

# *Closing rallies in Argentina ahead of elections*

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Buenos Aires, August 9 (RHC)-- Closing rallies for Argentina's main political parties have been held, ahead of primary elections that are slated for this Sunday. President Mauricio Macri's right-wing party held their rally in a small gym in Mar del Plata, while the progressive Fernandez-Fernandez ticket, led by Alberto Fernandez and former President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner as his running mate, held a large public rally in Rosario.

"I want people to be happy once again, to have work, to have kids going to school to study and not just to eat, for the elderly to leave with a full prescription from the pharmacy" exclaimed Alberto Fernandez, presidential candidate for the progressive 'Front for All' party.

Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner was met with the loudest cheers as she took the mic and appealed for unity against Macri neoliberal government. She said: "We need to unite the efforts of us all to be able to leave behind this ugly period that we've lived through as citizens. I never imagined the things we are seeing and living today. I never thought I'd see the return of entire families living on the streets."

Cristina addressed the economic crisis that the country has faced following four years of neoliberal reforms, which includes hyperinflation running at over 50%, as well as a multibillion-dollar debt to the IMF, acquired in exchange for the implementation of free-market policies such as privatization and social spending cuts.

"One can see clearly how they gradually divided us, so that they could finally reach government to carry out a level of abuse that no one expected. The breaking point for me was when they, once again, decided to go to the IMF and plunge every Argentinian into debt."

In Mar del Plata, there was a more somber mood among a smaller crowd. Incumbent President Macri warned against a return to 'populism' and admitted that former promises of economic growth had so far failed to materialize, saying: "Things take time and we have taken the right path. Anxieties must be calmed because building a country takes years."

Polls indicate that the progressive Fernandez-Fernandez ticket is on course for victory. The elections being held Sunday are a preliminary vote, but will give an indication of the balance of forces ahead of the official presidential elections on October 27th.

The progressive 'Front for All' ticket would need either 45%, or 40% with a 10 point difference if they are to win a first-round victory. A recent poll gave them 42% and Macri 33%. A victory for Fernandez would put an end to four years of neoliberal reform, and a turn away from U.S. foreign policy in the region, of which President Macri has been a keen devotee.

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