

Public Affairs in Latin America

South America, MERCOSUR & Brazil

Speaker: Michel Neil

September 2026

UNDERSTANDING THE ENVIRONMENT

The way public affairs are conducted depends on the circumstances of each country.

	GDP Growth (2026f, IMF)	Inflation (2026f, IMF)	Democracy (2026, V-DEM)	Corruption (2025, Int Transp.)	Press Freedom (2026, RSF)
ARG	3.5%	30.4%	0.52	36	52.44
BOL	-3.3%	20.7%	0.35	28	54.25
BRA	2.4%	4.0%	0.70	35	66.37
CHL	2.4%	2.9%	0.78	63	60.84
COL	2.3%	5.9%	0.56	37	51.66
ECU	2.5%	2.9%	0.39	33	44.37
GUY	16.2%	4.1%	0.33	40	59.58
PRY	4.2%	3.3%	0.38	24	54.67
PER	2.8%	2.5%	0.51	30	37.86
SUR	3.9%	11.8%	0.63	38	73.20
URU	1.8%	4.0%	0.79	73	68.72
VEN	4.0%	387.4%	0.04	10	30.48

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WHAT TO WATCH

1. **Economic forecasts:** World Economic Outlook (IMF)
2. **Democracy vs. Autocracy:** Liberal Democracy Index (V-DEM)
3. **Corruption:** Corruption Perception Index (International Transparency)
4. **Public Governance:** Government at a Glance (OECD); Worldwide Governance Indicators (World Bank)
5. **Institutional Stability:** Number of deposed presidents, and impeachments
6. **Checks & Balances** between the Branches
7. **Press Freedom:** World Press Freedom Index (Reports without Borders/ RSF)
8. **Level of Education:** Education at a Glance (OECD)
9. **Level of Citizenship:** access to the internet and mobile devices
10. **Civil society** engagement in public policy
11. **Lobbying regulations**

OVERVIEW

The political landscape has changed significantly.

AREA

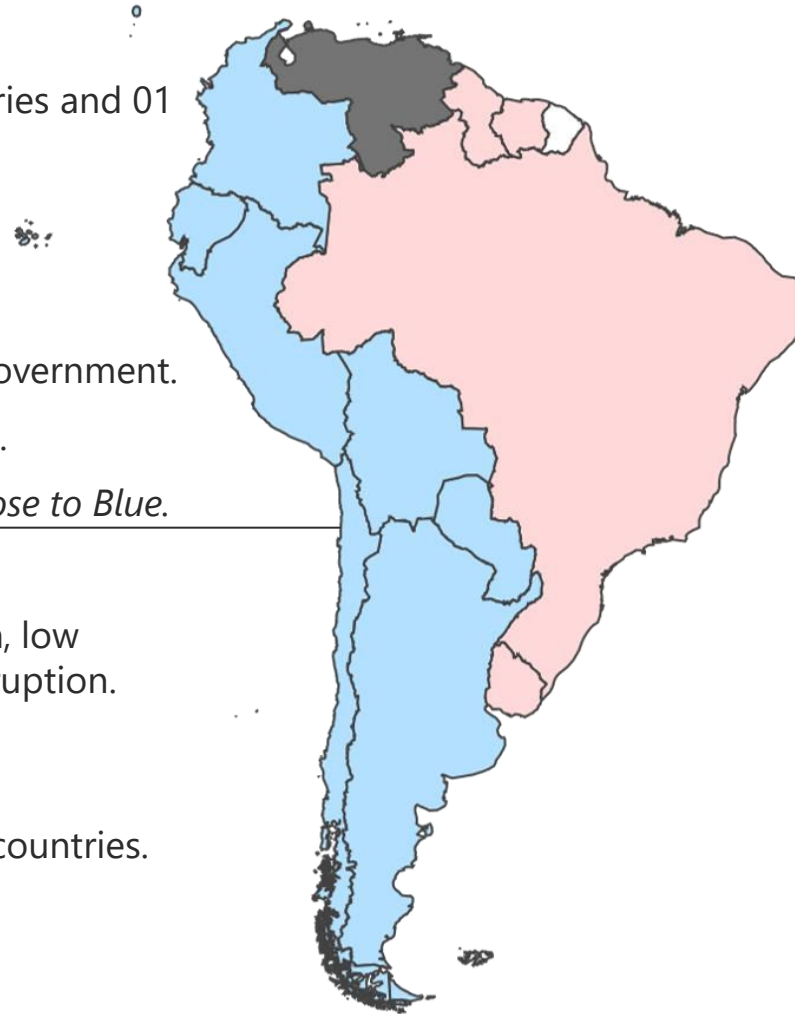
- 13 countries: 12 independent countries and 01 overseas territory.
- 440 million people.

