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## ***Ultra-right prevails in election of constituents in Chile and Boric retreats before triumph of Pinochet***



El sector de ultraderecha que lidera el fascista José Antonio Kast, fiel epígono del genocida dictador Augusto Pinochet, fue el ganador de los comicios en Chile que eligió a los 50 consejeros que redactarán la nueva Constitución de este país.

The far-right political sector that from the beginning opposed the change of the Constitution of the genocidal dictator Augusto Pinochet, now paradoxically, must lead this second attempt.

For his part, a defeated Gabriel Boric said that *"this process cannot be one of vendettas but of putting Chile and its people first."*

The party of Pinochet supporter [José Antonio Kast](#) won the election on Sunday, May 7, of the [50 councilors who will draft the new constitution that would replace Pinochet's and that will](#) be voted on in December of this year. The same political sector that from the beginning opposed the constituent process now, paradoxically, must lead this second attempt.

Although it was not entirely a surprise -the government polls were already known to President Gabriel Boric-, the triumph of a more extreme right embodied in the Republican Party in the elections of constitutional councilors, changes the Chilean political map not only in terms of the contents of the new draft of the new Constitution that will be prepared from June and will be voted on in December, but also with a view to future presidential elections.



His list (the "C") with 95% of the tables counted obtained 43.1% of the votes (22 councilors), above 33.3% (17) of the ruling list "D" baptized as Unity for Chile (Broad Front, Communist Party, Socialist Party) and 21.6% (11) of the *list "E"* formed by the traditional right (which in Chile tends to be called in recent times *"center-right"*) under the name of Safe Chile (UDI, RN, Evópoli). List *B*, All for Chile (Christian Democracy, PPD and Radical Party) and the People's Party ("*A*" list), led by Franco Parisi who came third in the presidential elections, were left without any of the 50 seats that will draft the new Constitution. To this is added a quota for native people.

The success of its list, the "*C*", is due, among other factors, to the figure of Kast, its founder, who contested the second presidential round, obtaining 44.13% of votes (3,650,088) against 55.87% (4,620,890) of Boric.

Already at 20:00 hours last Sunday, when the votes were just beginning to be counted, the atmosphere at its headquarters was partying. *"We are no longer a newcomer party,"* Luis Silva, one of the party's candidates, told reporters and was still waiting to find out if he won. *"Definitely any attempt to downplay the significance of the Republican Party on stage is going to look ridiculous because it's going to be trying to cover the sun with a finger, but I hope relations are good ... I think (the political forces) are going to reconfigure themselves for the better because I know that many people in the parties of*

*Chile Vamos want the best for Chile and we share many of those ideas. I see this process with great hope," he said.*

*Kast, admirer of Pinochet*



**A 50 años del golpe de Estado, el legado político del genocida Augusto Pinochet, sigue manteniendo plena vigencia en Chile.**

These words were crowned by Kast himself, who from the beginning opposed changing the Constitution of Pinochet, of whom he has publicly indicated his admiration. Without being able to hide his joy at returning to the top division of the country's political debate, after a long period of low profile he affirmed that *"today there is not much to celebrate, because Chile is not well. It is time not to celebrate, but to work in unity for the good of Chile. Today Chileans defeated reluctance, apathy and indifference, they have gone to the polls to give a clear signal about the direction they want for the country. They have chosen us not only for our ideas, but for our connection with the day-to-day problems experienced by Chileans who suffer for their homeland."*

Emboldened Kast in a speech paradoxical in his tone, conciliatory and provocative at the same time, he added that *"the ideas of common sense have triumphed (...)"* *Chile has defeated a failed government (that) has been unable to address the crisis of migration, economic and social insecurity. A government where many things are going up like the cost of living."*

That tone of the main leader of Chilean fascism made more latent one of the main criticisms of the sector even from the right itself: his inexperience and amateurism when it comes to politics, by not "*modulating*" his discourse well, generating confusion in the electorate.

In a style very similar to the campaigns of Trump or Bolsonaro, the construction of the party's narrative has been moving from memes and jokes of dubious taste to a more conservative look – betting on the family, the fight against crime, the control of migration and the free market – Kast also indicated that they will seek agreements with the left for a magna carta, although at the same time he contradictorily told the press that, to generate changes, "*Chile does not need a new Constitution.*" A paradox that is very likely to become a topic of discussion for the coming weeks.

*Boric calls to think about the future*

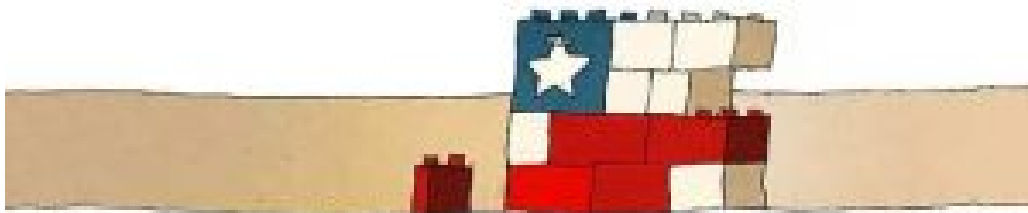


Boric

In a scenario where the right will be the majority, the ruling party will have to rearm again and for that a meeting has already been scheduled in the middle of this week led by Gabriel Boric where important decisions will be made about the government program and

if it will have to adapt even more before a vote that, although they have denied it in public, It can certainly be read as a negative assessment of his management.

