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# **Elections in Argentina**

## *2019 General Elections*

Frequently Asked Questions

Americas

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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# Frequently Asked Questions

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*Disclosure:*  
*These FAQs reflect decisions made by the Argentine elections authorities as of October 25, 2019, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.*

## When is Election Day?

General elections in Argentina will be held on October 27, with polls open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. As of July 27, Argentines can verify the polling place and the table number where they will vote at [www.padron.gob.ar](http://www.padron.gob.ar) or by calling 0800-999-7237.

A runoff will be held on November 24 if no presidential candidate receives at least 45 percent of the vote, or 40 percent with a 10-point margin over the runner-up. The inauguration is scheduled for December 10.<sup>1</sup>

## Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?

In the upcoming elections, Argentines will be electing:

- The president and vice president
- 24 senators
- 130 deputies<sup>2</sup>

General elections in Argentina are held every four years. This year's first-round vote for the president, vice president and almost half of the congressional seats will be held on October 27. These elections follow the open, simultaneous and obligatory primaries (*Primarias Abiertas, Simultáneas y Obligatorias*, PASO) held on August 11. The PASO elections, created in 2009, determine which candidates will participate in the general elections and narrow down the field, as the winning party lists must obtain at least 1.5 percent of votes to participate in the general elections.<sup>3</sup>

## How is Argentina's political system structured?

The president has executive power, is both head of state and head of government, and is elected for a four-year term only renewable once. The vice president is the president of the Senate.

Legislative power is vested in the bicameral congress. The Chamber of Deputies, which is the lower house and has 257 seats, is elected for four-year terms through a proportional system with half of the deputies standing for reelection every two years. The Senate, which is the upper house and has 72 seats, is elected for six-year terms. Three senators are elected per province through a proportional system – two from the leading party and one from the runner-up. One-third of the Senate seats are up for reelection every two years; however, all three senators from each province must be elected in the same year, otherwise selecting two from the leading party and one from the runner-up would be impossible. Therefore, every other year only eight of the 24 provinces hold elections for senators. This year the eight

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/argentinas-2019-electoral-calendar>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/argentinosenelmundo/vota-desde-el-exterior>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.batimes.com.ar/news/argentina/argentinas-paso-primaries-what-you-need-to-know.phtml>

provinces electing senators are Chaco, Entre Ríos, Neuquén, Río Negro, Salta, Santiago del Estero, Tierra del Fuego and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires.<sup>456</sup>

The judiciary is independent from the executive and legislative branches of government. The Supreme Court, the judiciary's highest authority, is composed of nine judges appointed by the president with Senate approval.<sup>7</sup>

## What are Argentina's electoral authorities?

The National Electoral Chamber (CNE) is the primary body in charge of supervising Argentine elections. The CNE is responsible for "everything related to the organization, management and control of the electoral processes."<sup>8</sup>

The CNE's objectives include: standardizing processes, updating and consolidating the National Voter Registry, facilitating the right to vote, handling electoral complaints, optimizing political party financial transparency, providing poll workers with the necessary tools to function autonomously, training tribunal personnel on electoral processes and educating citizens about their political rights and duties.<sup>9</sup>

Additionally, at the federal level, the National Electoral Directorate (DINE), under the Ministry of Interior, Public Works and Housing, provides infrastructural and logistical support to the electoral process.<sup>10</sup> DINE's responsibilities include planning and executing electoral activities, conducting analysis, redesign and updates of electoral materials, defining and implementing procurement policies for electoral materials, ensuring accessibility, developing comparative studies and providing technical advice to local jurisdictions and other entities regarding electoral technologies.<sup>11</sup>

## Who is running in these elections?

Currently, six presidential candidates will be on the October ballots:

- Alberto Fernández
  - Party: Front of All<sup>12</sup>
  - Vice President: Cristina Fernández de Kirchner

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/interior/dine/elecciones2019/cargos-a-elegir>

<sup>5</sup> [https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy\\_files/files/media/csis/pubs/hf\\_v15\\_05.pdf](https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/media/csis/pubs/hf_v15_05.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=416383825&Country=Argentina&topic=Summary&subtopic=Political+structure>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/place/Argentina/Justice>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.pjn.gov.ar/jurisprudencia2/resultado.php>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.electoral.gob.ar/nuevo/paginas/pdf/POLITICA\\_DE\\_CALIDAD.pdf](https://www.electoral.gob.ar/nuevo/paginas/pdf/POLITICA_DE_CALIDAD.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/interior/dine>

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/decreto\\_682\\_10\\_estructura\\_organizativa\\_de\\_la\\_direccion\\_nacional\\_electoral\\_y\\_direccion\\_de\\_asuntos\\_politicos\\_y\\_reforma\\_politica\\_de\\_la\\_secretaria\\_de\\_asuntos\\_politicos.pdf](https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/decreto_682_10_estructura_organizativa_de_la_direccion_nacional_electoral_y_direccion_de_asuntos_politicos_y_reforma_politica_de_la_secretaria_de_asuntos_politicos.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> *Frente de Todos*

Fernández was the chief of the Cabinet of Ministers during Néstor Kirchner's presidency and in the early months of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's.

- Mauricio Macri Miguel
  - Party: Together for Change<sup>13</sup>
  - Vice President : Ángel Pichetto

Macri is the current president of Argentina. He founded the party Together for Change.

- Roberto Lavagna
  - Party: Federal Consensus<sup>14</sup>
  - Vice President: Juan Manuel Urtubey

Roberto Lavagna is an economist and was the minister of economy from 2002-05.

- Nicolás del Caño
  - Party: The Front of the Left and Workers in Unity (FIT Unidad)<sup>15</sup>
  - Vice President: Romina del Plá

Caño is the former national deputy for Mendoza and was in office from 2013-15.

