

GFLED Codebook

The Global Forward-Looking Electoral Dataset

Version: April 2025

A Monthly Dataset of Past and Upcoming Elections Worldwide

1. Overview

The Global Forward-Looking Electoral Dataset (GFLED) provides harmonized, monthly data on presidential and/or parliamentary elections in 187 countries, covering the period from January 1989 through December 2030. It includes both historical electoral events and projections of future elections.

This document describes the dataset's structure, variables, and methodological assumptions.

Time Coverage: January 1989 – December 2030 (future releases may extend this)

Geographic Scope: 187 countries

Current Version: v202504 (April 2025)

2. Data Sources

The dataset draws on a combination of public and model-assisted sources. Historical election dates are primarily gathered from Wikipedia national election pages and verified using large language models (LLMs). For upcoming elections, we rely on the [Election Guide](#), supplemented by manual research and official government announcements where available.

3. Variables and Definitions

Variable	Description
<code>isocode</code>	ISO alpha-3 country code.
<code>period</code>	Monthly time stamp in <code>yyyymm</code> format.
<code>election</code>	Binary variable: 1 if an election occurs that month, 0 otherwise. For presidential systems, this refers to presidential elections; for parliamentary systems, to legislative elections.
<code>since_election</code>	Number of months since the last recorded election. Countries with no prior records before 1989 default to January 1980.
<code>until_election</code>	Number of months until the next known or expected election. If no future election is registered, periodicity is inferred from past cycles. If no reliable estimate is possible, a default upper bound of December 2035 is used.
<code>last12_election</code>	Binary variable: 1 if an election occurred in the previous 12 months; 0 otherwise. Captures recent exposure to electoral events.

4. Methodological Notes

- Each country is assigned either presidential or parliamentary elections as its reference type—not both. In systems with both, we prioritize presidential elections as the more prominent national event. If the country does not hold presidential elections, parliamentary elections are used.
- Future electoral dates are determined through a multi-step process: (1) official election calendars and announcements, (2) news and government sources, and (3) inferred periodicity from historical cycles. In the absence of any of these, a placeholder date is set at December 2035.
- The dataset is updated biannually. Each update may include new future projections and revisions to previously estimated election dates. Later versions may extend coverage beyond 2030.

5. Version History

- **v202504** – Initial public release, covering January 1989 through December 2030.

6. License

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