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FORTALECEMOS  
LAS DEMOCRACIAS  
DE AMÉRICA LATINA

STRENGTHENING  
DEMOCRACIES  
IN LATIN AMERICA

JUNE 2022

# Colombia

## Second round presidential vote Pre-electoral report

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# Executive Summary

Colombians voting for their **next president** on June 19 must pick from **left-winger Gustavo Petro** or the **anti-establishment figure Rodolfo Hernández**.

Polls put them **neck and neck**, with **Petro**, who represents 'Pacto Histórico', **holding a slim 1% lead**. In the first-round ballot, which saw the country's highest turnout since 1974, it was Petro who triumphed with over 40% of the vote. Trailing him in second place was Hernandez, of 'Liga de Gobernantes Anticorrupción', on 28%. Yet **Hernandez has since been strongly endorsed by Federico Gutiérrez – the mainstream and now eliminated conservative pick** in those elections who lost out to the other two.

The **pitting of these two extreme**, unorthodox figures marks a departure from politics as normal and, many say, the **death knell for the long-wielded influence over Colombian politics of former leader Alvaro Uribe and his supporters**. However, with the '**Urbists**' still making up 53 Senators and 75 Representatives, they will still **have a firm grip on the fortunes of whoever wins**.

Whether that is Petro or Hernandez, as President he will have to **grapple with Colombia's ailing economy and social concerns** and - especially for Hernandez - the daunting task of amassing enough legislative support for their agenda.

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### CONTEXT AND ELECTORAL KEY

- POLLS

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# The election in numbers

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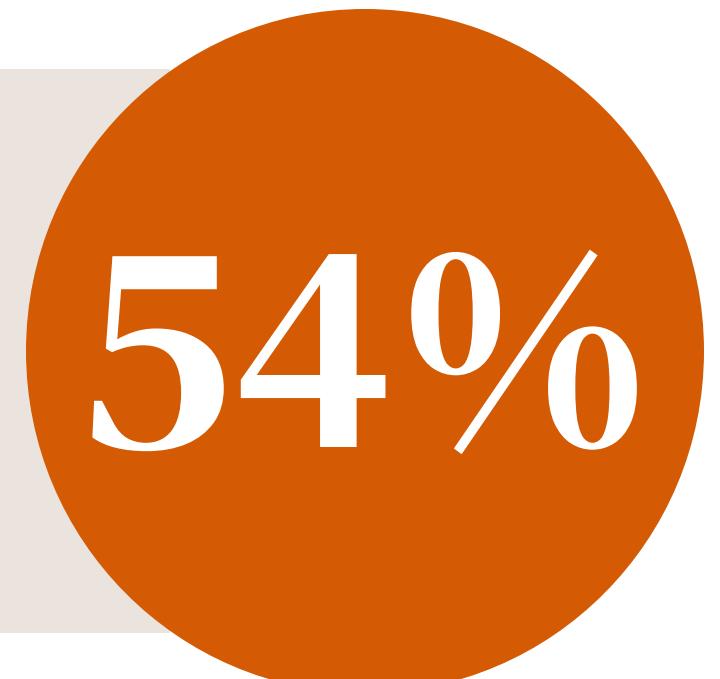
≈1%

Petro's estimated lead which, being easily within the margin of polling error, makes for an uncertain outcome this Sunday.



2 & 0

Respectively, the number of lower and upper chamber MPs belonging to Hernández's party in the Congress. Should he win, he faces a huge task in building the legislative support he needs for his political agenda.



54%

The votes garnered by Federico Gutiérrez in the first round. If all of those who supported him then heed his calls for them to get behind Hernandez, he wins.



23,94%



August 7

When the next President takes office.

# Basic Questions

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## What is at stake?

The President and Vice-President from 2022 to 2026.

## What is the voting mechanism and who takes part?

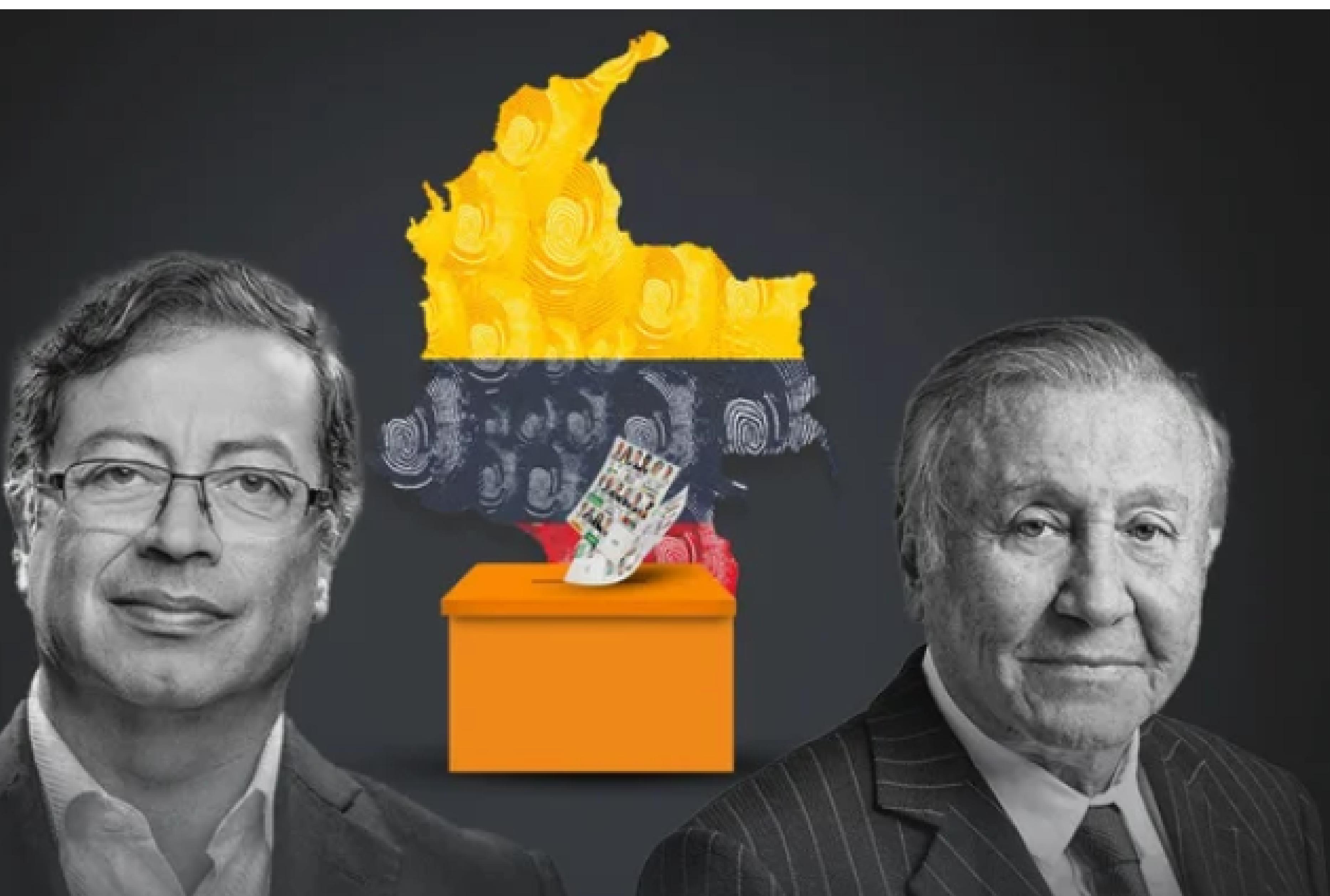
In line with the Constitution the election entails **direct, non-compulsory popular voting** and can be exercised by all Colombian citizens over 18 years of age.

