

# *Mexico ratifies asylum for Bolivian refugees at embassy in La Paz*

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Mexico City, January 3 (RHC)-- Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) reaffirmed Thursday that he will not fall to "any provocation" and ratified that he will not hand over the former officials from Evo Morales government that have been granted asylum at his country's embassy in La Paz, Bolivia.

"The instructions they have are to assert the right of asylum, that we cannot waver in this matter of giving protection to those politically persecuted people who received asylum in our embassy and who later received arrest warrants," the Mexican president said.

AMLO then added that "if we give these people up we would be ending the right of asylum that is sacred for Mexico, it is part of international law, but in the case of our country, always, even in more difficult circumstances, it has been enforced, it is a matter of principle."

The president's position comes after he ordered the withdrawal of his ambassador to the Andean country, Maria Teresa Mercado, "to safeguard her security and integrity" and who left the country on December 31st after being declared "persona non grata" by the President of the de-facto government of Bolivia Jeanine Añez.

The decision was taken after an "alleged interference" by the Mexican ambassador in an incident that occurred on December 27, when Spanish officials were prevented from entering, within the framework of a protocol visit to the residence of Mexico by the Bolivian police, generating tensions at the international level which resulted in the European Union delegation in Bolivia expressing "deep concern."

The bilateral crisis that began with Mexico dragged on into Spain when the de-facto government also declared two Spanish officials as "personas non-gratas," ordering them to leave Bolivian territory in 72 hours, something the Spanish government called a "hostile gesture."

Mexico has not expelled Bolivia's ambassador in Mexico City and AMLO said he would not react to provocations and that his position on the matter will always be to defend the principles of foreign policy. Relations have been difficult between the Mexican government and the de-facto government led by Añez since Mexico gave asylum to former Bolivian socialist leader Evo Morales last November, after a coup d'état was carried out against his government.

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