Mexico
Legislative Elections Pre-election Report
Next June 6, legislative elections will be held to renew the 500 members of Mexico's Chamber of Deputies. Likewise, at the subnational level 15 executive and 30 legislative branches will be up for grabs.

In line with the country’s mixed electoral system, two races will be occurring at once. On the one hand, the ruling alliance "Juntos Hacemos Historia" (Together We Make History) will compete for the 300 deputy seats granted under the principle of 'relative majority' against the opposition coalition "Va por México" (Go for Mexico). At the same time all the parties will compete against each other for the remaining 200 deputy seats under the principle of proportional majority.

Against a background of claims of corruption levelled at the government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) and criticism over its handling of the economic, social and health crises, there is much at stake, notably MORENA's very majority in the Chamber of Deputies.

The ballot comes amid continuing electoral violence in Mexico which, despite measures to tackle the issue and safeguard candidates has so far cost the lives of 143 in this campaign alone.

On the other hand, AMLO and MORENA will also seek to strengthen their position and power at the sub-national level, striving to obtain as many governorships as possible. Also the ruling party aspires to achieve at least a majority in 17 legislatures to ensure the ratification of any constitutional reform it pushes through the national Congress.

Thus, there is much to play for in the elections on Sunday, with a victory for the ruling party promising to help it consolidate its so-called "Fourth Transformation" of Mexico and position it as early favourite for the next presidential vote in 2024.
Basic Questions

What is at stake?
All 500 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Fifteen governors will also be elected and 30 sub-national legislatures will be renewed.

Electoral Calendar
The Mexican Constitution states that representatives of the Chamber of Deputies are elected in their entirety for a three-year term. Elections will be held on Sunday, June 6.

How is the vote cast?
Voting is universal, free, secret, direct, personal and non-transferable. Voting is considered a right and an obligation, although in practice there are no sanctions for those who do not vote. All Mexican citizens may participate, for which they must be registered before the National Electoral Institute (INE, in Spanish) and be 18 years of age or older.

How is the election conducted?
Mexico has a mixed electoral system: 300 deputies are elected by majority and 200 by proportional representation.

Which parties participate?
Due to the mixed electoral principle, there will be essentially 'two elections in one', featuring different contenders. For the seats distributed by the majority principle, there will be two coalitions facing each other off: "Juntos Hacemos Historia" (Together We Make History), made up of Movimiento Regeneración Nacional (Movement of National Regeneration, or MORENA), Partido del Trabajo (Labor Party, or PT) and Partido Verde Ecologista de México (Green Ecologist Party of Mexico, or PVEM) and "Va por México" (Go for Mexico), composed of Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party, or PAN), Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Revolutionary Institutional Party, or PRI) and Partido de la Revolución Democrática (Party of the Democratic Revolution, or PRD). For these seats, the Partido de Encuentro Solidario (Solidarity Party, or PES), Movimiento Ciudadano (Citizen Movement, or MC), Redes Sociales Progresistas (Progressive Social Networks) and Fuerza por México (Force for Mexico) will also compete autonomously.

For the seats assigned under the principle of proportional representation, all of the aforementioned spaces will compete against each other.

When do legislators take office?
Elected members of the Chamber of Deputies take their seats on September 1, 2021 and keep them until August 31, 2024.
**Political Context**

**Mexico's Fourth Transformation**

- With his arrival to power in 2018, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) initiated what he called the "Fourth Transformation" of Mexico. Thus, thanks to a solid majority of his party MORENA in both chambers of Congress, he has sought to promote a "social paradigm shift" away from the "neoliberalism" of the previous decades, with his administration focused on addressing the "political and economic problems left behind by previous administrations".

- Among the measures he has pursued, the most significant are educational reform and reorganizing the Judiciary and Attorney General's Office. He has also promoted "austerity" measures to guarantee an "efficient" State allowing for the allocation of more resources to cover the needs of the population. Additionally, he promoted changes in the health and social security system with the aim of guaranteeing access to health and better pensions for the population.

- The measures have advanced thanks to AMLO's legislative majorities. In the Chamber of Deputies, together with its allies (PT, PVEM, PES), he has 334 deputies, which allows him to promote any kind of bill including constitutional reforms without the need for opposition backing. In the Senate, together with his allies he has 76 seats, enough to pass ordinary laws but 8 seats shy of a qualified majority.