## Who is running for the presidency and what do they need to win?

**Rodolfo Hernandez** (Liga de Gobernantes Anticorrupción) and **Gustavo Petro** (Pacto Histórico). Whoever wins the most votes on Sunday wins.

## When will the next government take office?

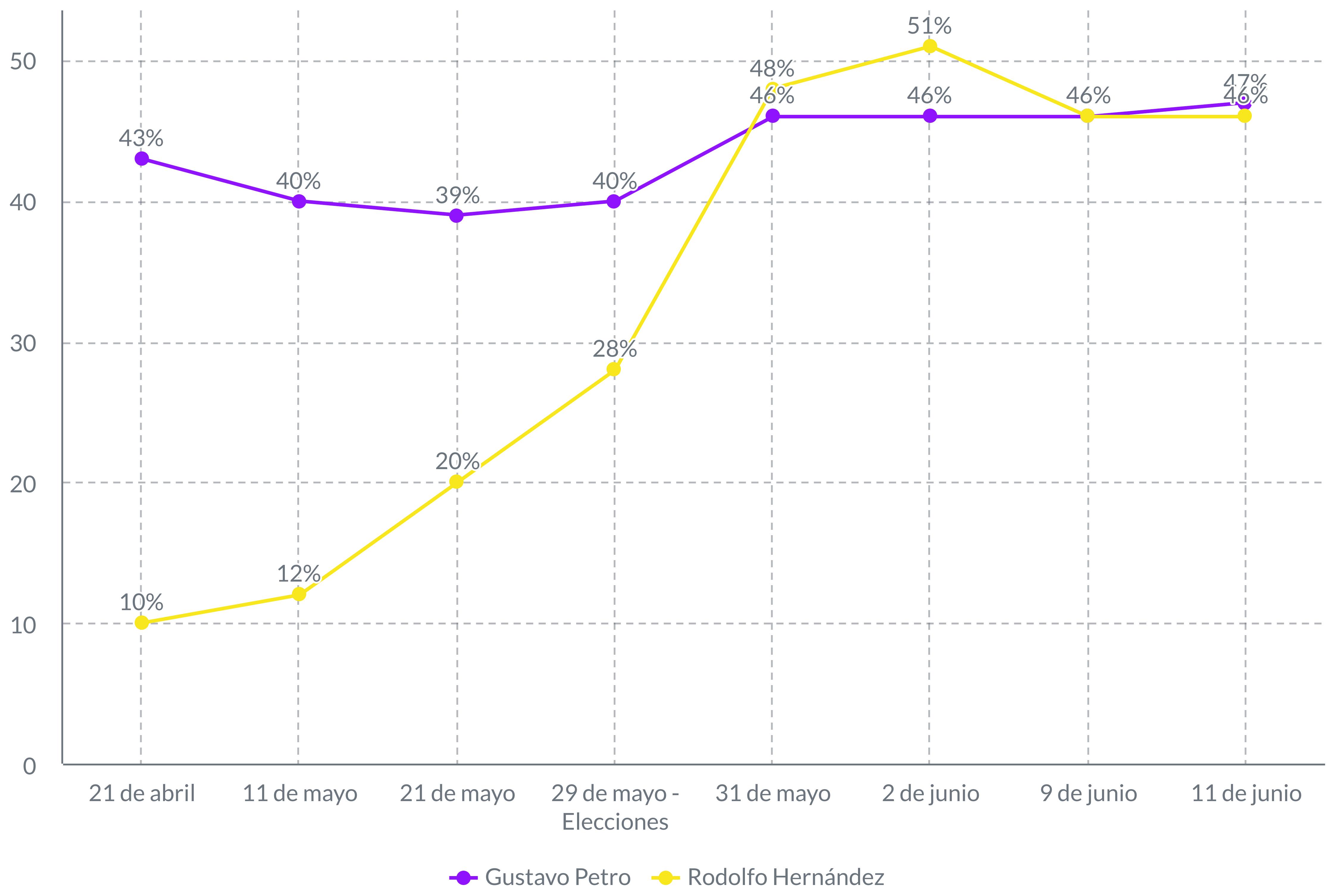
On August 7, 2022.



# Presidential Elections

## Polls

There is now a ban on further polling before the election, meaning the most recent surveys date to June 12. These **predict a technical tie**. The margin of Petro's lead over Hernandez - to 2.5 million more votes in the first round - has shrunk to almost nothing. This reflects a **surge of support for the former mayor of Bucaramanga**, who as well as through the backing of Gutierrez and others has been successful at shoring up his base.



