

## Argentina's First Lady To Run for Presidency

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BUENOS AIRES, July 1 -- Argentine President [Néstor Kirchner](#) will not run for reelection in October, but his wife, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, will run for the office, government officials announced Sunday.

Kirchner's cabinet chief, Alberto Fernández, confirmed news reports published Sunday announcing that Cristina Kirchner, a senator representing [Buenos Aires](#) province, will formally launch her candidacy at a July 19 rally.

The announcement ended more than a year of speculation about which of the Kirchners would be the candidate of their Victory Front party in this year's election, scheduled for Oct. 28.

The Kirchners have not publicly discussed why the president -- who would be easily reelected, according to most opinion polls -- would not seek a second term. But he has experienced several setbacks in recent weeks, watching endorsed allies lose elections for Buenos Aires mayor and provincial governorships. Energy shortages and inflation have also eroded his popularity, according to polls.

Some analysts suspect Cristina Kirchner's candidacy could reinvigorate the government's ruling coalition before the election, while allowing her husband to run for reelection in 2011. Term limits prevent more than two consecutive presidential terms.

According to recent surveys by several Argentine polling firms, either of the Kirchners would easily win the election. About 52 percent of voters now have a positive image of President Kirchner -- down from 68 percent last September -- while 61 percent have a positive image of the first lady, according to polls published Sunday in Clarin newspaper. The same polls showed that he would win the election by a wider margin than would his wife.

Expected presidential contenders include congresswoman Elisa Carrió and former economy minister Roberto Lavagna.