**Management of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

- The COVID-19 pandemic left Mexico positioned globally as the country with the highest mortality rate, with 9.2% of infected Mexicans having died so far. At the beginning of June, the total number of deaths was 223,568 people.

- At the beginning of the health emergency, AMLO was reluctant to impose a national containment. However, on March 23, 2020, a state of emergency was declared in view of the increasing number of infections. Massive closures were not implemented, but rather an epidemiological traffic light system was established, with localized restrictions according to the rate of infection. In spite of this, the country entered a deep recession with its economy shrinking 8.5% in 2020.

- At the same time, in order to continue with the implementation of an austere fiscal policy, only 0.7% of GDP was spent on social containment measures to moderate the consequences of the pandemic, the lowest figure of all Latin American countries. Added to this is a vaccination plan which, so far, has progressed at a slower pace than expected.

- Although in 2021 the economy has begun to rebound and the progress of the vaccination effort coming as a relief, the impact of the government’s criticised handling of the pandemic could play out in voting decisions this Sunday.
Political Context

Tit for tat accusations before the elections

- Both the ruling party and opposition have been embroiled in accusations of corruption and political scandals in the months leading up to the elections. Several of the candidates have criminal records, or are accused of diverting public funds, of sexual offences, or of having ties with organized crime.

- In addition, there have been recent claims of vote buying during the campaign implicating MORENA, MORENA’s allies and their opponents.

- MORENA party leaders, especially Marcelo Ebrard, have come in for especially fierce criticism following the recent Metro accident in Mexico City in which 25 people died. It has been claimed that the funds earmarked for the maintenance of tracks were mismanaged, which has taken its toll on AMLO’s as well as MORENA’s wider popularity.

- The accident, indeed, has sparked anger among a large section of the population adding to pressure from the opposition to keep the issue on the agenda ahead of the June 6.

New electoral rules, same violence

- In 2014, the Mexican Congress approved a political-electoral reform that introduced reelection at both the federal and local levels for legislators. It establishes that Deputies may be reelected for up to four consecutive terms. The nomination may only be made by the same party or coalition for which they won the seat for the first time.

- Despite the new rules, the political violence that usually characterizes electoral processes has remained. Since September 2020, 143 candidates of different political affiliations have been assassinated.

- The National Electoral Institute (INE) has said part of the incidents are carried out by members of organized crime seeking to control local governments in order to dominate illicit drug trafficking markets, among other factors.

- Although AMLO has instructed the Secretariat of Security and Citizen Protection to provide protection to candidates who have received threats or been victims of violence, the strategy has not led to a significant decrease in the number of assassinations of political actors. Thus, the elections will once again be marked by political violence.
Legislative Elections

HOW ARE CONGRESS MEMBERS ELECTED?
WHO TAKES PART?
HOW IS CONGRESS MADE UP?
HOW WOULD THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES BE COMPOSED?
WHAT IS THE AGENDA OF THE KEY PARTIES?
What is at stake?

The Mexican electoral system is mixed. This implies that the renewal of the Chamber of Deputies will be carried out by applying two different principles for the allocation of seats: 300 will be elected by relative majority and 200 will be distributed according to the principle of proportional representation. With this model, Mexico aspires to reflect the popular will in the best possible way in the allocation of seats.

Principle of Relative Majority

Under this principle, the country is divided into 300 single-member districts where one seat per territorial division will be at stake. Each seat will be won by the party or coalition that receives the highest number of votes without the need of achieving any minimum threshold to do so.

The constituencies are periodically updated according to the general population census and no federal state may have less than two seats at stake on this principle.

Among the districts that will distribute the most seats by this principle are the State of Mexico (41), the Federal District (24), and Veracruz (20), while the districts that will have the least number of seats at stake are Colima and Campeche (2 each).

You can access the detailed list of the seats that each state will put at stake in the elections here.
** Principle of Proportional Majority  

The remaining 200 deputies will be elected according to the principle of proportional representation in a system of regional lists voted in multi-member constituencies. For this purpose, the country is divided into 5 constituencies that will distribute 40 seats each. Here, based on the percentages of votes received, INE will allocate a proportional number of seats per space.

