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FEATURED Q&A

When Can Haiti Realistically Hold an Election?

Haiti's electoral council last week indefinitely delayed the country's presidential and legislative elections, which had been scheduled for December. The city of Cap-Haïtien is pictured. // File Photo: Billy G 30A via Adobe Stock.

Q Haiti's electoral council announced on Oct. 6 that it was indefinitely postponing the country's presidential and legislative elections, which had been set for December. The announcement came a week after the U.N. Security Council approved a six-month extension of the mandate of the Gang Suppression Force (GSF), which is seeking to help Haiti's government restore law and order amid worsening gang violence. The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Mike Waltz, said that while only 1,500 troops are currently deployed in Haiti, 4,000 others are expected to arrive within months. What are the main reasons behind the election's postponement, and when could a vote realistically be held? How effective has the GSF been at its mission since it was established a year ago? How likely are the additional 4,000 troops to arrive within the coming months, and how important is that full troop deployment to Haiti's ability to hold an election?

A Brian Nichols, former U.S. assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs and member of the Inter-American Dialogue's Board of Directors: "A decade has passed since Haiti's last presidential vote. The country's Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) has just postponed the start of campaigning and extended the official candidate registration for the next balloting until the end of October. Haitian authorities have begun to train poll workers, as well as equip the vote-counting and election-day structures, but almost none of the infrastructure from the 2016 election remains. Despite the

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At Least Five Dead as Storms Hit Western Mexico

Powerful storms that struck Mexico's Pacific coast have left at least five people dead. Hurricane Simon and Tropical Storm Rachel also caused flooding and toppled power lines and trees.

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Venezuela's PDVSA Eyes 105 Contracts by End of Year

Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA intends to close 105 oil and gas contracts by the end of the year, the company's president said at an event in Caracas.

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POLITICAL

China Sanctions Top Officials in Paraguay, Belize

China's government on Monday sanctioned Paraguayan Communications Minister Gustavo Villate and Belizean Foreign Minister Francis Fonseca over their countries' relations with Taiwan.

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Villate // File Photo: Paraguayan Government.

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POLITICAL NEWS

China Sanctions Top Gov't Officials in Paraguay, Belize

China's government on Monday sanctioned Paraguay's communications minister and Belize's foreign minister over their countries' relations with Taiwan, Reuters reported. The sanctions, which target Paraguay's Gustavo Villate and Belize's Francis Fonseca, whom Beijing called "pawns," include freezing any assets they may have in China, barring them from entering China and prohibiting Chinese individuals and organizations from cooperating with them, the Associated Press reported. The measures are largely symbolic as officials from countries with formal diplomatic relations with Taipei do not typically travel to China. Villate told local media on Monday that the sanctions were "to be expected," given projects that Paraguay and Taiwan are working on together, including a data center, Reuters reported. Belize's foreign ministry called the sanctions "unwarranted," adding that they "will not alter Belize's foreign policy." Taiwan also condemned the sanctions.

At Least Five Dead After Storms Hit Western Mexico

Powerful storms that hit Mexico's Pacific coast have resulted in at least five deaths, The Guardian reported today. Hurricane Simon and Tropical Storm Rachel caused flooding that blocked roads, took down electricity poles and trees, and also flooded homes, the newspaper reported. Hurricane Simon was blamed for the collapse of a wall in Chilpancingo, in Guerrero state, that killed a 71-year-old man, Governor Evelyn Salgado said at a press conference. Simon also damaged homes and infrastructure in coastal areas, including in the city of Acapulco, said Salgado. Tropical Storm Rachel was blamed for the deaths of four members of a family, including two children whose bodies were found on the outskirts on Ensenada, The Guardian reported. Five other people are missing in Baja California state. Governor Marina del Pilar said officials were helping more than 50 people in temporary shelters. Floodwaters in Baja California also damaged homes and swept away vehicles, the Associated Press reported.

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U.N. Security Council's renewal of the mandate of the Haiti Gang Suppression Force (GSF) for six months, the GSF has only deployed some 1,500 of the 5,000 planned soldiers and police. After important initial GSF gains, gangs have adapted, become more aggressive and violence is rising again. International observers expect additional GSF deployments in the coming months that will bolster its ability to take on gangs. However, the GSF will likely not reach its authorized level before 2027 due to problems securing materiel and transport. As long as gangs dominate around Haiti's most populous districts in and around the capital, a free and fair vote is out of reach. The Trump administration's focus on standing up a strong GSF in Haiti deserves praise. The international community urgently needs to step forward with economic assistance, soldiers, police, equipment and transport. The United States and other countries in the region also need to place a moratorium on deporting Haitians back to the country, which further destabilizes it. The fact that the Haitian people and the international community have been at this problem for 40 years does not make it any less urgent or important to solve."

