

BOLIVIA

Dates of Elections: 1 July 1979
29 June 1980

Purpose of Elections

/ July 1979: Elections were held for all the members of the Parliament provided for under the 1967 Constitution.

29 June 1980: Elections were held for all the members of Parliament following premature dissolution of this body.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Bolivia, the Congress, is composed of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies.

The Senate has 27 members — 3 for each of the country's 9 departments.

The Chamber of Deputies has 117 members.

All parliamentarians are elected for 4 years.

Electoral System

All Bolivian citizens who are at least 21 years of age (or 18, if they are married) are entitled to vote.

A Deputy must be a Bolivian by birth who is at least 25 years of age, has fulfilled his military obligation, is literate, has not been condemned to corporal punishment and has no charges or writs of execution pending against him; the age requirement for being Senator is 35.

The office of member of Congress is incompatible with that of Minister, diplomatic agent, civil servant or employee, military or police officer on active duty, contractor for public works or services, and official of a State-related company or enterprise; certain ecclesiastics may also not simultaneously be members.

Candidates for Congress are nominated by political parties or certain legally-established citizens' groups affiliated to such parties. Deputies and Senators are elected by direct and universal suffrage.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The bicameral National Congress provided for under the 1967 Constitution was dissolved in 1969, and no national legislature thereafter existed. In July 1978, legislative

and presidential elections took place but were subsequently annulled *. In November 1978, Gen. David Padilla Aranciba assumed power and announced that new elections would take place on 1 July 1979, with the new President and Congress assuming office on 6 August 1979, the Bolivian independence day.

For the July 1979 poll, candidates for the 144 Congress seats numbered 1,378. Leading contenders in the simultaneous presidential elections were Dr. Hernan Siles Zuazo of the leftist Democratic Popular Union (UDP) front, and Dr. Victor Paz Estenssoro of the centre-right Alliance of the National Revolutionary Movement (A-MNR, or MNR). Also in the running was the President from 1971 to 1978, Gen. Hugo Banzer Suarez, of the Nationalist Democratic Action (ADN). UDP won the most votes overall on polling day, but MNR captured more Congress seats due to the fact that the electoral system favoured the sparsely populated regions (MNR stongholds) at the expense of urban areas (UDP constituencies). While a full Congress was chosen, none of the presidential candidates attained the required absolute majority and, in this context, Congress ultimately elected an interim President of the Republic. In January 1980, it was announced that legislative and presidential elections would once more be held, in June.

Again led by Mr. Siles Zuazo, the UDP emerged as the clear victor in the June congressional poll, but once again no presidential candidate won the absolute majority of votes required to capture this post outright. It was thus again for the newly-elected Congress to designate a President; it planned to do so on 4 August. Before this scheduled meeting, however, military leaders effected a coup d'Etat on 17 July, assuming power and annulling the recent elections. Army General Luis Garcia Meza became the new President on 18 July.

* See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments XIII* (1978-1979), p. 8.

Statistics

1. *Results of the 1 July 1979 Elections and Distribution
of Seats in the Congress*

Number of registered electors. 1,877,000 (approx.)

Political Group	obtained	%	Number of Chamber of Deputies	Seats in Senate
Democratic Popular Union (UDP)	528,696	35.98	37	
Alliance of the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR).	527,184	35.88	43	16
Nationalist Democratic Action (ADN)	218,587	14.88	21	?
Socialist Party (PS).	70,765	4.81	6	—
Alliance for National Integration (APIN)	60,262	4.10	6	—
<i>Tupaj Katari Indian</i> Movement (MITKA)	28,344	1.93	1	—
Bolivian Unity Party (PUB).	18,979	1.29	2	—
Workers' Vanguard (VO).	16,560	1.13	1	—
			117	27

2. *Provisional Results of the 29 June 1980 Elections and Distribution
of Seats in the Congress*

Political Group	Number of Seats in Congress
UDP.	57
MNR.	44
ADN.	30
PS.	11