly large Peronist parties, Fuerza Patria,<sup>4</sup> Milei's party was declared victorious with over 40% of the votes.<sup>5</sup>

The election saw the landmark introduction of a new voting system across the country, known as the "*Boleta Única de Papel -BUP-*" (Unique Paper Ballot),<sup>6</sup> which was used for the first time at the federal level. However, thanks to local civil society organisations (CSOs), the alarm was raised in the run up to the election that the system was not made accessible to blind and partially sighted people, leading to a last-minute but ultimately incomplete attempt to implement accessibility provisions.

3 Nicolás Misculin and Leila Miller, "Argentina's midterm election hands decisive win to Milei's libertarian overhaul", Reuters, October 2025 <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/argentines-vote-high-stakes-test-mileis-libertarian-vision-2025-10-26/>

4 Sebastián Casse, "Qué dicen las encuestas a una semana de las elecciones legislativas en Argentina", El País, October 2025 <https://elpais.com/argentina/2025-10-18/que-dicen-las-encuestas-a-una-semana-de-las-elecciones-legislativas-en-argentina.html>

5 Javier Lorca, Federico Rivas Molina, Mar Centenera, "Así le hemos contado el triunfo de Milei en las elecciones legislativas de Argentina", El País, October 2025 <https://elpais.com/argentina/2025-10-26/elecciones-legislativas-en-argentina-2025-en-vivo.html>

6 Leandro Querido, "Debut de la Boleta Única de Papel", Transparencia Electoral, October 2025 <https://transparenciaelectoral.org/blog/debut-de-la-boleta-única-de-papel/>

In this report, Privacy International and Transparencia Electoral unpack how the new BUP system threatened certain fundamental human rights of blind and partially sighted Argentinians.

## 1.b. Contextual background on the vote in Argentina

Argentina has 35 million electors, of which only around 68% participated in this mid-term vote,<sup>7</sup> signalling a low voter turnout for this type of election. Different estimates point to there being between 900,000 and 2.7 million partially sighted and blind people in the country.<sup>8</sup>

The Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and the Province of Buenos Aires together represent roughly 44% of the whole electoral roll.<sup>9</sup> During federal elections, the National Electoral Chamber -CNE- and the National Elections Directorate -DINE- are responsible for administering elections, delegated to the Judicial Branch's 24 jurisdictions in the same number of provinces. Each one of the 24 electoral secretariats manages the election independently, in its own jurisdiction, and each province elected a determined quantity of deputies and, in some cases three Senators to the Federal Legislative Branch in these mid-term legislative elections.<sup>10</sup>

There are an approximate 48 national political parties in Argentina (717 in the provinces).<sup>11</sup> Currently, La Libertad Avanza and Fuerza Patria retain the majority of representation in the national executive and legislative bodies,

7 <https://resultados.mininterior.gob.ar>

8 World Population Review, "Blind Population by Country 2025" <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/blind-population-by-country>;

Universidad, "Casi 900 mil personas tienen dificultades visuales en Argentina", February 2019 <https://www.unidiversidad.com.ar/casi-900-mil-personas-tienen-dificultades-visuales-en-argentina>

9 Mariel Fitz Patrick and Sandra Crucianelli, "El padrón electoral argentino suma 634.000 nuevos votantes, pero CABA sigue en descenso", infobae, October 2025 <https://www.infobae.com/politica/2025/10/05/el-padron-electoral-argentino-suma-634000-nuevos-votantes-pero-caba-sigue-en-descenso/>

10 Government of Argentina, "¿Qué elegimos?" <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/elecciones-2025/que-elegimos>

11 Leandro Querido, Transparencia Electoral Director, International Elections Programme Buenos Aires Oral Presentation, 23 October 2025

although there are a few parties that hold local power at the regional level.<sup>12</sup> Argentinian legislation does not account for electoral observation, and so missions from the Organisation of American States -OAS-, the European Union or other international bodies have never observed elections in Argentina.<sup>13</sup>

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12 <https://resultados.mininterior.gob.ar/>

13 Project presented by Deputy Sabrina Ajmechet in July 2024 to include election observation in the Electoral National Code, which was ultimately not approved: <https://www4.hcdn.gob.ar/dependencias/dsecretaria/Periodo2024/PDF2024/TP2024/3697-D-2024.pdf>

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## 2. Authorities' incomplete response to civil society's calls for an accessible secret vote

