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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. 2021 |
| 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 ^c | 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. 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**.

- 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 seven people who sought to challenge Ortega in the upcoming elections. See "Nicaragua: Another presidential contender arrested ahead of election," *Deutsche Welle*, July 25, 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 | 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 | HENRY, Ariel ^d | Nov. 20, 2016 ^e | Nov. 7, 2021/ Jan. 23, 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, 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 IFI I 381, 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 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 I 699, 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. From January 13, 2020 until his death, President Moïse ruled 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 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 that November 7 would be the new date to hold the first round of elections for president, the legislature, and a constitutional referendum. The runoff election, if necessary, are scheduled to take place on January 23, 2022. See Samuel Celine, "New date set for Haiti elections, opposition wants new electoral council," Reuters, August 13, 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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