As can be seen in the graph, the run-off election predicts a **very tight scenario**. Despite his apparent disdain for Colombia's traditional parties, **Hernández knows all too well that endorsements from Federico Gutiérrez's Equipo por Colombia are critical**.

After the results of the first run-off election, **Hernández presented himself as the candidate of the centre and the right** of the Colombian political spectrum and, at the same time, as the reference point for so-called 'anti-Petristm'. This led to his voting intentions, in the first week after the first round election, surging to over 50%. However, as awareness of Hernández's proposals - and of past derogatory or incendiary statements, and association with corruption - has increased, so have the numbers disapproving of him.

**Petro**, on the other hand, **appears to have flatlined in the polls**. A key asset for Petro is his vice-presidential candidate, Francia Márquez who is popular among younger and minority voters. Come Sunday, **Petro is hoping that those voting for Gutiérrez in the first round do not**, as the latter has urged, **turn out en masse in support of Hernandez**, and/or that, with the spectre of having a tik tok star at the helm of the country, **turnout will be even greater in the run-off election tilting the balance Petro's favor**.

Here the **undecided voters promise to be key**, especially those who previously voted for Gutiérrez - who will have to decide whether to vote an outsider, critical of Uribism and the current government, or not vote at all.



# Who is competing?

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## Rodolfo Hernández

**Vicepresident: Marelen Castillo**

Rodolfo Hernández Suárez (1945) is a Colombian **businessman and civil engineer**. In June 2021 he announced his candidacy as an independent, financing his campaign with his own assets. The contender **presents himself to the election as an "outsider"**, a politician located outside the traditional political space outside the traditional Colombian parties.

In the 1990s he began his career as a construction businessman. In 2004, after the kidnapping and murder of his daughter by the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), he **turned to politics reaching the mayoralty of Bucaramanga in 2016**. However, in the middle of his term, the Procuraduría General de la Nación (PGN) suspended him for three months after assaulting a councilman. Due to this, **Hernández resigned in 2019**. He is currently going through disciplinary investigations with PGN.

In March he announced Marelen Castillo as his vice-president running mate, a biology, chemistry and industrial engineering graduate from Cali. Currently, Rodolfo is fighting to reach the second presidential round according to polls, consolidating his anti-establishment and anti-corruption speech.

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## LIGA DE GOBERNANTES ANTICORRUPCIÓN



It is a political movement founded by Hernandez while he served as mayor of Bucaramanga in 2019. According to its **political platform, the movement has the basic principles of "fair play, transparency, objectivity, morality and gender equity"**. From the discursive side, it refers to expressions such as "no stealing, no lying, no betrayal" and "no impunity".

## Gustavo Petro

Vicepresident: Francia Márquez



Born in 1960 in Ciénaga de Oro, department of Córdoba, Gustavo Petro is an opposition senator for Pacto Histórico. He was a member of the Movimiento 19 de abril (M-19), a socialist guerrilla group that took the Palace of Justice by force in 1985. After the demobilization of that group, Petro won a seat in the House of Representatives for the Alianza Democrática M-19 in 1991, a party of which he was a co-founder.

Between 2012 and 2015 he served as Mayor of Bogotá, until he was removed from office due to a disciplinary investigation related to the garbage collection system in the city. The present elections will be his third attempt to reach the presidency: in 2010 he achieved 9.1% of the votes and in 2018 25%, losing the second round against the current president of Colombia, Iván Duque.

Since 2018, due to the Opposition Statute (law of the same year, which establishes that the second most voted candidate gains access to a Senate seat), he has served as a legislator. From that space he organized the Pacto Histórico alliance. From the left-wing position, Petro states that his challenge is to build an effective and programmatic broad progressive alliance in order to stop being a "leader of radical ideas and attitudes".

After exceeding 80% of the votes in the intra-party consultation for Pacto Histórico, Petro emerged as the candidate of the coalition. At the same time, he added Francia Márquez as vice-presidential candidate, who achieved in March the third highest vote of all the consultations at national level. Márquez, backed by the Polo Democrático Alternativo party (center left), is an Afro-Colombian social leader, environmental activist, human rights defender and feminist.

## PACTO HISTÓRICO

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It is a leftist political coalition launched in February 2021, composed of 18 political parties and social movements of socialist, communist, progressive and social democratic ideology. It was consolidated as a government alternative built on social bases focused on social justice and peace. In addition, its member parties have emerged from fragmentation, creating an alliance made up of the Colombia Humana, Polo Democrático Alternativo, Communist Party and Movimiento Alternativo Indígena y Social parties, among others. In the legislative elections of last March, it reached 20 senators and 28 representatives to the Chamber of Representatives, becoming one of the main forces in Congress.



# Government Proposals

## Liga de Gobernantes Anticorrupción Rodolfo Hernández - Marelen Castillo



- Consolidate a **connectivity** platform to promote economic and social development and strengthen the **digital economy**.
- Introduce culture and art into the country's productive chain through the **promotion of the creative industry**.
- Deepen the **national policy of price control in the pharmaceutical industry**.
- Promote more sustainable and healthy forms of food production and consumption.
- Expand **access to credit** for small and medium-sized enterprises and intervene in the high tax burdens that impede competitiveness.
- Provide information for **monitoring food safety in agricultural production**, markets and food and nutritional risk groups.
- Reduce **VAT from 19% to 10%**, with a basic food basket exempted in a system without deductions of deductible payments.
- Reestablish consular relations with Venezuela.

To access the complete government plan [click here](#).

# Government Proposals

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## Pacto Histórico Gustavo Petro - Francia Márquez



- Strengthen second floor public banks as financial intermediaries and sponsors of business models to favor micro, small and medium enterprises, and the popular, urban and rural economy. Guarantee credit access programs with low interest rates.
- Review Free Trade Agreements and **intellectual property rights policy**.
- Support artists in the **creation of content for digital platforms**, boosting strategic sectors such as the national film industry and promoting cultural employment.
- Guarantee **access to essential medicines with timeliness**, quality and relevance, strengthening price regulation and promoting the reindustrialization of the national pharmaceutical sector.
- Promote the **development of biodegradable materials and ban single-use plastics**. In addition, implement measures to ensure healthy food environments, such as front warning labeling on products.
- Regulate work from home.
- Restore economic relations with Venezuela

To access the full government plan [click here](#).

