

## COSTA RICA

Polity5 regime codes:

fac	scode	polity	pers	bmon	bday	byear	emon	eday	eyear	exec	exconst	polcomp
0a	COS	-4	47	5	28	1838	3	12	1885	4	3	2
0b	COS	1	5	3	13	1885	5	7	1890	5	4	5
0c	COS	5	4	5	8	1890	5	7	1894	7	5	8
0d	COS	8	23	5	8	1894	1	27	1917	7	7	9
0e	COS	-3	3	1	28	1917	5	7	1920	5	3	3
0f	COS	5	28	5	8	1920	3	1	1948	7	5	8
1X	COS	-77	0	3	2	1948	4	23	1948	-77	-77	-77
1O	COS	4	2	4	24	1948	11	7	1949	5	5	9
1Oa	COS	9	4	11	8	1949	11	7	1953	7	7	10
1Ob	COS	10	65	11	8	1953	99	99	9999	8	7	10

PITF Problem Events: None

**0a)** May 28, 1838 (independence) – Costa Rica officially designates September 15, 1821, as its Independence Day. It is on that date that it joined other Central American provinces in a joint declaration of independence from Spain. The Central American region was initially annexed as part of the Mexican Empire of Agustín de Iturbide. Following the death of Iturbide in 1823, Mexico became a republic and the several territories of Central America banded together as the Federal Republic of Central America on July 1, 1823 (afterward known as the United Provinces of Central America, UPCA). However, the federation was unable to separate itself from Mexican interference or resolve the many disputes that arose among its member states, tensions between conservative and liberal factions, and rebellions by indigenous groups. On May 28, 1838, Braulio Carrillo gained control of the Costa Rican government through a military coup; he formally withdrew Costa Rica from the UPCA and proclaimed it an independent state. Costa Rica continued to be controlled by an oligarchy of economic elites and led by strongmen who gained power either through military force or staged elections.

**0b)** March 13, 1885 (concessions) – The liberal and military elite dominated politics in Costa Rica for nearly four decades with leadership commanded by the strongest personality. A coup led by Tomás Guardia Gutiérrez in 1870 created an overtly autocratic regime that stoked political opposition. Upon his death in 1882, leadership was turned over to Guardia's brother-in-law, Próspero Fernández Oreámuno, who had participated in the 1870 coup. When Próspero Fernández died in office on March 12, 1885, leadership was assumed by Ramón Bernardo Soto Alfaro. In the face of increasing opposition, Bernardo Soto conceded executive authority to Third Vice President Carlos Durán during the November 1889 elections.

**0c)** May 8, 1890 (transfer of executive authority) – The election of November 7, 1889, was notable for the strength of political activism. The candidate of the ruling Liberal Party lost to José Joaquín Rodríguez Zeledón representing a loosely formed Constitutionalist Party; Rodríguez took office on May 8, 1890. During the ensuing period, the political franchise was steadily broadened and several new parties were formed.

**0d)** May 8, 1894 (transfer of executive authority) – Rafael Anselmo José Yglesias Castro representing the Civil Party was elected president with the largest voter turnout to date; he took office on May 8, 1894, and was subsequently elected to a second term. This marks the beginning

of a period of relatively open and contested, although indirect, elections. It was not until 1913 that a constitutional amendment provided for the direct election of the president and the legislature; property and educational voting restrictions were also lifted. Until the first direct elections were held in 1914, popular conventions were held in the various localities to elect a limited number of electors, who then met in a body called the Electoral Assembly and elected the president, legislature, and local government officials. Even after the introduction of direct election for the presidency, many elections failed to provide a candidate with a majority of votes and, so, the presidency was decided by Congress.

**0e)** January 28, 1917 (military coup) – An economic crisis brought about through the disruption of trade during the First World War led to the imposition of new taxes and other economic austerity measures which, in turn, triggered a military coup supported by the economic oligarchy. General Federico Tinoco Granados deposed President Alfredo González Flores and dissolved Congress; he then arranged for elections to a Constituent Assembly charged with drafting a new constitution. The new constitution was adopted but popular pressure forced Tinoco to resign and flee into exile on August 12, 1919. He was replaced by Francisco Aguilar Barquero, who successfully steered the country back to elections and civilian government.