- Juan José Gómez Centurión
  - Party: We the Front<sup>16</sup>
  - Vice President: Cynthia Hotton

Juan José Gómez Centurión was the director general of customs from 2015-17. From December 2017 until he began his campaign in March 2019, he was the vice president of Banco Nacional.

- José Luis Espert
  - Party: United for Liberty and Dignity<sup>17</sup>
  - Vice President: Luis Rosales

Espert is a famous economist and provides regular commentary on Argentine television.

## **Who can vote in these elections? How many registered voters are there?**

Native Argentines over the age of 16 are eligible to vote, and naturalized citizens are eligible at 18 years old. According to the National Electoral Chamber's data, there are 33,841,837 eligible voters in Argentina with women representing 50.9 percent.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Juntos Por el Cambio*

<sup>14</sup> *Consenso Federal*

<sup>15</sup> *Frente de Izquierda y de los Trabajadores*

<sup>16</sup> *Frente Nos*

<sup>17</sup> *Frente Despertar*

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.clarin.com/politica/numeros-paso-votantes-mesas-jovenes-primerizos-presos-famosos\\_0\\_MOvz\\_it7Q.html](https://www.clarin.com/politica/numeros-paso-votantes-mesas-jovenes-primerizos-presos-famosos_0_MOvz_it7Q.html)

## When will the newly elected government take office?

The newly elected president will be inaugurated on December 10, 2019. The congress will be inaugurated on March 1, 2020.

## How will voters cast their ballots?

After arriving at the polling place indicated in the voter registry, voters will find their assigned table. There, voters will show their ID to the table authorities, who will then hand them an open and empty envelope. Voters take the empty envelope into the “dark room,”<sup>19</sup> choose a party’s ballot from the table, put it in the envelope, seal the envelope and place it inside the box of their preferred candidate. The table authorities retain the ID until the ballot has been placed in the box and the voter has signed confirming that they voted. The chairman will provide a written record of the vote and return the ID.<sup>20</sup>

## How will votes be counted?

New as of this year, votes will be counted using software rented from Smartmatic, and educ.ar will provide the hardware – scanner and netbook for each polling place – used for transmission. The telegrams from Smartmatic will face provisional scrutiny by the Ministry of the Interior and the Electoral Justice.<sup>21</sup>

## Are there any quotas?

In 1991, Argentina adopted the first gender quota law in the world:<sup>22</sup> Law 24.012 established a minimum of 30 percent women in party lists for national legislative positions. However, the application of the women’s quota in the Senate was delayed until 2001, when elections began to be direct.

Through successive regulations that ensured women’s inclusion when possible, these regulations would even lead to the de facto application of parity in the composition of lists of Senate candidates, as stated in Decree 1246/00. When only two candidates are presented per list for the first time, the quota law and its regulations provide that they must be candidates of different sex.<sup>23</sup>

Because of the implementation of the law, women’s participation in both the Senate and Chamber of Deputies has averaged 40 percent in recent years. In 2018, Argentina was among the top 15 countries in the Inter-Parliamentary Union’s ranking of the percentage of women in parliament.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The dark room, or *cuarto oscuro* in Spanish, is a private room that allows for voters to place their ballots in secrecy.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/justiciacerca/votoprimeravez>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.eleconomista.com.ar/2019-05-javier-smaldone-como-se-cuentan-los-votos-en-argentina/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.panoramas.pitt.edu/larr/women-representation-and-policy-change-argentina>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/ope-doc1-paridad.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/ope-doc1-paridad.pdf>

## How are electoral authorities guaranteeing equal access to the electoral process for persons with disabilities?

According to Argentine law, the state has to guarantee the political right to vote and electoral accessibility. There is electoral accessibility when:

- The buildings have ramps that allow voters access and movement within the building.
- Signage is clear and devices allow voters with visual disabilities to understand them.
- The table authorities are trained to provide the support that voters with disabilities require.<sup>25</sup>

Voters with disabilities are permitted to utilize assisted voting, receive assistance from the table chairman, bring a service dog, and bring someone with them to the dark room.<sup>26</sup>

## Can Argentines who reside abroad vote in these elections?

This year, approximately 370,000 Argentines are eligible to vote abroad. Argentines with an ID that shows an address abroad since before April 30, 2019, can vote by mail or in person at the embassy or consulate designated by the address on their ID. To vote by mail, voters must register with the [National Registry of Electors](#). If registered and approved, voters received a ballot packet at the beginning of October. The completed ballot had to reach the embassy or consulate before October 23.<sup>27</sup>

For complete out-of-country voting information, contact an Argentine embassy or consular office.

## Is electoral observation allowed?

Yes. Argentina allows electoral observation missions through agreements signed by the electoral authorities. The autonomous city of Buenos Aires recently sanctioned its first Electoral Code, becoming the first district in Argentina to incorporate an electoral observation requirement in its electoral legislation.<sup>28</sup> *Transparencia Electoral* (Electoral Transparency) will deploy an observer mission to Argentina from October 24-27.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/interior/dine/electores/votoaccesible>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/justiciacerca/votoaccesible>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/argentinosenelmundo/vota-desde-el-exterior>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/node/ministerio-de-gobierno/atlas-de-reglas-electorales/observacion-electoral>

<sup>29</sup> <https://twitter.com/TransparenciaAL/status/1174035291104899073>

## Resources

- [www.argentina.gob.ar](http://www.argentina.gob.ar)
- [www.electoral.gob.ar](http://www.electoral.gob.ar)
- [www.padron.gov.ar](http://www.padron.gov.ar)