



Panama — Va-PoReg Country Report

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12/31/1841 Start Part of Other Country [of Colombia]: On 11/18/1840, the State of Panama seceded from Colombia. However, it was reincorporated into Colombia on 12/31/1841. LIED and V-Dem do not provide data for Panama before 1903.

11/03/1903 End Part of Other Country [of Colombia, Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy]/Start (Male) Electoral Autocracy [semi-sovereign, external affairs under USA, Electoral Democracy]: On this date, Panama regained independence. We code this regime change event as a military coup, although it constitutes a borderline case in several respects. The Colombian generals tasked with maintaining control over Panama were separated from their troops through a ruse orchestrated by civilians associated with the Panamanian secessionist movement. The now-leaderless troops were compelled to withdraw under pressure from a US gunboat presence, suggesting elements of foreign military intervention. Nonetheless, the primary actors appear to have been generals aligned with the Panamanian secessionist movement, and the provisional government established following independence took the form of a junta. This justifies our coding decision.¹ In a treaty, the USA guaranteed the independence of Panama while obtaining „in perpetuity the use, occupation and control” of a zone for the construction, operation, and protection of the Panama Canal (Lansford 2021: 1283) and the right to intervene militarily beyond the Canal zone to restore public peace and constitutional order, and the right to supervise elections if requested (Bendel/Hillebrands/Zilla 2005: 511). In 1903 male suffrage was introduced (LIED). On 06/04/1918, the sudden death of President Ramón Maximiliano Valdés triggered a political earthquake and Ciro Luis Urriola, the First Vice-President succeeded him. Elections for the National Assembly were due on 07/07/1918, and the Assembly would choose the man to see out the remainder of Valdés’ term. The new administration probably feared that it would be unable to gain a majority in the National Assembly and issued a decree postponing the municipal and the national elections. The U.S. government raised concerns about the constitutionality of the decree and, citing Article 136 of the constitution, requested its withdrawal (McCain 1965: 73). The opposition gained a majority in the National Assembly, but the government contested several decisions and requested that the American electoral commission should decide the disputes. Towards the end of August. The American chargé gave a partial report of the findings of the committee and urged the National Assembly to elect Ricardo Arias Feraud president. The final judgment was that the government had won a majority of the National Assembly. With the approval of the State Department, Belisario Porras Barahona assumed the presidency of Panama for the second time (Major 1993: 139). The First Vice-President, Pedro Antonio Díaz de Obaldía, assumed the presidency on 10/01/1918 and was succeeded by Belisario Porras Barahona as soon as he returned from the United States of America on 10/12/1918.² During this period, the Liberals and Conservatives dominated the party system, but the Conservative Party soon became less relevant, and from 1908 all elected presidents belonged to the Liberal Party. Furthermore, despite elections being held regularly outcomes were often doubted and characterized as fraudulent. In the 1930s, the Communist Party, Socialist Party, and the Communal Action Association, led by the Arias brothers, emerged (Bendel/Hillebrands/Zilla 2005: 512). On 06/05/1932, general elections were held in Panama to elect a new president and a national assembly. Harmodio Arias Madrid of the Liberal Doctrinaire Party (PLDo) was elected president, whilst the PLDo emerged as the largest party in the National Assembly, winning 14 of the 32 seats. According to our

observations and LIED there were presidential and parliamentary elections with male suffrage. Per LIED they were not competitive until 1931 and competitive from 1932 onwards. In addition, V-Dem's CEI indicates no real cleanliness since 1904. The overall election conditions are ambiguous for the first two years after the end of being part of Columbia. From 1906 to 1919 the elections are not really free and fair. Between 1920 and 1932 the overall conditions score ambiguous outcomes. Since 1932, elections were not free and fair according to V-Dem's EF&FI. In addition, LIED indicates the absence of political liberties. V-Dem's PCLI indicates that that political liberties were somewhat present. Since 1904, according to Polity5, the executive encountered slight limitations on decision-making power imposed by other institutions. Although the 1931 revolt toppled Florencio Harmodio Arosemena's administration, it had not removed the structural hegemony of the Panamanian elite, a condition that severely limited the new regime's effectiveness. Before Arosemena's ousting, followers of former president Rodolfo Chiari controlled both, the National Police and the electoral board. After the uprising, the Chiaristas still wielded considerable influence among the police and commanded a majority of votes on the electoral board.³ For 1903-1904 and 1910-1912, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent. From 1905-1909 and from 1913-1935, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited.