On the other hand, there is the possibility of calling to vote "*rejection*" to this new Constitution since it will obviously be of an ultra-rightist character than the previous one as insinuated by the senator and president of Democratic Revolution (belonging to the Broad Front), Juan Ignacio Latorre. "*The danger is that if the right plus the extreme right manage to add the 3/5, the text may be worse than the Constitution of 80. It risks rejecting the text,*" he said recently. Some even think that a failure of this process could lead the country to a crisis of great proportions.



The complex thing is that, by December, after 50 years of the coup d'état, already with a constitutional text finalized, Chileans will have to define for the fifth time in less than three years whether they maintain the Pinochet Constitution of 1980 or bet on one, elaborated by an ultra-right that, from the beginning, opposed the constituent process.

*"Democracy is defended with democracy,"* Boric said in a television appearance that was in some ways a peaceful and conciliatory response to the statements of Kast and his fascist co-supporters.

*"This day has marked a new stage of the constituent process initiated in 2019. We once again have an opportunity to build, with dialogue and encounter, a new Magna Carta that represents in the best possible way the desires that we Chileans want to build. This should not be thought of in terms of a new election, but for future generations. A Constitution must last for decades and we must be able to successfully close this debate,"* he said.

The president made a self-criticism of the previous constituent process that was a "*failure*" because "*we did not know how to listen to those who thought differently.*" For this reason, he said: "*I want to invite the Republican Party that obtained an unquestionable first majority not to make the same mistake that we made at the time. This process cannot be one of vendettas but of putting Chile and its people first.*" That is why he invited to think

about the legitimacy of a Constitution that gives stability to a country that needs certainties for the future.

During his speech, Boric listed the efforts his government is making to overcome both the security and economic problems facing Kast.

*"When the pendulum of history swings back and forth, it is always the most vulnerable people who suffer the effects of elite confrontation. The leadership is at stake in stopping this pendulum movement, in a balance towards progress shared by all. That is my task as president,"* he said.



#### Constitutional exhaustion

These elections of the 50 constituent councilors is [another chapter of the bumpy road of Chileans towards a new Constitution](#) that has had them going to vote since 2020, first to approve the process with an overwhelming 78%, then to elect the Constituent Convention dominated by the left and progressivism (2021) and later by the constitutional text (2022) that ended up being rejected by 61% of the electorate.

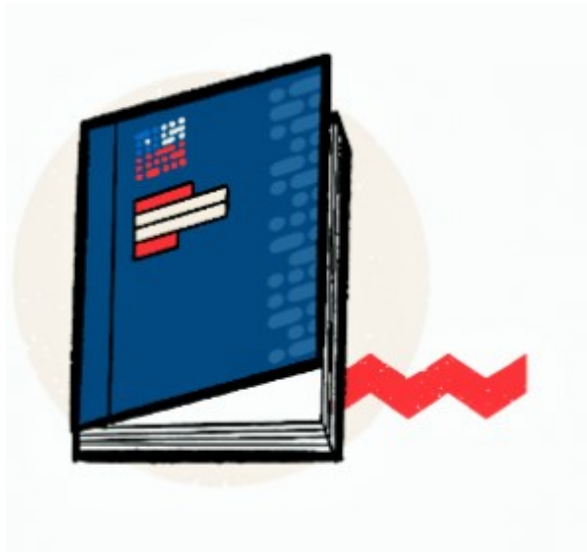
Despite the alleged disinterest of Chileans in the process, as pointed out by the Criteria survey, widely disseminated on May 6, according to which 56% said they were "tired of the constitutional issue" and 62% acknowledged being poorly informed about the issue,

millions of citizens went to vote in a process that operated without major problems. It is important to note that being compulsory voting, they also risked fines of more than \$ 100 and even night confinement. Something that also affected those who did not vote in the previous elections, in which 61.89% rejected in September 2022 the first constitutional proposal prepared by a Constitutional Convention, elected by citizens and dominated by the left. A result that to this day has affected the government's program and has been interpreted by the right as a triumph.



That progressive draft Constitution —which the government distributed for free and bookstores turned into a *best seller*— and which had as relevant issues gender parity, plurinationality, the environment and a reordering of the economic, educational and health model, was the result of a political process originated with the social outbreak of October 2019. with mass protests, street violence and cacerolazos that had the government of then ultraconservative President Sebastián Piñera on tenterhooks. A month later, thanks to the management of Gabriel Boric himself and the rest of the political parties, he ended up agreeing to initiate a constituent process to modify the 1980 Constitution promulgated by Augusto Pinochet and reformed, in part, by Ricardo Lagos in 2005.

However, the process that ended up being rejected had multiple difficulties, among them the lack of coordination and disputes of the leftist parties that made up the Constituent Convention (elected by the citizens themselves), the fierce opposition of the extreme right to any proposal, the emergence of movements with broad media support such as "*Amarillos pro Chile*" (which warned about the supposed serious effects of plurinationality or the end of the Senate that would be included in the text) and the proliferation of *fake news* on social networks including rumors about the change of the flag and the end of private property.



All this generated that after the rejection, the extreme right, heiress of Pinochet, has made a scratch of the field against a government that chose not to recognize the result as a defeat but as a manifestation of the Chilean people who, in any case, wanted to continue discussing a new Constitution.

After several months of debate, the scenario was as follows: the political parties selected 24 experts who are already working on a draft Constitution in which the political system, nor plurinationality or the economic model will not be questioned. Based on this text, the 50 councilors elected on this election day will work.

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