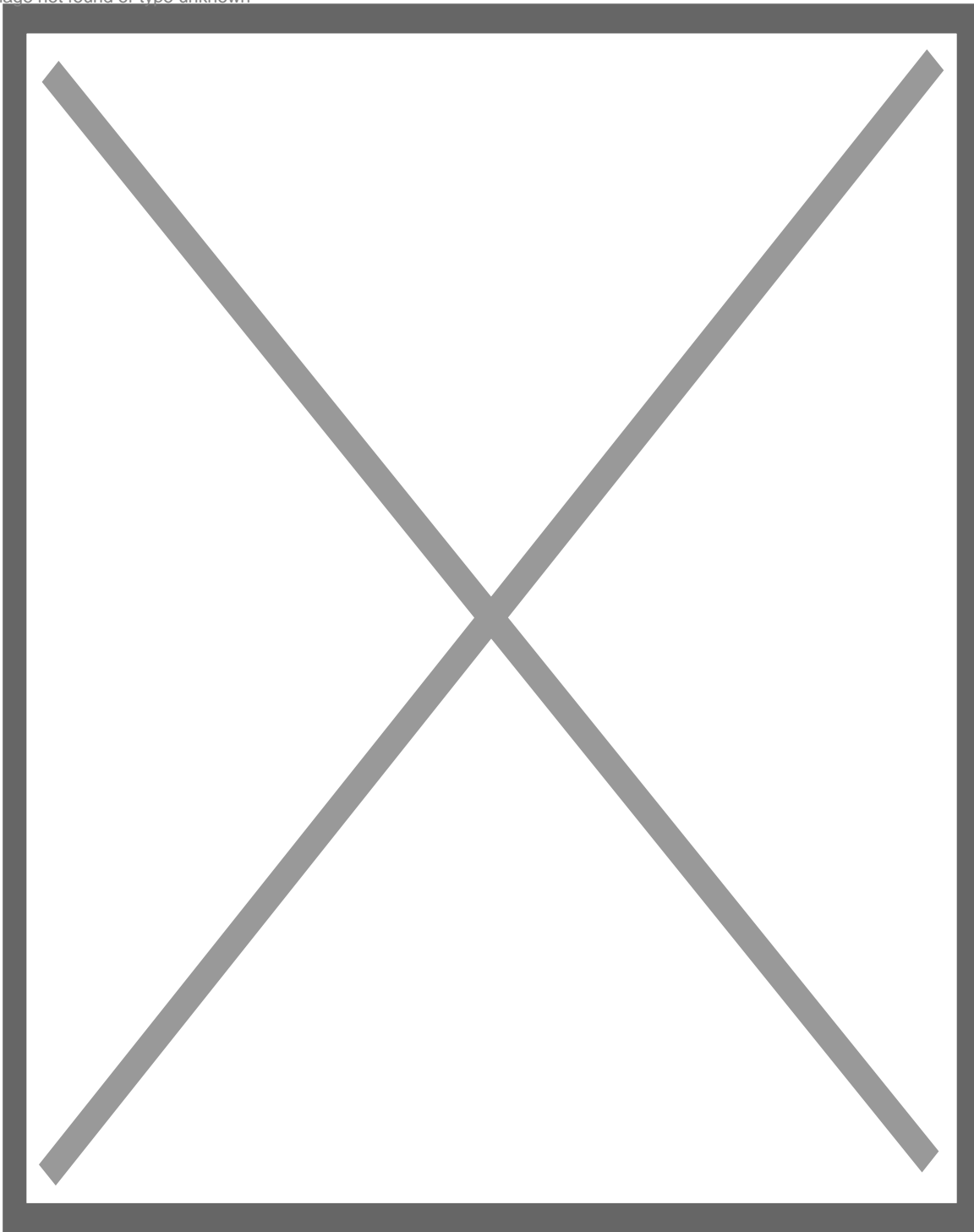


# *Polls close in Bolivia with official results of election pending*

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Sucre, October 18 (RHC)-- Millions of Bolivians went to the polls this Sunday to elect their next president in an election in which no serious incidents were reported and with which the country hopes to retake the democratic system that was interrupted after the coup d'état that the government of Evo Morales suffered last year.

Salvador Romero, president of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), described the day as

"successful", since only minor episodes were reported, such as delays in the opening of some polling stations or long lines and waiting time to vote.

The polling stations, to which 7.3 million Bolivians were summoned, began to close at 5:00 p.m. in Bolivia, the time stipulated by the electoral authorities who, at the last minute, decided to cancel the quick vote

count they had planned, which will postpone the official results for an indefinite period of time.

Hours before the voting began, the president of the TSE warned that the tests of the new system of Diffusion of Preliminary Results (Direpre) did not allow for certainty in the data, so it was better not to carry it out.

The candidate of the Movement to Socialism, MAS, Luis (Lucho) Arce, who leads the polls, criticized the unexpected decision made by the TSE just before the elections. "The Tribunal has had enough time to carry out the tests; you will remember that we observed how this system was being carried out and we pointed out to them that it was a step backwards in terms of transparency; they argue a technical issue, but we are surprised because it gives us to understand that the work has not been done seriously and responsibly," he said this morning when casting his vote.

The MAS standard-bearer warned, however, that the party has its own counting system and promised to respect the results by remembering that this party never took power by force of arms, but by democratic means.

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