03/02/1936 Continuation (Male) Electoral Autocracy [as independent country]: On this date, Panama entered into a new agreement with the United States, terminating the U.S. authority to intervene in Panamanian affairs and thus putting an end to its status as a protectorate. The ruling regime during this period was headed by Harmodio Arias Madrid (1932-36). Initially declared provisional president after a 1931 coup, Harmodio was replaced by a constitutional change allowing reelection, which, however, did not materialize. Instead, Harmodio mentored Ricardo Alfaro until his return to the presidency after the 1932 elections. In 1935, Harmodio aimed to secure the presidency for his foreign minister, Juan Demostenes Arosemena, under the newly formed Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR). The election was marred by widespread fraud and violence. In 06/1940, Harmodio's brother, Arnulfo Arias, who led the 1931 coup, won elections marked by fraud and violence. In 01/1941, Arnulfo orchestrated constitutional amendments, extending his term, reducing the legislature's power, restricting suffrage for non-whites, and shutting down newspapers (Conniff 1990: 617, 619-22, Casey et al. 2020: 12). The 1941 constitution introduced limited women's suffrage for educated women over 21 in local elections (Bendel/Hillebrands/Zilla 2005: 512). On 09/10/1941, Justice Minister Ricardo Adolfo de La Guardia assumed the presidency of Panama through a Cabinet election following the departure of President Arnulfo Arias to Havana. La Guardia's accession to power occurred amid political upheaval, as he initiated a coup that ousted Arnulfo Arias from office (Conniff 1990: 623, Casey et al. 2020: 12).⁴ De la Guardia became president on the same day. On 05/05/1945 In response to a political crisis, President Ricardo Adolfo de la Guardia Arango suspended the Constitution of 1941, consequently cancelling the next session of the National Assembly, and calling for a Constitutional Assembly election on 05/05/1945.

05/05/1945 Continuation Electoral Autocracy: Political tension continued during spring 1945, but the elections held on 05/05/1945 were peaceful and orderly, with approximately 110.000 voters participating (women voted in the national election for the first time). These elections showed a heavy vote for liberal elements and a coalition of the Liberal Renewal Party of Francisco Arias Paredes, the Liberal Democratic Party of Enrique Adolfo Jiménez, elements of the Liberal Doctrinaire Party of Domingo Díaz Arosemena and elements of the National Revolutionary Party (the „official“ party of the de la Guardia administration) united. They controlled 30 of the 46 delegates of the Constitutional Assembly, elected Enrique Adolfo Jiménez Provisional President of the Republic to hold office during the life of the Constitutional Assembly until a new President, elected in accordance with the provisions of the new Constitution, would assume office. This election took place on 06/15/1945.⁵ On 05/27/1948, general elections were held in Panama, electing both a new president and a new national assembly. Vote shares of Domingo Díaz Arosemena (Liberal Union–Socialist Party) and Arnulfo Arias (Authentic Revolutionary Party) were very close. On 08/07/1948,

the national electoral jury declared Domingo Díaz Arosemena the winner of the elections.⁶ On 10/01/1948, Díaz Arosemena was sworn in as president with Daniel Chanis as First Vice president and Robert Chiari as second vice president. The outcome of the 1948 election had been fiercely disputed, marked by protests, violence, and allegations of fraud from both factions. It is currently impossible to determine definitively which candidate emerged as the true winner (Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 86). From 1948 to 1952, National Police Commander Jose Antonio Remón wielded considerable influence, orchestrating the installation and removal of presidents with remarkable ease. One notable instance of his covert interventions was the thwarting of Arnulfo Arias's assumed victory in the 1948 presidential election (Black 1981: 33). The National Police were deployed, reputedly to monitor the elections, but their presence was really a calculated maneuver to influence the election's outcome against Arias (Chin/Wright/Carter 2021: 169). Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. According to LIED, elections were not competitive since 1936. V-Dem's CEI indicates that elections were not really clean until 1945 and not clean afterwards. Moreover, regarding freedom and fairness indicates an ambiguous state until 1945. V-Dem's EF&FI indicates no elections for the following two years. The 1948 elections are classified as not really free and fair. In addition to that, LIED and V-Dem's PCLI outcomes concerning the political liberties remained the same. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive encountered slight limitations on decision-making power imposed by other institutions. On 07/28/1949, Daniel Chanis Pinzón became acting chief executive after Domingo Díaz Arosemena took a six-month leave for health reasons. Chanis became interim president following Arosemena's death on 08/23/1949 but was overthrown on 11/20/1949 when he did not invalidate a supreme court ruling against powerful business families in Panama. His resignation was forced by the threat of violence, and José Antonio Remón Cantera, chief of the national police, installed his cousin Roberto Chiari, who was removed after a week by the Supreme Court (Conniff 1990: 626). For 1936-1944 and 1947-1949, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, and V-Dem's LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited. During the period of 1945-1946, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent.