Each party may present up to 40 candidates in each constituency. In addition, Mexican electoral laws guarantee that any party receiving 3% or more of the votes will win at least one seat on this principle.

** Proportional electoral districts

- **First**: Baja California, Baja California Sur, Chihuahua, Durango, Jalisco, Nayarit, Sinaloa and Sonora
- **Second**: Aguascalientes, Coahuila, Guanajuato, Nuevo León, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, Tamaulipas and Zacatecas.
- **Third**: Campeche, Chiapas, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Veracruz and Yucatán.
- **Fourth**: Ciudad de México, Guerrero, Morelos, Puebla and Tlaxcala.
- **Fifth**: Colima, Hidalgo, Estado de México and Michoacán.
Which political organizations are taking part?

Different electoral principles encourage parties to behave differently in order to aspire to as many seats as possible. The principle of relative majority promotes electoral alliances since, with only one seat up for grabs per district, the more parties supporting a candidacy, the greater the chances of winning that seat. On the other hand, under the proportional principle, as multiple seats are awarded based on the percentages obtained, the parties have more incentives to compete on their own against each other.

Who competes in the relative majority elections?

The following two main alliances will compete:

**Juntos Hacemos Historia.** Formed by MORENA, the Labor Party (PT) and the Ecologist Green Party of Mexico (PVEM). They will compete together in 183 of the 300 districts. MORENA nominated 88 candidates, PT 50 and PVEM 45.

**Va por México.** Integrated by the National Action Party (PAN), the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). It will compete in 219 districts in which the PRI nominated 77 candidates, the PAN 72 and the PRD 70.

In addition, the following entities will also compete individually:

- **Encuentro Solidario**
- **Movimiento Ciudadano**
- **Redes Sociales Progresistas**
- **Fuerza por México**
Who competes in the proportional principle election?

Under the proportional principle, all the different parties compete with their own individual lists (tickets). These will be the contenders:

**Ruling party and allies**

**Movimiento Regeneración Nacional (MORENA).** Created in 2011, it managed to become the country's leading political force in the 2018 presidential elections with López Obrador at its head. It defines itself as a rupture with respect to the opposition administrations that preceded it, positioning itself ideologically in the center-left.

**Partido del Trabajo (PT).** It is the MORENA ally with the largest representation in Congress. It defines itself as a leftist space and has supported López Obrador since 2006, even before the creation of MORENA.

**Partido Verde Ecologista de México (PVEM).** Its party proposal is focused on the conservation of the environment and natural resources, as well as the fight against corruption. It did not accompany MORENA in the 2018 elections, being the most recent incorporation to the ruling coalition. It joined in 2019.

**Partido Encuentro Solidario (PES).** It is the successor party to the Social Encounter Party that lost its legal status in 2018 after MORENA's electoral victory. It defines itself as a social conservative space. It cannot participate in coalitions because the law prevents it from doing so as it does not have the legally required seniority.
Who competes in the proportional principle election?

**Opposition**

**Partido Acción Nacional (PAN).** It is the opposition party with the largest legislative bench. It is considered a space of Christian conservative right, which in the 2018 presidential elections was consecrated as the second national political force. It achieved access to the presidency between 2000 and 2012.

**Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI).** Founded in 1929, it was the governing party until 2000. Characterized as a conservative party, it is the second most important opposition party in terms of legislative strength.

**Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD).** Founded in 1989, it identifies itself as a social democratic space and is in favor of gender equality and the development of sustainable energies. In recent years it has worked in coalition with the PAN and the PRI.

** Movimiento Ciudadano (MC).** It is a self-defined social democratic space founded in 1999 under the name of Convergencia por la Democracia. Having worked together with the PRI, PAN and PRD during these three legislative years, it chose to compete autonomously in these elections.

In these elections, new spaces such as Fuerza por México and Redes Sociales Progresistas will also compete. Here you can access the list of all the candidates of each party in relation to each of the two electoral principles.
What is the current composition of the Chamber of Deputies?

MORENA has 256 deputies exceeding by 5 seats the absolute majority required to pass any ordinary bill. Furthermore, by adding the seats of its allies (PT, PVEM and PES), MORENA can get the support of 334 deputies. This means that it even has the number needed to push through bills that require qualified majorities (two-thirds of the total), such as constitutional reforms.

