

# *International observers confirm legitimacy of Bolivian elections*

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La Paz, October 22 (RHC)-- A number of international observers that are in La Paz monitoring Bolivia's general elections have praised the legitimacy and transparency of the process which comes in contrast to proclamations by U.S.-backed opposition leaders who have already made declarations questioning the results.

One of the leading observers, Rixi Moncada, who is the president of the electoral court in Honduras, praised the level of independent monitoring that took place. "The vote count is open to all who want to see it... we could see the noting down of each of the votes from each ballot paper."

Another observer, Manu Pineda, a Spanish lawmaker in the European Parliament, also spoke to media praising the legitimacy of Bolivia's electoral process. "In Spain ballots are counted and assigned very quickly, however in Bolivia, each ballot paper is held and shown to all, so there cannot be any manipulation, the vote is then recorded publicly on a board for all to see. The count takes a very long time, but we can see that it's a positive thing because it stops any possibility of fraud."

"Everything has taken place with total normality and regularity," Sandra Perreira, another EU lawmaker, from Portugal, commented. However, many are concerned that the opposition will refuse to recognize the legal results if Evo Morales comes out on top.

Already opposition candidate Carlos Mesa has said he does not recognize the preliminary results published by the electoral authorities after they indicated that Morales was heading for a first-round victory. This is despite the fact that Mesa initially endorsed the results when they temporarily showed him having a slightly larger share of the vote, before being updated after votes from rural areas had arrived to be counted.

Mesa called for street mobilizations that ended in violence at vote-counting stations, with some opposition protesters burning ballots and the buildings where counting was taking place.

The Organization of the American States (OAS) and the U.S. government have already issued statements expressing "concerns" over the legitimacy of the result, citing a technical issue that led to preliminary results being frozen temporarily, despite the fact that the live vote monitor has not suffered any such issues. One of those making such declarations was infamous war hawk Senator Marco Rubio, who has been very vocal about intervention efforts in Venezuela and Cuba.

In the face of attempts to delegitimize the election results, Indigenous groups and workers unions have called a "state of emergency" to defend the public vote from opposition violence.

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