POLITICS

- Instability among the branches of government.
- Decline in public trust in institutions.
- A shift from *Red to Rose and from Rose to Blue*.
- Leaders elected by narrow margins
- Limited access to public information, low transparency, and high levels of corruption.

SOCIAL

- Significant social inequality among countries.
- Hunger is being eradicated.



ECONOMY

- The region produces commodities such as oil, gas, minerals, and agribusiness products.
- Real GDP Growth 2026 (estimated): 2.0% (EIU, August 2026).
- Economies are resilient amid political and global uncertainties.
- Central banks adopt a cautious approach.
- Rare earths attract interest from the US, the EU, and China.
- Macroeconomic conditions restrict governments' ability to respond to citizens' demands.
- Countries need to navigate the rivalry between the US and China.

OVERVIEW

South American presidents are shaping the new political landscape.

● Right-wing ● Left-wing

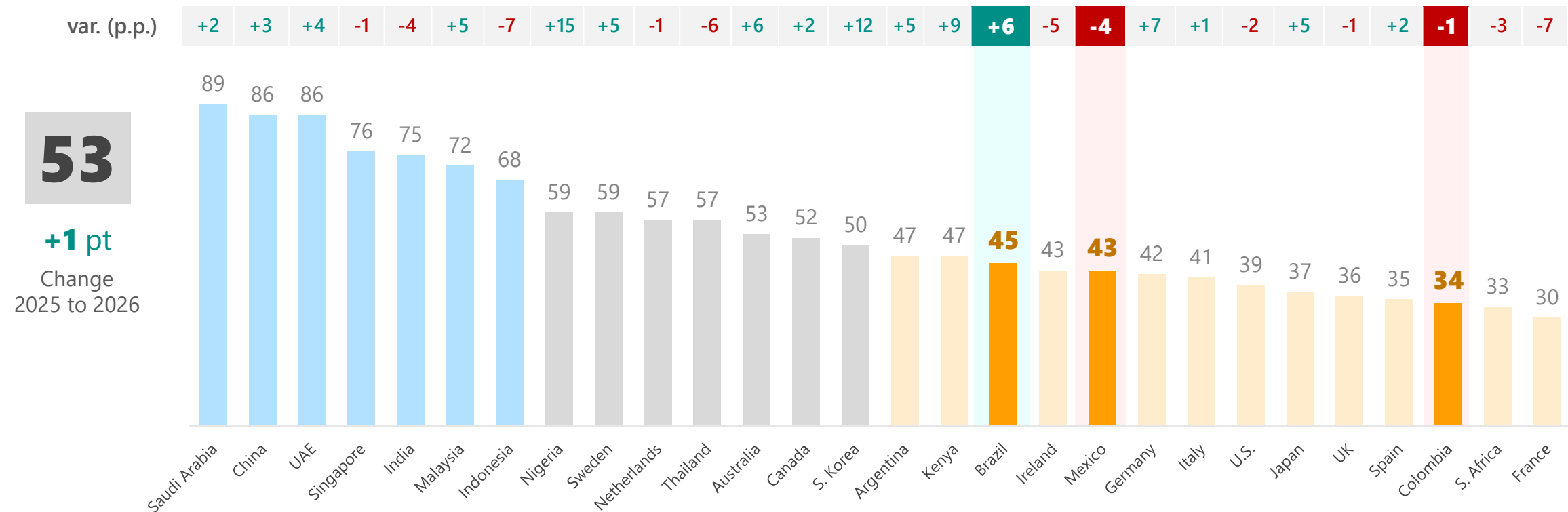
COUNTRY	ARGENTINA	BOLIVIA	BRAZIL	CHILE	COLOMBIA	ECUADOR	GUYANA	PARAGUAY	PERU	SURINAME	URUGUAY	VENEZUELA
Incumbent	 Javier Milei	 Rodrigo Paz	 Lula da Silva	 José Antônio Kast	 Abelardo de la Espriella	 Daniel Noboa	 Irfaan Ali	 Santiago Peña	 Keiko Fujimori	 Jennifer Geerlings-Simons	 Yamandú Orsi	 Dercy Rodríguez
Political Compass	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Term of office	2023-2027	2025-2030	2023-2027	2026-2030	2026-2030	2023-2027	2025-2030	2023-2028	2026-2031	2025-2030	2025-2030	2026-?
Political parties	44	20	30	20	32	7	5	37	43	14	23	75
Mercosur	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
Shield of Americas	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Lobbying is regulated?	✗	✗	✗	✓ <i>Law no. 20730 of 2014</i>	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓ <i>Law no. 28024 of 2003</i>	✗	✗	✗

