May 2024

General elections in Mexico
Pre-election report
The elections scheduled for June 2 are anticipated to be monumental for Mexico, as they are on track to become the largest in the nation's history. With almost **20,000 positions at stake**, including the Presidency, the entire Congress, 9 governorships, and 30 local legislatures, these elections will shape the country's future trajectory. **The incoming President will officially take office on October 1.**

The three main candidates for the presidency are Claudia Sheinbaum of the ruling coalition “Seguimos Haciendo Historia,” Xóchitl Gálvez of the opposition coalition “Fuerza y Corazón por México,” and Jorge Álvarez Máynez of the Movimiento Ciudadano party.

Polls indicate that **Sheinbaum is leading the race**, with a focus on advancing Mexico's "Fourth Transformation" (4T), a movement championed by current President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) to enact significant reforms aimed at combating corruption and promoting social justice. Gálvez is her main competitor, while Álvarez Máynez has limited chances of winning, making it highly likely that Mexico will have its first female President.

The elections will also shake up Mexico’s Congress, with 500 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 128 in the Senate up for grabs. Sheinbaum's lead in the polls and the strong territorial influence of the ruling party Morena suggest that her coalition will likely retain an absolute majority in both chambers. However, projections indicate that they will fall short of the qualified majority required to enact constitutional changes.

The electoral process is unfolding against a backdrop of **political violence**. Mexican voters will play a crucial role in determining whether the country will continue on the trajectory set by AMLO's administration or if they will opt for change with opposition parties.
Since the start of the campaign, Sheinbaum has maintained a commanding lead in the polls, garnering approximately 50% support. This significant advantage underscores the populace's preference for perpetuating the policies instituted by AMLO during his tenure. Conversely, Xóchitl Gálvez has struggled to surpass 30% support, despite a narrowing gap between the two candidates as the campaign progresses. Nonetheless, Sheinbaum remains the undisputed frontrunner.

Although both AMLO and Sheinbaum have asserted non-interference in her government plan, certain proposals suggest a marked continuity with the initiatives initiated by the current administration. This leaves observers speculating on the extent to which Sheinbaum's presidency will adhere to the foundations laid by AMLO or diverge to forge her own path forward.
Claudia Sheinbaum's favorability in current polls can be attributed to several key factors: the enduring legacy of a charismatic and widely supported leader, backing from a politically influential party, and substantial legislative majorities in Congress.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's (AMLO) strong leadership and the policies he champions under the banner of the "Fourth Transformation" (4T), aimed at fostering social inclusion, have bolstered his popularity both nationally and regionally. With an approval rating of 59% in his final year and an average of 62% over his 66-month tenure, AMLO's initiatives have resonated with many, particularly focusing on historically marginalized communities through reforms addressing wealth distribution, social assistance, labor rights, and environmental sustainability.

Sheinbaum, positioning herself as a proponent of the 4T, faces the challenge of stepping out of AMLO's shadow, asserting her autonomy, and retaining support from both her party and constituents should she assume the presidency. Moreover, uncertainty looms over whether AMLO will indeed retire from political life at the conclusion of his term, adding another layer of complexity to Sheinbaum's potential presidency.

Source: own elaboration with data from “Image of Power - DL” based on a compilation of opinion polls from external sources conducted between January 2019 and January 2024.
Sheinbaum: Morena's chosen one

Claudia Sheinbaum (Seguimos Haciendo Historia)

Profile

Claudia Sheinbaum, aged 61, possesses a left-wing orientation and a technocratic background. She holds a degree in Physics from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), as well as a Master's degree and a PhD in Environmental Engineering from the same university.

She embarked on her political journey in 1989 with the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD), later joining MORENA in 2014. She gained prominence as Secretary of the Environment of the Federal District from 2000 to 2006 under López Obrador's administration in Mexico City. Subsequently, she served as Head of Government of Mexico City (CDMX) from 2018 to 2023, prior to her presidential bid.

Government plan

- Sustain minimum wage increases in real terms, with the goal of reaching an all-time high by 2030.
- Increase fiscal incentives for artistic and cinematographic production. Also proposes the modification of cultural sector laws, such as the Law on Culture and Cultural Rights, and social security for artists.
- Fair tax collection from large taxpayers and an increase in the tax base without increasing rates or creating new taxes.
- To continue with the Latin American and Caribbean Medicines Agency (AMLAC, in Spanish) initiatives and establish a National Pharmaceutical Policy that promotes free and effective access to medicines.
- Elimination of autonomous agencies, including the Federal Economic Competition Commission (COFECE, in Spanish) and the Federal Telecommunications Institute (IFT, in Spanish), among others.
- Promote the use of renewable energy and boost electromobility.
**Government plan**

- Build at least one maximum security, high-tech prison.
- Resume the fiscal stimulus policy for all the arts.
- Implementation of the “My Health” card in order to provide access to medicines and medical care.
- Promote a comprehensive cybersecurity strategy, as well as the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in government activities.
- Articulate a nearshoring strategy.

**Profile**

At 61 years old, this candidate holds a center-right stance and boasts a background in computer engineering from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).

Engaged in Mexican politics since 2000, she previously served as Chief Delegate of Hidalgo from 2015 to 2018. Subsequently, she secured a seat in the Senate for the PAN, holding this position between 2018 and 2023. Despite her personal liberal inclinations, she aligns with the conservative coalition.