**0f)** May 8, 1920 (transfer of executive authority) – On December 7, 1919 Julio Acosta García was elected president; he took office on May 8, 1920. Despite a new constitution and a return to elected government, Costa Rican politics continues to be characterized by tensions among competing sections within its ruling oligarchy and populist leaders. Claims of electoral fraud are common during this period.

**1X) Date of Change to Factional-Anarchic:** March 2, 1948 (vote to annul presidential election)

**Brief Explanation of Change To:**

The presidential election of 1944 was particularly contentious as outgoing President Rafael Ángel Calderón Guardia of the National Republican Party had challenged the oligarchy and promoted a populist agenda and adopted a social welfare program. As consecutive terms were not allowed, Calderón backed the candidacy of Teodoro Picado, who won amidst charges of fraud and intimidation. Picado's term in office was characterized by increasing social tensions and political confrontations. In a concession to the opposition, President Picado created an independent Electoral Tribunal to oversee presidential elections held on February 8, 1948. However, when the Electoral Tribunal declared opposition candidate Otilio Ulate the winner over Calderón, the election was challenged in the Congress, which was dominated by Calderón supporters; Congress voted to annul the election result on March 1. This triggered a backlash from the opposition and a government crackdown, including the arrest of Ulate. A rebel army under the command of Col. José Figueres engaged with government forces on March 12, 1948, and civil war ensued. Government forces were quickly defeated and the government capitulated on April 19 with rebel forces taking over the capital on April 24. After the war, Figueres ruled for a year and a half as head of the Junta Fundadora, a "founding council" which abolished the military and oversaw the election of the Constituent Assembly that produced the new Costa

Rican Constitution of 1949. The military junta then stepped down and transferred authority to Ulate.

**Identify Main Factions:**

- *Populists* — In promoting his social welfare program, President Calderón and the National Republican Party lost much of the support of the traditional oligarchy and increasingly relied on populist support, including the communist Popular Vanguard Party. The government increasingly used the Costa Rican military and private militias to quell urban unrest.
- *Anti-Government Opposition* — Opposition to the Calderón-led populists came from a coalition of anti-communists, conservatives, and social democratic urban intellectuals. The opposition coalition quickly collapsed following the defeat of the Calderón-Picado government.

**10) Date of Change from Factional-Anarchic:** April 24, 1948 (military government)

**Brief Explanation of Change From:**

Following the ending of the civil war, a provisional government was briefly established under the leadership of Leon Herrera but it was replaced on May 3 by a military junta under the direction of Col. José Figueres, who had led the victorious rebel forces in the civil war. The Costa Rican Army was abolished on December 1, 1948; national security was assigned to an internal police force, the Civil Guard. Former President Calderón led an armed invasion from exile in Nicaragua on December 11, 1948, to unseat the junta but it was repulsed. Elections for a Constituent Assembly were held in December 1948 and, on January 16, 1949, in its first official act, the Assembly validated the results of the 1948 presidential election and declared Otilio Ulate as president-elect.

**Changes within Democratic Period:**

**10a)** November 8, 1949 (inauguration of president) – Following the drafting of a new constitution, the junta transferred executive authority to President Ulate on November 8, 1949; elected members of the Constituent Assembly became members of the new legislature. The new constitution was then adopted by the new government on November 9, 1949.

**20b)** November 8, 1953 (inauguration of president) – General elections were held on July 25, 1953, in which women were allowed to vote for the first time. José Figueres, candidate of the National Liberation Party (NLP) and former head of the Junta Fundadora, won the presidency with a large majority in open and competitive elections, while the NLP won a majority of seats in the Congress. On January 11, 1955, Calderónistas mounted a second invasion from Nicaragua which was, again, repulsed by the Civil Guard.