LATIN AMERICA: PUBLIC OPINION

Latin Americans are likely to distrust their governments.

“I TRUST GOVERNMENT TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT”

In percentage



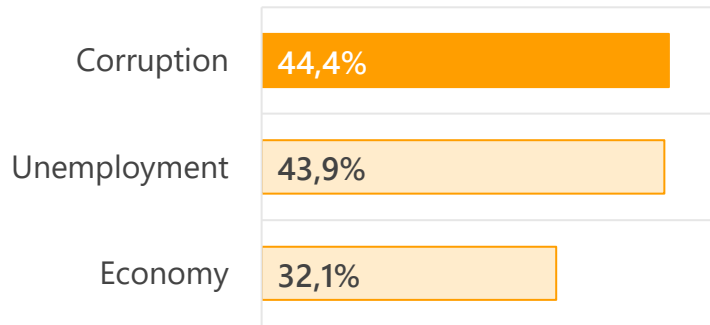
Source: 2026 Edelman Trust Barometer (slide 43, [Link](#))

LATIN AMERICA: PUBLIC OPINION

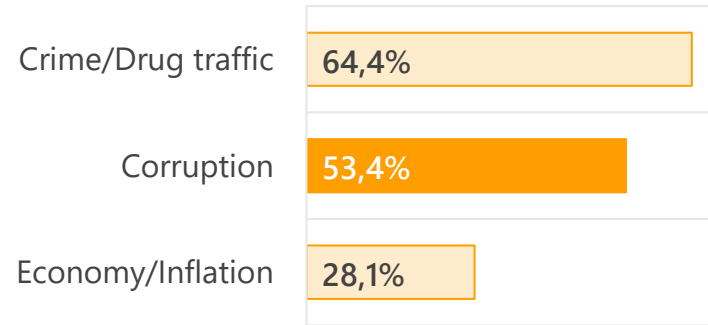
In major Latin American countries, societies think corruption is the number one challenge facing their nations.