### 2.a. Local CSOs sound the alarm

In the weeks leading up to the legislative elections, Argentinian civil society organisation, Asociación Tiflonexos (Tiflonexos), publicly sounded the alarm regarding the lack of accessibility of the new BUP voting system.<sup>14</sup>

Tiflonexos went on to design and print their own disability-adapted voting stencils which were made to place on top of the official ballot paper, and contained tactile cut-out holes identifying the areas on the official ballot for each candidate where the vote should be cast, as well as a braille translation of the ballot's printed text.<sup>15</sup> Tiflonexos' rapid proposal of the production of these paper accessible voting stencils was based upon the model used in Argentina's provincial elections in the province of Sante Fe since 2011.<sup>16</sup> Due to a lack of subsequent action or concrete response from the CNE, Tiflonexos decided to propose the stencils' implementation to the provincial authorities; namely the City of Buenos Aires and the Province of Buenos Aires.<sup>17</sup>

Tiflonexos raised their own funds to have these stencils printed before election day and organised collection points for them, whilst raising awareness publicly as to their availability.<sup>18</sup> The electoral authorities of the City of Buenos Aires eventually designed, printed and distributed their own stencil as well.<sup>19</sup>

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14 Tiflonexos, "#VotoSinBarreras!", October 2025 <https://tiflonexos.org/content/votosinbarreras>

15 *Ibid.*

16 Information provided by Tiflonexos in an internal memo, December 2025.

17 *Ibid.*

18 *Ibid.*

19 See 2.c. of this report.

The issue was subsequently picked up by a host of national media outlets and began to gain public traction thanks to the efforts of Tiflonexos and other local organisations of persons with disabilities.<sup>20</sup> In the week prior to election day, the Argentinian Federation of Institutions for the Blind and Visually Impaired (FAICA),<sup>21</sup> reported they had filed an official complaint with Argentina's National Electoral Chamber asking them to implement accessibility criteria.<sup>22</sup> When speaking about the filing of the complaint in an interview with Misiones Cuatro, Vice President of FAICA, Lucía Velázquez, stated:

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20 Rafaela, Radio AND 97.7FM, "Polémica por la Boleta Única Papel: personas ciegas no podrán votar de forma autónoma en las elecciones del domingo", October 2025 <https://adn979.com/contenido/172083/polemica-por-la-boleta-unica-papel-personas-ciegas-no-podran-votar-de-forma-auto> ;

ADN Sur, "Crearon plantillas para que personas ciegas puedan votar, pero una traba legal impide su uso en estas elecciones" October 2025 [https://www.adnsur.com.ar/politica/crearon-plantillas-para-que-personas-ciegas-puedan-votar--pero-una-traba-legal-impide-su-uso-en-estas-elecciones\\_a68f82119e9c205ee8f551200](https://www.adnsur.com.ar/politica/crearon-plantillas-para-que-personas-ciegas-puedan-votar--pero-una-traba-legal-impide-su-uso-en-estas-elecciones_a68f82119e9c205ee8f551200) ;

Misiones Cuatro, "Reclama accesibilidad en las elecciones: "El sistema de boleta única no contempla a personas con discapacidad visual", September 2025 <https://misionescuatro.com/general/reclama-accesibilidad-en-las-elecciones-el-sistema-de-boleta-unica-no-contempla-a-personas-con-discapacidad-visual/> ;

El 1 Digital y Radio Universidad, "Denuncian que la boleta única de papel restringe el derecho al voto de las personas ciegas", October 2025 <https://www.el1digital.com.ar/politica/nacional-politica/denuncian-que-la-boleta-unica-de-papel-restringe-el-derecho-al-voto-de-las-personas-ciegas/> ;

Diario el Norte, "Mar del Plata: diseñan plantillas para que personas ciegas puedan votar de forma secreta", October 2025 <https://diarioelnorte.com.ar/mar-del-plata-disenar-plantillas-para-que-personas-ciegas-puedan-votar-de-forma-secreta/> ;

Redacción 0223, "¿Cómo votarán los no videntes? Lanzan una campaña para garantizar el derecho al sufragio secreto", October 2025 <https://www.0223.com.ar/nota/2025-10-21-18-5-0-como-votaran-los-no-videntes-lanzan-una-campana-para-garantizar-el-derecho-al-sufragio-secreto> ;

