

Latin America and the Caribbean: Fact Sheet on Leaders and Elections

Updated July 9, 2021

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

98-684

This report provides the results of recent presidential elections in Latin America and the Caribbean. Below are three tables organized by region, that include the date of each country's independence, the name of the most recently elected president or prime minister, and the projected date of the next presidential election. Information in this report was gathered from numerous sources, including the U.S. State Department, Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) World Fact Book, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) Election Guide, Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), and other news sources.

Table 1. South America: Heads of State and Election Schedules

Country	Independence Date	Head of Government	Last Election/Runoff	Next Election/Runoff
Argentina	July 9, 1816	FERNÁNDEZ, Alberto	Oct. 27, 2019	Oct. 2023
Bolivia	Aug. 6, 1825	ARCE, Luis ^a	Oct. 18, 2020 ^b	2025
Brazil	Sept. 7, 1822	BOLSONARO, Jair	Oct. 7, 2018/ Oct. 28, 2018	Oct. 2022
Chile	Sept. 18, 1810	PIÑERA, Sebastián	Nov. 19, 2017/ Dec. 17, 2017	Nov. 2021
Colombia	July 20, 1810	DUQUE, Iván	May 27, 2018/ June 17, 2018	May 2022
Ecuador	May 24, 1822	MORENO, Lenín	Feb. 7, 2021/ Apr. 11, 2021 ^c	Feb. 2025
Paraguay	May 14, 1811	ABDO BENÍTEZ, Mario	Apr. 22, 2018	Apr. 2023
Peru	July 28, 1821	SAGASTI, Francisco ^d	Apr. 11, 2021 /June 6, 2021 ^e	Apr. 2026
Uruguay	Aug. 25, 1825	LACALLE POU, Luis	Oct. 27, 2019/ Nov. 24, 2019	Oct. 2024
Venezuela	July 5, 1811	MADURO, Nicolás	May 20, 2018 ^f	May 2024

Source: Compiled by the Congressional Research Service (CRS).

Notes: For information on Guyana and Suriname, see **Table 3** notes.

- a. Evo Morales stepped down from office on November 10, 2019, due to concerns of fraud in his October 2019 reelection bid. Second Vice President of the Senate, Jeanine Áñez, became interim president on November 12, 2019. Following elections on October 18, 2020 with the victory for the political party MAS, Luis Arce became President on November 8, 2020.
- b. Elections were held on October 18, after the November 2019 results were annulled, and then delayed in March 2020 due to the spread of COVID-19. See CRS In Focus IFI I325, *Bolivia: An Overview*, by Clare Ribando Seelke.
- c. In the first round of elections in February, no candidate received enough votes to win outright. In the April runoff election, Guillermo Lasso won and is scheduled to be inaugurated on May 24, 2021.
- d. Martín Vizcarra was impeached by the Peruvian Congress on November 9, 2020 and constitutionally succeeded by the head of Congress, Manuel Merino, who resigned under pressure after six days. On November 17, the legislature elected Francisco Sagasti to be president of the legislature and, in turn, interim president until July 2021.
- e. In the June runoff election, Pedro Castillo is the presumptive winner. The National Jury of Elections is to announce final results after it has resolved appeals. The inauguration is scheduled to be held on July 28, 2021.
- f. In a controversial move, Venezuela's presidential election was moved earlier from December 2018 to May 20, 2018. Most Venezuelans and much of the international community considered the May 2018 election, in which then-President Nicolás Maduro won reelection, as illegitimate (CRS In Focus IFI0230, *Venezuela*:

Political Crisis and U.S. Policy, by Clare Ribando Seelke). The United States and over 50 other countries have recognized Juan Guaidó, elected president of Venezuela's National Assembly in January 2019, as Interim President of Venezuela, yet Maduro remains in power.

Table 2. Mexico and Central America: Heads of State and Election Schedules

Country	Independence Date	Head of Government	Last Election/Runoff	Next Election/Runoff
Mexico	Sept. 16, 1810	LÓPEZ OBRADOR, Andrés Manuel	July 1, 2018	July 1, 2024
Costa Rica	Sept. 15, 1821	ALVARADO, Carlos	Feb. 4, 2018/ Apr. 1, 2018	Feb. 2022
El Salvador	Sept. 15, 1821	BUKELE, Nayib	Feb. 3, 2019	Feb. 2024
Guatemala	Sept. 15, 1821	GIAMMATTEI, Alejandro	June 16, 2019/ Aug. 11, 2019	2023
Honduras	Sept. 15, 1821	HERNÁNDEZ, Juan Orlando	Nov. 26, 2017	Nov. 2021
Nicaragua	Sept. 15, 1821	ORTEGA, Daniel	Nov. 6, 2016	Nov. 7, 2021 ^a
Panama	Nov. 3, 1903	CORTIZO, Laurentino	May 5, 2019	May 2024

Source: Compiled by CRS.

Notes: For information on Belize, see **Table 3** notes.

