

Chile to Remove Visas for Bolivian Officials



La Paz, July 22 (RHC)-- Bolivian President Evo Morales blasted the recent decision by Chilean officials to remove standing visas for his country's diplomats. Evo Morales took to his official Twitter account to condemn the move, stating: "The Foreign Ministry of Chile has decided that it will remove visas for Bolivian diplomats. Despite this abuse, Bolivia will not take away visas for Chilean diplomats."

The Chilean government announced that all Bolivian officials would need entry visas in passports to visit, amid a diplomatic standoff between the two neighbors. The decision was prompted by a visit earlier this week by Bolivian Foreign Minister David Choquehuanca, who traveled with a delegation to the port city of Arica in order to verify allegations of abuse and discrimination against Bolivian truckers.

Bolivian authorities have also accused Chile of violating the 1904 treaty which forces the government of Santiago to facilitate access to the sea to the neighboring country after Bolivia's coastal territory was taken during the War of the Pacific (1879-1883).

Bolivia and Chile have had no formal diplomatic relations since 1978. Recently, Chile opened a new case before the Hague-based International Court of Justice over a disputed water course originating in Bolivia.

The Bolivian government hopes to gain sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean in order to import and export goods and raw materials without paying costly tariffs to neighboring Chile and Peru.

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