## How are the other parties supporting?

After the first round, the **candidates who did not make it to the ballot** had to choose who they would **support** in Sunday's election. For now, **Hernandez has been the main beneficiary** - crucially via the endorsement of **Federico Gutiérrez of Equipo por Colombia**. This candidate obtained 23.94% of votes in the first round, which would allow Hernandez to win the presidency if all those voters support him. Likewise, and in spite of **publicly insisting that he will not ally himself with traditional spaces**, he **received the support of many of them**, especially from **center-right spaces**. Among them, the Centro Democrático (current ruling party), the Partido Conservador, the Partido MIRA and Cambio Radical. He also received support from a fraction of the center-left coalition Centro Esperanza and Enrique Gómez of Salvación Nacional.

On the other hand, **Gustavo Petro received the support of two important political figures of the left**: Antanas Mockus, former mayor of Bogota (Alianza Verde) and former Minister of Health, Alejandro Gaviria (Partido Liberal). On the other hand, other spaces that performed well in the legislative elections, such as the **Partido de la U, Partido Liberal and the Alianza Verde** allowed their militants to **freely decide whom to support**. The same was done by **Colombia Justa Libre**.

It should be noted that these alignments **do not guarantee a perfect transfer of voters for the second round**, since votes are not transferred "mathematically" but depend on the individual will of each voter. However, they help to understand how Sunday's race will be structured and delineate possible alignments that will exist in Colombia whether one candidate or the other wins.

## A polarized and controversial run-up

Campaigning has been marked by **polarized opinions and debate as well as underhand tactics**. **Hernández** has continued to use social networks as part of a **self-financed campaign pitted against "the political class" and "bureaucracy"**. He has scaled back his media and TV exposure ostensibly because of death threats but also likely as a damage limitation exercise following a string of PR unfriendly appearances.

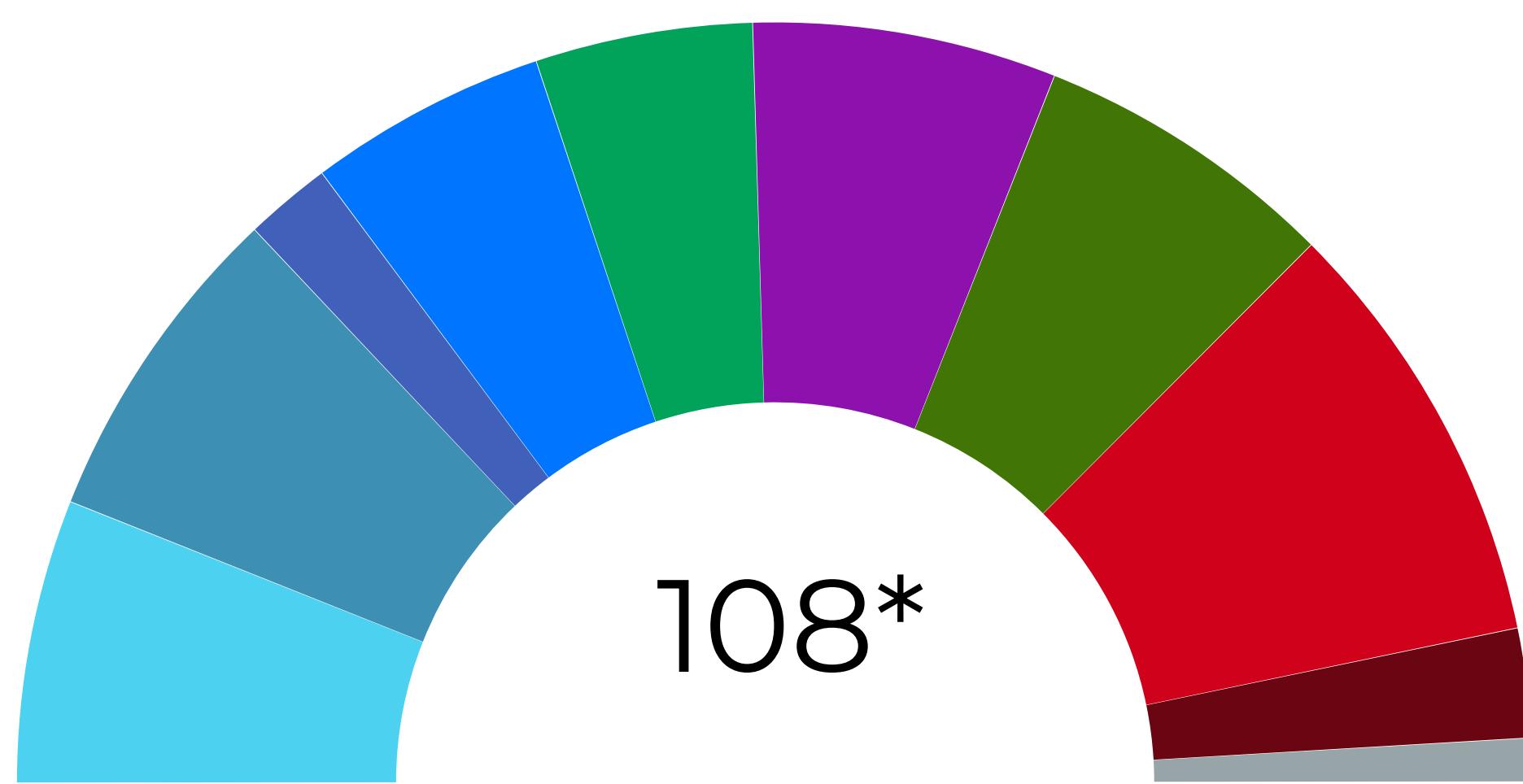
**Petro has sought to leverage these controversies by virally disseminating his opponent's sexist remarks and links to multiple cases of corruption**. However, he suffered a setback after recordings were leaked of his campaign team planning how to discredit Hernandez. He has also sought to woo center-ground voters, calling for a 'national dialogue' to overcome the political and economic crisis. At the same time, Petro's has also worked hard to pitch his political proposals taking advantage of being the more visible of the two candidates.

