
Argentine Primary Elections: No Surprise Advance of the Right Wing

By: Arnaldo Musa / Cubasí
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Argentine primary elections to define mainly the presidential candidates in the upcoming October elections did not really gave big surprises, as the most prominent candidates in the race prevailed and achieved advances that were expected from the right and, above all, the far-right.

The Argentine primaries, also called PASO (Primary, Open, Simultaneous, and Compulsory) were created in 2009, after the approval of Law No. 26,571.2. They basically define two issues: which parties are authorized to run for national elections, which according to the law are those who obtain at least 1.5% of the votes validly cast in the district in question for the respective category. The list that will represent each political party is also defined, hence the open domestic. Despite being mandatory, with heavy fines for non-attendance, only 68% of voters voted.

This event was held at a time when Argentina is going through a serious economic crisis, the rise in the cost of living is extremely high, the huge debt acquired by previous governments -despite the fact that it's now paid in yuan- is still onerous, and public tranquility has been transgressed by the police and it has not been possible to control the anarchic governance of the province of Jujuy that has greatly affected the indigenous masses.

Thus, in this dangerous mix for the government, only five forces managed to overcome the level of 1.5% of votes and were enabled to compete in the presidential elections for October 22.

The far-right Javier Milei, from Libertad Avanza, was the candidate with the most votes as the sole candidate of his party, with a few points above 30.

The second force with the most votes was the Macrista Together for Change (just over 28%), which will have Patricia Bullrich as its representative in October. The former Minister of Security of the government of Mauricio Macri won the internal voting of that coalition, by beating the head of government of the City of Buenos Aires, Horacio Rodríguez Larreta.

The officialist Unión por la Patria was left with just over 27% and was the third most voted force, with the Minister of

Economy Sergio Massa scratching 22 points and comfortably winning the domestic force over Juan Grabois, being the second most voted presidential candidate, after Milei.

Besides the three forces that shared the vast majority of votes, two other parties will compete on October 22.

On the one hand, Hacemos por nuestro País, whose candidate for president is the governor of Córdoba, Juan Schiaretti, who won just over 3.5% of votes. With a Peron characteristic, the vice-presidential candidate is Florencio Bandazo, a historic minister of Kircherism in Argentina.

The last force to compete in October is the Frente de Izquierda y Trabajadores, whose presidential candidate is Myriam Bregan. That coalition barely exceeded 2.5% of votes, and was far from its results in other elections.

Far from the minimum required by the electoral law, candidates like Guillermo Moreno, controversial former Secretary of Commerce of the Cristina Kirchner administration, who recently distanced itself from the former president, and other smaller forces that, added together, do not reach 5%, of the remaining votes.

MILEI AND MASSA, THE MOST VOTED

In his speech after the first results of the primary elections, the candidate for president of Libertad Avanza, Javier Milei, thanked his followers and assured that "this alternative will not only put an end to Kirchnerism, but it will also put an end to the parasitic, silly and useless political strata of this country".

In one of the most celebrated moments of the night, Milei thanked his dogs for the victory, escorted on stage by his sister Karina and the candidate for head of government of the City of Buenos Aires, Ramiro Marra.

"Today we have stood up to say enough to the model of decadence. Today we took the first step for the reconstruction of Argentina," continued the presidential candidate. "Today we are the force with the most votes because we are the true opposition, because a different Argentina is impossible with the same people, with the same who have always failed and they have all been in the State for 40 years, those with good and bad manners", Milei continued in his speech.

Let's see some of Milei's propositions. For the workplaces, flexibility is essential. It includes the end of compensation and its replacement by unemployment insurance with the aim of reducing labor costs to "end informality".

In terms of health, the collection of benefits that the population currently receives free or subsidized is generalized. And in education, the system of buches or checks to distribute funds to parents so that demand is financed instead of supply, as well as the elimination of the obligation of comprehensive sexual education.

The far-right leader had already warned: the deregulation of the possession of firearms for citizens is one of the measures that appear on the electoral platform.

In turn, the candidate Sergio Massa spoke from the headquarters of Unión por la Patria after the PASO elections. "Important weeks are beginning. The discussion is beginning about which country we are going to build in the coming years, if we are heading for a country with indiscriminate opening of imports or with defense of the national industry," he said.

The Minister of Economy also recalled the situation that he envisions in Argentina, after knowing the results of the elections. "A stage begins in which the country discusses whether we go to tuition fees or continue with a free and inclusive public university. The discussion begins in Argentina about whether private retirement systems return, or the State is going to continue protecting our retirees. The discussion begins in Argentina about whether we are going to a labor market with more or less rights. It begins to discuss whether to eliminate paid vacations, the double bonus, if collective agreements are respected, if there will be workers or if we condemn our people to be slaves".

Unión por la Patria reached these elections with an unequal in-house that had two candidates who express projects have profound differences: the Minister of Economy Sergio Massa and the social leader Juan Grabois. This political side born for the occasion, has in its favor that it has the integration of almost all Peron followers - with the exception of the Cordoba adventure and the resistance of Guillermo Moreno. Against it appears the 39% poverty rate left by the current administration in the midst of monthly inflation that erodes its own electoral base.

Peronism is risking its re-election, but it does not have the current period of government as an asset to display. Massa is supported in this idea by the current chief of staff, Agustín Ross, read this obstacle well, avoided the exculpatory speech and apologized for what was missing.

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