

Mexico Political Chatter

March 19, 2026

The 2027 election is on the political class's mind this week, with early candidate unveilings from the PRI, PVEM, and MC, alongside debates over the proposed electoral reform "Plan B" — which would allow President Sheinbaum to campaign during a recall referendum — and the replacement of three key positions within the National Electoral Institute (INE).

The Green Party presented nine profiles to compete for candidacies in various state governments, including Ruth González, wife of the current governor of San Luis Potosí, and current party leader Karen Castrejón. On the Monterrey front, Movimiento Ciudadano will back Mariana Rodríguez and Luis Donaldo Colosio. Meanwhile, the PRI emulated Morena with the announcement of its "Defenders of Mexico," which included leaders such as Manuel Añorve and Adrián de la Garza, along with the surprising invitation to Rosario Robles to support the party's organizational efforts.

On the electoral reform front, although the new initiative initially drew support from Morena's allies — the PT and the Green Party — the possibility of allowing the president to campaign during a recall referendum through changes to Article 35 of the Constitution raised new doubts from the PT, whose leader, Benjamín Robles, said that keeping Plan B as written would prevent fair elections.

Additionally, the replacement of three INE councillors will open a new front of political negotiations in a process that will be crucial to the electoral arbiter's internal balance ahead of the 2027 elections, as a qualified majority is required to appoint successors to Dania Paola Ravel, Jaime Rivera, and Beatriz Claudia Zavala, whose terms end on April 4.

As attention turns today to Cancún, where President Claudia Sheinbaum will preside over the plenary and inaugural session of the 89th Banking Convention, Enrique Quintana calls on the stakeholders involved to abandon "announcement mode" — where every convention produces commitments, agreements, and speeches on the same topics, without translating them into concrete changes in the lives of businesses and people.

Finally, the reappearance of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas — the historic leader of the Mexican left — now with an honorary role heading the newly created Petroleum Advisory Commission at Pemex, opens a new chapter in Cárdenas's relationship with the so-called Fourth Transformation, toward which he has at times shown distance and criticism.

The Cracks in Sheinbaum's Plan B: Recall, Parity...

The so-called electoral reform "Plan B" pushed by the government opens the door to one of its most controversial changes: allowing the president to promote a recall referendum and campaign to remain in office — something currently restricted by impartiality rules. The proposal maintains limits such as a ban on using public resources, but redefines the Executive's role in these processes, in contrast with what happened in 2022, when the INE blocked government promotion of the recall vote.

Beyond the recall referendum, the package includes deeper adjustments ahead of 2027: from the possibility of a "mega election" combining judicial races, governorships, and referendums, to changes in municipal governments that sparked controversy for weakening gender parity criteria — a point that was later corrected following criticism. Taken together, Plan B seeks to unblock the reform after the failure of the original proposal, but reopens the debate over electoral balance and the limits of political power.

Current positions on Plan B:

-  In favor: Morena, PVEM
-  Against: PAN, PRI
-  Undecided: MC
-  With reservations: PT

 [Proceso: The fine print of "Plan B": Sheinbaum would campaign in the recall referendum](#)

Road to 2027: Parties Accelerate Candidate Unveilings

More than a year before the 2027 midterm elections, political parties have already begun moving their pieces and positioning potential candidates for governorships, getting a head start on a race that has not yet formally begun. Mexico's 2027 midterm elections are shaping up as an anticipated contest in which each political force seeks to position figures and test its territorial strength.

In this early push, MC is backing profiles such as Mariana Rodríguez and Luis Donaldo Colosio, while the PRI presented its "Defenders of Mexico" as a prelude to candidacies, including Adrián de la Garza, Christian Castro Bello, and Manuel Añorve, among others. The PVEM has already unveiled at least nine gubernatorial hopefuls — including Waldo Fernández, Carlos Puente, and Karen Castrejón — in coordination with Morena, which is also advancing an internal calendar to define its candidates. This early wave of unveilings reflects not only competition, but the fragmentation of the opposition in the face of a ruling bloc seeking to organize its pieces.