# With what kind of Congress must the next president work ?

The next president of Colombia will have to **contend with a fragmented Congress**. Reshuffled following the legislative elections of March 13, **neither candidate would have the necessary majorities to guarantee backing for his proposals**. Thus, both Petro and Hernández will have to **build alliances** if they want to push through their agendas.

It is important to **identify how the ideological alignments** within Congress will be structured in order to be able to envisage the eventual alliances that will determine the political and regulatory situation in the upcoming years. On the **left** will be Pacto Histórico, the Coalición Centro Esperanza and Comunes; in the **center**, the Liberal Party will stand out; and on the **right**, there will be the parties close to Uribe, among them Centro Democrático (CD), Cambio Radical (CR) or the Conservative Party (PC). In this part of the spectrum, the League of Anticorruption Governors, the Partido de la U and Mira - Justa Libres can also be found.

SENATE 2022-2026



## Right and center-right

- CENTRO DEMOCRÁTICO (13)
- PARTIDO CONSERVADOR (15)
- MIRA - COLOMBIA JUSTA LIBRE (4)
- CAMBIO RADICAL (11)
- PARTIDO DE LA U (10)

## Left and center-left

- ALIANZA VERDE (13)
- PACTO HISTÓRICO (20)
- COMUNES (5)

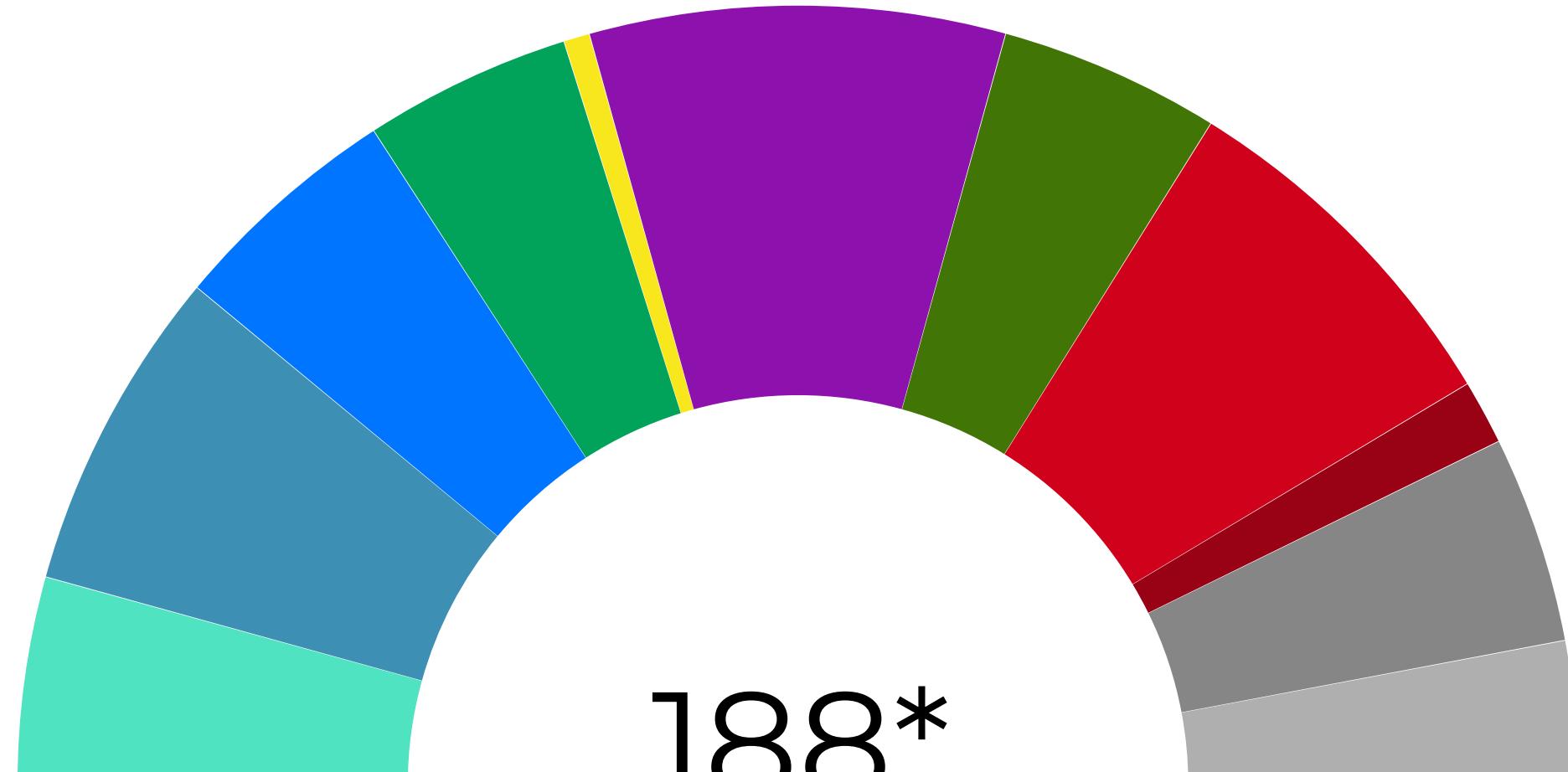
## Others

- OTHERS (3)

## Center

- PARTIDO LIBERAL (14)

CHAMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES 2022-2026



## Right and center-right

- CENTRO DEMOCRÁTICO (16)
- PARTIDO CONSERVADOR (25)
- CAMBIO RADICAL (18)
- PARTIDO DE LA U (16)
- LIGA DE GOBERNANTES ANTICORRUPCIÓN (2)

## Left and center-left

- ALIANZA VERDE (17)
- PACTO HISTÓRICO (28)
- COMUNES (5)

## Others

- PEACE SEATS (16)
- OTHERS (13)

\* The presidential ticket that achieves second place will be assigned a Senate seat for the presidential candidate and a seat in the House of Representatives for the vice-presidential candidate.