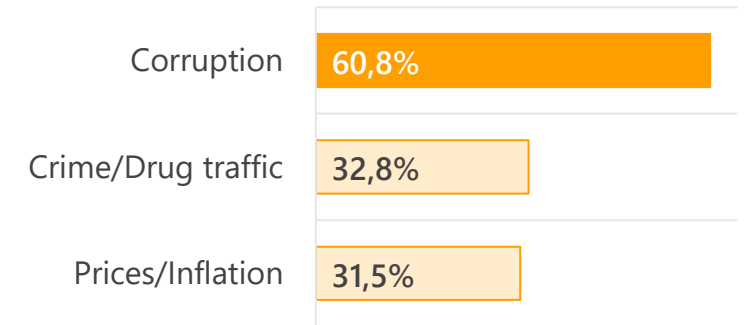
Argentina



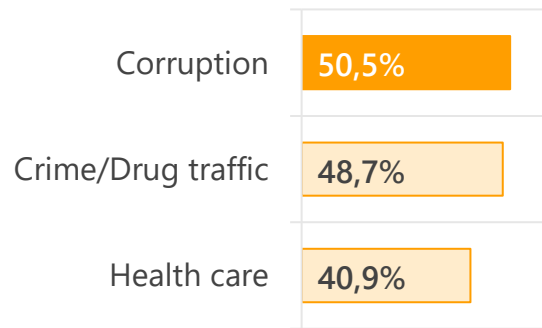
Brazil



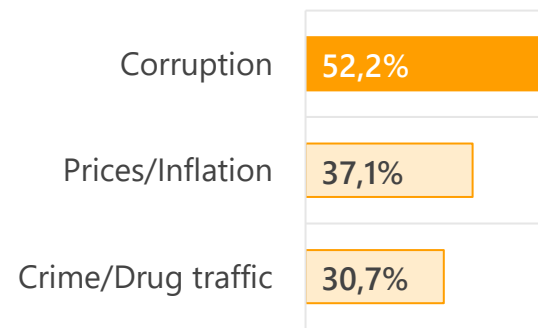
Chile



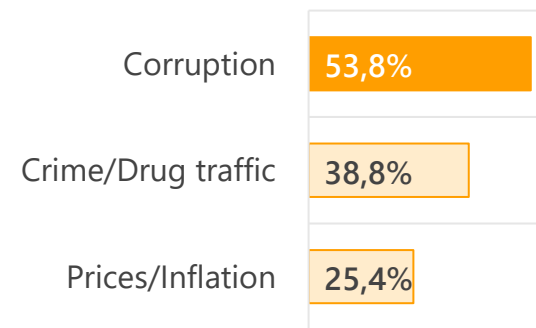
Colombia



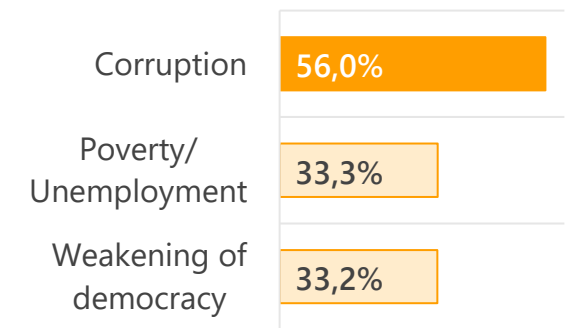
Mexico



Peru



Venezuela



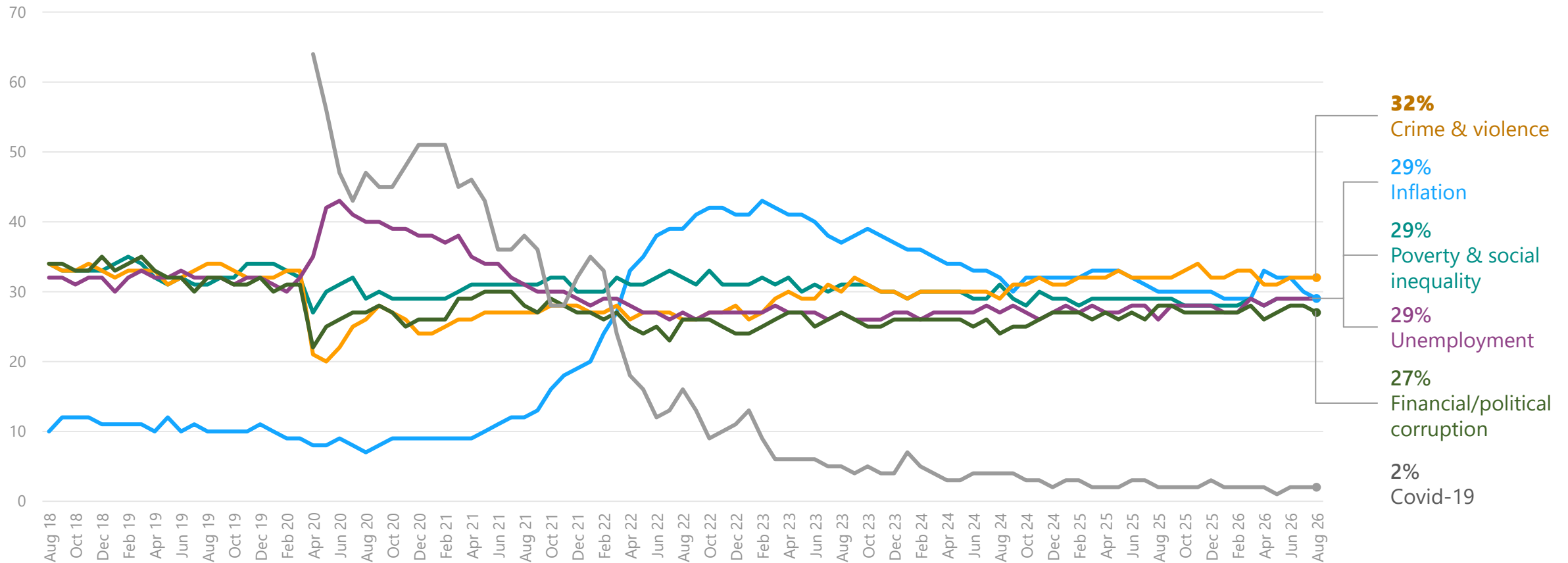
Source: Latam Pulse, August 2026 (AtlasIntel/Bloomberg, [Link](#)).

LATIN AMERICA: PUBLIC OPINION

Latin Americans' concerns are not confined to the region. They are global.

WORLD WORRIES: LONG TERM TRENDS

Which three of the following topics do you find the most worrying in your country? (in %)



Source: IPSOS What Worries the World, August 2026 (slide 8, [Link](#))

MERCOSUR



Current Pro Tempore Presidency

Yamandú Orsi
President of Uruguay 



Establishment

March 26, 1991
Treaty of Asunción signed by: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay.



Type

Intergovernmental organization and customs union whose import duty system is based on the NCM code.

Country	Area (Km ²)	Population (million)	GDP (USD billion)	GDP/ Mercosur GDP
Argentina	2,780,400	48.0	688.4	18.7%
Bolivia	1,098,581	12.8	80.7	2.2%
Brazil	8,515,770	214.1	2,640.00	71.8%
Paraguay	406,752	6.5	60.5	1.6%
Uruguay	176,215	3.5	96.1	2.6%
Venezuela	916,445	26.9	111.3	3.0%
Mercosur	13,894,163	311.6	3,677.1	

Source: IMF.



■ Member States
■ Associated States

6 Member States



7 Associated States



WHAT TO KNOW

- The region is **culturally** protectionist.
- Brazil is the largest economy, but it **no longer** exerts the same influence within the bloc that it once did.
- The Mercosur-E.U. Agreement is the **largest** ever negotiated by the bloc.
- Mercosur has **little experience** dealing with multilateral agreements involving more developed and experienced regions.
- Lobbying is viewed **negatively** – following the money trail often leads to major corporate scandals.
- **Low level** of professionalization.

