

Government Seeks Dialogue Amid Bolivia Turmoil



La Paz, July 23 (teleSUR-RHC)-- After an attack on the German consulate in the capital on Wednesday, the Bolivian government reiterated its commitment to seek peace and dialogue with the opposition who have been protesting for two weeks.

Bolivian Vice President Alvaro Garcia Linera condemned the attacks from opposition protesters against various ministers and journalists while assuring the government still wants a path towards peace and dialogue.

Miners from the Potosi region were alleged to have detonated dynamite that set the German consulate on fire, reported ABI, Bolivia's state news agency. Miners were also accused of throwing dynamite at the public building of the Government Vice Ministry just minutes after dialogue with the government failed. They also reportedly threw rocks at the government building.

"I want to denounce the attack against the ministers, having dynamited the Ministry; it's an attack against journalists who were peacefully with their cameras, there are pictures," the vice president said in a speech

on Wednesday afternoon.

ABI reports that police used teargas to disband the protest and managed to put out the fire at the consulate. No injuries were reported.

The Potosi Civic Committee (Comcipo), an alliance of unions and social organizations from the Bolivian city of Potosi, broke out in protests when they said dialogue with the government failed. Committee leaders are demanding more public services and employment opportunities from the government, including a hydroelectric plant, hospitals, roads, factories, an international airport and effective action to preserve the Cerro Rico Mountain, damaged by mining.

Opposition leaders demanded the presence of President Evo Morales, the mediation of the Catholic Church and human rights advocates, and the public spotlight of the media. However, soon after announcing the preconditions, the opposition leaders broke off the deal and continued with protests.

The Bolivian government has plans to invest in the city of unrest. It recently announced that if Potosi institutions, or the most prestigious universities in Bolivia, proposed a plan for a cement factory, President Evo Morales would be willing to spend \$50 million to \$250 million to develop the project.

Comcipo protests began last July 6 in La Paz with the arrival of dozens of activists of the organization, supported by miners and university members. They have since advocated that the government complies with the demands from the Potosi people.

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