2.2.1. Branches

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The President and Vice-President are elected by direct universal suffrage by absolute majority. The Legislative branch is made up of the Congress (166 representatives) and the Senate (102 representatives), both of which are elected to four-year terms.64 In 2023, Colombia elected Gustavo Petro, the first left-wing president in its history.65

The judiciary is made up of four high courts: the Supreme Court of Justice (Corte Suprema de Justicia), for ordinary jurisdiction matters; the Constitutional Court (Corte Constitucional), for matters of constitutionality; the Higher Council of the Judiciary (Consejo Superior de la Judicatura), which deals with the conduct of judicial officials and conflicts of jurisdiction; and the Council of the State (Consejo de Estado), which deals with administrative litigation.66 The following is the breakdown of the justice system:67

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Figure 1: Structure of the judiciary system68

Two additional jurisdictions are the 'special jurisdictions', which includes the Jurisdicción de las Comunidades Indígenas ('indigenous jurisdiction'), which covers indigenous territories and is carried out by indigenous authorities under the Constitution and the laws of Colombia, and the La Jurisdicción de Paz ('peace jurisdiction'), which is carried out by justices of the peace to address community conflicts.69

The Office of the Attorney General (Fiscalía General de la Nación, FGN) is the institution of the judiciary with administrative and budgetary autonomy responsible for carrying out criminal investigations and the prosecution of crimes committed in the country.70 The National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences (Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses, INMLCF) is the agency responsible for providing technical and scientific support to prosecutors, judges, judicial police, and other authorities, through the collection of evidence and the provision of expert legal medicine and forensic advice.71 For additional information, see Section 5 on state institutions and access to justice.

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  OAS, Sistema Legal Colombiano, n.d., url, p. 1

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EU, EEAS, 2023 EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World, 29 May 2024, url, p. 265; Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report — Colombia, 2024, url, p. 3

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  OAS, Sistema Legal Colombiano, n.d., url, p. 2

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  Colombia, Función Pública, Rama Judicial, n.d., url

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  Colombia, Rama Judicial, n.d., url, pp. 5-6

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  Colombia, Rama Judicial, n.d., url, pp. 12-14

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  Colombia, Rama Judicial, n.d., url, p. 17

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