

Cuba has confirmed that Miguel Diaz-Canel, a Communist Party loyalist, is to replace Raul Castro as president - bringing an end to the 59-year era of rule under the Castro brothers, though almost certainly not their influence or power.



Cuban President Raul Castro waves next to First Vice-President Miguel Mario Diaz-Canel Bermudez during a National Assembly session on April 18, 2018. Diaz-Canel was selected as the next president to replace Castro, will remain head of the Communist Party. (AFP photo)

Politicians in the country's National Assembly announced the vice president had been selected to replace the brother of Fidel Castro, who had taken charge of the country after his brother fell ill in 2011. Fidel Castro, the driving force behind the country's revolution and who ruled it with a first that was frequently cast of iron, died in 2016.

In his first televised address to the nation, Diaz-Canel vowed to continue the socialist revolution that was established by the Castros. He said that Cuban foreign policy would not change and he would not negotiate the nation's principles, according to the Associated Press.

At the same time, he said Cuba was always ready to engage in dialogue with those who "treat us as equals".

Castro will remain head of the Communist Party, which is designated by the constitution as "the superior guiding force of society and the state." As a result, he may still be the most powerful person in Cuba for the time being, the AP said.

Sources: Al Jazeera, Guardian, Reuters, Independent UK

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