 [Reforma: PRI Presents Pre-Pre-Candidates as 'Defenders of Mexico'](#)

FGR Admits Chain of Errors in "El Mencho" Case

The Attorney General's Office (FGR) admitted that it did not immediately secure the cabin in Tapalpa, Jalisco, allegedly used by Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, "El Mencho," allowing third parties to enter and contaminate the scene. The agency argued there were no safe conditions during the operation, and that the securing of the site took place afterward, once the situation was under control. The problem: during that gap, all control over the evidence was lost, compromising any subsequent findings.

Beyond the operation itself, the episode damages the federal government's narrative of effectiveness: a key crime scene without a chain of custody in a high-profile case is no minor detail. The FGR has already opened an internal investigation, but the damage is done — any evidence is now under suspicion and the defense would have grounds to challenge it. In political terms, it exposes an ongoing tension in the security strategy: prioritizing immediate territorial control versus ensuring solid judicial proceedings. In that dilemma, this case makes clear who lost.

 [La Jornada: FGR Admits It Did Not Secure "El Mencho's" Cabins Due to Lack of Safe Conditions](#)

Cuba, Trump, and the USMCA: The Perfect Storm

The reappearance of Andrés Manuel López Obrador to promote a fundraising effort in support of Cuba — backed by Claudia Sheinbaum with a personal contribution — revived a topic as symbolic as it is uncomfortable. The gesture, framed as humanitarian aid, comes just as Donald Trump turns his attention back to the island and hardens his regional narrative, while the USMCA renegotiation gets underway. At that crossroads of pressures, support for Cuba ceases to be mere solidarity: it becomes a political signal.

The timing is significant. In the midst of a redefinition of the relationship with Washington, Mexico sends a message that can be read as an ideological gesture toward Latin America — or as an unnecessary provocation toward its main trading partner. The underlying question is whether this kind of positioning strengthens a foreign policy with its own identity, or opens new pressure points at a moment when every move counts at the USMCA negotiating table. It also raises once again the question of how much the hardline Morena faction aligned with AMLO actually supports Sheinbaum — opening a new front for her at a moment when negotiations must be handled with care.

 [CNN Español: Sheinbaum Reiterates Support for AMLO's Call to Aid Cuba, Says She Will Make a Personal Contribution](#)

INE Transition: The Dispute Over Three Key Seats Begins

The Chamber of Deputies is preparing to elect three new INE councillors, whose terms expire on April 4, 2026, in a process that will be crucial to the electoral arbiter's internal balance ahead of the 2027 elections. The appointment requires a qualified majority (two-thirds), and if that threshold is not met, a lottery mechanism will be used — adding political pressure to the process. Although the transition should have moved forward months ago, it was delayed by the electoral reform debate, and lawmakers are now looking to resolve it with an eye toward a possible vote in late April. Beyond the calendar, the decision is strategic: the new composition could shift the balance within the INE, amid ongoing questions about its autonomy and the weight of the ruling majority in the Chamber.

 [Milenio: Deputies Aim for Election of Three New INE Councillors in Full Session by April 22](#)

Pemex Bets on New Council Headed by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas

The federal government announced the creation of a Petroleum Advisory Commission at Pemex, to be headed by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, in a move that blends technical and political signals. Beyond its role of analysis and recommendations on the energy sector, the appointment revives the symbolic weight of Cardenismo and reinforces the bet on a model of greater state control in energy policy — at a pivotal moment for defining the state oil company's direction amid financial pressures and the global energy transition.

 [El Economista: Pemex to Have New Petroleum Advisory Commission Chaired by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas](#)

Quick Takes

- **Plan B: Blowing Up the INE – Ricardo Raphael** Raphael warns that the electoral reform "Plan B" could push the National Electoral Institute (INE) to a dangerous saturation point by loading it with an agenda and responsibilities that put its balanced operation at risk. The columnist uses the metaphor of a "saturation point" to underscore that attempting to concentrate an enormous number of offices and responsibilities in a single electoral process could break the institutional balance. In his view, this not only strains the INE's technical capacity, but opens a deeper debate about the limits of the reform and the health of the democratic system.

