

Pope Francis joins Bolivia's Evo Morales in call for solidarity and peace



Vatican City, July 2 (RHC)-- Bolivian President Evo Morales met with Pope Francis over the weekend at the Vatican. During the meeting, the sixth between President Morales and the Argentinean-born Pope, they discussed many of the issues affecting the Latin American region.

Evo Morales traveled to the Vatican for the church council last Thursday, in which the Pope appointed 14 new cardinals, including Bolivia's and Latin America's first Indigenous cardinal, Toribio Porco Ticona. Evo Morales expressed his excitement through social media. "Emotional consecration of brother Toribio Ticona as Cardinal in Bolivia. A historic and unprecedented act, not only for the country and the region but for all the world's Indigenous movement. Now the church has a cardinal of the people," Evo Morales wrote on Twitter. Ticona is a priest from the rural and mining town of Coro Coro, west of La Paz. Before becoming a priest, Ticona also worked as a miner.

Evo Morales and the Pope spoke about Bolivia's ongoing maritime dispute with neighboring Chile. "The brother Pope Francis always asks about the sea issue, is a fact and he knows the history, surely he will ask, and we will talk about that issue as well." The dispute, which is being heard at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, was also discussed in the previous meetings between the two world

leaders.

Pope Francis and Evo Morales reportedly held a "cordial conversation" on bilateral relations and the "regional situation." According to the Vatican, the Pope highlighted the duty Morales had to "work for a world of solidarity and peace, built on justice." The two also exchanged gifts according to the Vatican with the Pope giving the Bolivian president a medallion of the Angel of Peace, "which traps the demon of war and injustice."

During his traditional Friday mass, Pope Francis urged Christians to stop justifying and keeping themselves "far from real human dramas, which preserve us from contact with other people's concrete existence and, in the end, from knowing the revolutionary power of God's tender love."

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