● IN FORCE

● APPLIED PROVISIONALLY

● UNDER DOMESTIC RATIFICATION

● UNDER NEGOTIATION

COUNTRY	AGREEMENT	STATUS
Bolivia	[ACE 36] MERCOSUR-Bolivia	●
Chile	[ACE 35] MERCOSUR-Chile	●
Colombia	[ACE 72] MERCOSUR-Colombia	●
Cuba	[ACE 62] MERCOSUL-Cuba	●
Egypt	MERCOSUR-Egypt	●
Ecuador	[ACE 59] MERCOSUR-Colombia-Ecuador-Venezuela	●
USA	ATEC Protocol related to commercial and transparency rules	●
India	MERCOSUR-India Expansion of the PTA MERCOSUR-India	●
Israel	MERCOSUR-Israel	●
Mexico	[ACE 54] MERCOSUR-Mexico [ACE 55] MERCOSUR-Mexico: Automotive products	●
Palestine	MERCOSUR-Palestine	●
Panama	[ACE 76] MERCOSUR-Panama	●
Peru	[ACE 58] MERCOSUR-Peru	●
SACU	MERCOSUR-SACU (Southern Africa Customs Union)	●
E.U.	MERCOSUR-E.U. (European Union)	●
Singapore	MERCOSUR-Singapore	●
EFTA	MERCOSUR-EFTA (European Free Trade Association)	●
Canada	MERCOSUR-Canada	●
South Korea	MERCOSUR-South Korea	●
UAE	MERCOSUR-UAE (United Arab Emirates)	●
Indonesia	MERCOSUR-Indonesia	●
Lebanon	MERCOSUR-Lebanon	●
Vietnam	MERCOSUR-Vietnam	●