François Pierre-Louis, professor of political science at Queens College, City University of New York: "Before we even consider the reasons for the postponement of the election, one should ask if Prime Minister Fils-Aimé is serious about holding elections. Under his administration, the gangs have occupied more territory, the number of

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NEWS BRIEFS

At Least 27 Injured as Earthquake, Aftershocks Rattle Panama

At least 27 people have been injured in Panama after a powerful 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck the country on Friday, followed by more than 200 aftershocks, Reuters reported. No deaths have been reported after the earthquake and aftershocks, but nearly 900 homes have sustained damage. The earthquake was centered in Herrera province. Panama's government declared a state of emergency.

U.S. Authorities Detain Businessman Accused of Corruption in Venezuela

A businessman wanted in the United States for allegedly bribing senior Venezuelan officials to win state contracts, was taken into U.S. custody on Sunday, the Associated Press reported. Alvaro Pulido, 62, was indicted in Miami in 2019 and 2021 in connection with an investigation of his partner Alex Saab. In a statement posted to social media site X, U.S. Attorney General Todd Blanche accused Pulido of corrupting programs for food, medicine and housing. Pulido appears in court today.

Cuba's Government Was Uninvolved With Seized Biodiesel: Energy Minister

Cuba's energy minister said Monday that the government was not involved in a biodiesel shipment to Cuba that U.S. authorities seized in September, Reuters reported. U.S. officials said last week that authorities had intercepted 90 shipments of biodiesel worth nearly $3 million under contracts involving ENETEC, a sanctioned Cuban state fuel trader. Cuban Energy Minister Vicente de la O Levy said he had no knowledge of the fuel shipments. The U.S. government earlier this year began blocking fuel shipments to Cuba but has allowed exporters to send fuel to Cuba's private sector.

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BUSINESS NEWS

Venezuela's PDVSA Eyes 105 Contracts by End of Year

Venezuela's state oil company, PDVSA, intends to close 105 oil and gas contracts before the end of 2026, its president, Héctor Obregón, said Friday at a business event in Caracas, Reuters reported. Sixty-one are signed and 44 are pending, and about 70 percent cover new fields. Obregón said the company's output should reach 1.5 million barrels per day by the end of 2027, up from about 1.2 million now. PDVSA's refineries, which are prone to fires and power cuts, are processing 350,000 barrels a day, enough to cover domestic gasoline demand, he said. Acting Venezuelan President Delcy Rodríguez cited the same tally last Thursday at the 82nd annual assembly of the business federation Fedecámaras, according to a statement from Venezuela's hydrocarbons ministry. The statement said the deals include a binational agreement with the United States to extract 65 billion barrels of crude.

Genneia Opens 129-Megawatt Solar Plant in Argentina

San Juan Sur, a 129-megawatt solar plant in Argentina's Sarmiento department, was inaugurated by power producer Genneia and is now the most powerful photovoltaic facility operating in San Juan province, the provincial government said, Renewables Now reported Friday. The $110 million project covers 500 hectares and uses 250,000 bifacial panels. Its electricity will be sold to large industrial customers. The plant can power about 90,000 homes and avoid roughly 160,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions a year. San Juan Sur is Genneia's fourth solar complex in the province, after Ullum I, II and III, Sierras de Ullum and Tocota III. It lifts the company's operating capacity there to 350 megawatts and the province's solar farms to 24, Renewables Now reported. Genneia Chairman Jorge Brito, San Juan Gov. Marcelo Orrego and Genneia Chief Executive Bernardo Andrews attended the inauguration, Infobae reported. Brito said the company has invested more than $2 billion over the past decade and now has more than 1.7 gigawatts of renewable capacity in nine provinces. He described the plant as part of its role as a "strategic partner for the development of mining," according to Infobae.

THE DIALOGUE CONTINUES

How Much Will New Financing Bolster Bolivia's Economy?

Q Bolivia's Senate on Sept. 18 ratified a $1.9 billion financing agreement with the International Monetary Fund that will also help the country access billions of dollars more from the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and other institutions for a broader financing package of more than $5 billion. The deal came as President Rodrigo Paz's government is grappling with falling international reserves and fiscal deterioration. How much could the deal with the IMF and potential financing from other institutions strengthen Bolivia's fiscal situation? What will the end of fuel subsidies, as required under the IMF deal, mean for Bolivian households and businesses, and how is the government planning to soften that blow? How likely is the IMF program to succeed without triggering a social and economic shock?

