

Cadre rotation and corruption: Who's gonna be Cuba's next president?



No longer a candidate for top office: the former governor of Cienfuegos, Alexandre Corona Quintero (Source: [5 de Septiembre](#))

There has been an unexpected change of leadership in the western Cuban province of Cienfuegos. As the local newspaper “5 de Septiembre” [reported](#) on Wednesday, Governor Alexandre Corona Quintero asked for his resignation after “admitting mistakes in the exercise of his office”. According to the brief note in the newspaper, President Miguel Díaz-Canel “granted the request”.

The 51-year-old Quintero has headed the province since 2020 and was re-elected in 2023. He has a master's degree in management and a diploma in security and national defense and public administration. According to the Cuban parliament's website, he graduated from the College of the Ministry of the Interior in Villa Clara in 1995 and began his professional life as a civil servant at this institution. From 1997, he held various management positions in the fisheries sector, including general director of the state-owned companies EPICEN and YAGUACÁN. In 2006, he was promoted to Vice President of the Provincial Administration Council in Cienfuegos and was elected Vice President of the Provincial Assembly in 2008.

This is the second time this year that a Cuban politician has resigned due to unspecified misconduct in office. On March 8, it was announced that the Minister of Economy, Alejandro Gil, who had recently resigned, was under investigation for “serious mistakes”. He subsequently resigned as a member of parliament and member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC). The disclosure of cases of corruption and the associated resignations of politicians have so far been a rarity in socialist Cuba and are the subject of particular interest from observers at home and abroad.

Last December, Cuba's President Miguel Díaz-Canel announced a “zero tolerance policy” towards corrupt civil servants and illegal networks. Subsequently, the Court of Auditors and

the public prosecutor's office uncovered numerous cases of corruption in connection with money laundering, embezzlement of raw materials, and the theft of staple foods such as rice, flour and oil. It was reported that a total of eleven illegal corruption networks within state structures had been dismantled by the end of March. Journalist José Miguel Solís from state broadcaster "Radio Rebelde" [posted](#) on Facebook a few days after the "Causa Gil" came to light that in the province of Matanzas alone, a dozen cadres had been removed from office in recent months due to mismanagement.

New governors are to be appointed in the provinces of Villa Clara, Matanzas, and Santiago de Cuba in the near future, although these are likely to be regular cadre rotations. In Santa Clara, Alberto López Díaz, who has also held the office since 2020, will have to vacate the post one year after his re-election in May 2023. As the state news portal "Cubadebate" reports, the governors and deputy governors of Cienfuegos, Matanzas, Villa Clara, and Santiago de Cuba are to be re-elected next May 4. Under the Cuban one-party system, governors are elected by the members of the municipal parliaments "on the proposal of the president", according to the constitution.



The next generation, born between 1969 and 1982, is brought into position. From left: Beatriz Jhonson Urrutia, Joel Queipo Ruiz, Susely Morfa González and Mario Felipe Sabines Lorenzo

Meanwhile, in Havana, Santiago de Cuba, Matanzas, Ciego de Ávila, and Holguín, the more influential offices of First Party Secretary of the provinces have been reappointed in recent weeks. In Santiago, CC member Beatriz Jhonson Urrutia (54) was elected First Party Secretary; she previously headed the province as governor, while in Matanzas, Mario Felipe Sabines Lorenzo (52) was appointed. His predecessor, the former head of the communist youth association UJC, Susely Morfa González, is one of the up-and-coming young cadres in the Central Committee at the age of 42 and will take on "other tasks" there in future. Joel Queipo Ruiz (52), the former head of the Economic Department at the PCC Central Committee, who has been First Secretary of Holguín Province since April 20, has moved in the opposite direction. The black nuclear physicist is also considered a promising young cadre and was promoted to the CC at the 2021 party congress. He has so far lacked government experience at provincial level. Livan Izquierdo Alonso (56) took office in Havana, having been transferred from Ciego de Ávila, where Julio Heriberto Gómez Casanova (44), secretary of the provincial capital of the same name, took over.

Díaz-Canel's maxim, as declared at the last party congress in 2021, was similar to the meritocratic approach in China and Vietnam: allowing young cadres to gain experience by managing different provinces. Prior to his presidency, he himself worked as First Party Secretary in his home province of Villa Clara and Holguín, among other places. At his inauguration in 2018, Raúl Castro described him as the "sole survivor" of a group of young

cadres who were being groomed for the top job. In exactly four years' time, in April 2028, Cuba will have a new president. While Díaz-Canel cannot run for a third term according to the constitution, Prime Minister Manuel Marrero would be too old for the office, along with many other familiar faces from the current politburo. According to Article 127 of the Cuban constitution, the president must not be older than 60 when taking office. ([Cubaheute](#))