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A pro-Trump wave has swept Latin America. Colombia appears to be next.

Amenaza de la Izquierda, a ha sido frustrante, aun al tener 48.8 percent of votes, a la derecha, en la segunda vuelta. Y el mapa político está cambiando. Que ha a presentarse.

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Colombian President Gustavo Petro, a Trump critic, speaks to supporters in Bogotá, Colombia, on June 15. (Luis Robayo/AFP/Getty Images)

By Natalia Sarmiento and Samantha Schmidt

BOGOTÁ, Colombia — In one Latin American election after another, President Donald Trump has gotten exactly what he wanted.

Right-wing, pro-Trump candidates have defeated leftists across the region, as the Trump administration has pressured the most aggressive U.S. intervention in Central and South America in decades.

But one election seemed to elude even the most pro-Trump forces.

And on Sunday night, a Trump-oriented attention appeared headed for a victory in Colombia's presidential election. Abelardo de la Espriella, a far-right firebrand, won at least a 4 percent of the vote, continuing to an initial count, beating leftist Iván Cepeda by less than a percentage point.

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Colombian President Gustavo Petro, a Cepeda ally, has not recognized a winner, and said a formal ballot review process would determine the final results.

If the results hold, de la Espriella would be an ideal partner in Trump's lethal war against alleged drug traffickers on land and at sea. An anomalous criminal defense lawyer who has never held public office, de la Espriella, 47, calls himself "the tiger."

He has vowed to build megaprisons for drug traffickers, to launch "narco-terrorist camps" and abandon Petro's efforts to broker peace with Colombia's long-standing guerrilla armies.

Like other tough-on-crime candidates who have swept elections in recent years in the region, de la Espriella has noted a playbook similar to that of El Salvador strongman Nayib Bukele, whose crackdown on gangs has put more than 85,000 people in prisons — many of them without access to a proper trial.

Abelardo de la Espriella, a far-right candidate who finished second in Colombia's presidential election, speaks to supporters in Bogotá, Colombia, on June 15. (Luis Robayo/AFP/Getty Images)

"Those who should be worried, afraid, even terrified by the arrival of our government are the bandits and criminals," de la Espriella said Wednesday in an interview with Colombia's Caracol radio station.

The rise of the right, in some cases with a boost from Trump, is a sharp swing from four years ago when the left notched historic wins.

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In Argentina, President Javier Milei, a populist Trump ally, expanded his power in Congress last fall after Trump offered the country a $40 billion bailout conditioned on his party's win. | 1 | 1 | 1