

# *Tensions Between Chile and Bolivia Escalate*

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La Paz, August 5 (RHC-teleSUR) -- Tensions between Bolivia and Chile escalated Tuesday, after Bolivia's President Evo Morales announced he is considering making his country's Chilean consul a persona non-grata for meeting with opposition factions.

In an exclusive interview with newspaper El Deber, Morales accused the Chilean consul in Bolivia of attempting to "destabilize" his government for meeting with the political opposition in the country.

Morales said he is considering making consul Milenko Skoknic a persona non-grata like he did with the former U.S. ambassador to Bolivia, Philip Goldberg, who was expelled from the country in 2008.

The Chilean consul branded the announcement as a "threat" from the Bolivian president that would put the possibility for renewed relations between Chile and Bolivia at risk.

The escalation between the two countries comes as Bolivia seeks to negotiate sea access with Chile through the International Court of Justice in the Hague after losing it in a war in 1879.

Late last month, Bolivian President Evo Morales announced he had agreed to re-establish diplomatic relations with Chile in order to gain eventual access to the Pacific Ocean and said he planned for Pope Francis to become the guarantor in bridging relations between the two countries.

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