

## October 2019

**ARGENTINA**

Oct. 27—Alberto Fernández is elected president with 48% of the vote, ousting the incumbent Mauricio Macri, who takes 41%. Fernández's victory marks a resurgence of the left-wing populist Peronist tradition, and of former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, who will be vice president. Macri had promised that free-market reforms and austerity would revive the economy, but failed to avert a deep recession.

**BOLIVIA**

Oct. 24—The incumbent, Evo Morales, is declared the winner of an Oct. 20 presidential election with 47% of the vote; no runoff is required because his margin of victory narrowly exceeds 10 points after a delayed vote count. The main opposition candidate, former President Carlos Mesa, says the official tally is fraudulent and the Organization of American States calls for a runoff, as violent protests spread across the country. Morales, the country's 1st indigenous president, claims his 4th term, having won a 2017 court ruling to circumvent term limits.

**CANADA**

Oct. 21—Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party wins just 33% of the popular vote and loses its majority in the House of Commons, ending up with 157 out of 338 seats, 27 fewer than in the last election in 2015. But Trudeau is expected to form a minority government dependent on outside support from smaller parties.

**CHILE**

Oct. 19—President Sebastián Piñera cancels an increase in subway fares that precipitated the worst outbreak of nationwide civil unrest in decades. Days of rioting had prompted Piñera to declare that the nation was "at war." Despite other concessions by the government, violent protests against inequality continue through the end of the month, leaving at least 20 dead.

**CHINA**

Oct. 1—At a commemoration of the 70th anniversary of Communist Party rule, marked by a massive military parade in Beijing, President Xi Jinping declares, "No force can obstruct the advance of the Chinese people and Chinese nation." But protesters in Hong Kong attempt to disrupt the occasion with 1 of the largest and most violent demonstrations in months of unrest over tightening control from Beijing; 1 protester is shot by a police officer.

**IRAQ**

Oct. 29—Masked gunmen kill 18 people in an attack on protesters at a tent encampment in the Shia holy city of Karbala. It is 1 of the deadliest incidents in a nationwide wave of protests that began Oct. 1, denouncing corruption, political dysfunction, and Iranian influence. A total of more than 250 people have been killed so far. Protesters blame Iran-backed militias for responding to the demonstrations with deadly force.

**LEBANON**

Oct. 29—Prime Minister Saad Hariri and his cabinet resign, meeting 1 demand of nationwide mass protests that have continued for 2 weeks. The government's plan to raise taxes on messaging services, including widely used WhatsApp, triggered the popular uprising. But the protesters have expressed discontent over the corruption of the ruling elite, deficient public services, and Iranian influence, calling for an end to the post-civil war governing system based on a formula balancing sectarian groups.

**POLAND**

Oct. 13—In parliamentary elections, the conservative populist ruling party, Law and Justice (PiS), retains a majority of 235 seats in the 460-seat lower chamber but loses control of the upper house. The main opposition party, the center-right Civic Platform, wins only 134 seats. But the outcome of the election will make it harder for PiS and its leader, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, to enact sweeping constitutional changes, though it has already reduced the independence of the judiciary and the media. A left-wing coalition finishes 3rd, winning 43 seats.

**PORTUGAL**

Oct. 6—The Socialist Party of incumbent Prime Minister António Costa finishes 1st in parliamentary elections with 36% of the vote and 106 seats, 20 more than it held previously but 8 short of a majority. Costa Oct. 26 returns to office leading a minority government with outside backing in parliament from smaller parties on the left. He is credited with cutting the budget deficit and halving unemployment to 7% while presiding over a recovery in economic growth following a debt crisis and deep recession. But he faces criticism for leaving public services underfunded and rising inequality.

**SPAIN**

Oct. 14—The Supreme Court imposes lengthy prison terms on 9 leaders of the Catalan independence movement for attempting to secede in 2017. The former vice president of the province of Catalonia, Oriol Junqueras, receives the longest term, 13 years. After the verdicts, a Spanish judge issues a new arrest warrant for the former provincial president, Carles Puigdemont, who is in self-imposed exile in Belgium, where judges have denied Spain's requests for his extradition. Protesters immediately take to the streets in Barcelona; subsequent protests over the next 2 weeks take a violent turn and lead to 100s of arrests.

**SYRIA**

Oct. 6—US President Donald Trump unexpectedly announces that he will withdraw US forces from northeast Syria, clearing the way for a threatened Turkish military incursion to drive away from the border area US-backed Syrian Kurdish militia forces that played a crucial role in operations against the Islamic State (ISIS). Turkey Oct. 9 launches the cross-border offensive.

Oct. 14—After drawing bipartisan condemnation in Congress for abandoning the US's Kurdish allies, Trump says he will impose sanctions on Turkey. But after talks in Ankara, US Vice President Mike Pence Oct. 17 announces that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has agreed to a 5-day cease-fire to allow a Kurdish withdrawal, and that all sanctions will be lifted once it is implemented.

Oct. 27—Trump announces that US commandos have killed Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS, in a raid on a compound in northwest Syria. Kurdish forces reportedly provided key intelligence support for the operation.

**TUNISIA**

Oct. 13—Kais Saied, a law professor backed by Islamist parties, wins a runoff for the presidency with 72% of the vote. His leading rival, media tycoon Nabil Karoui, was jailed for much of the campaign on money laundering charges. Saied succeeds the late President Beji Caid Essebsi, who died in office in July at the age of 92 after becoming the country's 1st democratically elected president in 2014, following the uprising that toppled the dictatorial regime of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali in 2011. ■