In contrast, the opposition is weak in this chamber. The PAN, with 77 seats, is the strongest opposition party, followed by the PRI with 48, then the MC with 25 and the PRD with 12 seats.
What is the current composition of the Senate?

The ruling party has 61 senators, so it does not have enough on its own to reach the majority required to pass bills, which is 65. Thus, in this chamber it needs the votes of its allies, with whom it reaches 78 parliamentarians. Unlike in the Chamber of Deputies, here the ruling party does not have a qualified majority, even with its allies, so in order to move forward on constitutional reforms it must negotiate with the opposition.

Thus, the combined seats of the PAN, PRI, MC and PRD (49 out of 128) are enough to constitute what has been called a "blocking minority", and these are the key spaces with which MORENA will have to negotiate in order to unblock any future constitutional reform it wishes. It is important to note that this blocking capacity will be maintained until the end of AMLO's mandate in 2024, since the Senate is not set for midterm renewal.
What would the Chamber of Deputies look like after the elections?

The polls foresee MORENA obtaining around 40% of the votes. It would be followed by the PRI with 17% and the PAN with 16%. Further behind would be the MC with 6%, the PVEM with 5%, the PRD with 5% and the PT with 4%. The rest of the spaces would not exceed 3%.

Due to the mixed electoral principle, these values will not perfectly reflect the final composition of the Chamber of Deputies. Based on a projection combining both principles, it is estimated that MORENA will lose part of its current bench, dropping to some 228 deputies. With the support of allies it will have 322 seats and will retain an absolute majority to pass ordinary laws. However, it is set to lose the qualified majority that allowed it to pass constitutional reforms.

In the opposition, the PAN would increase its number of seats to 79, maintaining its position as the main opposition party. The PRI will see the greatest growth in the opposition, which will gain around 63 seats. Thus, a more balanced Chamber is expected, in which MORENA will have to negotiate in order to unblock any far-reaching constitutional reforms.

*Source: Own projection based on polls conducted by local consultants during March, April and May 2021.

Ruling Party & Allies (322)
- MOVIMIENTO REGENERACIÓN NACIONAL (MORENA - 228)
- PARTIDO DEL TRABAJO (PT - 45)
- PARTIDO VERDE ECOLOGISTA DE MÉXICO (PVEM - 49)

Opposition (178)
- PARTIDO ACCIÓN NACIONAL (PAN - 79)
- PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO INSTITUCIONAL (PRI - 63)
- PARTIDO DE LA REVOLUCIÓN DEMOCRÁTICA (PRD - 20)
- MOVIMIENTO CIUDADANO (MC - 16)
What priorities would the new majority have?

If the above-mentioned projections materialise, MORENA and its allies will be able to push forward their legislative agenda with relative ease. It is therefore important to look at its priorities, which include the following:

**Economy**
- Reduce tax burden
- Combat tax evasion
- Encourage private investment

**Health**
- Strengthen free and accessible provision of medicines to vulnerable sectors

**Social**
- Fight corruption
- Promote employment creation
- Advocate for migrants’ rights

Meanwhile, the coalition might also pursue the following bills:

- **Bill to enact the Federal Law on Cinematography and Audiovisuals.** With the aim of promoting the production of national films, it will establish a 10% screen quota for the exhibition of this content in cinemas.

- **Bill to enact the Law to regulate the protection of digital users.** The text proposes to delimit the rights that digital service providers must guarantee to their users.

For their part, the PT, the PES and the PVEM presented their legislative platforms detailing the projects they will seek to promote over the next three years.
What priorities would the opposition have?

Both the main opposition parties, Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) and Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), will seek to promote the following measures during the next three-year term:

**Economy**
Stimulate free economic competition, modify the model of tax deductions and avoid collusion among companies.

**Health**
Ensure the availability of free medicines and modify the purchasing system for these supplies.

**Digital**
Legislate on cybersecurity and user data protection.

**Economy**
Promote sustained economic growth

**Health**
Ensure the supply of medicines and guarantee the treatment of high-cost diseases such as cancer.

**Digital**
Protect the digital identity and create a regulatory framework for cybercrime.

**Audiovisual Sector**
Expand and strengthen support for culture and film production.

The PRD and MC also presented their legislative platforms explaining what they will seek to promote during the next three years.
Subnational Elections

WHAT DO THEY CHOOSE?
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?
WHAT IS THE CURRENT POLITICAL POWER MAP? HOW COULD IT BE MODIFIED?
Why are subnational elections important?