A Steven E. Hendrix, managing director at Hendrix LLC and former USAID senior coordinator at the U.S. State Department: "In 1985, facing hyperinflation and economic collapse, President Víctor Paz Estenssoro warned that 'Bolivia se nos muere.' The structural adjustment that followed transformed the Bolivian economy. Four decades later, Bolivia again faces a structural crisis, but the deepest problem is no longer simply fiscal or monetary. It is whether the country can recover effective government after decades in which corruption, state capture, politicized institutions and declining administrative capacity steadily weakened the state itself. The IMF package may help prevent financial collapse. It can rebuild reserves, ease the foreign exchange shortage and unlock additional multilateral financing. Ending an unsustainable fuel subsidy may also be unavoidable, although the effects on transportation, agriculture, businesses and household budgets will be painful and will require carefully targeted protection for the most vulnerable. But the financial crisis is best understood as a symptom of a larger breakdown. Bolivia has to restore the capacity to manage public resources, deliver services, enforce rules fairly and command public confidence. President Rodrigo Paz has described the country's deeper crisis as moral and institutional. In that sense, Bolivia does need structural adjustment again, but of a very different kind. The central task now is to reclaim the state: professional institutions, transparent government, accountability, an independent justice system and enough administrative capacity to turn policy into results. Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz made the struggle against corruption and abuse of public power central to his political life. Bolivia's present crisis is different, but the underlying question is again whether public institutions serve the country or those who capture them. The IMF can help keep Bolivia financially afloat. It cannot answer that larger question for Bolivians."

EDITOR'S NOTE: The comment above is a continuation of the Q&A published in the Oct. 9 issue of the Advisor.

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internally displaced people has increased to more than 1.5 million, and individuals who have been accused of corruption and working with the gangs are roaming freely. Moreover, his government just signed a lobbying contract with Roger Stone, President Trump's ally, for $65,000 a month to help him stay in power. The Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) that Fils-Aimé appointed has gone through several personnel changes and the electoral law has been amended several times since it was published. The international community and the Haitian government had promised that the Gang Suppression Force (GSF), which replaced the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission would be fully operational by October 2026. Now we are learning that the same countries that promised troops for the MSS that never arrived are committing forces for the GSF. It has been almost a year since the GSF landed in Haiti. So far, they have been ineffective in combating the gangs, opening the country's major roads and creating a peaceful environment in the capital. It's unlikely the additional 4,000 troops who are scheduled to arrive will lead to stability and create conditions to hold elections if the current government does not show its commitment to transition the country out of this endless spiral that started since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse five years ago."

Karen Richman, director of undergraduate studies and professor of the practice at the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame: "It is obvious that organized violence is being used in Haiti to disrupt the electoral process and undermine confidence in elections. The apparent success of this strategy is evident in the recent announcement of the indefinite postponement of elections. The sharp upsurge in horrific mass killings and kidnappings over the past 12 months—including a massacre of farmers and the abduction of prominent government leaders—suggests that Haiti's security situation has only worsened since the U.N. Security Council authorized the Gang Suppression Force (GSF) in September 2025. The GSF has been either unable or unwilling to intervene to stop the violence or to respond effectively in the aftermath of attacks. Its mandate is to conduct 'counter-gang operations to neutralize, isolate, and deter gangs,' in coordination with the Haitian National Police and Haitian armed forces. The separate United Nations Support Office in Haiti (UNSOH) was established to provide the GSF with logistical and operational support. This outcome is not surprising, given that the number of GSF personnel deployed has remained far below the force ceiling of 5,550 authorized by the Security Council. But it is questionable whether even the authorized force of 5,550 personnel would have made significant progress toward achieving the mission's objectives: conducting counter-gang operations to neutralize, isolate and deter gangs; securing critical infrastructure; protecting vulnerable populations; supporting humanitarian access; and strengthening the capacity of Haitian institutions. This is the inevitable outcome of U.S.-led international interference in Haitian affairs and the continuing disregard for Haitian sovereignty. The U.N. 'peacekeeping force' that descended on Haiti after the United States removed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004 did little to 'keep the peace' and, in fact, contributed to corruption and human-rights violations. In my recent conversations with Haitians, several independently used the word 'joke' to describe the GSF, saying they are well-equipped, well-fed and well-paid to 'do nothing' to help a terrorized population. The continuation of the mission raises fundamental questions about whether deploying an international force—rather than strengthening Haitian institutions and respecting Haitian sovereignty—can provide a meaningful solution to Haiti's security crisis."

The Advisor welcomes comments on its Q&A section. Readers can write editor Gene Kuleta.

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