

## Latin America and the Caribbean

↓ **Bolivia** Amid concerns over legitimacy of general election results, govt faced mass protests, strikes and clashes between govt and opposition supporters that left several dead. Violent protests erupted in at least nine cities day after 20 Oct vote, which incumbent President Morales won amid concerns over vote-rigging and fraud, with opposition disputing results: thousands demonstrated in capital La Paz, while groups of Morales supporters and opponents clashed in various cities. Final results released 24 Oct showed Morales won 47.1% of vote thus avoiding second round, sparking more riots in La Paz and Santa Cruz de La Sierra, with police firing tear gas at crowds. Opposition candidate Carlos Mesa accused govt of “shameful and crude alteration of the result”, while EU and Organization American States (OAS) called for run-off. Govt supporters and opposition demonstrators clashed in various cities late month, including in La Paz where anti-govt protesters established road blocks; govt 30 Oct said two people died in clashes in Montero, Santa Cruz province. OAS 31 Oct began audit of results; Mesa rejected audit, saying he did not trust it.

↓ **Chile** Unrest rocked country as escalating anti-austerity protests led to incidents of looting and clashes between security forces and demonstrators, with some twenty people killed. Protests in capital Santiago against increased public transport prices turned violent 18 Oct as protesters threw stones, attacked police vehicles and burnt at least one bus, while anti-riot police used tear gas and batons against demonstrators. President Piñera declared state of emergency in capital, later extended to other cities as protests and clashes with police spread, increasingly focused on cost of living in general and inequality; curfews imposed in Santiago, Valparaíso, Coquimbo and Biobío. By 27 Oct some 20 people reported killed nationwide (including five people killed in Santiago garment factory reportedly torched by looters); National Institute for Human Rights reported 546 people suffered firearms injuries. Interior Minister said govt had deployed 10,500 police and soldiers. UN Human rights chief Bachelet 24 Oct announced “verification mission” to examine allegations of rights violations, with govt’s consent. Piñera 23 Oct announced 20% increase in basic pensions and proposal for state to finance expensive medical treatments. Over a million people reportedly joined peaceful rally in Santiago 25 Oct. State of emergency lifted 27 October; Piñera dismissed his cabinet, however protests and unrest continued. Govt 30 Oct pulled out of hosting Nov Apec trade forum and Dec UN climate change conference.

➡ **Colombia** Political violence continued in lead-up to local elections, while attacks on community leaders by armed groups remained at high level. In 27 Oct local elections, ruling Democratic Centre party failed to make gains, with significant victories by left-leaning Green Party and local coalitions; former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) combatant won mayoral seat in Turbaco, Bolívar. Govt deployed 60,000 soldiers to guard polls amid concerns over possible violence, particularly longstanding conflict regions in Pacific, Bajo Cauca and near Venezuelan border; election day passed without violence, though reports of vote-buying in some areas prior to vote. Ahead of poll, violence included shooting of vehicle transporting mayoral candidate for Toledo, Norte de Santander (north east) 19 Oct; at least 22 mayoral candidates killed in year leading up to vote. Intimidation and violence against social leaders and activists continued, including by armed groups apparently

seeking to use their land for illicit economic activity; three indigenous leaders assassinated in La Guajira (north), Nariño (south west) and Quindío (west) mid-Oct; FARC dissidents 29 Oct killed four members of Nasa indigenous guard and indigenous governor in Tacueyo reserve, Cauca (south west). UN 5 Oct reported threats by National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrillas and clashes between ELN and Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (country's main drug trafficking group) displaced 47 families in Alto Baudó, Chocó (west). Congress 18 Oct approved funding of transitional justice mechanism Special Jurisdiction for Peace through 2020 despite controversy over the court. Head of UN mission 10 Oct told UN Security Council (UNSC) that demobilisation of FARC forces continued to demonstrate results; however UN reported 52 assassinations of former FARC combatants in 2019. UNSC 15 Oct reiterated "full and unanimous support" for implementation of 2016 peace deal but highlighted concerns over violence against political candidates, activists and demobilised FARC members. Govt 21 Oct issued decree requiring FARC to hand over economic proceeds from conflict by 31 Dec; although transfer agreed in 2016 accord, FARC called deadline "new attack on peace".

↓ **Ecuador** Twelve days of mass protests sparked by President Moreno 3 Oct removing \$1.3bn fuel subsidy shuttered much of country and, according to public prosecutor's office, left some eight dead with over 1,500 injured and police arresting 1,192. Following removal of subsidy, demonstrators 3 Oct shut major roads in Quito and smaller cities, leading to some looting. Moreno 3 Oct declared state of emergency, while country's largest indigenous movement Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) 5 Oct declared its own state of exception and announced permanent national mobilisation against govt. Govt 6 Oct temporarily moved capital to Guayaquil on coast. Moreno 7 Oct accused former President Correa and Venezuelan President Maduro of fomenting unrest with "destabilisation plan". After another massive march in Quito on 9 Oct, organised by CONAIE and trade unions, Moreno returned to Quito and offered concrete dialogue process mediated by the UN and Catholic Church; Moreno 14 Oct repealed decree. CONAIE 23 Oct announced pause in talks, alleging govt "persecution" of its leaders. Inter-American Commission on Human Rights visited country 28 Oct-1 Nov to document potential rights abuses during protests, meeting with CONAIE and civil society groups.