11/24/1949 End Electoral Autocracy/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: The National Guard installed Arias as president through a coup. The deposed acting president had tried to dismiss the head of the National Guard. In response, the Guard ousted him and installed Arias, who had been a candidate in the 1948 presidential election, claiming that a recount showed he had won the election (Pippin 1964: 40-57, Major 1993: 271, Percy 1998: 138-39). However, since the origin of the takeover was a coup by the National Guard, we do not count this regime as a continuation of the electoral autocracy. Since the National Guard is part of the official national security forces, we classify this regime change event as a military coup. After being installed, Arias tried to change the constitution to lengthen his term, jailed hundreds of opponents, and tried to suspend the parliament (Pippin 1964: 69-70, Percy 1998: 138-39, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 86). On 05/08/1951, Arias made an attempt to prolong his rule, dissolve congress, and establish a clandestine police force to strengthen his authority in Panama against the traditional elites. However, this endeavor backfired, leading to his removal from power by the police acting under the direction of the elites. Arias had been impeached by the elected National Assembly, and the impeachment was upheld by the Supreme Court. Despite this, he refused to resign and instead shot one of the officers who approached him for discussion. Following this incident, he was forcefully ousted by the Guard (Pippin 1964: 70-76, Percy 1998: 140, Bendel/Krennerich 1993: 496, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 86). Arias was then replaced by his vice president, Alcibiades Arosemena, who appointed a multiparty cabinet and oversaw competitive elections in 1952. In accordance with LIED, both executive and legislative elections were held, but they were not categorized as multiparty. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive's constraints were categorized as Intermediate Category 2, between slight and substantial limitations. During this regime period, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is

classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited. In this timeframe, LIED identifies political liberties as absent, whereas V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as suggesting that political liberties were somewhat present.

05/11/1952 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Electoral Autocracy: On this date, national police commander José Antonio Remón became president, running for the National Patriotic Coalition (CPN). He became president in a very questionable election in which there were many clear examples of manipulation and police intervention in Remon's favor. On 02/28/1953, the enactment of legislation that disadvantaged opposition parties marked the pivotal moment when the gradual „authoritarianization“ of the elected Remon government transitioned into dictatorship. Subsequently, harassment of the opposition persisted, and additional legal disadvantages were gradually imposed (Pippin 1964: 91-93, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 86).⁷ The elections in this period (1946-1964) were still neither free nor competitive (Bendel/Hillebrands/Zilla 2005). On 01/02/1955, Remón's assassination resulted in internal conflict among his closest supporters, leading to a division within the CPN. Those loyal to Remón's established rules and policies were marginalized, allowing traditional political elites, previously sidelined during his tenure, to regain dominance. (Pippin 1964: 130-32, Percy 1998: 141-42, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 86). After the assassination, the first vice-president José Ramón Guizado, initially assumed the office of president. However, he was impeached and imprisoned due to his alleged involvement in the assassination. He was replaced by the second Vice President Ricardo Arias, who completed the remainder of his term of office.⁸ General elections were held on 05/13/1956. Prior to the elections, the Remón administration mandated that parties must have 45,000 members to gain official recognition. This criterion, later eased to 5,000, resulted in the exclusion of all opposition parties from the 1956 elections, except for the National Liberal Party (Partido Liberal Nacional-PLN), which could trace its origins back to the original Liberal Party. The CPN candidate Ernesto de la Guardia won the elections.⁹ The only opposition candidate Victor Goytia claimed electoral fraud.¹⁰ Many other data sets classify Panama as a democracy from 1955 to 1968 (AF, GWF, MCM, BR). The amendment of the electoral law in the run-up to the 1956 elections, which effectively prevented the participation of all opposition parties, as well as the election manipulations, clearly argue for a classification as an electoral autocracy in the period up to 1960. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. We thus agree with LIED, which also classifies a multiparty autocracy between 1952 and 1959 and an electoral democracy only between 1960 and 1968. LIED confirms that no competitive elections were held during this time. Furthermore, V-Dem's CEI classifies the elections as not really clean since 1953. V-Dem's EF&FI declares the overall election conditions as ambiguous. Furthermore, political liberties were absent according to LIED but V-Dem's PCLI points out they were somewhat present. Between 1952 and 1954, based on Polity5's assessment, the executive's power was noticeably limited but not substantial, fitting Intermediate Category 2. Since 1955, as per Polity5's classification, the executive's authority was significantly constrained by institutional checks during this time. During this regime period, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited.