MDZ Sociedad, "Crean boletas en Braille para garantizar el voto autónomo de personas no videntes en las elecciones", October 2025 <https://www.mdzol.com/sociedad/crean-boletas-braille-garantizar-el-voto-autonomo-personas-no-videntes-las-elecciones-n1364626> ;

La Capital mar de Plata, "Realizan una campaña para garantizar el voto secreto de las personas no videntes" October 2025 <https://www.lacapitalmdp.com/realizan-una-campana-para-garantizar-el-voto-secreto-de-las-personas-no-videntes/> ;

Agencia DIB, "Mar del Plata: diseñan plantillas para que ciegos y disminuidos visuales tengan garantizado su derecho al voto secreto", October 2025 <https://dib.com.ar/politica/mar-del-plata-disenar-plantillas-que-ciegos-y-disminuidos-visuales-tengan-garantizado-su-derecho-al-voto-secreto-n48210>

21 Federación Argentina de Instituciones de Ciegos y Ambliopes (FAICA)

<https://www.faica.org.ar/inicio.php>

22 Lucía Velázquez quoted in Misiones Cuatro, "Reclama accesibilidad en las elecciones: "El sistema de boleta única no contempla a personas con discapacidad visual", September 2025 <https://misionescuatro.com/general/reclama-accesibilidad-en-las-elecciones-el-sistema-de-boleta-unica-no-contempla-a-personas-con-discapacidad-visual/>

*"It's a direct invasion of privacy, not being able to vote autonomously. For example, if you were to accompany me I'd have to say, well [...], I chose such and such a person, and then you from that point as the Polling Station Staff member - and we don't know each other - how can I know that you are doing what I tell you?".<sup>23</sup>*

Argentina's federal system allocates responsibility to Provincial Electoral Secretaries who, in coordination with the CNE and the DINE, play a central role in the implementation of the accessibility measures foreseen by the Argentinian legal and regulatory framework;<sup>24</sup> to which the introduction and implementation of the BUP was subject.<sup>25</sup> Argentinian CSO the Asociación de Derechos Civiles (ADC) reported that during parliamentary discussions over the new BUP voting system, reasonable adjustments and accessibility provisions were originally contemplated, but were not incorporated in a mandatory manner into the final text of the law 27.781/2024.<sup>26</sup>

This omission was in spite of civil society having reportedly proposed simple and low cost accessibility measures that could have been incorporated into the BUP's implementation at a federal level, and having signalled repeatedly that the system's final accessibility measures were insufficient.<sup>27</sup>

23 Lucía Velázquez quoted by Misiones Cuatro, "El sistema de boleta única no contempla a personas con discapacidad visual", October 2025 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pjp2dr4HLo4>

24 Government of Argentina, "Voto accessible" <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/dine/voto-accesible?>; Information provided by ADC in an internal memo, December 2025.

25 Information provided by ADC in an internal memo, December 2025.

26 *Ibid*; National Electoral Code, Law 27781.

27 *Ibid*; see also section 4.

## 2.b. An assisted vote is not an accessible vote

Amongst the concerns raised by local CSOs was that the only so-called accessible provision for voters with visual disabilities was what authorities termed an "assisted vote".<sup>28</sup> This required the voter to bring a person of their choice with them to the polling station to vote on their behalf.<sup>29</sup> If they did not have a person that they trust, they would be allocated a staff member of the Polling Station.<sup>30</sup> This person would be instructed to cast the vote in accordance with the voters' wish, but their compliance with this wish would be impossible for the voter with a visual disability to ever verify, and the voter themselves could not directly cast their own vote.

Furthermore, the voter with a visual disability in this scenario is forced to disclose their vote, and thus their political choice, to another person who may not even be known to them. Respect of the right to a secret vote under such circumstances is impossible.<sup>31</sup> The notion that this type of "assisted vote" is accessible, is therefore critically flawed.

## 2.c. Authorities' incomplete last-minute attempt to set up accessibility mechanisms

On September 8th 2025, Transparencia Electoral attended a meeting with other CSOs hosted by the DINE where civil society, academics and experts were informed of efforts being made for the effective implementation of the new voting instrument, the BUP. When asked if there were any provisions to make voting accessible for visually-impaired people, authorities responded that the protocol being contemplated was the assisted vote for this population.

<sup>28</sup> Government of Argentina, "Voto accesible" <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/justicia/derechofacil/leysimple/voto-accesible>

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> See further details in section 3 of this report.

