

# Mexico

*The United Mexican States*



## Key Facts



**OAS Membership Date:** 30 April 1948

**Head of State / Head of Government:** President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador

**Capital city:** Mexico City

**Population:** 125, 959, 205

**Language(s):** Spanish only (92.7%), Spanish and indigenous languages (5.7%), indigenous only (0.8%), unspecified (0.8%)

Note: Indigenous languages include Mayan as well as other regional languages

**Religions:** Roman Catholic (82.7%), Pentecostal (1.6%), Jehovah's Witness (1.4%), other Evangelical Churches (5%), other (1.9%), none (4.7%), unspecified (2.7%)

**Ethnic Groups:** mestizo (Amerindian-Spanish) 62%, predominantly Amerindian (21%), Amerindian (7%), other, mostly European (10%)

**Currency:** Mexican Peso (MXN)

**Gross domestic product (PPP):** \$2.463 trillion (2017 est.)

**Gross domestic product (per capita):** \$19,900 (2017 est.)

**Population Below the Poverty Line:** 46.2%

**Unemployment Rate:** 3.2% (March 2019)

**Legal System:** Civil law system with a US-constitutional law influence; judicial review of legislative acts.

**Political system:** Mexico is a federal presidential republic that provides an executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. The president of Mexico acts as both the head of government and chief of state, and is elected with a simple majority vote for a single 6-year term. The next elections will be held in 2024. The president's cabinet is appointed by the president; yet the Attorney General, head of the Bank of Mexico, and senior treasury officials require consent of the Senate.

The legislative branch of Mexico exists as a bicameral legislature and is known as the National Congress. The upper house is known as the Senate, which is comprised of 128 seats. 96 of these seats are elected in multi-constituencies by simple majority vote while the remaining 32 are directly elected through a nationwide constituency based upon proportional representation vote. Members of the Senate serve six-year terms. The lower house, known as the Chamber of Deputies, is comprised of 500 seats. 300 of these seats are directly elected by single constituencies in a simple majority vote while the remaining 200 are elected through a nationwide constituency based upon proportional representation vote (The House of Deputies elections mirror that of the Senate). Unlike the Senate, members of the House of Deputies serve 3-year terms.

Mexico's two highest courts are known as the Supreme Court of Justice, made up of one chief justice and 11 other judges, and the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary, made up of the superior court (7 judges including the court president and five regional courts, each with 3 judges). Whereas the Supreme Court justices are nominated by the president and confirmed by 2/3 of the Senate, judges of the Electoral Tribunal are nominated by members of the Supreme Court and confirmed by 2/3 of the Senate. Judges on the Supreme Court hold 15-year terms, while judges on the Tribunal Court hold 9-year terms.

**Economy:** Mexico possesses the 11<sup>th</sup> largest economy (\$2.4 trillion USD) in the world, and its manufacturing sector has massively increased since signing on to NAFTA in 1994. However, income inequality continues to be a massive burden on the Mexican people. Mexico is currently the US's second largest export market and third largest for imports, with two-way trade totaling and \$623 billion in 2017 alone. Mexico's economy has also seen significant benefits from trade with other nations, with 90% of its trade operating under free trade agreements.

In 2012, Mexico formed the economic alliance known as the Pacific Union with Peru, Colombia, and Chile. Under the previous administration, Mexico passed sweeping economic reforms across industries to increase its competitiveness in multiple economic sectors. Despite these reforms, Mexico's economy grew at only 2% annually in 2013, and it is not expected to improve much in the coming years. This is due to many things, including weak rule of law and corruption.

## Diplomatic Relations

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### Relations to the OAS

Mexico is a founding member of the OAS, having signed the Organization's Charter of 1948 in Bogota, Colombia. Mexico is also a member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, a vital agency to of the OAS, focused on upholding human rights and monitoring violations. However, Mexico was also the subject of multiple investigations by the Commission, most notably the 2014 Iguala mass kidnapping as part of the larger Mexican Drug War. Joel Hernandez Garcia is Mexico's Commissioner for the IACHR (8 in total), and will serve at this post until 2021. To help combat the issue of human rights violations in the Western hemisphere, Mexico has also joined the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. This Court rules if a state is guilty of violating human rights, and if individuals are guilty of these violations.

Mexico is also a member of the OAS's Inter-American Democratic Charter, which was adopted on 11 September 2001 in response to calls for strengthening democratic institutions across the hemisphere

and more specifically member states. Former Mexican president Vicente Fox called for a special session on the invocation of the charter in April 2002 when there was an attempted coup in Venezuela to overthrow Hugo Chavez's rule. Chavez later rebuked Fox, calling him a puppet of the United States. Mexico also participated in the Free Trade of the Americas talk in 2005, which was an attempt to eliminate all trade barriers across states in the Western Hemisphere, excluding Cuba.

### **Relations to Venezuela**

Throughout much of the twentieth century, diplomatic relations between Mexico and Venezuela have been strained. While initially disagreeing over sending ambassadorships to each other (for example, Venezuela initially sent their ambassador to Mexico to Washington, D.C., instead of Mexico City), relations began to normalize during the second half of the twentieth century, and there have been multiple high-level visits between the two states since.

However, in the 1990s, Venezuela pulled out of a trade agreement it had signed with Mexico, because of Mexico's involvement in the oil industry, as well as, signing on to NAFTA with the United States and Canada. In 2005, the relationship became further strained when each country pulled their respective ambassador back home, after an exchange of hostile words by the Chavez and Fox. Although Chavez's funeral was attended by then Mexican President Nieto in 2013, Venezuelan President Maduro has since accused the Mexican government of plotting to topple his regime and assassinate him.

In 2017, Mexico announced that it will follow the lead of the United States in imposing sanctions on the Venezuelan government. However, Mexican President Lopez Obrador has stated that Mexico will continue its practice of non-intervention and has since refused to recognize opposition leader Juan Guaido as the president of Venezuela. President Lopez Obrador had also previously invited Maduro to attend his inauguration as the new president of Mexico. As of today, Mexico has not broken diplomatic relations with Maduro's government, and claims that the decision is out of respect for self-determination and a state's rights to sovereignty.