In the Senate, the **ideological sector with most influence will be the center right and the right**, which together will have **up to 53 seats**. On the other hand, the **left** could form an alliance of up to 38 seats. Here the role of the **centrist Liberal Party will be key** to allow the right a majority, although its support would be insufficient for the left to reach such a threshold. In its case, it will still have to look for support in other minority groups or in the more moderate sector of the center-right, something that seems to be difficult.

In the **House of Representatives**, the situation is similar. The **center-right and right wing** will have up to **77 out of 188 seats**, 18 behind the majority. This sum includes the 2 representatives obtained by Hernandez's party, the Anti-Corruption Governors League. On the other hand, the **left and center-left parties would have up to 50 seats**. Here again, the **behavior of the Liberal Party will be key**, where their 32 representatives could give the center-right a majority of its own or bring the left closer to that number. However, any alliance of the latter tendency will require the support of the peace seats (16) or the seats of other political minorities.

## The candidates and the legislative branch

### Liga de Gobernantes Anticorrupción

Rodolfo Hernández - Marelen Castillo



Hernández, should he win the presidency, **will have a greater challenge than Petro in his relationship with Congress**. On the one hand, he has **only two representatives and no senators**. Thus, he will have to create a broad alliance from scratch, negotiating part of his government program and, potentially, ministerial positions in his possible future cabinet.

A good part of his **programmatic agenda will have to pass through Congress, so alliance building will be essential**. Although at the moment the candidate has chosen not to modify his intransigent stance towards the political establishment, the need for support may push him to forge a center-right alliance with these same traditional parties.

On the side of these spaces, **the predisposition seems to exist after many of them expressed in favor of supporting the candidate over Petro in these elections.** However, these electoral alignments will not necessarily translate into legislative coalitions. Likewise, Hernandez will also have to seduce the Partido Liberal, a key centrist space to reach the majority.

Likewise, **the need for strong alliances will be important to ensure its own survival.** Hernández has been indicted by the Attorney General's Office for false testimony and undue interest in the execution of contracts. These cases could go through the Congressional Accusations Commission, opening the possibility of an **impeachment trial.** Without a large bench, this process could move forward with relative ease if the political arc as a whole decides to move forward with the process.

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## Pacto Histórico

### Gustavo Petro - Francia Márquez

The **situation of Petro and his space is relatively better than that of Hernández,** although he will still have legislative limitations. He will **have 28 representatives and 20 senators.** These numbers make it one of the parties with the largest representation in Congress.

However, his limitations will come from the side of the **rejection generated by his ideology in a good part of the political arc.** The center-right and right-wing parties have large benches (53 senators and 77 representatives) and have already expressed their rejection of Petro. Thus, **Pacto Histórico will have to guarantee the alignment of the entire left and also obtain the endorsement of the centrist Liberal Party** to get closer to the majorities.

However, **that will not be enough.** In both chambers he will need to obtain additional support from smaller spaces or independents to reach that threshold. Thus, like Hernandez, Petro will have to strongly negotiate his government program in order to push through legislation in Congress.



# Political context and electoral keys

## The decline of the Uribismo

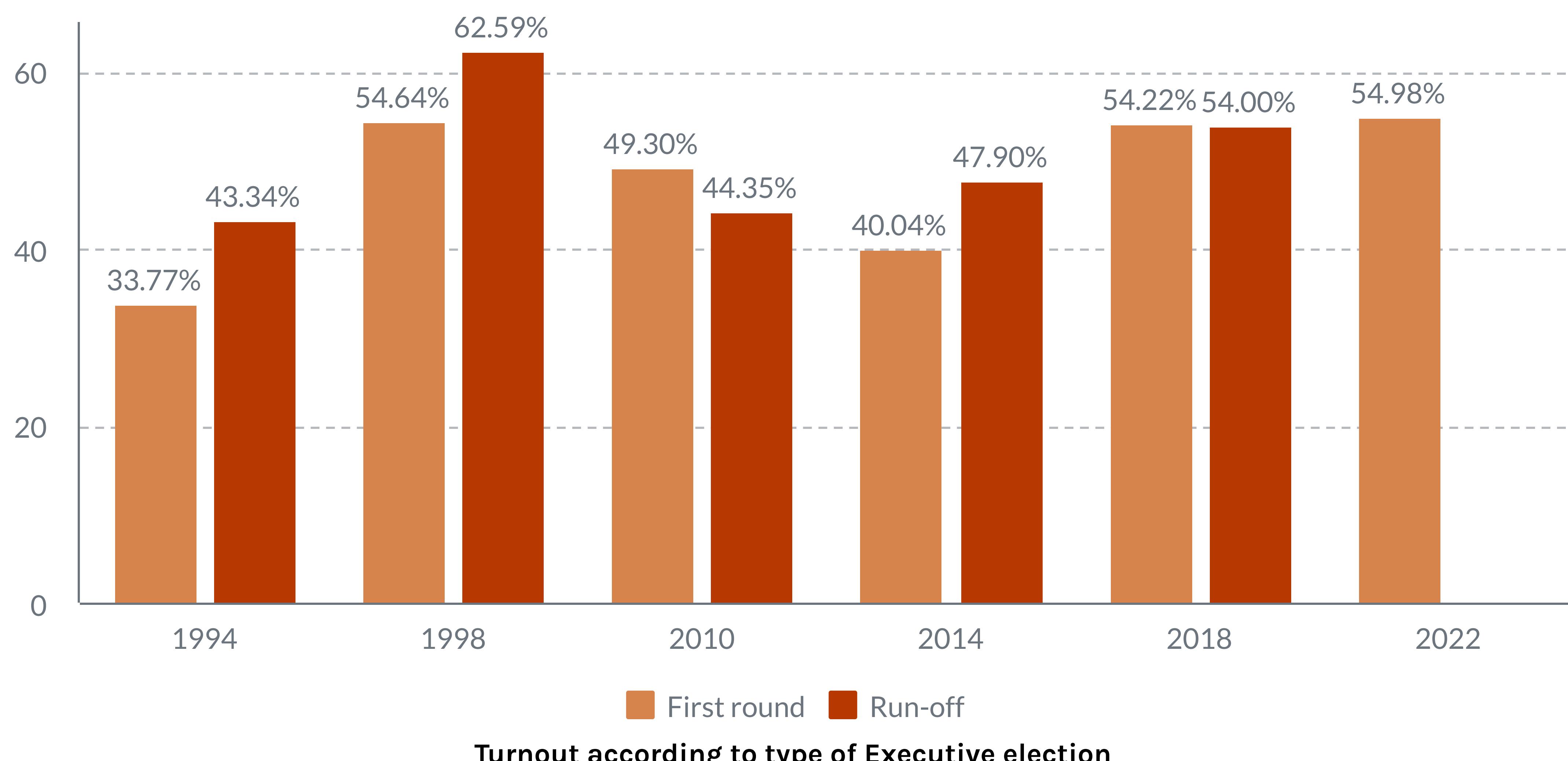
After the first round, the political map of Colombia experienced a significant change. President Iván Duque and former President Álvaro Uribe were defeated. Thus, **the Uribismo stopped being the electoral force it had been in the last 20 years** and its leader acknowledged that in these elections his support to any candidate could be damaging instead of beneficial. In fact, Oscar Zuluaga, the candidate proposed for the first round by the current ruling party, **had to give up his candidature in March**, after the little approval he received from the population.