Mexico is a federal country, which means it is divided into 32 subnational territories that have autonomy to govern themselves in different areas. Thus, in order to understand the political distribution of power in such a country, it is important to know how many subnational territories each party controls, since each one of them represents a source of authority from which political power can be built.

In addition, whoever controls the states, and specifically their legislative branches, has a greater chance of promoting constitutional reforms, since the Mexican Constitution establishes that no reform will enter into force unless it has the endorsement of 17 subnational legislatures. Thus, the sub-national elections will have a special significance for MORENA's ambitions to consolidate his "Fourth Transformation".

What is the current political power map?

The subnational political power map is different depending on the state power we consider. In terms of subnational executive powers or, in other words, governorships, the PRI controls 11 districts (in green in the lower left map), followed by the PAN with 9 (in blue). MORENA has 6 (in red).

This panorama changes diametrically when we observe which is the party with the most seats in each sub-national Legislative Branch. Here, MORENA has holds more seats than its rivals in 19 (in red in the lower left map) of the 32 legislatures. PAN barely achieves those numbers in 6, while the PRI only in 3.

This distribution owes to the fact that in Mexico, governorships are renewed every 6 years while legislatures are renewed every 3. Thus in the 2018 elections, when MORENA won the national presidency, it won in many legislatures but could not win the same number of governorships as only a fraction of them were up for grabs at the time.
What do Mexicans choose and how would the political power map be modified?

Next Sunday, new governors will be elected in Baja California, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Chihuahua, Colima, Guerrero, Michoacán, Nayarit, Nuevo León, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tlaxcala and Zacatecas. In addition, 30 of the 32 state legislatures will be renewed entirely (except in Coahuila and Quintana Roo).

Below you can find a map showing the favorites so far to win the race in each subnational executive:

- **MORENA as favorite**: Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Nayarit, Colima, Michoacan, Guerrero, Tlaxcala
- **PAN as favorite**: Querétaro, San Luis Potosí
- **No clear favorite**: Baja California Sur, Campeche, Zacatecas
- **MC as favorite**: Nuevo León
- **No gubernatorial election**

Own projections based on multiple opinion polls conducted in each subnational territory in April and May.

In the event of these tendencies being confirmed, MORENA appears as the favorite to obtain most of the governorships up for renewal. It is worth noting the retreat of the PRI on the power map, which can now only aspire to win in two of the territories where no clear favorite exists: Campeche and Zacatecas.

The political power map in the legislatures is more uncertain due to the lack of reliable data on opinion polls. However, everything seems to indicate that MORENA is emerging as the favorite to at least maintain a similar power ratio to the one it currently holds.
Conclusions

The continuation of the "Fourth Transformation" initiated by AMLO in 2018 will be largely determined by the results of the mid-term elections to be held on June 6. The outcome could deepen MORENA's political power and allow it to face the second part of the presidential term with renewed strength.

These elections will be marked by multiple issues that will influence their outcome. The poor handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the vaccination process of the population with its consequent impact on the health, social and economic well-being of the population will be determining factors that could negatively impact MORENA.

Also important are the historical tensions across the Mexican territory and especially the political violence that has cost the lives of over 140 candidates. Finally, the tit for tat allegations of corruption and political clientelism will also impact voting as will, to the detriment of the ruling party, the tragedy of the Line 12 Metro accident.

Overall, projections and trends indicate that MORENA would win the elections with around 40% of votes but would see its power in the Chamber of Deputies diminish. At the moment it is believed that the party will lose its absolute majority, though it could retain it by adding the support of its allies. Also, it is set to lose his qualified majority there, which would prevent it from approving constitutional reforms without reaching agreements with the opposition. On the other hand, everything seems to indicate that AMLO will increase his political power in subnational terms, being the favorite to win 9 of the 15 governorships being voted for. It is also projected to retain control of most subnational legislatures.

In conclusion, if current trends are confirmed, MORENA will emerge from the elections still as the dominant party in Mexico for the next three years, but will have to take a more constructive and collaborative approach in the National Congress if it wants to continue promoting the structural reforms necessary to guarantee the strengthening of the so-called "Fourth Transformation".
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