BRAZIL

General Elections – October 4, 2026



214 MILLION
BRAZILIANS



A HUGE &
HIGHLY DIVERSE COUNTRY



10TH-LARGEST
ECONOMY IN THE WORLD



SIGNIFICANT
SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

WHAT'S AT STAKE



158.8
million voters



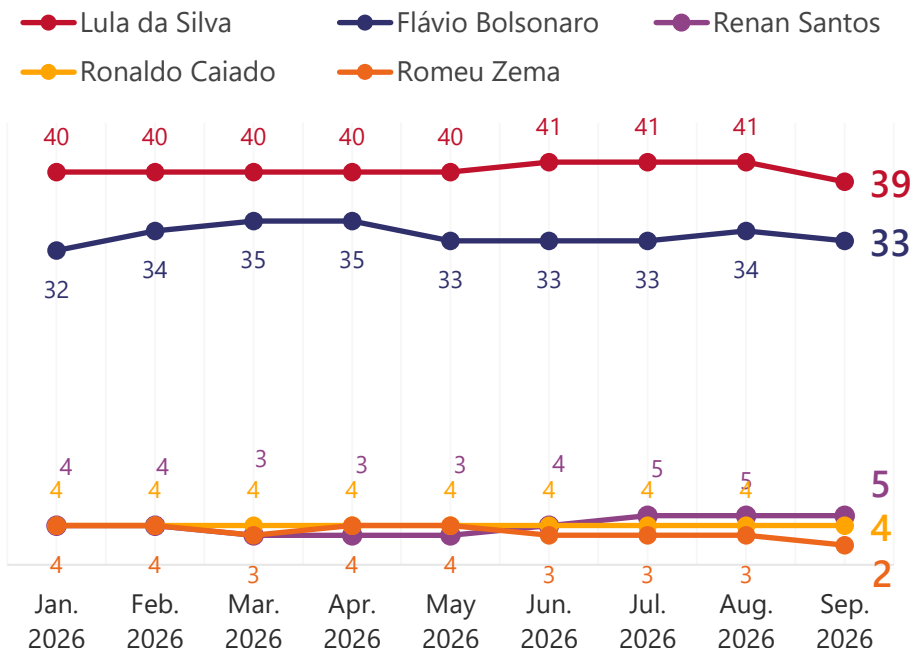
20,765
candidates

1,654 positions up for grabs

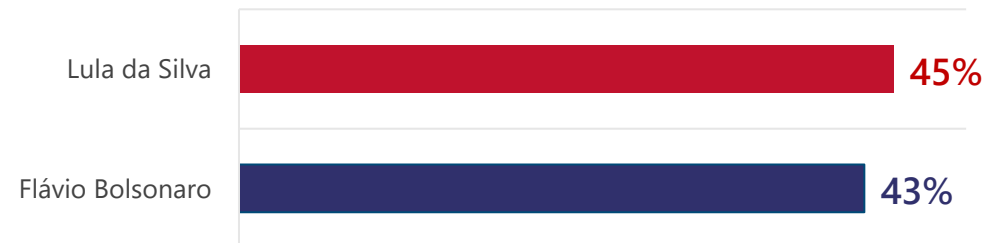
- 1** President & Vice-President
- 27** Governors & Lieutenant Governors (27/27)
- 54** Senators (54/81)
- 513** Federal Representatives (513/513)
- 1,059** State & Federal District Representatives

TOO EARLY TO CALL

Voting intentions – 1st round (% , time series)



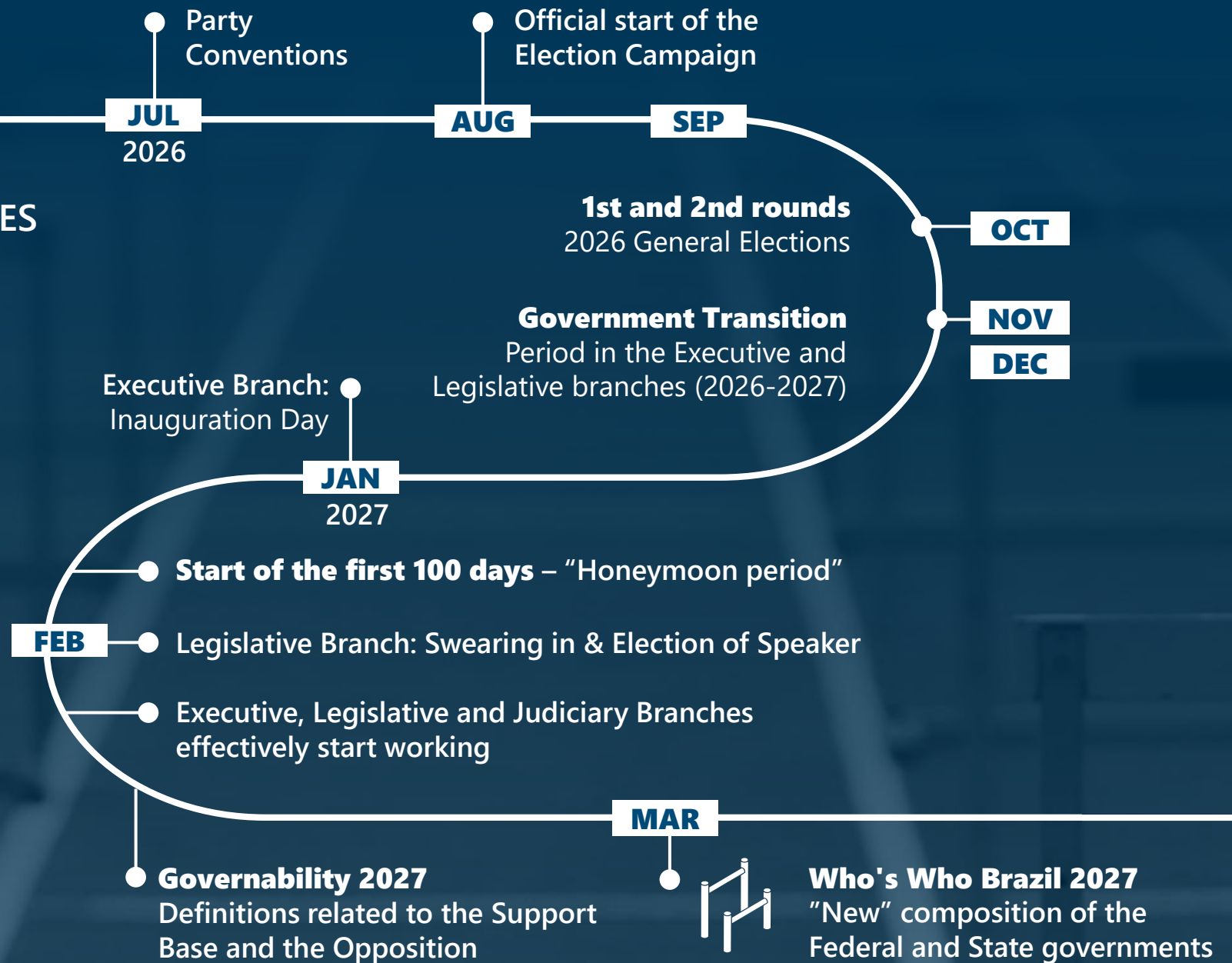
Runoff Scenario (October 25th, 2026)