**Government plan**

- Promote incentives for artistic creation and improve the legal framework to foster the promotion of arts and culture.
- Promote a progressive and redistributive tax reform.
- Regulating the role of private banking to lighten the financial burden of credit.
- Developing a cybersecurity strategy.
- Promote self-care, with emphasis on access and quality of care; and implement strategies that allow for the participation of the pharmaceutical industry.
Early projections suggest that the ruling coalition comprising Morena, the Partido Verde Ecologista de México (PVEM), and the Partido del Trabajo (PT) will maintain an absolute majority in both chambers of Congress. With anticipated continuity from the previous legislature, this coalition is poised to secure approximately 25 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, while minimal changes are expected in the Senate. This favorable composition will facilitate the passage of ordinary legislation without significant hurdles or the need for negotiations with other political forces.

However, achieving the qualified majority necessary for ambitious reforms, such as constitutional amendments, appears to be beyond the ruling party’s reach. To attain the required two-thirds majority in the Chamber of Deputies, it would need to secure 33 additional seats out of a total of 500, while in the Senate, it would require just 12 more seats out of 128.

Given this landscape, the legislative dynamics of the current Congress may persist, with an opposition reluctant to support such reforms and potentially obstructing any prospects of consensus in this regard. It remains to be seen whether Sheinbaum can bridge the gap with an obstinate opposition or if the status quo will endure.
How did Congress fare alongside AMLO?

As previously noted, the ruling coalition holds an absolute majority in both chambers of Congress, enabling AMLO's administration to enact significant reforms aligned with the "Fourth Transformation." These include constitutionalizing senior citizens' pensions, bolstering energy sovereignty through Hydrocarbons Law reform, establishing the National Guard for public security, and extending workers' vacation entitlements, among others.

However, the primary hurdle in Congress has been the resistance to constitutional reforms proposed by the president, particularly contentious issues such as transferring the National Guard to the Secretary of Defense, electoral reform, restructuring the judiciary, and electricity reform favoring state involvement in the sector. Despite lacking a qualified majority and facing opposition reluctance, many of these amendments were stymied, with the Supreme Court of Justice also playing a balancing role.

With projections indicating a continuation of this congressional makeup, where the ruling party remains distant from the requisite majority, a similar scenario may unfold. If Sheinbaum secures the presidency, she will face the challenge of advancing an agenda that includes substantial reforms to the Constitution.
Since its inception in 2011, the National Regeneration Movement (Morena) has experienced exponential growth in both its following and influence, expanding its political reach across Mexico. AMLO’s ascent to power in 2018 propelled Morena to secure victories in 5 governorships, a success replicated at the federal level, culminating in 21 out of 32 governorships by 2024.

This surge in Morena's support stemmed from a disillusioned electorate disenchanted with traditional political parties, notably the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the National Action Party (PAN). As Morena’s prominence surged, the decline of the PRI coincided, with the PAN and the Movimiento Ciudadano (MC) emerging as principal opposition forces. In a remarkable turn of events, the opposition forged an unprecedented alliance between the PRI and the PAN, historical adversaries, in response to Morena's dominance.

Morena's ascendancy afforded the party, alongside its allies, an absolute majority in both chambers of Congress. These legislative majorities were instrumental in advancing the government's Fourth Transformation (4T) agenda and solidifying its political dominance. While the President's agenda encountered minimal obstacles, constitutional reforms faced opposition and judicial impediments.
Morena enters the 2024 elections with governance over 21 out of Mexico's 32 states. Additionally, its coalition allies govern two more states, bringing the total coalition-held governorships to 23, while the opposition controls only 9.

- Of the 9 governorships up for grabs in these elections, Morena holds power in 6:
  - Mexico City (CDMX)
  - Chiapas
  - Morelos
  - Puebla
  - Tabasco
  - Veracruz

- Polls suggest that the majority of governorships, including key territories like the capital city (CDMX), are poised to remain under Morena's control.

- Meanwhile, the opposition is anticipated to retain governorships in Jalisco (held by MC), Guanajuato, and Yucatán (both held by PAN).

A key factor at the local level: To ensure the approval of constitutional reforms, Morena needs to secure victories in at least 4 out of the 9 local elections currently contested. This would allow them to maintain the necessary support from 17 local congresses for the ratification of these reforms sanctioned by the federal Congress.
Challenges for the next government

The upcoming elections are unfolding against a backdrop of persistent concerns, chief among them being **insecurity and violence**. 78% of the surveyed population expressed apprehension about falling victim to violent crime, highlighting the pervasive nature of this issue. Moreover, data from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) revealed a disturbing trend, with 33 individuals intending to run for office, including 16 aspiring candidates, tragically losing their lives between June 4, 2023, and February 7, 2024.

Another pressing issue confronting the nation is the ongoing **shortage of medicines in the public sector**. Despite efforts to address this through initiatives like the National Medicine Warehouse, delivery times exceeding 20 days after hospital requests underscore the persistent challenges in this domain, which the next government will inherit.

**Nearshoring** presents a significant opportunity for leveraging Mexico's strategic geographical location and robust trade ties with the United States to stimulate investment and industrial growth in the interior regions. Crafting a comprehensive long-term strategy on this front, while considering the continuation of tax incentives initiated by the previous administration, will be imperative for the incoming government.

The recent **energy crisis**, precipitated by a drought-induced water shortage impacting dam operations and exacerbating electricity shortages, underscores the urgent need for bolstering electric infrastructure. Addressing this crisis will be paramount, especially if the government seeks to attract foreign investment and facilitate the installation of multinational companies in the country.
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