- a. In July 2020, the Nicaraguan government announced a date for the next presidential election. Critics contend the electoral council's resolution is invalid because it contains changes in voting rules that the national legislature is supposed to approve. See Associated Press, "Nicaraguan government sets date for presidential election," July 14, 2020, at <https://apnews.com/264f780a50f86ee438a187b093f5d755>. The Ortega government has arrested five people who sought to challenge Ortega in the upcoming elections. See "Argentina, Mexico recall ambassadors as Nicaragua broadens crackdown," Reuters, June 21, 2021.

Table 3. Caribbean: Heads of State and Election Schedules

Country	Independence Date	Head of Government	Last Election/ Runoff	Next Election/ Runoff
Antigua and Barbuda	Nov. 1, 1981	BROWNE, Gaston	Mar. 21, 2018	by Mar. 2023
Bahamas	July 10, 1973	MINNIS, Hubert	May 10, 2017	by May 2022
Barbados	Nov. 30, 1966	MOTTLEY, Mia	May 25, 2018	by May 2023
Belize	Sept. 21, 1981	BRICEÑO, Johnny	Nov. 11, 2020	by 2025
Cuba ^a	May 20, 1902	DÍAZ-CANEL, Miguel	Apr. 2018	Apr. 2023
Dominica	Nov. 3, 1978	SKERRIT, Roosevelt	Dec. 6, 2019	by Mar. 2025
Dominican Republic ^b	Feb. 27, 1844	ABINADER, Luis	July 5, 2020	May 2024
Grenada	Feb. 7, 1974	MITCHELL, Keith	Mar. 13, 2018	by Mar. 2023
Guyana	May 26, 1966	ALI, Irfaan	Mar. 2, 2020 ^c	by 2025
Haiti	Jan. 1, 1804	MOÏSE, Jovenel ^d	Nov. 20, 2016 ^e	Sept. 19, 2021/Nov. 21, 2021 ^g
Jamaica	Aug. 6, 1962	HOLNESS, Andrew	Sept. 3, 2020	by 2025
St. Kitts and Nevis	Sept. 19, 1983	HARRIS, Timothy	June 5, 2020	by 2025
St. Lucia	Feb. 22, 1979	CHASTANET, Allen	June 6, 2016	by June 2021
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Oct. 27, 1979	GONSALVES, Ralph E.	Nov. 5, 2020	by 2025
Suriname	Nov. 25, 1975	SANTOKHI, Chandrikapersad Error! Reference source not found.	May 25, 2020	2025
Trinidad and Tobago	Aug. 31, 1962	ROWLEY, Keith	Aug. 10, 2020	by 2025

Source: Compiled by CRS.

Notes: Although Belize is located in Central America and Guyana and Suriname are located in South America, all three are members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

- Cuba does not have direct elections for its head of government. Instead, Cuba's legislature selects the members of the 31-member Council of State, with the president of that body serving as Cuba's head of government and head of state. In April 2019, Cuba's legislature selected Miguel Diaz-Canel for a five-year term. In October 2019, Cuba's legislature appointed Diaz-Canel as president of the republic under Cuba's new constitution.
- The Dominican Republic moved elections from May to July 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Irfaan Ali was sworn into office on August 2, 2020, 5 months after elections were held on March, 2, 2020. Allegations of fraud and vote tampering delayed the election results as legal challenges were pursued by supporters of the ruling government led by President David Granger. See CRS In Focus IF11381, *Guyana: An Overview*, by Mark P. Sullivan.
- President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated on July 7, 2021. Haitian interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph was in charge in the immediate aftermath. Joseph had resigned on July 5, after Ariel Henry was named prime minister, but the latter has not yet been sworn in. Under the Haitian Constitution, either the Council of Ministers under the Prime Minister should govern or, in the last year of a presidential term, the legislature should elect a provisional president. Currently, there is no functioning legislature, as most of the legislators' terms have expired.
- There is a dispute over whether Moïse's five-year term began the February after an annulled election process in fall 2015, or upon his inauguration in 2017, and would end, respectively, on either February 7, 2021, or

February 7, 2022. As of January 13, 2020, Moïse was ruling by decree. Most of the national legislature's terms expired on that date without the body having passed an elections law to elect new legislators. Moïse

- f. appointed a new Provisional Electoral Council by decree, which announced a constitutional referendum, most recently rescheduled to coincide with national elections in September 2021, which may change electoral laws, and parliamentary and presidential elections as indicated. Some argue the moves could be unconstitutional. See CRS Report R45034, *Haiti's Political and Economic Conditions*, by Maureen Taft-Morales.
- g. Haiti held controversial national elections on October 25, 2015. After postponing runoff elections several times, the Provisional Electoral Council announced new presidential elections would take place instead in October 2016; these were delayed for a month due to Hurricane Matthew.
- h. A coalition of four opposition parties won the most legislative seats in May 2020. On July 13, 2020, the newly elected National Assembly elected Chandrikapersad “Chan” Santokhi as president, who was sworn in on July 16, 2020, succeeding Déni Bouterse who served as president since 2010.

Author Information

Carla Y. Davis-Castro
Research Librarian

Acknowledgments

Nese F. DeBruyne, CRS Senior Research Librarian, was the former author of this report.

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS’s institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.