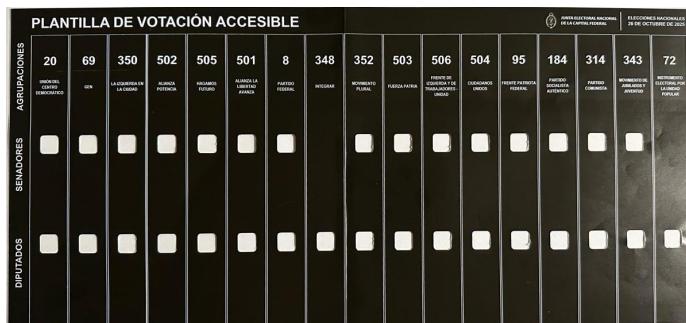


Image 1

It was only later in the third week of October, and in response to CSOs' complaints and publicising of their concerns, that electoral secretariats in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and the Province of Buenos Aires made last-minute attempts to remedy the situation.

Just four days before election day, the National Electoral Chamber issued Act no. 26 on 22 October 2025<sup>32</sup> which addressed people with disabilities' right to suffrage

in equal conditions, and which recognises that "[...] *In order to enable blind persons to vote, the option of assisted voting is not sufficient to guarantee conditions of autonomy in the exercise of political rights [...]*".<sup>33</sup> The Act legally foresaw, for the first time under the BUP, a voting mechanism for an accessible vote consisting of a voting stencil and QR code, and recognised the right for people with blindness or low vision to use a voting stencil supplied to them by an NGO.<sup>34</sup>

This accessibility mechanism was only approved in two out of 24 provinces, and was very similar to the solution proposed by Tiflonexos, consisted of a voting stencil to be placed on top of the BUP ballot with tactile cut-out holes for the vote to be cast, and did succeed in providing mechanisms to

32 Document: <https://transparenciaelectoral.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/ACTA-26-1.pdf>

33 This is an approximate translation of the Spanish text of the law, which reads: "[...] con el fin de permitir el acceso al sufragio de las personas no videntes, la opción del voto asistido no resulta suficiente para garantizar las condiciones de autonomía en el ejercicio de los derechos políticos [...]"

Available at: <https://transparenciaelectoral.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/ACTA-26-1.pdf>

34 *Ibid.*

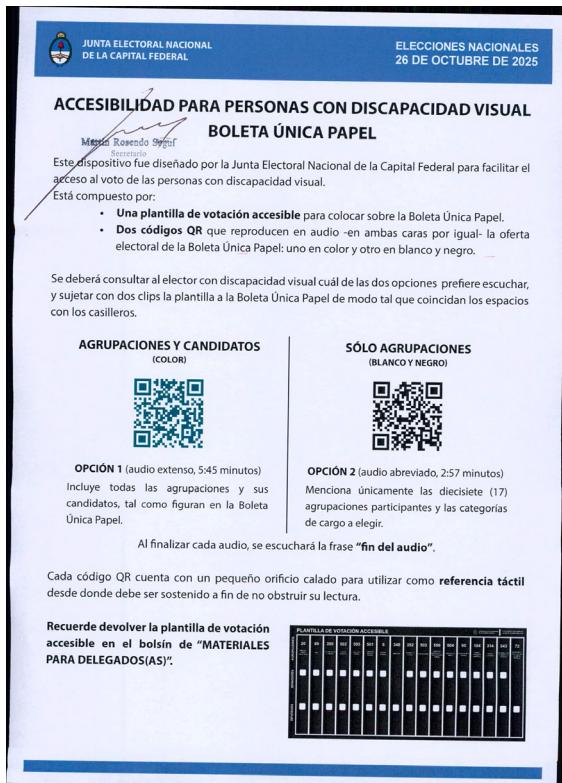


Image 2

The stencils were accompanied with QR codes which linked to YouTube videos that had been published three days before the vote, and gave audio explanations of what was written on the BUP voting slip, whose text was included in Annexes to Act no.26 (see Image 2).<sup>37</sup>

The QR codes could only be accessed using a device with internet connection,<sup>38</sup> such as the voter's own mobile phone, meaning that its usefulness was impaired by any internet connectivity problems, or if the

35 Photograph by Transparencia Electoral during a workshop hosted by *Laboratorio de Innovación Institucional (LABI/N)* of the *Dirección General Asuntos Políticos y Electorales*, Buenos Aires City Government, October 30th 2025.

