

Bolivian president calls for technical and not political report on ballot audit



La Paz, November 4 (RHC)-- Bolivian President Evo Morales says that he expects a technical-legal and non-political report of the audit made by the OAS of the October 20th presidential elections, which saw him winning re-election by a 10-percent margin, while opposition has refused to recognize his victory.

The president also said the opposition's demonstrations, which have at times turned violent, are detrimental to the country's economic growth and give a "very bad image" of Bolivia in the world.

The opposition has rejected recognizing the results of the elections which after the completion of the full count showed that Morales, from the Movement to Socialism (MAS), obtained 47.08 percent to 36.51 percent for Carlos Mesa, the right-wing candidate, granting the current president re-election without the need for a second round as he has a 10 percent lead.

The opposition argues that the suspension of the preliminary count, when it was showing a possibility of a second-round was evidence of fraud. However, the electoral authorities had already said ahead of the vote count that the preliminary count would not be binding and would be published at different stages of the counting process, unlike the full count which ended three days after elections day.

In response to the doubts and fraud claims by opposition parties and their supporters, the government asked the Organization of American States (OAS), along with multiple regional governments, for an audit that began last Thursday and would take approximately two weeks and includes 30 different election specialists.

"They invented something called fraud, but no one has presented proof of fraud (...) Since they don't know how to present (the evidence), they say 'no, you have to cancel elections' and others say 'it was Evo', 'let Evo resign,' Morales said in an act in Cochabamba, a regional stronghold of his government.

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