

# *Evo Morales says police put Cochabamba's residents' health at risk*

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Buenos Aires, April 20 (RHC)-- Bolivia's former President Evo Morales has denounced that the police entered the Cochabamba Department without taking due sanitary precautions and challenging the local population, which expelled several officers from the Shinahota Municipality.

"The Police have the constitutional power to be present throughout Bolivia. However, their entry to the Tropics, without following sanitary protocols and coordinating with local authorities, puts the population's health at risk," Morales tweeted.

The Cochabamba Tropics are between the Andean mountains and the Amazon plains. In this region, local authorities established a strict quarantine in the municipalities of Villa Tunari, Shinahota, Chimore, Puerto Villarroel, and Entre Rios.

Bolivia's coup-regime led by Jeanine Añez, however, ordered that the police retake control of the Shinahota Municipality from where it was previously expelled by area residents.

Over the weekend, the Bolivian army and police, which were deployed areas with a majority Indigenous population, had to withdraw due to social rejection. At least 85 police officers have abandoned their posts in Cochabamba.

Evo Morales also denounced that the de-facto government implemented actions against the poorest inhabitants, most of whom require help to cope with the quarantine. "The banks closed so that people cannot access cash transfers. The sale of fuel was prohibited to prevent my brothers from continuing to distribute free fruit to the most humble people," the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) leader. He added: "Those decisions are criminal and threaten life."

Besides ignoring these allegations, the Añez administration threatened the Cochabamba people with criminal proceedings against them. "Faced with this belligerent and malicious attitude, the only response they will get from us is that we continue... patrolling all over Bolivia," the Defense Minister Fernando Lopez warned.

Police officers "did not pose any threat to the population... we will remain in the Tropics and implement criminal actions," Cochabamba's police commander Franz Sellis said. Notwithstanding the foregoing, local authorities confirmed that the deployment of the Añez-controlled security forces represents a health risk.

"They put at risk an entire population that did not have a single case of coronavirus for over a month," Villa Tunari Mayor Asterio Romero told local media Radio Kawsachun Coca.???????

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