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FEATURED Q&A

Who Has the Edge in Bolivia's General Election in August?



Andrónico Rodríguez, leader of Bolivia's senate, this month announced his candidacy for president in general elections scheduled for Aug. 17. // File Photo: @AndronicoRod via X.

Q **Andrónico Rodríguez, the leader of Bolivia's Senate, on May 3 announced his candidacy for the country's upcoming presidential election, the first round of which is scheduled for Aug. 17. Rodríguez led all prospective candidates in a poll conducted in late March. Incumbent President Luis Arce on May 13 announced he will not seek re-election and called for leftist parties to unite behind a single candidate. How successful will Rodríguez be at earning support from Indigenous and left-leaning voters, who make up a majority of the electorate? What is the likelihood of a contested election result leading to social unrest, and what might that situation entail? Three months before the general election, which candidate is best positioned to become Bolivia's next president?**

A **Eduardo Ruiz, analyst at Control Risks in Bogotá:** "Andrónico Rodríguez, president of Bolivia's Senate, has emerged as a leading contender in the run-up to the presidential election on Aug. 17. With President Luis Arce withdrawing to avoid splitting the ruling party and Evo Morales disqualified by the constitutional court, Rodríguez stands as the main candidate of the ruling party's left-leaning factions. His Indigenous heritage and political base in the Chapare region position him to secure significant support from Bolivia's Indigenous and progressive electorate. Backed by influential figures such as Vice President David Choquehuanca and El Alto Mayor Eva Copa, Rodríguez offers a moderate platform centered on reforming the country's economic model amid an ongoing crisis of inflation and fuel shortages. However, the political landscape remains highly polarized. It is

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U.S. Supreme Court Maintains Block on Some Deportations

The U.S. Supreme Court on Friday maintained a block on the Trump administration's use of an 18th-century law to deport some Venezuelan migrants.

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China, E.U. Halt Brazil Poultry Imports Over Flu

China and the European Union halted imports of poultry from Brazil after a case of bird flu was detected in the South American country.

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POLITICAL

Milei-Backed Candidates Win Buenos Aires Elections

Argentine President Javier Milei's party won Sunday's local elections in Buenos Aires, defeating the left-wing Peronists and the bloc backed by center-right former President Mauricio Macri.

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Milei // File Photo: Argentine Government.

POLITICAL NEWS

U.S. Supreme Court Maintains Block on Some Deportations

The U.S. Supreme Court on Friday maintained its block on the Trump administration's deportations of Venezuelans under a 18th-century law, Reuters reported. In the ruling, the justices granted the American Civil Liberties Union's request to maintain a temporary block that it ordered on April 19. In that order, the court said the administration must not deport dozens of migrants who are being held at a detention facility in Texas, the wire service reported. Lawyers for the ACLU had argued that the administration was set to deport the migrants without required notice or an opportunity to argue against the removal orders. "Under these circumstances, notice roughly 24 hours before removal, devoid of information about how to exercise due process rights to contest that removal, surely does not pass muster," the justices said Friday in the unsigned order, Reuters reported. The Supreme Court sent the case back to an appeals court, telling it to examine the migrants' claims that they could not be deported legally under the 1798 Alien Enemies Act, The New York Times reported. Two of the Supreme Court's conservative justices, Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas, dissented from the ruling, with Alito saying the high court does not have the authority to rule on the case at this point, The New York Times reported. He also questioned whether it was illegal to provide relief to the group of detainees. U.S. President Donald Trump reacted angrily to the ruling in a social media post, saying "THE SUPREME COURT WON'T ALLOW US TO GET CRIMINALS OUT OF OUR COUNTRY!" In a later post, Trump added, "The Supreme Court of the United States is not allowing me to do what I was elected to do," and he said it was "a bad and dangerous day for America," The New York Times reported. In several lower court rulings, judges have said the Trump administration has overstepped the law's scope, which is to be used only when the United States has under-

gone an "invasion" or a "predatory incursion," the newspaper reported.