36 Information provided by Tiflonexos in an internal memo, December 2025.

37 See YouTube videos here that QR codes led to:

Secretaría Electoral de la Capital Federal, "Oferta electoral, audio complementario para el uso de la plantilla de votación accesible" <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=WrzEwQj-rxE>;

Secretaría Electoral de la Capital Federal, "Agrupaciones participantes, audio complementario para el uso de la plantilla de votación accesible" <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=WwEM3k9GxTc>; Act 26 available at: <https://transparenciaelectoral.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/ACTA-26-1.pdf>

38 *Ibid.*

facilitate an autonomous and secret vote for some people with visual disabilities voting in those provinces who had access to these stencils (see Image 1).<sup>35</sup>

In total, 2500 stencils were produced, of which 2000 were distributed in the City of Buenos Aires and across the Province of Buenos Aires, leading to reports that their use enabled a large number of people who are blind and with low vision to vote autonomously.<sup>36</sup>

individual did not have such a device.

The Association for Aid for the Blind (ASAC), an Argentinian CSO that helped with distribution of the stencils and the training for their use, held a permanent campaign in their offices in the City of Buenos Aires for visually-impaired people to learn how to vote using the stencil. Desiree Carolina Isea (ASAC), stated they thought:

*"the few people who were able to vote with the Tiflonexos stencil were able to use it correctly because of the previous training campaign."*

The stencil, which was approved by the electoral authorities of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires did not have braille on it, but the one approved in the Province of Buenos Aires did. However, it must be recalled that not all people with visual disabilities are braille literate.

## **2.d. Major distribution barriers to an accessible secret vote**

Per Tiflonexos, the lead CSO involved in these efforts, the accessibility mechanisms to facilitate a secret vote discussed above were only approved in two out of 24 provinces nationwide.<sup>39</sup> The two provinces in question were the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and the Province of Buenos Aires, which accounts for 44% of the electorate. Of that 44%, 37% (13.1 million voters) corresponds to the Province of Buenos Aires, which is vast in territory (over

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<sup>39</sup> Comments provided by Tiflonexos.

300 thousand square Km) and contains 135 municipalities.<sup>40</sup> By account of those CSOs involved in the effort, in that district, the authority approved the use of the stencil but did not distribute it.<sup>41</sup>

Official distribution was only approved in the electoral districts of La Plata, Berisso, Punta Indio, Lobos, Cañuelas and Brandsen, due to Act no. 18 from the National Electoral Board of Buenos Aires which adopted the distribution as a pilot initiative and approved the use of stencils from Tiflonexos, and named the CSO specifically.<sup>42</sup> In the rest of the province, stencils were distributed directly by local CSOs, some of whom Tiflonexos sent stencils to in advance, or were held at distinct collection points for people to collect prior to the vote, such as the Congressional Library.<sup>43</sup> In Mar del Plata district, Tiflonexos sent 100 stencils to the local civil society organisation, UMASDECA, who distributed them to 100 polling stations in the district.<sup>44</sup>

For the CSOs to distribute the voting stencil themselves across the entire district (Province of Buenos Aires) which is vast, was impossible. Furthermore, distribution of voting mechanisms should not fall to civil society and is the responsibility of the electoral authorities. The approval of an accessibility mechanism such as in this case is ineffective if it cannot effectively be distributed to polling stations and does not reach voters. Regardless of the approval of the accessibility mechanism, it was not fully put into practise. It is not possible to tell how many polling stations exactly across these territories did or did not receive the voting stencil. According to Pablo Lecuona, Director of Tiflonexos:

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40 Argentine government, "Municipios de la Provincia de Buenos Aires" <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/buenosaires/municipios>

41 Interview conducted by Transparency Electoral of ASAC representative and lack of official resolutions.

42 JUNTA ELECTORAL NACIONAL DISTRITO BUENOS AIRES, ACTA N ° 18.

43 Information provided by Tiflonexos in an internal memo and internal correspondence, December 2025.

44 Information provided by Tiflonexos in internal correspondence, December 2025.

*"With the designed tool, we tried to get it adopted by the provinces, and we obtained the commitment of the Province of Buenos Aires to authorize its use and, given the short time and the complex logistics of the province, the distribution by official route in the electoral district of the City of La Plata, as a pilot experience, while in the rest of the province the distribution would be carried out directly to people with disabilities who requested it."*

Reports indirectly gathered by Transparencia Electoral on the election day indicated that most polling station authorities did not know about the stencil or were instructed to request it from the electoral secretariat if they needed it (rather than already having it available to them and in their possession during the vote). This protocol would have added unnecessary waiting times for visually-impaired voters that could eventually lead to an unknown number of voters to either desist and leave without voting, or agree to the assisted vote modality.