The weakening of the movement may be due to the **strong citizens' rejection to the economic and social policies implemented by Duque**, who became president with Uribe's support, after three years of facing strong mobilizations due to questioned economic policies and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Blank vote and turnout

Looking ahead to Sunday's elections, there will be one variable that may change the results: **the level of voter turnout**. In elections held in May, voter turnout reached 54.91% of the electoral roll, the highest in the last 20 years. In addition, the blank vote in May was also low compared to the last 20 years, being 1.7%, as well as unmarked votes (0.13%) and null votes (1.13%).

Hernandez, who at first seemed to capture the 5 million votes of Gutiérrez, has lost voting intentions in the last days. Therefore, his main asset will continue to be the rejection of a sector of society to an eventual presidency of Gustavo Petro.



In case the **participation decreases significantly**, the space that could channel this situation could be Pacto Histórico, who has an **electorate that is convinced with his government agenda and would vote for him again** in the second round.

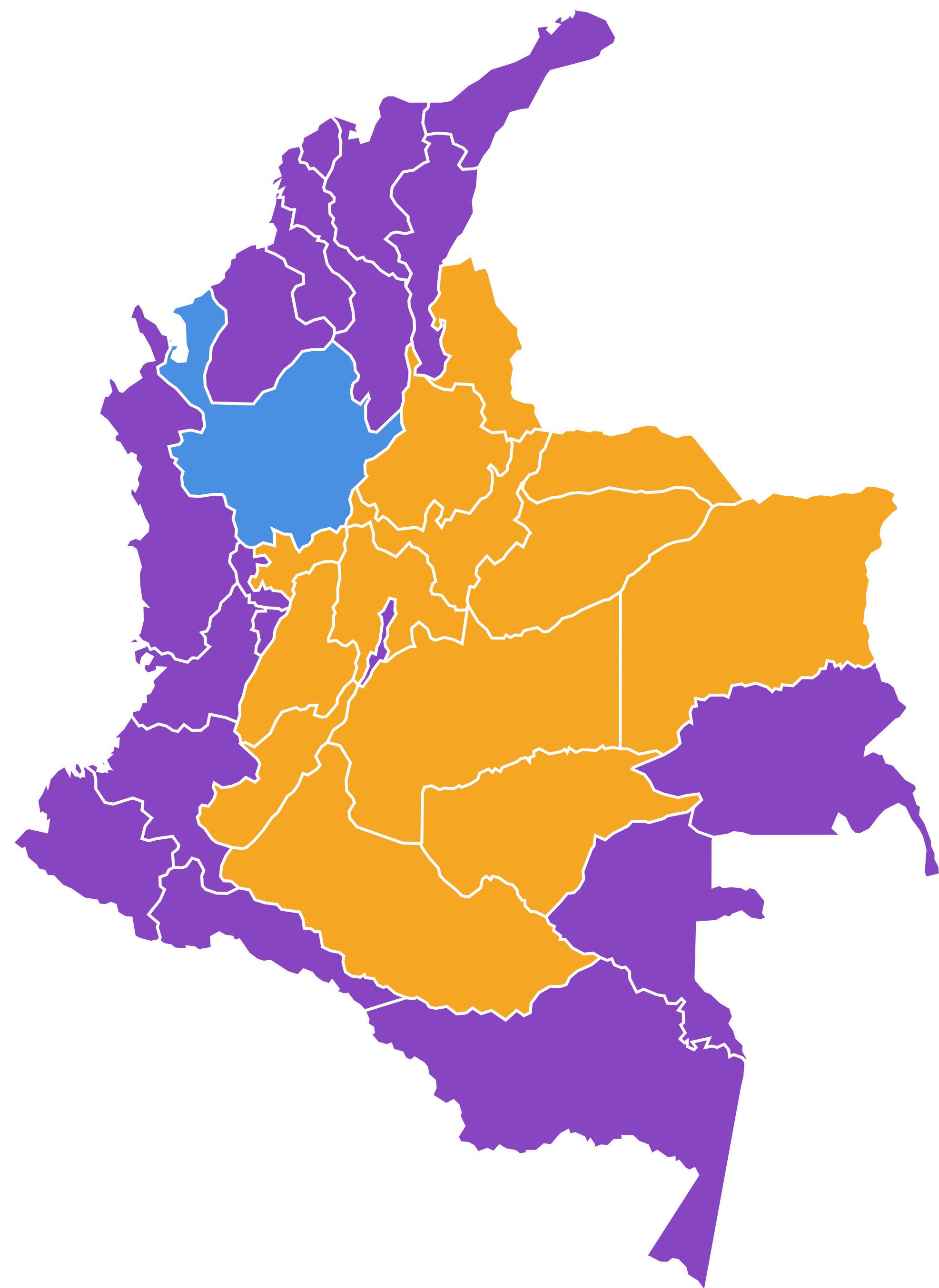
On the other hand, according to opinion polls, **an increase in the blank vote is expected on the part of citizens**, mainly from the electorate of Federico Gutierrez and Uribism. This vote may be interpreted as a variable that expresses disagreement with both candidates.

