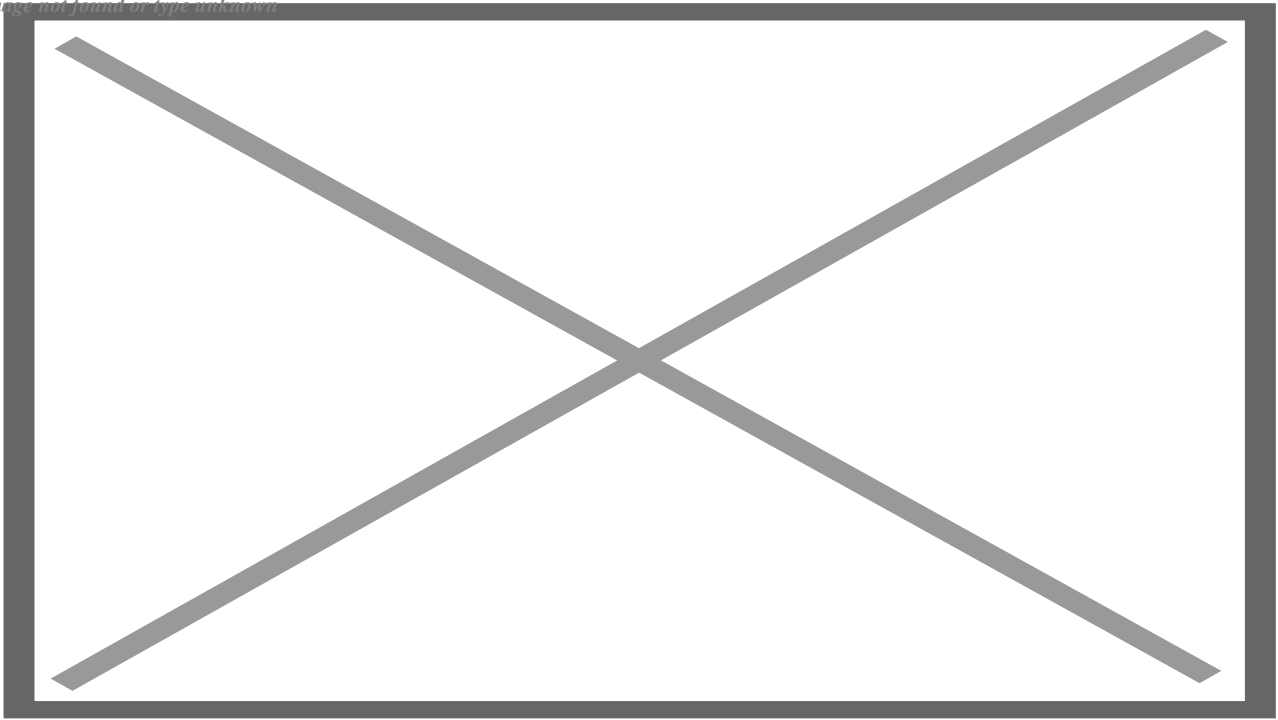


The threat of the ultra-right in Argentina

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By María Josefina Arce

The results of the so-called PASO, primary, open, simultaneous and mandatory elections, held this weekend in Argentina, have sounded the alarm bells. They are an alert about the future of a country that is suffering the burden of the demands of the IMF, the International Monetary Fund.

The ultra-right wing obtained the highest number of votes on Sunday, in which Argentines chose at the polls the candidates who will represent the political parties and coalitions in the general elections of October 22nd, in which the new president of the South American nation must be elected.

Javier Milei, from La Libertad Avanza, admirer of former US President Donald Trump and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, was the most voted, obtaining 30% of the votes.

The result obtained by Milei was a great surprise for many, which opens a big question mark as to what will happen in two months' time in the general elections, in which the electorate usually casts a punishment vote.

However, as a counterweight there is Sergio Massa, of the ruling Peronist party Unión por la Patria, who obtained 27.3% of the votes and, according to analysts, is one of the candidates with possibilities for October.

With 28.3%, the controversial Patricia Bullrich, of the right-wing Juntos por el Cambio party, who was part of the government of former President Mauricio Macri, responsible for the return to the country of the IMF and its adjustment policies, also positioned herself for the general elections with 28.3%.

Sunday was also characterized by apathy. Although the so-called PASO are mandatory, only about 69% of the electorate went to the polls, a lower turnout than usual in Argentina.

Twenty-six pre-candidates for the presidency from 15 political parties ran in the PASO, in which those who will run for the seats to be renewed in the legislative branch were also elected.

In October, 130 of the 257 members of the Chamber of Deputies and 24 of the 72 members of the Senate will be appointed.

In order to be elected and compete in the general elections, a minimum of 1.5% of the valid votes cast was required.

The PASO have been marked by a complex economic situation, in which high inflation is currently one of the main concerns of the citizens.

Economic forecasts for Argentina are not favorable at the moment. According to analysts, the average inflation rate for this year will be 116%.

Experts have pointed out that the impact of the more than US\$ 56 billion debt contracted by Macri with the IMF and the constant interference of the international organization, which, they stress, slows down the country's progress, cannot be ignored.

Against this backdrop and a candidate who is an admirer of the military dictatorship, the great unknown now is what will happen on October 22nd at the polls, which will be the path chosen by the Argentines. But do not forget that the danger of the advance of the ultra-right is more real than ever.

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