

President Evo Morales calls new presidential elections in Bolivia



La Paz, November 10 (RHC)-- Bolivian President Evo Morales said Sunday that he was calling new presidential elections after a night of major unrest and violence across the country led by the right-wing opposition in what the Bolivian government has denounced as an attempted coup.

Morales, speaking at a press conference in La Paz early Sunday morning, also said he would replace the country's electoral body. "I have decided to renew all the members of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and call for new general elections." Evo Morales called for calm and peace amid opposition protests and mobilizations, which have turned violent, against his victory in the October 20th elections. "We all have the obligation to make Bolivia peaceful."

"I call for respect between families, of private properties, of authorities, of all the social sectors. All we have in Bolivia is the legacy of the people, and between Bolivians, we can't come against each other to inflict harm," the president said.

Morales made the announcement after consulting with different social movements in the country. He held the press conference alongside Juan Carlos Guarachi, leader of the labor union federation (COB) and Segundina Flores, executive secretary of the Indigenous women organization Bartolinas.

His announcement came shortly after the Organization of American States (OAS) issued its audit report on the elections of October 20th in which it recommended the holding of new polls. Voting should take place as soon as conditions are in place to guarantee it being able to go ahead, including a newly composed electoral body, the OAS said.

After his comments to the press, the Bolivian president tweeted that his government's decision came after "listening to the COB, the Unity Pact and different sectors from the countryside and the cities, we have decided to ask the Legislative Assembly, within the constitutional principle of coordination, to renew the entire TSE in order to call new national elections."

Sectors of the opposition were quick to react to the decision, saying that Morales should not stand for the upcoming elections.

Saturday saw some of the most violent nights in the country as opposition protesters burned down the houses of two governors as well as the house of the sister of President Morales. Violent protesters also took over two state media outlets and threatening their staff. The signal of Bolivia TV was taken off air for more than eight hours.

Meanwhile, supporters of President Morales took to the streets in different cities across the country, saying that they would protect the nation's democracy and constitution against the attempted coup by the right-wing opposition.

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