05/20/1960 End Electoral Autocracy/Start Electoral Hybrid Regime: On this date general elections were held. The CPN began to disintegrate after being overwhelmed by the unrest and other problems. The Union of National Opposition was formed in 1960 after most of the dissenting factions merged with the PLN. De la Guardia was the first president to serve a full four-year term after the war, and Chiari was the first opposition candidate ever elected to the presidency.¹¹ The pre-1968 multi-party system aimed at managing the competition for political power among prominent families. Each party typically operated as a tool for its leader, who promised jobs or other benefits to supporters if they won. Among the major parties of the 1960s, only the heavily divided PLN had a long history. The Socialist Party and the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) were the only ones with clearly defined agendas. The Panameñista Party (PP), led by the unpredictable former president Arnulfo Arias, was the sole party with a substantial support base, appealing to the

disillusioned, yet lacking a distinct ideology or program. In the 1964 presidential elections, seven candidates ran, but only three were taken seriously. Robles, previously a minister in Chiari's government, represented the National Opposition Union, which included the PLN and seven smaller parties. After some behind-the-scenes maneuvering, Robles gained the endorsement of the outgoing president. Juan de Arco Galindo, a former member of the National Assembly and public works minister, and brother-in-law of former President de la Guardia, was backed by the National Opposition Alliance coalition, consisting of seven parties led by the CPN. Arnulfo Arias had the support of the PP, which was already the largest party in the country. The Electoral Tribunal declared that Robles won over Arias by more than 10,000 votes out of 317,312 votes cast. The CPN coalition was far behind the leading two candidates.¹² The results of the elections in 1964 were accepted by all contestants (Bendel/Hillebrands/Zilla 2005). Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. According to LIED, the elections were competitive until 1967. V-Dem's CEI indicates no real cleanliness until 1964. Since 1965, no clean elections are scored. Furthermore V-Dem's EF&FI classifies the overall election conditions as ambiguous for the entire period. Regarding the political liberties, LIED states their absence for this time. But V-Dem's PCLI remained at somewhat present scores. Until 1967, based on Polity5's assessment, the executive encountered substantial institutional limitations on power. From 1960 to 1966, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited. For 1967, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate. In the mid-1960s, Panama's political landscape remained under the fragile dominion of the oligarchy. Despite periodic emergence of individuals from the middle class, notably comprising educators and public servants, seeking political influence, their ambitions to ascend to higher social echelons hindered their ability to coalesce with the lower strata to contest oligarchic control. Within the middle class, students emerged as the most vocal constituency, often articulating the grievances of the economically disenfranchised; nevertheless, upon completion of their education, they typically became integrated into the prevailing establishment. The multiparty system in place until the 1968 coup d'état functioned to moderate the competition for political authority among prominent families. Typically, political parties operated as extensions of individual leaders, whose patrons expected employment opportunities or other benefits in the event of their candidate's success (Bendel/Hillebrands/Zilla 2005).¹³

