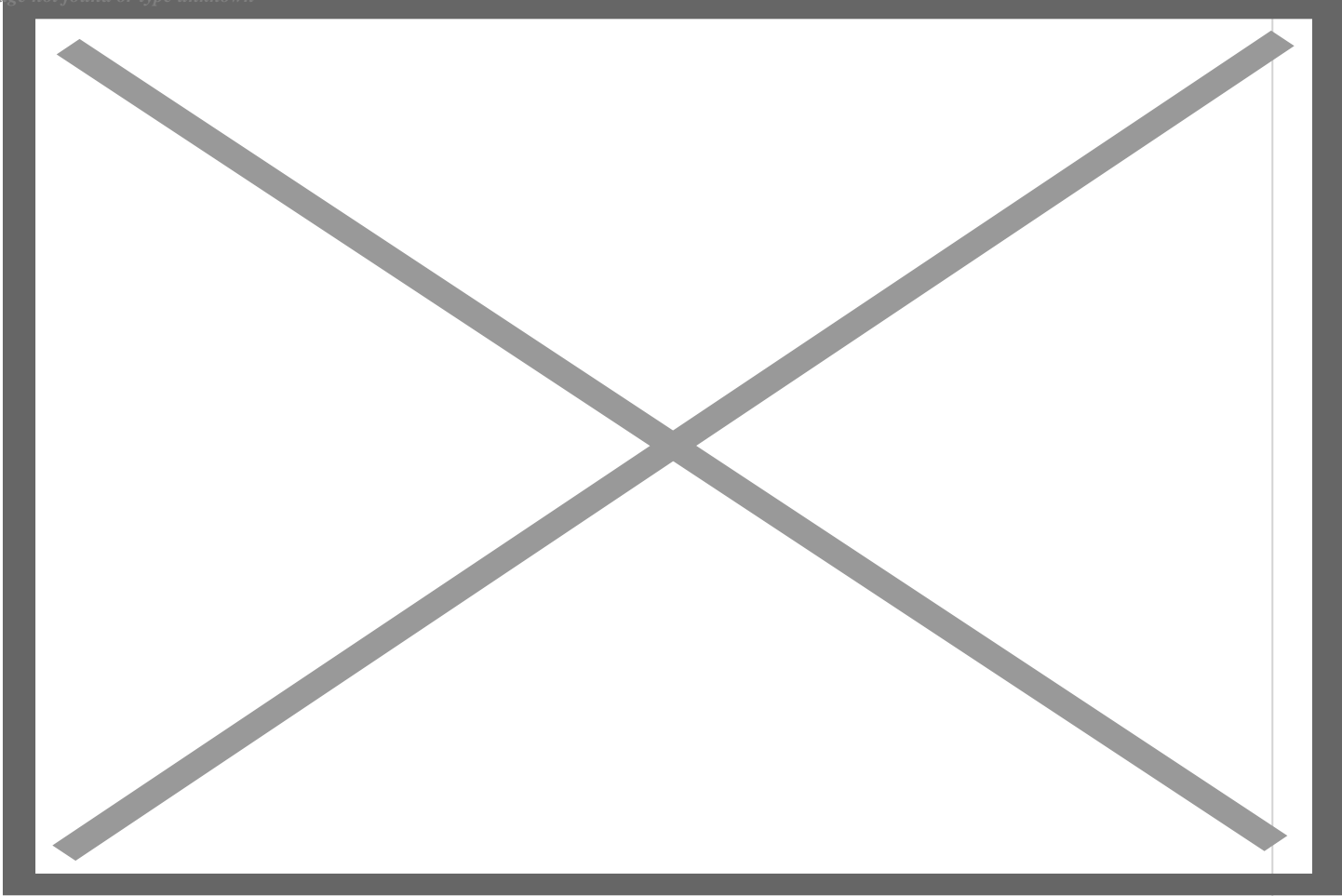


Chile returns to the polls

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By María Josefina Arce.

The 50 councilors who will draft Chile's new Constitution will be elected at the polls this Sunday, a day that, polls reveal, is already marked by the lack of interest of Chileans, who have focused their attention on the economic situation and the insecurity that has been growing.

The latest polls have shown that, although voting is mandatory, about 10% of those polled said they would not vote, while as of last April only 31% said they were interested in the constitutional process.

Twenty-five men and an equal number of women will make up the Constitutional Council, which, based on a draft prepared by a commission of experts, will draft a Magna Carta that will leave behind the current one, inherited from the bloody dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet, which led to an unequal country under a neoliberal model.

Three coalitions and two political parties with hundreds of candidates throughout the country are participating in this event, which according to Prensa Latina news agency creates confusion among citizens.

The work of the Council will be joined by the Committee of Experts, of 24 members, with gender parity and elected in equal parts by the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. Although it will have a say, it will not have a vote when making decisions.

This is the second constitutional process that the southern country has undergone in three years. The social outburst of 2019, under the mandate of the now former president Sebastián Piñera, paved the way for this change, as it was one of the main demands of the tens of thousands of Chileans who took to the streets and were violently repressed.

With COVID 19 in the background, in 2020 Chileans went to the polls. Nearly eighty percent of the electorate voted in the plebiscite in favor of drafting a new document and doing so through a Constitutional Convention.

One hundred and fifty-five members formed this body, at the head of which the indigenous Elisa Loncón was appointed in a historic event.

Finally, in September of last year, in a referendum, Chileans voted on the proposal. However, the rejection of the text was imposed at the polls, a fact that was influenced by false news, misinformation and manipulation of certain aspects, in order to create confusion.

The right wing maneuvered with issues included in the document such as water as a public good, the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, the recovery of basic services, among others.

Now Chileans will return to the polls to elect those who will be in charge of the important task of drafting a new Constitution, which will open the way for necessary changes in a country of deep inequalities.

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