

# *Rigoberta Menchu Expresses Support for Bolivian Maritime Claim*

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La Paz, February 24 (RHC-teleSUR) -- Guatemalan indigenous leader and 1992 Nobel Peace Prize recipient Rigoberta Menchú expressed her support Monday for Bolivia's right to direct access with the Pacific Ocean. Bolivia has filed a claim against Chile before the International Court of Justice.

Menchu spoke before entering the government palace in La Paz, Bolivia for a meeting with President Evo Morales. Menchu said that this gathering would address several issues including the Andean nation's right to the sea, reported the Bolivarian Information Agency (ABI).

"I am filled with great expectations, especially because President Morales is part of CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) and UNASUR (Union of South American Nations). I am also very aware of Bolivia's issue, the maritime claim, I am watching to see how it proceeds..." she expressed.

The indigenous leader said that no nation should remain without access to the sea. "Having access to the sea has great

repercussions for development. We are optimistic about the Bolivian aspirations in their lawsuit against Chile," he said.

Menchu also expressed how she considers Bolivia at the forefront defending indigenous people's rights. "We have to speak from different angles in order to talk about rights, as you know Bolivia was the first nation that drafted a plurinational Constitution and this is an exercise of power that benefits indigenous peoples."

Prensa Latina reports that Bolivia lost 120,000 square kilometers of territory rich in minerals and 400 linear kilometers of the Pacific coast after the War of the Pacific with Chile.

The International Court of Justice is set to make a decision regarding Bolivia's maritime cause next month.

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