Source: The Economist Poll Tracker, last updated on September 7, 2026.



9 MONTHS OF POLITICAL UNCERTAINTIES AND HURDLES AHEAD



PUBLIC AFFAIRS IN LATIN AMERICA

Key takeaways

- The more closed off and less transparent a country is, the greater the scope for corruption and dirty money.
- Among all Latin American countries, only Peru and Chile have regulations on lobbying.
- In Brazil, lobbying regulations have been under discussion since 1998, but opponents of transparency have blocked their passage.
- Latin America countries are debating whether to align themselves with Washington, DC, or establish trade and collaborative partnerships with China, the European Union, EFTA, and India.
- Governments and societies in Latin America no longer accept being treated as colonized countries.
- It is in this context that the “Donroe Doctrine”, the Mercosur-EU Agreement – which is provisionally applied and currently subject to the “Brussels Effect” – and the trade partnership with China should be analyzed.



Latin American countries holding elections in 2026 and 2027

- **Brazil**
General elections
[October 4, 2026](#)
- **El Salvador**
Presidential, legislative, and municipal elections
[February 28, 2027](#)
- **Argentina**
General elections for president and Congress
[October 24, 2027](#)
- **Guatemala**
General elections for the president, Congress, and municipal governments
[June 2027](#)
- **Mexico**
Midterm elections for the Chamber of Deputies and state offices
[Scheduled for 2027](#)

PATRI

Our premise for advocacy

- With the advent of the internet and mobile technology, civil society is better organized to participate in public policy; however, “the authorities have failed to adapt to this new era.”
- The environment favors direct corporate lobbying and the pursuit of access to decision-makers through well-connected intermediaries, often by opaque means or corruption (“dirty money”).
- Oversight bodies tend to remain inactive until media-exposed scandals force them to respond.
- We advocate for in-person self-representation – that is, *speaking on one’s own behalf*, with the support of professional expertise.
- We believe that outsourced representation, with unclear legal standards, works like a “black box”.



“In a democracy, the public policy process requires the involvement of all stakeholders – business leaders, civil society, and government decision-makers – as well as reliable information, qualified representation, transparency, and ethics.

Self-representation is more transparent and legitimate in a country lacking necessary lobbying regulations”.

– Eduardo Ricardo,
PATRI’s founder & chairman

BRAZIL IS OUR WORLD

WE HELP MAKE IT YOURS

WE NAVIGATE ON THE GROUND THROUGH EVERY LEVEL.

UNDERSTANDING BRAZIL IS KEY TO UNLOCKING ITS OPPORTUNITIES. AT PATRI, WE TRANSLATE COMPLEXITY INTO CLARITY, MAKING THE COUNTRY'S POLICIES AND DYNAMICS ACCESSIBLE TO YOU.





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Our expertise combines an in-depth understanding of multiple sectors, industries, and stakeholders, with an exhaustive knowledge of all branches of federal, state, and municipal governments, as well as opinion makers in civil society and international bodies and agencies.

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