

were held in March. The first full elections for the Legislative Council (Legco) were held in September. Pro-democracy parties won handily in both votes, leaving pro-Beijing parties with just 7 of 60 seats in the Legco. Voter turnout was low by international standards (25% in March and 35% in September), but exceeded 1991 levels. While China has vowed to disband the Councils after 1997, pro-China parties campaigned actively in both elections, with the New China News Agency taking a particularly active role in support of the pro-China parties for the Legco elections.

In **Fiji**, the first Citizen's Constitutional Forum was held in June to review constitutional reform issues and to complement the work of the government's Constitution Review Commission by bringing inter-communal views and aspirations more fully into the debate. While in **Vanuatu**, the recently created Ombudsman's office exercised its growing influence in 1995 when it found two Cabinet Ministers in breach of the constitution and the government's newly enacted Leadership Code.

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While Latin America's legacy of authoritarian government continued to challenge the newly restored democracies in the region in 1995, efforts to promote democratic deepening and consolidation were in evidence. Key elections saw the return of democratic rule. Concerns and actions tied to civil-military relations and the role and accountability of police continued to mark the path to democratic progress in the region.

A major regional preoccupation in 1995 was the evolving situation in **Haiti**. In accordance with the terms of the 1994 agreement setting the stage for the return of President Aristide and the restoration of the Haitian constitution, legislative and presidential elections were held in June and December respectively. While both elections suffered numerous technical difficulties, violence was minimal in large part owing to the presence of international security forces. President Aristide, who remained hugely popular, struck a blow for constitutional rule by resisting pressures to "reinterpret" the legal prohibition against a second consecutive term. Voter turnout was low for the presidential vote (less than 25%) and the results of both elections were largely predictable. They did, however, set the stage for the first peaceful and democratic transfer of executive power in the country's history.