

2026 Costa Rica General Elections

Right-wing Laura Fernández, wins Costa Rican elections

On February 1, 2026, Laura Fernández of the governing Sovereign People's Party (PPS) [secured](#) the Costa Rican presidency with 48.3% of the vote, surprisingly avoiding a runoff by surpassing the required 40% threshold. Álvaro Ramos of the National Liberation Party (PLN), who [came](#) in second with 33.4%, has since [conceded](#) the elections.

Fernández, a close ally of outgoing President Rodrigo Chaves, campaigned as the "[continuation of Chaves' change](#)" and is widely seen as his political heir. Her campaign reflected a mix of security-focused governance and pro-business economic reforms aimed at modernizing Costa Rica. She focused heavily on security, with policies inspired by Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele, as well as bold economic reforms, including selling the Central Bank of Costa Rica and the International Bank of Costa Rica (Bisca) to raise funds for the public pension system. Her proposals also include [digitizing](#) government services to reduce bureaucracy and expanding 5G connectivity across the country, particularly in rural areas, to close the digital divide.

Fernandez's win solidifies the PPS' position in government, after its founding only four years prior. She will be inaugurated on May 1, 2026, and will become Costa Rica's second female president and the ninth woman in Latin American history to be elected.

The Sovereign People's Party enters the Legislative Assembly with a resounding majority

In addition to the presidency, Costa Ricans also voted yesterday to elect the 57 deputies in the Legislative Assembly. The Sovereign People's Party (PPS) [won](#) 31 seats, achieving an outright majority in the legislature and ensuring smoother passage of Fernandez's agenda. This marks the first time that the PPS will enter the legislature, a significant milestone for President Chaves' party, after his [split](#) with the Social Democratic Progress Party (PPSD). Álvaro Ramos' [social democrat](#) leaning National Liberation Party [won](#) 17 seats, while Ariel Robles' left-wing Broad Front Party (FA) [won](#) 7 seats. The remaining two seats [went](#) to the Citizens' Action Coalition and the Social Christian Unity Party.

An election defined by growing security issues

Costa Rica's 2026 elections centered on crime and drug trafficking, with 42.4% of Costa Rican voters [citing](#) the issue as their primary concern in a December 2025 survey. Once considered one of Latin America's safest nations, Costa Rica now has the 8th highest [homicide rate](#) in the region. This rise in violent crime is [motivated](#) by an increase in drug trafficking, with Costa Rica becoming a key global transshipment point.

In response, Fernández has proposed creating a [CECOT](#)-style super prison, increasing jail time for criminals, and establishing "[emergency zones](#)" where civil liberties would temporarily be suspended to allow security forces to target narcotraffickers. Fernández also emphasized

[strengthening](#) international cooperation with the U.S. DEA, Europe's Interpol, and other agencies to tackle drug trafficking.

Regional context: a rightward shift

Fernández's decisive win reflects a broader rightward shift in Latin America, where voters are increasingly electing conservative governments and hard-right leaders in response to public frustration over insecurity, corruption, and economic stagnation. In recent years, Argentina, Paraguay, Ecuador, Panama, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic have all seen right-wing candidates rise to power. The trend accelerated in 2025, when Bolivia, Chile, and Ecuador elected conservative governments—Bolivia's Rodrigo Paz ended nearly two decades of socialist rule, while José Antonio Kast's victory in Chile ushered in the country's first far-right administration since its return to democracy in 1990.

While Latin American political cycles historically have worked as a pendulum, a key factor accelerating this continental shift has been the influence of U.S. President Donald Trump, whose close alignment with right-wing leaders such as Nayib Bukele in El Salvador and Daniel Noboa in Ecuador has strengthened conservative networks across the region. Moreover, Trump's indirect involvement in elections—most notably in Argentina and Honduras—has emboldened right-wing candidates and reshaped regional dynamics. Colombia and Brazil, both currently under left-leaning governments, will head to the polls to elect a new president in 2026.