

# *Bolivian police demand Mexican Embassy turn over refugees*

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La Paz, December 25 (RHC)-- La Paz Police Commander William Cordero has demanded that Mexico hand over supporters and former officials of the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) who sought refuge at the Mexican embassy after the coup d'état against President Evo Morales on November 10th.

"The Mexican representatives should better collaborate with the Bolivian Justice and hand over the people who take refuge inside the embassy," Cordero said. Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) pointed out that the coup-regime led by Jeanine Añez could be violating international law and the conventions on the right to asylum.??????

Despite the complaints made by the Mexican government, the Bolivian police maintain unusual levels of surveillance around the Mexican embassy. Bolivia's Security Minister Wilson Santamaria, who denied that the de-facto government is harassing Mexican diplomats, said that the increased vigilance around the embassy is intended to prevent "the escape" of former officials.

"We are exercising our sovereignty and have taken the necessary provisions so that our security devices can immediately detect any complicit action aimed at helping the fugitives [inside the embassy] to leave the country. We will not allow that," Santamaria said.

On Tuesday the AMLO administration issued a protest note demanding respect for the inviolability of its diplomatic mission. Mexico's Under Secretary for Latin America Maximiliano Reyes published images warning that Bolivian police officers would be conducting security inspections of Mexican diplomats. "Are they protecting us from ourselves?," Reyes asked.

Mexico's Secretary of International Relations denounced that Bolivian security agents carry out controls on all persons entering or leaving the Mexican embassy, attempt to impede the free transit of the diplomatic personnel, and follow the displacements of official diplomatic vehicles.

"They are delaying. They consider that our country, Mexico, is garbage. They can kill anyone at the Mexican embassy. In Bolivia, there is no government but a dictatorship." The meme reads: "The Secretary of International Relations (SRE) is on permanent alert and anticipates the risk of armed incursion into the Mexican embassy in Bolivia."

Mexico's Director of American Regional Organizations and Mechanisms Efrain Guadarrama also warned that "police harassment continues in our La Paz embassy."

"We will continue denouncing the harassment of our diplomatic precincts and exhibiting violations of international law in Bolivia," Guadarrama stressed.

After the coup against Morales, the self-proclaimed interim president Añez began systematic political persecution against MAS militants, supporters, and former officials. In response to this circumstance, the AMLO administration, which does not recognize Añez as president, provided shelter to some members of the Evo Morales administration.

Currently, the Mexican embassy provides shelter to former Presidency Minister Juan Quintana, former Defense Minister Javier Zavaleta, former Justice Minister Hector Arce, and former Culture Minister Wilma Alanoca.???????

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