

GUATEMALA

Date of Elections: March 1, 1970

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Guatemala, the Congress, consists of 55 Deputies who are elected for 4 years and are eligible for re-election only once and after a period of 4 years following the end of their mandate.

The mandate of the Deputies elected in 1966 had expired.

Electoral System

All Guatemalan citizens of either sex, over the age of 18 and inscribed in the electoral register have the right to vote. Persons who have been deprived of their civil rights by sentence of conviction or by judicial interdiction cannot vote. Voting is compulsory for all literate citizens and optional for the remainder.

In order to be elected to the office of Deputy, a candidate must hold Guatemalan nationality, be in possession of his civil rights and be at least 30 years old. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with the exercise of public office in the executive or judicial branches, with the exception of the teaching profession. Contractors for public works or enterprises which are financed by the State or a municipality, close relatives of the President and Vice-President of the Republic, members of the army on active service, ministers of a religion or sect, persons who have been convicted in a case involving accounts and have not settled their liabilities, and those representing the interests of companies or individuals operating public services are not eligible for the Congress.

Candidates must be presented by legally registered political parties. The Constitution prohibits the formation of parties if they advocate Communist ideologies and if their doctrine, methods or international connections threaten the sovereignty of the State or the foundations of its democratic organization.

Deputies are elected by simple plurality system in constituencies in which there is only one seat to be filled. When there are 2 seats to be provided for, they are filled by party-list system. The 2 candidates of the party that polled the most votes are elected. However, if the difference between the total number of votes won by the leading party and the total number of votes won by the party in second position represents less than 20 % of the leading party's total votes, each of the 2 parties receives 1 seat.

If 3 or more seats are to be filled, the election is held by closed party-list system with proportional distribution of seats according to the d'Hondt method.

Each Deputy is elected with an alternate who is called to replace him should he die, resign or lose his parliamentary mandate during a legislature.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Three parties contested the legislative and presidential elections of March 1, 1970: the National Liberation Movement (MLN), led by Colonel Carlos Arafia Osorio; the Revolutionary Party (PR), led by Mr. Mario Fuentes Pieruccini; and the Democratic Institutional Party (PID), a Christian Democrat group under the leadership of Mr. Jorge Lucas Caballeros.

The electoral campaign was marred by incidents of great violence and assassinations. The right-wing National Liberation Movement based its propaganda on the need to stamp out guerilla activities and urban terrorism. Its presidential candidate, Colonel Arafia Osorio, won with 42 % of the votes. The Liberal candidate, Mr. Fuentes Pieruccini, received 35 %. As neither contestant had won an absolute majority, it was, in conformity with the Constitution, left to the Congress to choose the new President. Thus, on March 21, 1970, Colonel Arafia Osorio was elected Head of State.

Statistics

Distribution of Seats in the National Congress

Political Group	Number of Seats in the Congress
Revolutionary Party (PR)	.38
National Liberation Movement (MLN)	.1
Democratic Institutional Party (PID)	.—