## **2.e. The importance of universally accessible elections by design to guarantee the human rights of all persons in the electorate<sup>45</sup>**

It is important to frame the discussion of the accessibility of the BUP electoral system by underlining that accessibility is not a matter of affording privileges or special measures to certain groups of people, such as people living with visual disabilities, but instead is a question of dismantling structural inequalities and barriers that can govern the interaction between all individuals and their physical or communicative environments, in order to

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<sup>45</sup> The authors thank the Asociación por los Derechos Civiles (ADC) for their contribution towards the formulation and substance of this section.

ensure an autonomous and secret vote. Ensuring universally accessible design from the inception of institutional and electoral systems such as Argentina's BUP system must be understood as being of essential benefit to the whole of society, not only as something targeted towards catering to people with disabilities.

An electoral system which is meaningfully accessible should facilitate the autonomous, private, secure and secret vote for everybody in the electorate. For example, older people, those with low levels of literacy and people who face barriers using technology and/or language, amongst many others, benefit from robust measures ensuring a universally accessible voting system geared towards preserving the rights of the electorate as a whole, not only certain people living with disabilities. Within this framing, both the right to privacy and human right to accessibility are complementary and enabling rights, meaning that their fulfillment in turn allows the enjoyment of other fundamental rights such as the right to political participation and the right to a secret vote.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> The right to accessibility is enshrined in article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); see also section 3.b. on the right to privacy; see section 3.d. on the right to political participation.

### 3. BUP failure to guarantee fundamental rights

Privacy International and Transparencia Electoral believe that the new BUP system does not fully guarantee the fundamental right to secrecy of the vote, privacy, political participation and non-discrimination for some people in Argentina's electorate, including those who are blind or partially sighted. These rights are enshrined in Argentinian national legislation as well as in a host of international treaties and other instruments to which the state is party.<sup>47</sup>

Critically, Tiflonexos received reports of specific cases where some individuals, due to the lack of an option to vote autonomously and in secret, decided not to vote.<sup>48</sup> These reports give rise to serious concerns regarding the respect of these individuals' human rights, as well as the broader human rights and democratic impact of the BUP system's accessibility shortcomings in the October 2025 legislative election.

The below concerns are raised only with respect to the 22 provinces in which the BUP accessibility provisions were not implemented for the election, as well as those unknown number of localities within the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and the Province of Buenos Aires where distribution did not occur.

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<sup>47</sup> Argentina has signed and ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man (the Botogá Declaration) and the American Convention on Human Rights (ACHR), and has formally incorporated those instruments into its national legislation through article 75.22 of its National Constitution.

<sup>48</sup> Information provided by Tiflonexos in an internal memo, December 2025.

### **3.a. The rights to a secret vote and political participation:**

The right to cast a secret vote is a human right, the respect of which facilitates the preservation of the democratic character of the electoral process. The right to a secret vote is enshrined in the Constitution of Argentina, the National Electoral Code and various international treaties to which Argentina is a signatory.<sup>49</sup> The BUP system, by design, obliged people with visual disabilities in the provinces in question either to vote without having a secret vote, or to not vote at all.

In order to cast their vote in these areas, blind and partially sighted people would have been obliged to be accompanied by a second person who would assist them in casting their vote, due to the lack of any accessibility provision enabling their independent understanding of the information contained on the ballot slip, or their identification of where the ballot needed to be marked in order to cast a vote. This was known as an "assisted vote" whereby the voter selects a trusted person of their choice (assuming they have one, which not everybody will),<sup>50</sup> to accompany them and cast the vote on their behalf.<sup>51</sup> A secret and autonomous vote was therefore not possible in all cases.