➡ **El Salvador** Tensions continued between President Bukele and opposition-controlled Legislative Assembly over govt accusations against main opposition parties. Assembly 8 Oct created special commission to investigate Sept claims by govt official that opposition parties Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) may have been behind spike in homicides 20-21 Sept. Assembly 16 Oct appointed Apolonio Tobar as human rights Ombudsman; Bukele criticised appointment, noting that Attorney General's Office has investigated Tobar on four occasions. Witness at trial of 426 MS-13 gang members on murder and weapons charges 11 Oct alleged gang negotiated deals with FMLN and ARENA around 2014 presidential and 2015 local elections in exchange for votes, and reported gang members paid military officers for sniper training. Following Sept asylum agreement with U.S., Washington 16 Oct announced restoration of some aid previously cut in April, focused on security and law enforcement; Bukele 28 Oct announced U.S. had extended Temporary Protected

Status residency for 260,00 Salvadorans living in U.S. to 2021. Head of National Police announced 108 homicides 1-29 Oct, approx half that of same period 2018.

► **Guatemala** Political tensions continued over work of former anti-corruption body International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), whose mandate ended in Sept, and migration agreement with U.S.. Constitutional Court 7 Oct ordered injunction to immediately halt commission of inquiry set up by Congress late-Sept to probe alleged illegal or arbitrary acts by CICIG on grounds that Congress was usurping functions of Attorney General's Office; President-elect Giammattei late Sept made statement criticising commission as "political show". Congress dropped inquiry commission but 14 Oct launched Truth Commission to hold public hearings for people to report alleged CICIG abuses. Giammattei 3 Oct reiterated concern over lack of information on "Safe Third Country" agreement with U.S. which allows U.S. to transfer asylum cases to Guatemala while their cases are reviewed, and did not rule out repealing it when he takes office in Jan. U.S. 15 Oct warned govt must maintain agreement to benefit from proposed regional development plans, next day resumed some aid, focused on law enforcement and security. President Morales 2 Oct extended state of emergency in 22 municipalities, imposed in Sept following killing of three soldiers; Peasant Development Committee 17 Oct organised several protests across country rejecting extension.

► **Haiti** Deadly unrest and political deadlock continued despite international attempts to facilitate dialogue, with protesters and opposition parties demanding President Moïse's resignation. Moïse 2 Oct announced creation of presidential dialogue committee in effort to resolve protracted crisis, but four of seven members resigned shortly after, saying negotiations were futile as Moïse is unwilling to leave power. Opposition rejected dialogue and 4 Oct established committee to set up transitional govt; coalition of 107 civil society organisations 11 Oct announced support for transition. Moïse 15 Oct held press conference reiterating openness to negotiations, but said he would only relinquish power through legal process such as elections (scheduled for 2022); opposition rejected overtures and called for more protests. Amid worsening fuel shortages, anti-govt protests and related violence continued including in capital Port-au-Prince, where one person was killed 17 Oct and one shot dead by police 20 Oct. Several hundred police and supporters 27 Oct demonstrated alongside anti-govt protesters in capital, demanding better salaries; two people killed: first reportedly shot by second, who was then beaten to death and burned by demonstrators. International community attempted to facilitate dialogue; Core Group (UN Sec Gen's representative, ambassadors of U.S., EU, France, Canada, Brazil and Spain and Organization of American States' representative) held meetings early Oct with opposition and business community; opposition 4 Oct held protests against interference by Core Group. Armed violence continued including murder of journalist Nehemie Joseph, found shot dead in his car in Mirebalais 10 Oct. UN's Mission for Justice Support in Haiti mandate ended 15 Oct, replaced by political mission focused on political stability and governance.

► **Honduras** Civil unrest continued over allegations of President Hernández's links to narco-trafficking. Around a thousand anti-govt protesters, summoned by opposition figures Salvador Nasralla and centre-left Liberal party president Luis Zelaya, marched in capital Tegucigalpa 9 Oct demanding Hernández's resignation; police attacked demonstrators forcing them to disperse; earlier same day, over 6,000