Milei-Aligned Candidates Win Buenos Aires Vote

Argentine President Javier Milei's La Libertad Avanza party on Sunday defeated candidates backed by former President Mauricio Macri in local legislative elections in Buenos Aires, strengthening Milei's hold on the country's right wing, Bloomberg News reported. Milei's party said it won twice as many votes as it did in the most recent local election in 2023, the Associated Press reported. Milei's spokesman, Manuel Adorni, won 30.1 percent of the votes, defeating Macri's center-right candidate, Silvia Lospennato, who received 15.9 percent, Bloomberg News reported. "Today is a pivotal day for the ideas of freedom," Milei said at a rally following the vote, the Associated Press reported. In acknowledging defeat, Lospennato said, "The results are not as expected," the AP reported. "We have a lot of work ahead of us," she added. In the election, Buenos Aires residents voted to renew legislators for about half the 60 seats in the city's legislature, the Buenos Aires Herald reported. Adorni and Lospennato headed their party tickets, each leading a bloc of 30 candidates, the newspaper reported. None of the candidates will become Buenos Aires' mayor; current Mayor Jorge Macri was elected to a four-year term in 2023. While Adorni came in first in the local vote, Lospennato of the PRO party came in third, and left-wing Peronist candidate Leandro Santoro finished second, with 27.4 percent of the vote, Bloomberg News reported. The head candidates' percentages will determine the how many candidates from their parties get seats in the city's legislature. The win by Adorni and the ruling party could help the party's chances in midterm elections later this year, the AP reported. The center-right PRO party has governed Buenos Aires for the past 18 years without interruption, and Lospennato's loss in the local vote marked a major upset, the Associated Press reported.

NEWS BRIEFS

Two Crew Members Killed as Mexican Navy Ship Strikes Brooklyn Bridge

Two crew members were killed on Saturday when a Mexican navy ship on a goodwill tour struck the Brooklyn Bridge in New York, the Associated Press reported. The crew members were positioned in the masts of the ship, the Cuauhtémoc, when it began moving swiftly in reverse, striking the bridge. Video showed crew members and dangling and falling from the damaged masts. At least 19 crew members were injured, said New York Mayor Eric Adams. No one on the bridge was hurt, he said.

Hundreds of Morales Supporters Protest in Bolivia

Hundreds of supporters of former Bolivian President Evo Morales protested in La Paz on Friday to voice their disagreement with the disqualification of Morales' candidacy last week by Bolivia's constitutional court, the Associated Press reported. At least four people were injured in the demonstration, with police firing tear gas at the crowd. Morales, who faces an active arrest warrant for alleged sexual abuse, was not present at the demonstration in Bolivia's capital city, the AP reported.

Guyana Passes Measure to Hold Companies Liable for Any Oil Spills

Guyana's parliament on Friday passed legislation that would hold oil companies liable for damages in the event of an oil spill, Reuters reported. The bill requires that firms operating oil and gas assets in Guyanese territory—including the ExxonMobil-led consortium that controls the offshore Stabroek Block—must commit to covering the costs of cleanup efforts after an oil spill, as well as conducting more regular inspections of equipment, Reuters reported.

ECONOMIC NEWS

China, E.U. Halt Brazil Poultry Imports Over Flu

Brazilian authorities on Friday detected a case of bird flu at a poultry farm, causing China and the European Union to pause poultry imports from Latin America's largest country, Reuters reported. China, the leading buyer of Brazilian poultry products, as well as Japan and South Korea, on Friday suspended imports of Brazilian poultry for at least 60 days, the Financial Times reported. Today, the European Union followed suit in banning poultry products from Brazil, Reuters reported. A European Commission spokesperson told Reuters that there is no set deadline for the import freeze, saying that E.U. regulations require an export country to be entirely free of avian influenza before normal commercial relations can resume. Brazil is the leading foreign supplier of poultry to the European Union, accounting for 32 percent of imports last year, according to the wire service. Brazil, the world's leading poultry producer, sent approximately 4 percent of its poultry exports to the European Union last year, Reuters reported. Friday's bird flu discovery is Brazil's first recent case at a commercial poultry farm. The import freezes take effect immediately; South Korea's agriculture ministry said that all shipments departing on or after May 15 are affected by the pause, news site aviNews reported. Currently, there are 37 separate shipments totaling 844 tons of chicken meat from Brazil that are in quarantine protocols at South Korean ports, according to aviNews.

Colombia Applies to Join China-Based Development Bank

Colombia's government has applied to join the China-based New Development Bank, the Associated Press reported Saturday. The application to the development bank, which is

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still unclear whether Arce will fully endorse Rodríguez or pursue an alternative political strategy. Meanwhile, Morales' disqualification has sparked protests and road blockades. Thus, social unrest is very likely regardless of the outcome of the elections due to the high politicization among the political actors. In addition, electoral fraud cannot be ruled out, especially considering the irregularities that led to the annulment of the 2019 election and the ongoing politicization of state institutions. Finally, Rodríguez's main challenger will be Cochabamba Mayor Manfred Reyes Villa. Given the high degree of fragmentation within both the ruling party and the opposition, the election outcome will likely hinge on the candidate most capable of building broad coalitions for the presidential runoff, scheduled for Oct. 19. Nevertheless, political instability is likely to persist beyond the elections."

