

# **Vladimir Putin, Kim Jong Un and other world leaders who have not acknowledged a Biden win**

As President-elect Joe Biden moved forward on Monday with preparations to take office in January, some world leaders have continued to remain silent on the outcome of the election, which President Trump has yet to concede.

Congratulatory messages from around the world rolled in over the weekend following Biden's victory on Saturday, and traditional allies spoke of restored cooperation. Few in foreign capitals rushed to defend Trump's version of events — unfounded assertions that Democrats stole the election through widespread election fraud. But some retained their silence.

Even after some leaders aligned with Trump, including Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, joined the congratulatory chorus, Turkey, Russia, and others held back, citing Trump's legal challenges questioning the results.

Here are some of the leaders who have remained silent.

Estonian cabinet minister to resign after calling Biden corrupt, saying Trump would emerge as election winner

## **Russian President Vladimir Putin**

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said no statement of congratulations was to be offered because “there will be certain legal proceedings which were announced by the incumbent president.”

The decision to hold off could foreshadow frosty relations between Biden and Putin. Their ties are already strained by allegations, which the Kremlin denied, that Russia was behind pro-Trump disinformation campaigns ahead of the 2016 and 2020 elections.

## **Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan**

On Monday, Omer Celik, a spokesman for Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party, said, "We are waiting for the election results to be officially announced because eventually there are objections, other arguments, and things like that."

The remarks came after days of silence from government officials, over an election result that is widely seen as a blow to Erdogan.

Whereas Erdogan's consolidation of power went unchallenged by Trump, the Turkish government appears concerned that Biden "will reintroduce a democracy and human rights promotion discourse into the bilateral relationship," according to Asli Aydintasbas, a fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Opposition figures welcomed Biden's victory. Kemal Kilicdaroglu, one of Erdogan's most prominent adversaries, said he was looking "forward to strengthening Turkish-American relations and our strategic alliance."

## **Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador**

"With regard to the U.S. election, we are going to wait until all the legal matters have been resolved," López Obrador said at a news conference Saturday, Reuters reported. "I can't congratulate one candidate or the other. I want to wait until the electoral process is over."

The United States is Mexico's top export market.

"President Trump has been very respectful of us, and we have reached very good agreements, and we thank him because he has not interfered and has respected us," López Obrador said Saturday, according to the Associated Press.

## **Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro**

Bolsonaro's silence on Biden's victory did not come as a surprise.

Few world leaders have associated themselves more closely with Trump than Bolsonaro, the formerly fringe politician who won the Brazilian presidency in

2018, mimicking many of Trump's campaign tactics.

"I hope, God willing, to soon appear at the inauguration of President [Trump] in the United States," Bolsonaro said late last month.

But last week, Bolsonaro appeared to adjust to a new reality. "I am not the most important person in Brazil, just as Trump is not the most important person in the world, as he himself says," Bolsonaro said Friday.

Bolsonaro has also adopted "a more pragmatic tone" in private, the Associated Press reported Sunday, citing unnamed officials.

## **North Korean leader Kim Jong Un**

North Korean state media has refrained from making mention of the U.S. election.

As a matter of course, the North Korean government restricts the flow of information on political freedoms elsewhere.

Whereas Trump claims to have enjoyed a "special friendship" with Kim, meeting with him thrice and engaging in diplomatic talks, Biden's election could be an unwelcome development for Pyongyang. North Korean state media has said Biden deserves "merciless punishment" for insulting the country's dignity.

North Korea watches Biden victory with one finger on the missile test trigger

## **Chinese President Xi Jinping**

"I noticed that Mr. Biden has declared victory of the election," China Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Monday, stopping short of acknowledging a result. "We understand that the presidential election result will be determined following U.S. laws and procedures."

As Biden led the vote count last week, a senior ministry official hinted that China was eager to turn a new page. The next U.S. administration should "meet halfway" with Beijing on matters of disagreement and collaborate whenever possible, Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng said in remarks that some state media outlets framed as a desire to move past the rancor and trade wars of the Trump

years. But many in Beijing fear that Biden will take a tough line on China — perhaps more so than Trump.

A U.S.-China detente under Biden? Beijing isn't betting on it.

## **Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Jansa**

Moving past the Trump presidency might prove awkward for Jansa, who prematurely congratulated Trump last week and has doubled down since.

“It’s pretty clear that American people have elected @realDonaldTrump and @Mike\_Pence for #4moreyears. More delays and facts denying from [the mainstream media], bigger the final triumph for #POTUS,” Jansa wrote on Twitter last week.

He has shown no indication that he will follow other E.U. leaders in congratulating Biden and has instead continued to cast doubts on Biden’s victory.

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