supporters of ruling National Party marched in support of Hernández. Anti-govt groups spurred by allegations of Hernández's links to drug trafficking; U.S. court 18 Oct found President's brother guilty on four charges, including drug trafficking, with prosecutors alleging President Hernández protected him. Detained drug trafficker Nery Orlando López Sanabria – whose ledger, confiscated during June 2018 arrest, was used as evidence in Tony Hernández's trial – murdered in maximum security prison "El Pozo" 26 Oct. Following verdict, Manuel Zelaya of left-wing Libre party called on supporters to protest indefinitely until Hernández resigns; opposition leaders including Nasralla, Luis Zelaya and Manuel Zelaya 19 Oct formed coalition to force President from office through continuous protests. Hernández 20 Oct called for peace; 7,000 govt sympathisers marched in Tegucigalpa same day. Debate over new penal code continued with rights groups concerned it will harden penalties against protesters and ease punishments for officials guilty of embezzlement; National Anti-corruption Council 16 Oct presented citizen initiative against legislation to Congress and organised protest against it in front of parliament. Following Sept asylum agreement with U.S., Washington 16 Oct announced restoration of some aid previously cut in April, focused on security and law enforcement.

↓ **Mexico** Govt faced political crisis following series of high profile violent events in Sinaloa (north), Michoacán (centre) and Guerrero (south) mid-Oct. National Guard and army officers 17 Oct detained Ovidio Guzmán, son of Joaquín Guzmán – alias "El Chapo" and former leader of Sinaloa Cartel currently imprisoned in U.S. – in Culiacán, Sinaloa; Sinaloa Cartel responded deploying crews of gunmen in city and attacked military forces, leading to eight deaths including one soldier. Authorities released Ovidio to prevent further escalation; amid criticism from media and opposition, govt admitted to poor planning of arrest. Elsewhere in country, alleged Jalisco Cartel New Generation gunmen 14 Oct killed thirteen police in attack in Aguililla, Michoacán. Fourteen alleged members of armed group and one soldier killed in clash outside Iguala, Guerrero 16 Oct; army said they were attacked first, National Human Rights Commission opened investigation into possible wrongdoing by state forces. President López Obrador 18 Oct stated govt's security strategy working "very well". Tensions continued over anti-corruption efforts; Supreme Court judge Eduardo Medina resigned 3 Oct due to federal investigation into suspicious financial movements in his bank accounts, while head of oil workers union Carlos Romero Deschamps, accused of embezzling funds from state oil company PEMEX, stepped down. Some observers lauded progress in anti-corruption while others accused govt of acting selectively, alleging several key govt officials also accused of corruption.

➡ **Nicaragua** Amid stalled political dialogue and increasing international pressure on govt, President Ortega's govt continued harassment of anti-govt movements. Ortega 4 Oct claimed govt is gathering evidence of anti-govt protesters' abuses to possibly present to International Criminal Court, despite Nicaragua not being party to Rome Statute; also said he would not return private TV station seized by police in Dec 2018 to owners, alleging their involvement in "failed coup attempt". Opposition continued to denounce govt repression; sociologist and opposition activist Elvira Cuadra 8 Oct presented report claiming police and paramilitaries have killed 60 rural residents and political opponents in 2019. Ortega late Sept appeared to secure support of national police and Supreme Court, which on 26 Sept requested

National Assembly remove from office former Court magistrate Rafael Solís, who left country in Jan denouncing Ortega's repression of 2018 protests. International actors increased pressure on govt; Organization of American States high-level commission – which was denied entry to Nicaragua in Sept – met with opposition and exiles in El Salvador 1-3 Oct. Incoming EU foreign policy chief Borrell 7 Oct called Nicaragua's crisis worse than Venezuela's and called for sanctions, while EU Foreign Affairs Council 14 Oct adopted framework for targeted sanctions against officials involved in human rights violations; also passed resolution conditioning lifting of sanctions on full implementation of March 2019 agreements between govt and opposition, return of international rights bodies and govt-opposition pact on electoral reforms; Ortega 16 Oct criticised EU for aligning with U.S. and appointing Borrell. Economic deterioration continued.

➔ **Venezuela** Govt continued “National Dialogue” with minor opposition parties following Sept collapse of Norwegian-backed talks with main opposition, resuming participation in National Assembly (AN) ahead of elections due 2020, releasing some political prisoners and offering to negotiate changes to electoral authority. However, opposition dismissed initiative, with opposition MPs saying ruling-United Socialist Party of Venezuela and its allies (Patria Para Todos and Communist Party of Venezuela) had made no efforts to promote an agreement in parliament. Political violence continued; body of opposition political activist Edmundo Rada, a member of opposition leader Juan Guaidó's Voluntad Popular party, found burnt and shot 18 Oct in outskirts of Caracas; Rada had been under police special forces' surveillance; party leaders said they interpreted murder as political message. UN Human Rights Council 17 Oct controversially elected Venezuelan govt as member despite opponents of its candidacy arguing govt's human rights record, and refusal to cooperate with Council's fact-finding mission, made it unfit for membership. Eduardo Stein, joint special representative of UN refugee and migration agencies, said 4.5mn Venezuelans had left country since 2015, stating number could be higher when including those using illegal crossing points.