

Bolivia's MAS Party Wins Majority in Local Governments



La Paz, March 30 (teleSUR-RHC) According to unofficial final results, Bolivia's Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) – President Evo Morales' party – won most of the country's local governments on Sunday's elections.

Just months after sweeping Bolivia's general elections, MAS obtained victories in four out of nine provinces, while finishing first in two other provinces that are slated to go to a second round of voting.

In Pando and Cochabamba the governing party registered wins with over 60 percent of the ballots (66.3 and 60.1 respectively), while in Oruro MAS won with 55 percent of the votes. Similarly in Potosi, the governing party won with 57.1 percent. The provinces of Beni and Chiquisaca seems to be leading for a second round on May 3, with MAS leading after Sunday's vote but lacking the 10 point advantage over the second place candidate necessary to be declared the outright winner.

If MAS wins in a second round in Beni – a traditional opposition stronghold – it would be the first time in a decade that the province is not going to be ruled by the opposition. The opposition also obtained victories in La Paz, Santa Cruz and Tarija.

Speaking at a press conference, Vice-President Alvaro Garcia Linera recognized the defeat in La Paz. "We assess that (the defeat in La Paz) has to do with the weaknesses of formation of local leadership,

both at the departmental and municipal levels," said Garcia Linera, who praised the elections as having been "peaceful, participatory and democratic."

The MAS leader added that results nationwide reaffirmed the left-wing party as the strongest political force in the country. The country's electoral authority gave preliminary numbers indicating that at least 85 percent of the over 6 million registered voters participated in the election.

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