

Bolivia won't drop ICJ suit against Chile: president



La Paz, Feb 1, (RHC), -- Bolivia will not drop the suit it has filed against neighboring Chile at The Hague-based International Court of Justice (ICJ), demanding for its access to Pacific Ocean through Chile, Bolivian President Evo Morales said Friday.

Bolivia will press ahead with its demand for sea access through Chile and "the claim filed at The Hague will not be dropped," Morales told a press conference at the presidential palace of Quemado in La Paz in the wake of a recent news report in Chilean daily *La Tercera* that Bolivia will likely drop the suit in favor of bilateral negotiations.

"As far as I know, there can be dialogue parallel to the demand. We are open to dialogue accompanied by official proposals and solutions, and not just mere meetings," Morales added.

In last April, Bolivia filed its suit at The Hague, requesting the ICJ, also known as the World Court, obligate Chile into a negotiated solution to Bolivia's demand.

Bolivia lost its sea access to Chile in the late 1800s, during the War of the Pacific, in which it lost 120,000 square kilometers of land, including 440 kilometers of coastline, to its neighbor.

The dispute led the two nations to sever diplomatic ties in 1978.

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