

FOCUS LATIN AMERICA

Guatemalans Worry About Graft After Giammattei Wins Election

by Sonia Pérez D.

Few took to Guatemala's streets to celebrate Monday after Alejandro Giammattei overwhelmingly won election as the country's next president, with some questioning how he would tackle the corruption, violence and insufficient economic opportunity that has driven tens of thousands to flee the Central American nation.

Giammattei, who takes office Jan. 14 for a four-year term, received nearly 58% of the votes compared with 42% for former first lady Sandra Torres in Sunday's runoff. But more than half of the 8 million registered voters abstained, suggesting a fed-up electorate disenchanted by both candidates.

"I think it is going to be the same as this government," said Guillermo Cacao, a businessman, referring to the outgoing administration of Jimmy Morales, who has been the subject of suspected graft allegations though he denies guilt and has been shielded from prosecution as sitting president.

But with homicide rates among the worst in the world at about 35 per 100,000 inhabitants, enough voters in the runoff were still swayed by the president-elect's promises to crack down on crime, in addition to his staunchly conservative stances against abortion and same-sex marriage.

"If he fights corruption, many of the country's problems will be solved because there will be money for investment, health, security and education," university student Christopher Alvarado said.

Giammattei, a 63-year-old doctor, succeeded on his fourth run for the presidency after several more popular candidates were barred from the race, including a former prosecutor who was instrumental in the anti-corruption drive of recent years.

Even so, analysts see in his victory a likely continuation of the political status quo.

"During his 20 years of running for the presidency, Giammattei has been surrounded by people linked to corruption and organized crime," said Mike Allison, a political scientist specializing in Central America at the University of Scranton. "Like Morales, Giammattei will be more interested in protecting his friends and allies from criminal judgment than in strengthening the rule of law."

Morales last year ended the mandate of a U.N. commission that helped jail dozens of powerful politicians, officials and businesspeople. The commission known as CICIG is set to wrap up operations and decamp from the country next month.

Giammattei "will not support the continuation of CICIG, which has achieved important advances in that fight in recent years," said Michael Shifter, president of the Inter-American Dialogue.

Nonetheless, he expressed hope that the new government may surprise by committing to serious reforms on other matters of public importance.

One of Giammattei's most crucial and difficult tasks will be trying to stem the large flow of migrants heading toward the United States, with at least 1% of Guatemala's population of some 16 million having left this year alone.

He will also have to figure out whether to abide by or scrap an agreement Morales signed last month with Washington that would require Hondurans and Salvadorans crossing through his country to apply for asylum there instead of on U.S. soil.

The agreement, which came amid pressure from the Trump administration, has been criticized at home by opponents who note that Guatemala suffers the same violence, poverty and lack of opportunity that other Central Americans and the country's own citizens are fleeing. The deal has been challenged in the courts.

Neither Giammattei nor Torres talked much about the agreement in their final pitches to voters in recent weeks, beyond saying the issue should have been left to the

winner of the election rather than negotiated under Morales. The president-elect has not said whether he will implement the deal, though he has allowed that Guatemala has scant resources to apply to the issue.

Allison said it appears that Giammattei "would seem to be aligning with those who believe the consequences of rejecting a 'safe third country' agreement with the United States would be worse than accepting it."

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo congratulated the president-elect in a brief statement, saying Washington looks forward to continuing partnership in areas including addressing irregular migration. He did not mention the July agreement.

Giammattei spent several months behind bars in 2008 when he was director of the country's prison system, after some prisoners were killed in a raid on his watch. He was eventually acquitted of wrongdoing.

Leaning on the crutches he uses because of his multiple sclerosis, Giammattei acknowledged in an emotional speech late Sunday that it had been a long road to victory.

"We won. We are very excited, it is logical, it has been 12 years of struggle," Giammattei said. "Twelve years waiting to serve my country."

The leader of Torres' party congratulated Giammattei, but the candidate herself lashed out on Twitter, calling the president-elect, Morales and others "people without scruples, sold to dark powers and who have harmed Guatemala for years favoring the few and neglecting the people."

Human Rights Prosecutor Jordán Rodas said Sunday he hopes the new government will respect liberties and that he was prepared to hold talks on protecting rights, amid fears from the LGBTQ community that rights could be rolled back.

"The future president has sided with the vision of conservative groups that maintain a caveman mentality, and for them nothing exists other than a man and a woman as such," said activist Leonel Hernández.

But Geovany Vásquez, a businessman, said he had voted in favor of Giammattei and was happy the candidate won.

"I didn't want Sandra Torres in the presidency because she's been handing out solidarity bags," he said. "People need work, not presents."

Sonia Pérez D. reports for the Associated Press.



CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **Local Planning Agency (LPA)** meeting on **Wednesday, August 28, 2019 beginning at 5:00 PM**, to consider the adoption of the 5-Year Capital Improvement Schedule Annual Update (2019) of the City's Comprehensive Plan. This meeting will be held at the **City of Doral, Government Center, Council Chambers located at 8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, Florida, 33166.**

The City of Doral proposes to adopt the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 19-

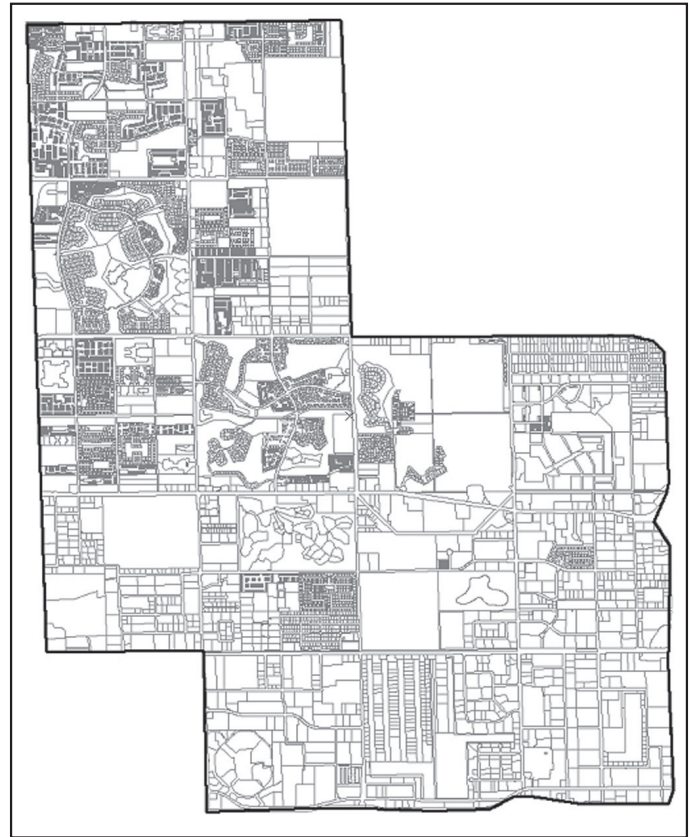
A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, SITTING AS THE LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY, RECOMMENDING APPROVAL / DENIAL OF, OR GOING FORWARD WITHOUT A RECOMMENDATION TO THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY THE ADOPTION OF THE 5-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE ANNUAL UPDATE FOR FISCAL YEARS 2019/2020 - 2023/2024 OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PURSUANT TO SECTION 163.3177(3)(B), FLORIDA STATUTES; PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL OF THE 5-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE TO THE STATE LAND PLANNING AGENCY IN THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

HEARING NO.: 19-08-DOR-01

APPLICANT: City of Doral

REQUEST: To adopt the Capital Improvements Element Annual Update (2019) of the Comprehensive Plan and to authorize transmittal of the 5-Year Schedule of Capital Improvements to the State Land Planning Agency in the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO).

Location Map



Information relating the subject application is on file and may be examined in the City of Doral, Planning and Zoning Department Located at **8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, FL. 33166**. All persons are invited to appear at this meeting or be represented by an agent, or to express their views in writing addressed to the City Clerk, **8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, FL. 33166**. Maps and other data pertaining to these applications are available for public inspection during normal business hours in City Hall. Any persons wishing to speak at a public hearing should register with the City Clerk prior to that item being heard. Inquiries regarding the item may be directed to the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes If a person decides to appeal any decisions made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. This notice does not constitute consent by the City for introduction or admission of otherwise inadmissible or irrelevant evidence, nor does it authorize challenges or appeals not otherwise allowed by law. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, all persons who are disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in this meeting because of that disability should contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL no later than three (3) business days prior to the proceeding.

NOTE: If you are not able to communicate, or are not comfortable expressing yourself, in the English language, it is your responsibility to bring with you an English-speaking interpreter when conducting business at the City of Doral during the zoning application process up to, and including, appearance at a hearing. This person may be a friend, relative or someone else. A minor cannot serve as a valid interpreter. The City of Doral DOES NOT provide interpretation services during the zoning application process or during any quasi-judicial proceeding.

NOTA: Si usted no está en capacidad de comunicarse, o no se siente cómodo al expresarse en inglés, es de su responsabilidad traer un intérprete del idioma inglés cuando trate asuntos públicos o de negocios con la Ciudad de Doral durante el proceso de solicitudes de zonificación, incluyendo su comparecencia a una audiencia. Esta persona puede ser un amigo, familiar o alguien que le haga la traducción durante su comparecencia a la audiencia. Un menor de edad no puede ser intérprete. La Ciudad de Doral NO suministra servicio de traducción durante ningún procedimiento durante el proceso de solicitudes de zonificación.

Connie Diaz, MMC
City Clerk
City of Doral

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