

GUATEMALA

Date of Elections: 3 November 1985

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament provided for in the 1985 Constitution*.

Characteristics of Parliament

Under the 1985 Constitution, the unicameral Parliament of Guatemala, the Congress, consists of 100 members elected for 5 years. Deputies are eligible for re-election only once, after the lapse of one parliamentary session.

Electoral System

All Guatemalan citizens who are at least 18 years of age and registered as electors have the right to vote. Persons who are not in full possession of their civil rights and members of the armed and police forces are barred from being electors.

Voting is compulsory for all citizens with certain exceptions; abstention is punishable by fine.

Qualified electors who are literate and nominated by a legally registered political party may be elected to the Congress. Those ineligible include close relatives of the President and Vice-President of the Republic, civil servants, holders of certain public functions, members of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and Audit Office, government contractors and persons convicted of crime.

Of the 100 congressional seats, 75 are filled by direct election in the country's 23 districts and 25 on the basis of proportional representation from a national list. In the latter case, distribution of seats is effected according to the d'Hondt method.

Within each constituency, an alternate Deputy is elected at the same time as the titular member. The former fills a vacancy which might arise between general elections.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

General elections were originally scheduled for July 1985 but postponed due to delays in the drafting of a new Constitution by the National Constituent Assembly chosen on 1 July 1984**.

The legislative polling was held concurrently with that for President of the Republic and municipalities. Main contenders for the presidency were Mr. Mario Vinicio Cerezo Arevalo of the centrist Christian Democratic Party (PDCG) and Mr. Jorge Carpio Nicolle of the moderately conservative Union of the National Centre (UCN). Altogether 14 parties and

*See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 10.

** See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments XVIII* (1983-1984), pp. 11-12.

eight presidential candidates were in contention. Economic issues (inflation, unemployment, etc.), human rights and how to deal with the continuing leftist guerilla insurgency were in the forefront of the campaign debate.

While a run-off election for President proved necessary on 8 December, the PDCG secured an absolute majority of congressional seats on polling day. On 14 January 1986, Mr. Cerezo was inaugurated as Head of State, thus ending years of military rule. On the same day, the new Cabinet was sworn in and the Congress held its first session.

Statistics

*1. Results of the Elections and Distribution
of Seats in the Congress*

Number of registered electors.	2,765,116	
Voters.	2,235,502	(80.8%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	34,657	
Valid votes.	2,200,845	
Political Group	% of Votes obtained	Number of Seats
Christian Democratic Party (PDCG).	38.7	51
Union of the National Centre (UCN).	20.2	22
Revolutionary Party (PR) - Demo- cratic Party of National Cooperation (PDCN)	13.8	11
National Liberation Movement (MLN).	6.3	6
Democratic Institutional Party (PID).	6.3	6
Nationalist Authentic Central (CAN)	6.3	1
Democratic Socialist Party (PSD)	3.4	2
Nationalist Renewal Party (PRN)	3.2	1
Anti-Communist Unification Party (PUA)	1.8	—
		100

2. *Distribution of Deputies according to Professional Category*

Lawyers. . . . .	.33
Teachers. . . . .	.15
Trade and commerce. . . . .	.11
Doctors. . . . .	.9
Farmers. . . . .	.6
Industrialists. . . . .	.5
Politicians. . . . .	.4
Others. . . . .	.17
	100

3. *Distribution of Deputies according to Sex*

Men. . . . .	.95
Women. . . . .	.5
	100

4. *Distribution of Deputies according to Age Group*

18-30 years. . . . .	.5
31-60». . . . .	.88
61-80 ». . . . .	.7
	100