## Territoriality of candidates

The **political polarization in Colombia can be seen in the voting maps in the first presidential round**.

The vote for the candidates shows similarities with recent elections. Specifically, with the results of the plebiscite on the peace agreements signed with the FARC guerrilla in 2016, where the northern, western and southern regions of the country voted "yes", while the coffee-growing, Andean and eastern regions voted "no". A similar electoral result occurred in the 2018 presidential election. Petro won in the same regions. The novelty this year comes from the electoral victory of the candidate of Pacto Histórico in new districts, achieving greater territoriality in his campaign.

**Gustavo Petro gained electoral influence in the Colombian periphery, especially in the Pacific coast**, where the most neglected areas of the country in terms of economic growth are concentrated. **The exception in this matter is the district of Bogota, where the triumph of the former mayor of the capital was clear** (30 points ahead of Hernandez). In this regard, he built new victories in Bogota, as well as in the Caribbean and the Colombian Pacific. **Hernández, on the other hand, showed greater strength in the Eje Cafetero, Antioquia, in the center-east and in the center-south of the country**.



**First round winners by district**

- GUSTAVO PETRO
- RODOLFO HERNÁNDEZ
- FEDERICO GUTIÉRREZ

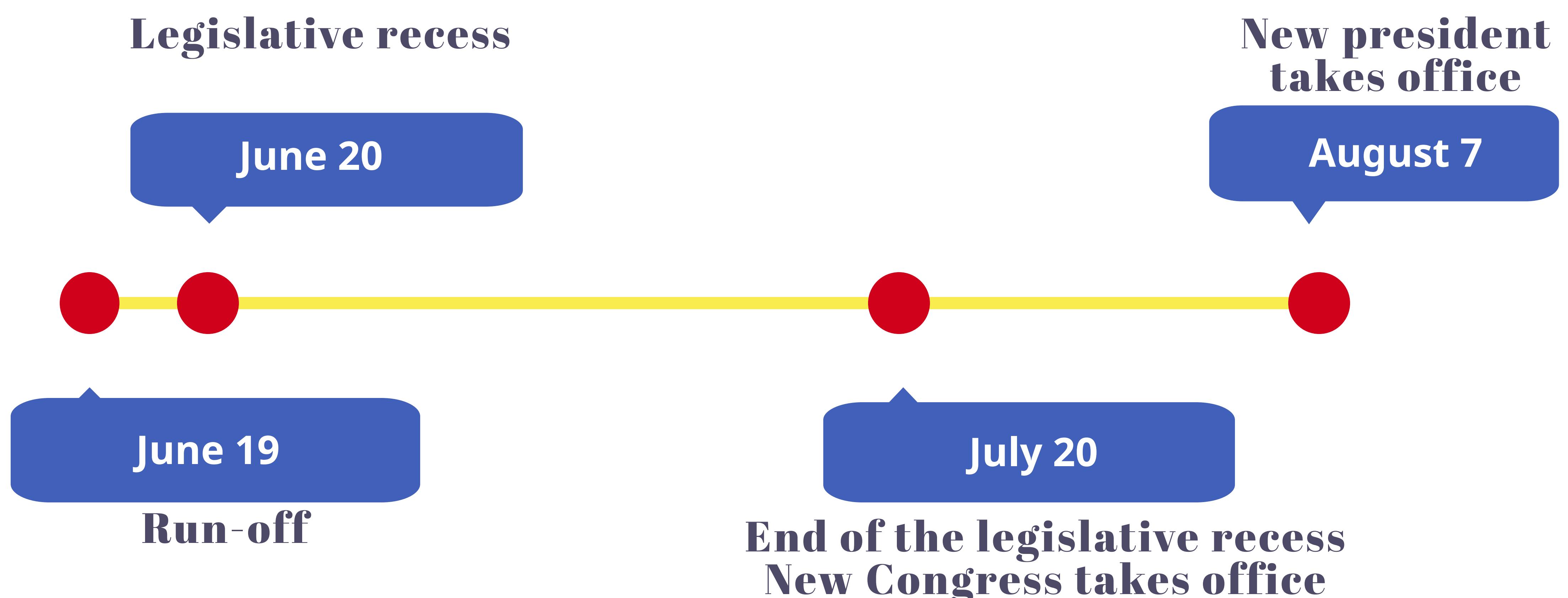
In addition, with the endorsement of the figure of Francia Márquez, Petro manages to capture mainly young, female and middle class voters, while the inhabitants of the higher socioeconomic sectors are more inclined to Petro. In the lower socioeconomic groups, however, there would be a technical tie between the two candidates.

# Projections

The **final stretch of the campaign will be crucial** – and its effects on the outcome harder to judge after the ban on fresh polling since June 12. A **key factor will be who and how many actually make the trip to the polling booths** as opposed to staying at home. **Rodolfo Hernández relies on those formerly backing Federico Gutiérrez to come out in force; Petro needs the opposite.** As things stand, they are neck and neck with Petro in the lead by the slimmest of margins.

More broadly, the **struggles destined to confront either candidate**, especially Hernandez, upon reaching the presidency and **having to gain the required legislative support** bodes badly for how well they can govern the country. There are also concerns over the integrity of the elections (and the candidates), with both Petro and Hernandez hinting they will challenge any close outcome. Petro has suggested there was electoral 'fraud' in the March ballot, and that he is "certain" the country's electoral commission favors his opponent. Hernández has hit back by labelling Petro and 'the left' an authoritarian force that is disrespectful of democratic institutions. This has polarised the atmosphere further and likely weakened trust in Colombia's democratic institutions.

**Whoever wins on Sunday, as President he will have to grapple with Colombia's ailing economy and social concerns** and - especially in the case of Hernandez - with the task of **amassing enough legislative support to push forward his manifesto.**



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Pre- election Colombia  
Presidential Elections Report



Image of Power  
March - April 2022

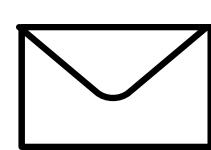


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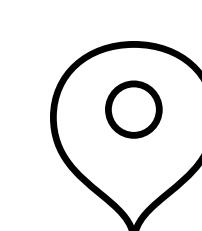
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