 [Milenio: Plan B: Blowing Up the INE](#)

- **Banking and Government: Time to Exit "Announcement Mode" – Enrique Quintana**

Writing ahead of the 89th Banking Convention, Quintana draws a bittersweet picture of Mexico's financial system: solid numbers on capitalization and profits, but a contribution to development that remains insufficient. He notes that private sector credit stands at just 38% of GDP — compared to 120% in Chile and over 70% in Brazil — and that credit growth has been concentrated in consumer and mortgage lending, not productive financing. His central diagnosis is that Mexico has spent over a decade stuck in "announcement mode": every convention produces the same commitments on the same topics, with no concrete mechanisms to ensure compliance. The way out of the vicious cycle, he concludes, requires the government to generate a growth environment and the banking sector to take on the productive risk it currently avoids — because both are protagonists of the same problem.

 [El Financiero: Banking and Government: Time to Exit "Announcement Mode"](#)

- **A Majority for Rent – María Scherer** In her column, María Scherer argues that the apparent political majority in Mexico does not rest on solid convictions, but on a network of pragmatic loyalties and power-driven incentives — making it a "majority for rent": functional enough to push decisions

through, but fragile and volatile. In this context, she warns of the paradox Sheinbaum faces: despite leading an unprecedented electoral powerhouse, her room to maneuver is constrained by minor actors whose support is indispensable. The debate thus shifts away from long-term projects toward a logic of constant negotiation, where support is built day by day and can collapse just as quickly — revealing that the strength of power is also, at its core, its greatest weakness.

 [La Política Online: A Majority for Rent](#)

- **The PRI and PVEM's "Corcholatas," and the Return of Rosario Robles – Francisco Garfias**

Francisco Garfias reads in the PRI and Green Party's early unveilings a race that has already passed the point of no return, and finds the most striking note in Rosario Robles's return to the political arena as coordinator of the "Defenders of Mexico." Garfias notes that Morena set the "bad example" of jumping the gun on campaigns, and that the PRI and PVEM simply followed suit. On Plan B, Garfias is blunt: the PT and PVEM's resistance is fading because both know that a second "no" to Sheinbaum would blow up the ruling coalition. Nevertheless, in the case of San Luis Potosí — where Ruth González's candidacy would violate the rules designed to combat nepotism — he argues that a break is inevitable.

 [Excélsior: The PRI and PVEM's "Corcholatas," and the Return of Rosario Robles](#)

- **The Farewell of Juan Ramón de la Fuente – Roberto Rock** The departure of Juan Ramón de la Fuente, as columnist Rock and his sources frame it, marks more than a transition in Mexican diplomacy: it symbolizes the close of a chapter led by a technical, moderate, and internationally recognized profile, at a time when foreign policy faces pressures and redefinitions. His exit suggests a possible shift toward a more political than institutional approach, leaving open the question of whether the weight of diplomacy will rest on experience or loyalty. The move has not yet been confirmed.

 [El Sol de México: Heretic Portrait / The Farewell of Juan Ramón de la Fuente](#)

The Agenda in Brief

On **Friday, March 20**, the 89th Banking Convention in Cancún concludes, following three days of activities from March 18 to 20, 2026.

The PAN announced that on **March 21** it will reveal a key decision for its future and for the country, as part of a new strategy ahead of 2027 and 2030. The party leadership seeks to relaunch itself in the current political landscape.

On **April 4**, Dania Paola Ravel, Jaime Rivera, and Beatriz Claudia Zavala conclude their terms as members of the INE's General Council. Candidate registration will take place from March 23 to 25. The Chamber of Deputies expects to hold the election around April 22.