A Kathryn Ledebur, director of the Andean Information Network in Cochabamba: "It's unclear how much support Rodríguez will garner in this highly polarized context. He should make it to the second round of voting, yet stalwart Morales supporters could withhold their support. They perceive his candidacy as a betrayal after years as Morales' eventual successor, and vociferously reject the illegal constitutional tribunal rulings banning Morales's constitutionally permitted candidacy. Wildly unpopular incumbent Arce's message of support for Rodríguez could also hurt his standing. The

urban middle class often fails to distinguish between Arce, Morales and Rodríguez, and blame them equally for rampant inflation, gasoline shortages and the overall economic crisis. The lackluster, divided opposition candidates will begrudgingly form an alliance to block Rodríguez's presidency. No candidate on the right has significant support, nor concrete political proposals or platforms. Although the outcome of the election is uncertain, it will be hotly contested. Social unrest appears inevitable, especially after the OAS'

“It remains to be seen how much the U.S. administration will interfere with elections.”

— Kathryn Ledebur

thoroughly refuted claims of electoral fraud in 2019, impunity for human rights violations committed by the illegally-instated Añez government, and a severe erosion of the rule of law, including members of Constitutional Tribunal who illegally extended their mandates to legitimize Arce's policies. Arbitrary arrests and politically motivated prosecutions of Morales supporters further deteriorated due process. Trump has yet to endorse a candidate. It remains to be seen how much the U.S. administration will interfere with elections. Its direct corrosive intervention in 2019, which allowed an unprincipled, racist, violent sector of the Bolivia right to control

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headquartered in Shanghai, came as Colombian President Gustavo Petro was concluding a trip to China. Petro met in Shanghai with the bank's head, former Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, the AP reported. The development bank was established a decade ago by the BRICS bloc of developing economies, which then included Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. It was previously known as the BRICS Development Bank. The bank has ap-

proved 122 infrastructure projects, worth more than \$40 billion, Rousseff has said. On Saturday, Petro told reporters that Colombia will buy \$512 million in the bank's shares, and he expressed hopes for securing the development bank's backing for a 75-mile railway or canal that would link Colombia's Atlantic and Pacific coasts. The application followed Colombia's move to join China's Belt and Road Initiative, Reuters reported.

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the country for a year, could prove to be a chilling precedent.”

A **Mauricio Becerra de la Roca Donoso, managing partner at BDA Abogados in Santa Cruz de la Sierra:** “Bolivia’s left-wing and Indigenous sector is currently represented by three prominent figures, all formerly part of the ruling party for 19 of the past 20 years, the Movement for Socialism (MAS). President Arce, who is not running for re-election, still controls MAS. Former President Evo Morales, now without a party and barred from running by the constitutional court, continues to push for legal and social means to regain eligibility. Meanwhile, Senator Andrónico Rodríguez has emerged as a fresh face supported by a new political bloc, ‘Alianza Popular,’ gaining significant backing as a renewal figure in contrast to Arce and Morales. While there are growing calls for unity around Rodríguez, it remains unclear whether the three will come together or remain divided. On the center-right, two main figures—businessman Samuel Doria Medina and former President Jorge Quiroga—also remain at odds. Civic and citizen groups urge them to unite to defeat the left, but so far, no signs of convergence have emerged.

As a result, the right is just as fragmented as the left, creating an unpredictable and open electoral scenario. Regarding confidence in the electoral process: Unlike in 2019, when the Electoral Tribunal was widely discredited and subordinated to President Morales, leading to accusations of fraud and the

“**The right is just as fragmented as the left, creating an unpredictable and open electoral scenario.”**

— **Mauricio Becerra de la Roca Donoso**

annulment of the election, the new heads of the electoral body have restored some credibility to this institution, thanks to more responsible recent conduct. Therefore, despite Morales’ announcements of complaints and protests about his candidacy, the upcoming elections are expected to produce a widely accepted result.”

The Advisor welcomes comments on its Q&A section. Readers can write editor Gene Kuleta.

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