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

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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. 21, 2021/ Dec. 19, 2021 ^c |
| Colombia | July 20, 1810 | DUQUE, Iván | May 27, 2018/ June 17, 2018 | May 2022 |
| Ecuador | May 24, 1822 | LASSO, Guillermo | Feb. 7, 2021/ Apr. 11, 2021 | Feb. 2025 |
| Paraguay | May 14, 1811 | ABDO BENITEZ, Mario | Apr. 22, 2018 | Apr. 2023 |
| Peru | July 28, 1821 | CASTILLO, Pedro | Apr. 11, 2021 /June 6, 2021 | 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 ^d | May 2024 |

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

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

- 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 IFI1325, *Bolivia: An Overview*, by Clare Ribando Seelke.
- c. The first round of Chile’s presidential election did not produce a majority winner and a runoff election is scheduled between front runners José Antonio Kast and Gabriel Boric, who received 27.9% of the vote and 25.8%, respectively.
- d. 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. 28, 2021 |
| Nicaragua | Sept. 15, 1821 | ORTEGA, Daniel | Nov. 7, 2021 ^a | Nov. 2025 |
| Panama | Nov. 3, 1903 | CORTIZO, Laurentino | May 5, 2019 | May 2024 |

Source: Compiled by CRS.

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

- a. Prior to the elections, the Ortega government arrested eight people who sought to challenge Ortega in the elections and dozens of political and civil society leaders. The White House declared it “a pantomime election that was neither free nor fair, and most certainly not democratic.” See The White House, “Statement by President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. on Nicaragua’s Sham Elections,” November 7, 2021. See CRS Report R46860, *Nicaragua in Brief: Political Developments in 2021, U.S. Policy, and Issues for Congress*, by Maureen Taft-Morales.

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 | DAVIS, Philip | Sept. 16, 2021 | by Sept. 2026 |
| 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 | HENRY, Ariel ^d | Nov. 20, 2016 ^e | Postponed until 2022 ^a |
| 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 | PIERRE, Philip | July 26, 2021 | by June 2026 |
| St. Vincent and the Grenadines | Oct. 27, 1979 | GONSALVES, Ralph E. | Nov. 5, 2020 | by 2025 |
| Suriname | Nov. 25, 1975 | SANTOKHI, Chandrikapersad ^g | 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).

- a. 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.
- b. The Dominican Republic moved elections from May to July 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- c. Irfaan Ali was sworn into office on August 2, 2020, five 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 IFI 1381, *Guyana: An Overview*, by Mark P. Sullivan.
- d. President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated on July 7, 2021. Haitian Acting Prime Minister Claude Joseph was in charge in the immediate aftermath. Moïse had named Ariel Henry as prime minister, but not sworn him in the day before his death. Henry was sworn in as de facto prime minister on July 20, 2021. 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. See CRS Insight INI 1699, *Haiti: Concerns After the Presidential Assassination*, by Maureen Taft-Morales.
- e. 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.

- f. 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. On January 13, 2020, most of the national legislature's terms expired without the body having passed an elections law to elect new legislators. From that date until his death, President Moïse ruled by decree. Moïse appointed a new Provisional Electoral Council by decree, which announced a constitutional referendum that 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. In August 2021, Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council announced November 7 for the first round of elections for president, the legislature, and a constitutional referendum with a runoff election, if necessary, on January 23, 2022. On September 27, 2021, de facto Prime Minister Henry dissolved the Provisional Electoral Council and later said he plans to hold a constitutional referendum by February 2022 and elections soon after. See Dánica Coto, Joshua Goodman and Pierre-Richard Luxama, "The AP Interview: Haiti PM plans to hold elections next year," Associated Press, September 28, 2021.
- g. 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.

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