The right to political participation is also a fundamental human right enshrined in numerous international treaties to which Argentina is party and which often incorporates within it the right to a secret vote, as well as being consecrated at a national level in the Argentinian constitution.<sup>52</sup>

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49 Constitution of Argentina article 37; ICCPR article 25 which enshrines the right to political participation; the CRPD article 29 (see also article 75); UDHR article 21; Bogotá Declaration article XX; ACHR article 23; and see: National Electoral Code article 13, <https://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/15000-19999/19442/texact.htm>

50 El 1 Digital y Radio Universidad, "Denuncian que la boleta única de papel restringe el derecho al voto de las personas ciegas", October 2025 <https://www.el1digital.com.ar/politica/nacional-politica/denuncian-que-la-boleta-unica-de-papel-restringe-el-derecho-al-voto-de-las-personas-ciegas/>

51 Government of Argentina, "Voto accessible" <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/justicia/derechofacil/leysimple/voto-accesible>

52 ICCPR article 25; UDHR article 21; Constitution of Argentina article 37.

It should further be noted that article 29(a) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities obliges signatory states like Argentina to "*Ensuring that voting procedures, facilities and materials are appropriate, accessible and easy to understand and use*" as well as to "*Protecting the right of persons with disabilities to vote by secret ballot in elections [...]*"; and the shortcomings of the BUP system risk incompatibility with this obligation and respect of the right to political participation and a secret vote more broadly.

### **3.b. The right to privacy:**

The failure to provide for a secret vote for all people in the Argentinian electorate, including those who are blind and with low vision, in turn did not uphold those people's basic human right to privacy, since their vote in the 22 provinces was made contingent upon providing the information of their political choice to another person.<sup>53</sup> The BUP system required them to disclose their political opinion and have to trust the person assisting their vote to replicate that choice in the ballot.

The political candidate that a person elects by casting their vote is particularly sensitive information. It is a prime example of information which reveals a person's political opinion, and is thus categorised as special category sensitive personal data in data protection principles recognised around the world, including in Argentina.<sup>54</sup> In addition, Argentinian Constitution's Article 18 recognises that "private papers" are "inviolable"; compounding the BUP system's lack of respect for the right to privacy of visually disabled people.

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53 ICCPR article 17; CRPD article 22; Constitution of Argentina article 18; UDHR article 12; Bogotá Declaration article V; ACHR article 11.

54 Protección de los datos personales, ley 25.326, Articles 2 and 7, see: <https://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/60000-64999/64790/texact.htm>

### 3.c. The right to non-discrimination:

The lack of accessibility of the BUP threatened the fundamental human right to non-discrimination<sup>55</sup> for those in the Argentinian electorate who are blind and with low vision, as well as others, since it did not provide equal access to a secret vote across the country compared to the rest of the electorate. This created an inequality as a direct result of the disabilities of blind and partially sighted people. The right to political participation in Article 37 of Argentina's constitution which enshrines the right to a secret vote, further stipulates this vote must also be "equal". For these reasons, the right to non-discrimination was threatened and potentially violated in the legislative elections by depriving people of their ability to autonomously exercise suffrage because of visual disability.

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55 The right to non discrimination is enshrined in ICCPR article 26; Constitution of Argentina article 17 enshrines the right to equality; UDHR article 7; Bogotá Declaration article II; Pact of San José article 24; see also: Argentina's Ley N° 23.592 which enshrines the right to non discrimination: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/normativa/nacional/ley-23592-20465/actualizacion>

## 4. Recommendations

As a result of our above findings and ensuing concerns, Privacy International and Transparencia Electoral call upon Argentina's National Electoral Chamber and the National Electoral Directorate to implement the following recommendations ahead of future elections:

1. Accessible voting mechanisms that ensure a secret ballot for people who are blind and have low vision must be guaranteed at every polling station;
2. Audio explanations should not be reliant on the owner's own device or on internet connectivity. The electoral authority should provide its own non-internet dependent audio devices;
3. The accessible ballot stencil should be made more secure by being printed in the form of an envelope into which the voting ballot itself is put, to avoid it slipping as an individual casts their vote;
4. The election authorities should distribute the stencils to guarantee their availability in all polling stations at all times during the vote; and
5. Consulting with CSOs and NGOs that represent these populations in a manner that is timely, systematic and guarantees their participation as a prerequisite to developing inclusive, accessible and democratic electoral systems, is central to ensuring these solutions exist at all polling stations.



Transparencia  
Electoral



Privacy International  
62 Britton Street  
London EC1M 5UY  
United Kingdom

+44 (0)20 3422 4321

[privacyinternational.org](http://privacyinternational.org)