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Peru: Update On Constituent Assembly Elections

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As of the Oct. 29 deadline, candidate lists for political parties and independents planning to participate in the Nov. 22 elections for the constituent assembly were complete. Approximately 2,240 candidates will compete for the 80 seats in the assembly. The assembly will be empowered to draft a new constitution and then to perform legislative and oversight functions until the end of President Alberto Fujimori's term in July 1995. If they meet all requirements, including approval of the signature lists by the National Election Tribunal (Jurado Nacional de Elecciones, JNE), a total of 19 different parties and independent groups will compete in the elections. The country’s two largest political parties, the Popular American Revolutionary Alliance (Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana, APRA) and Popular Action (Acción Popular) as well as the smaller Liberty Movement (Movimiento Libertad), the Unified Mariateguista Party (Partido Unificado Mariateguista, PUM), the Peruvian Communist Party (Partido Comunista Peruano) and the Revolutionary Left Union (Unión de Izquierda Revolucionaria) have refused to participate. New Majority (Nueva Mayoria), a coalition which brings together Fujimori’s Change 90 (Cambio 90) and the union of independent candidates led by Fujimori’s former energy minister Jaime Yoshiyama Tanaka, is expected to come out ahead in the vote, perhaps achieving control over a majority seats in the assembly. On Oct. 30, Fujimori raised the possibility that the constitution could be amended to permit presidential re-election for consecutive terms. Under the current constitution, presidents are only eligible for re-election following an interval of five years out of office. Next, Fujimori announced plans to hold a referendum on the issue of the death penalty during the Nov. 22 balloting for the constituent assembly. The proposal provoked a wave of protest from various political groups. The Independent Democratic Movement (Movimiento Democratico Independiente, MDI) announced it was considering withdrawing from the elections, "due to evident distortions and violations of the rules of the game governing the electoral process." (Sources: Associated Press, 10/29/92, 10/30/92; Spanish news service EFE, 10/22-24/92, 10/26/92, 10/30/92, 10/31/92; Agence France-Presse, 10/23/92, 10/25/92, 10/31/92, 11/01/92)

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