

Bolivian president Evo Morales asks for 'fair and accurate' ruling in sea access dispute with Chile



The Hague, March 19 (RHC)-- Bolivian President Evo Morales arrived in The Hague Monday to attend the opening hearings for his country's case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), saying he expects a "fair and accurate ruling" in the over-a-century sea access dispute with Chile.

Speaking at a press conference, the Bolivian president said that the ruling was important for the future relationship between the two neighboring countries.

"The Court must seek solutions for future generations because Chile and Bolivia will forever be neighbors," Morales said.

For several decades, Bolivia has been fighting to reclaim its coastal territory from Chile to gain access to the Pacific Ocean, which it lost in the 1897 War of the Pacific that left the country landlocked.

Speaking to reporters at a press conference following the hearings, President Morales said: "We want Bolivians and Chileans, as brothers, to solve our differences together. We must as brothers look for solutions for the good of future generations."

He added that his government is not interested in negotiating the century-old treaty, but to end the injustice his country suffered over the decades.

During the opening hearings, Bolivian lawyers said the Andean country was not asking "the court to rule on how sovereign access should be arranged ... but simply (to ensure) that Chile return to the negotiating table in good faith."

In 2015, despite Chilean opposition, the International Court of Justice decided that landlocked Bolivia had jurisdiction in the case. The oral hearing at the ICJ will run through March 28, after which the judges will take several months before setting the date for a ruling.

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