

Panama: The Government

The government of Panama follows the patterns of presidential representative with three branches: the executive, legislative, and judiciary. The executive is elected by popular election vote exercise the senior's citizens for a period 5. The president is considered the head of the state and the head of the government and has two vice- presidents. He also presides over multi party system. The legislative branches are also elected by popular election vote in the same terms as the president as well. It is composed of Unicameral National Assembly of 78 members. Positions in Judiciary are appointed independently some of them by judicial careers contest.

When the government of Panama reformed the Constitution in 2004, Panama's executive branch has only one vice president and the members of the Unicameral National Assembly were lowered down to 74. There are nine members of the judiciary under the Supreme Court which is appointed with a term of 10 years. Voters in Panama should be at least 18 years old and the voting is supervised by Electoral Tribunal who takes responsibility in the registration of voters, transparency in the process of election, implementing the electoral laws and judging any violations of the electoral law. They also are charged to settle any dispute regarding electoral issues. Their decision is usually considered final although it can be appeal once the Tribunal itself has violated some of the enforced laws.

Aside from the executive, legislative and judicial branches in the government of Panama, there are also state apparatus that consists of independent and quasi-independent institutions and entities that have several functions to the public. One of the most important agencies is the Electoral Tribunal. Second to the Electoral Tribunal is the independent controller general whose term also last for 10 years. The responsibility of the controller is to oversee revenues of the government and expenditures and to investigate the government operations as a whole. Although this functions as independent body from the three branches, the controller usually settles for the government policies and never challenged it.

Some quasi independent government entities include National Bank of Panama, the Colon Free Zone, University of Panama and Hydraulic Resources and Electrification. There are still many quasi- independent commissions that are responsible to other areas in the economic and social system of Panama.

Finally, Panama has several public employees scattered through the three government branches of the nation and its independent agencies and commission, and other Panama municipalities. They are appointed public servants that may carry the post temporarily or permanently. They follow certain policies and law regulated by the government of Panama in terms of employment, functions and even when leaving the post. The State may dictate those in high appointments such as directors, secretaries and temporary employees to be exempted from the regulations and policies.

The most important thing is that the government in Panama is truly democratic and constitutional, leading to much foreign direct investors from countries such as the U.S., Canada, China, and much of Europe, which has contributed to staggering development in many of the country's prominent business sectors.

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