

# [***Candidates spar in Mexico's first presidential debate ahead of June 2 election***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRP-HJK1-JC5B-G30F-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

MEXICO CITY — In Mexico’s first presidential debate on Sunday ahead of June 2 elections, former Mexico City Mayor and frontrunner Claudia Sheinbaum appeared comfortable with her polling lead, remaining calm amid ex-Senator Xóchitl Gálvez's personal attacks.

Jorge Álvarez Máynez, a candidate from the Citizen Movement party who is polling in single digits, grinned widely and presented himself as an alternative to the other two candidates, who he said represented the “old ***politics***.”

In the debate, candidates responded to questions about health, education, corruption, transparency, vulnerable groups and violence against women.

Polls have shown Sheinbaum of the Morena party of outgoing leftist President Andrés Manuel López Obrador leading by more than 20 points over Gálvez, who represents a coalition of opposition parties. If Sheinbaum or Gálvez wins, they would become the first woman president in Mexico, a country with a reputation for gender-based violence and a “macho,” male-dominated culture.

Sheinbaum emphasized her connection with the highly popular López Obrador and promised she would continue his policies.

“We're going to keep transforming Mexico,” Sheinbaum said.

Meanwhile, Gálvez launched personal attacks against her competition, including at Sheinbaum.

“Claudia, even if you deny it, you are still cold and heartless. I would call you the ice lady,” Gálvez said.

“Claudia, you're not AMLO. You don't have his charisma,” she said, using the president's nickname. Sheinbaum did not respond to several of Gálvez's sharpest attacks.

Mentions of López Obrador were surprisingly few in the debate even though the populist leader, who is not eligible for reelection, [*looms large*](https://apnews.com/article/mexico-lopez-obrador-election-sheinbaum-amlo-d00d1ad481137a33d8dad1bd24b7422d) in the upcoming polls.

The candidates also discussed rising migration levels to the United States, agreeing that migrants should be protected and respected on their path through Mexico. That contrasted with the security-focused approach pushed by the U.S. government.

Notably, the candidates spoke little of Mexico's soaring levels of violence and the slayings of local candidates, but a subsequent debate is expected to focus on security topics.

Sheinbaum briefly mentioned the recent [*raid of Mexico’s Embassy by Ecuadorian police*](https://apnews.com/article/mexico-ecuador-jorge-glas-diplomatic-immunity-embassy-c888b82d614f91ef9a7bd8faa09afe91) on Friday, cutting in at the beginning of the debate to thank embassy staff for their bravery.

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