

《两阿根廷前领导人宣布参与竞选总统》

Two Argentinian former presidents announced Saturday they are running for parliament again.

Argentina's former President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, 64, formally launched her bid on Saturday for a Senate seat in October's mid-term elections in a race despite facing corruption charges.

The 64-year-old leftist ex-president who dominated Argentine politics for years alongside her late husband, has remained a divisive figure since leaving power, and is now seeking public office again.

Fernandez de Kirchner took office in 2007, vowing to continue the work started by her husband Nestor Kirchner, who in 2003 inherited an economy in shambles after what was then the largest sovereign debt default in history.



Argentinian former President Cristina Kirchner waves upon her arrival for a hearing in court for alleged fraud in the concession of public works during her term in Buenos Aires, Oct. 31, 2016. /VCG Photo

Since standing down two years ago she has channeled popular anger against the budget cuts of her successor Mauricio Macri, launching a new party called Citizen Union, and her return to politics spells a headache for the

conservative president.

Her supporters hope a seat in the Senate might pave the way for a fresh presidential bid in 2019.

It could also spare her jail: she is being investigated over three sets of corruption charges and faces trial in a fourth case of alleged financial mismanagement as president. She has denied wrongdoing and said the cases are politically motivated.

Argentine ex-president Carlos Menem, at age 86, also announced Saturday his candidacy in the country's October elections on Twitter. This move was believed to enable him to continue to dodge prison time over a string of criminal convictions.





A screenshot of Carlos Menem's tweet shows he signs to be a candidate for a senator in the October election. /VCG Photo

President from 1989 to 1999 and a senator since 2005, Menem has been convicted of arms trafficking and corruption, but has so far escaped prison time given his parliamentary immunity.

Menem was once wildly popular, leading Argentina through a period of rapid economic growth in the 1990s and titillating Argentines with his fondness for fast cars and women half his age.

But his popularity plummeted as his key economic policies unraveled after his tenure, culminating in a devastating

2001 crisis that triggered riots in the streets.



Former Argentinian President Carlos Menem attends a Senate session to vote on an income tax reform bill at Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Dec. 21, 2016. /VCG Photo

In 2013 he was sentenced to seven years for trafficking arms to Croatia and Ecuador, a sentence that was upheld by Argentina's top criminal court this week.

He was also convicted in 2015 of corruption for masterminding the illegal overpayment of high-ranking officials' salaries.