10/11/1968 End Electoral Hybrid Regime/Start Military Autocracy: On 10/01/1968, Arnulfo Arias became president for the third time and, once in office, sought to establish total control. Arnulfo Arias was overthrown in a coup led by General Omar Torrijos and Major Boris Martínez on 10/11/1968 when he attempted to reassign the commander of the National Guard.¹⁴ On 10/12/1968, a two-man provisional junta was installed, led by Colonel José María Pinilla Fábrega and seconded by Colonel Bolívar Urrutia. The junta dissolved the National Assembly, silenced the opposition, and named a ruling cabinet which incorporated military and civilian members. Martínez and Torrijos retained most of the executive power in Panama (Ropp 1982: 37, Priestley 2000: 28, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 87). Following the public announcement of agrarian reform legislation, Martínez was ousted from the power-sharing arrangement on 02/21/1969, and Torrijos took over the control of the government.¹⁵ According to LIED, no multiparty executive or legislative elections were conducted during this period. According to Polity5, the executive held unlimited authority with no institutionalized constraints on decision-making power during this period. For this timeframe, LIED identifies political liberties as absent, whereas V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as indicating that political liberties are absent until 1979 and are not really present afterwards. On 08/06/1972, parliamentary elections took place to select a new National Assembly of Community Representatives. However, traditional political parties were prohibited from participating, and the brief legislative sessions left little opportunity to challenge the military's executive authority. While the Liberals and Panameñistas chose to boycott the elections for representatives to the Assembly of Corregimientos, the People's Party of Panama (PPP) fielded 120

candidates. In September, the parliament convened and proclaimed General Torrijos as „the Supreme Leader of the Panamanian Revolution.”¹⁶ Indirect presidential elections were held in Panama on 10/10/1972, resulting in the election of a new President and Vice President. The National Assembly of Community Representatives chose Demetrio B. Lakas as President and Arturo Sucre Pereira as Vice President for a six-year term (1972–1978).¹⁷ On 10/11/1978, Torrijos stepped down as head of government but remained de facto ruler of the country and appointed Aristides Royo president.¹⁸ In 1979 General Torrijos founded the Democratic Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Democrático, PRD). According to LIED both executive and legislative elections were held, but they were not categorized as multiparty. Until 1977, according to Polity5, the executive held unlimited authority with no institutionalized constraints on decision-making power. Between 1978 and 1981, the executive experienced minimal limitations on decision-making, placing it in the first intermediate category. Per FH, from 1972 to 1977, the country scores between 11 and 14 as not free, which we also interpret as not free. Per FH’s evaluation for 1978 and 1979, the country scores from 9 to 10 as not free, which we categorize as rather not free. As per FH, in 1980, the country receives a score of 8, which we interpret as falling into the rather not free category. As classified by FH in 1981, the country scores between 9 and 10 as not free, which we interpret as rather not free.. On 03/03/1982 after the death of Torrijos on 07/31/1981, power was supposed to transition to civilian Aristides Royo. However, instead, the military seized on the power vacuum, Aguilar ascended to Torrijos’ previous position as military leader, and Royo again found himself in a puppet presidency. On 03/03/1982, Paredes seized power of the National Guard from Aguilar and assumed his position as the military leader of the nation. The civilian president chosen by Torrijos was forced to retire a few months later on 07/31/1982 (Kempe 1990: 114-24, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 87). We concur with GWF and the Colpus Dataset that after Trojillo’s death, political power remained with the National Guard commander, while Royo acted as figurehead president. Hence, this is coded as a transition from a military autocracy under Flores Aguilar to a military autocracy under Paredes (Chin/Wright/Carter 2021: 186). On 07/30/1982, Paredes forced his puppet president to resign under threat of violence. This forced removal was related to an internal power struggle. On 05/07/1989, Panama held general elections to elect a new president and a legislative assembly. Despite accusations of fraud, the election proceeded, and oppositional candidate Guillermo Endara allegedly won against military ruler Manuel Noriega. The Noriega regime immediately annulled the elections.¹⁹ As documented in LIED, multiparty executive and legislative elections were conducted during this period, which were not classified as multiparty. In 1982 and 1983, based on Polity5’s assessment, the executive faced slight limitations on power during this period. From 1984 to 1988, based on Polity5’s evaluation, the executive faced weak constraints, classified as Intermediate Category 1 between unlimited authority and slight limitations. In 1989, the executive’s authority was significantly constrained, nearing parity with other branches, placing it in the third intermediate category. For 1968, V-Dem’s JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem’s LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent. From 1969 to 1989, V-Dem’s JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, whereas V-Dem’s LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent. As classified by FH in 1982 and 1983, the country scores between 9 and 10 as not free, which we interpret as rather not free. Per FH, in 1984, the country scores between 6 and 7, categorized as partly free, which we interpret as rather free. Per FH’s evaluation in 1985 and 1986, the country scores from 9 to 10 as not free, which we categorize as rather not free. As classified by FH from 1987 to 1989, the country is scored from 11 to 14 as not free, which corresponds to our interpretation of not free.

12/20/1989 End Military Autocracy/Start Electoral Democracy: On this date, the United States of America invaded Panama, deposed military strongman Manuel Noriega and disbanded the base of his power, the Panama Defense Force. On the same day, Guillermo Endara, the apparent victor in a presidential election, was sworn into office. On 12/27/1990, Panama’s Electoral Tribunal invalidated the annulment of the 1989 election and confirmed Endara’s presidency. Manuel Noriega surrendered on 01/02/1990 and was detained as a prisoner of war and taken to the United States of America.²⁰ After an internationally monitored election

campaign, Ernesto Pérez Balladares became president on 09/01/1994. Since then, Panama has experienced multiple peaceful and democratic transitions of power arranged through popular elections.²¹ On 05/05/2019, Panama held general elections. Since incumbent President Juan Carlos Varela was unable to run for a second consecutive term due to constitutional term limits, businessman and politician Laurentino Cortizo from the center-left Democratic Revolutionary Party emerged as the winner with approximately 33% of the vote. He narrowly defeated Rómulo Roux of the center-right Democratic Change party, who secured 31% of the vote.²² Panama's political framework is characterized by democratic institutions, featuring competitive elections and systematic changes in leadership. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Since the country's democratic transition, the elections score constant competitiveness per LIED. V-Dem's CEI states electoral cleanliness since 1992. The overall election conditions are free and fair since 1991 per V-Dem's EF&FI. While there is a general respect for freedoms of expression and association, the nation faces significant challenges due to corruption and impunity, particularly impacting the justice system and upper echelons of governance. Widespread discrimination against racial minorities persists, and indigenous communities encounter difficulties in safeguarding their legal rights, especially concerning land and development initiatives.²³ Per FH, from 1990 to 1993, the country scores between 6 and 7, categorized as partly free, which we interpret as rather free. According to FH, from 1994 to 1998, the country is rated as free with a score of 5, which we interpret as rather free in our framework. As per FH's classification from 1999 onwards, the country is considered free with a score ranging from 2 to 4, which we also interpret as free in our framework. LIED classifies political liberties as present since 2000. According to V-Dem's PCLI Panama already guaranteed full political liberties since 1990. Based on Polity5's evaluation, during this period, the executive's power was limited to a degree between substantial constraints and parity with other institutions, fitting Intermediate Category 3. For 1990-2004, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating robust constraints on the executive. From 2005-2019 and in 2021, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were robust. For 2020 and from 2022 onward, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating robust constraints on the executive.

Electoral Democracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Notes

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secession_of_Panama_from_Colombia#Formation_of_secessionist_movement

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1918_Panamanian_presidential_election

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1932_Panamanian_general_election

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/1941/10/10/archives/coup-is-bloodless-panama-drops-chief-who-leaves-country-without.html>

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1945_Panamanian_Constitutional_Assembly_election

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1948_Panamanian_general_election#cite_note-1

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jos%C3%A9_Antonio_Rem%C3%B3n_Cantera

⁸ <https://countrystudies.us/panama/13.htm>

⁹ <https://countrystudies.us/panama/14.htm>

¹⁰ <https://uca.edu/politicalscience/home/research-projects/dadm-project/western-hemisphere-region/panama-1903-present/>

¹¹ <https://countrystudies.us/panama/14.htm>

¹² <https://countrystudies.us/panama/16.htm>

¹³ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Panama_\(1964%E2%80%931977\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Panama_(1964%E2%80%931977))

¹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1968_Panamanian_coup_d%27%C3%A9tat

¹⁵ <https://www.laestrella.com.pa/nacional/181011/191003-boris-moral-cruzada-martinez>

¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1972_Panamanian_parliamentary_election

¹⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1972_Panamanian_presidential_election

¹⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar_Torrijos

¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1989_Panamanian_general_election

²⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manuel_Noriega

²¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Panama

²² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019_Panamanian_general_election

²³ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/panama/freedom-world/2019>

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