

Bolivian movements and trade unions propose to hold elections on October 11

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Meeting held at Parotani blockade on the Cochabamba-Oruro highway. Every day the number of blockades and mobilizations on a national level grows. Photo: Kawsachun News

On August 12, Bolivian social movements and trade unions, which have been mobilizing against postponement of general elections for the past ten days, issued an official statement and proposed to hold elections on October 11.

The main organizers of [the national strike and the nationwide road blockades](#), the Bolivian Workers' Center (COB) and the Pact of Unity (a national alliance of social movements and grassroots organizations), said that they are ready to lift blockades and end the indefinite general strike if the Supreme Electoral Court (TSE) sets October 11 as the new date for elections, guaranteeing that it is definitive and approved by law. They also demanded that all the seven members of the TSE, which is under the direct control of the coup-installed government, participate in the dialogue meeting and gave the electoral body a 24-hour deadline to respond.

The same day, Bolivia's Senate also approved a law calling to hold the country's general elections no later than October 18. The law will now go to the Chamber of Deputies for its approval. Once it is approved by the deputies, it will pass to the defacto president, Jeanine Áñez, for its constitutional promulgation.

Former president Evo Morales's party, the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS), holds the two-thirds majority in both chambers of Bolivia's parliament, the Plurinational Legislative Assembly, and has expressed its willingness to approve the law.

Áñez's government, which usurped power following the civic-military coup against Morales in November 2019, has [postponed the elections three times since March this year](#), citing the health risk due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Since August 3, hundreds of thousands of Bolivians have been mobilizing and maintaining road blockades in all the nine departments of Bolivia to demand [the restoration of democracy, free and fair elections and Áñez's resignation](#). More than 140 major highways, roads and streets have been blocked by protesters across Bolivia. The number of road blockades and organizations and unions joining the national strike are increasing with each passing day.

In recent days, several massive protests were also carried out in the capital, La Paz, and the neighboring city, El Alto, against the regime. Today, on August 13, a massive march will be held in La Paz. The protesters from different parts of the department will march to the seat of government or the presidential palace.

Meanwhile, the de-facto government has adopted [the strategy of criminalizing the social protests, politically persecuting the social leaders, and threatening the protesters](#). It has accused the protesters for blocking the passage of ambulances and vehicles transporting medical supplies. Trumped up charges of genocide and terrorism were even pressed against Morales, who is currently exiled in Argentina, MAS presidential candidates, Luis Arce and David Choquehuanca, as well as the secretary general of COB, Juan Carlos Huarachi. The far-right has also mobilized violent right-wing extremists groups to attack the protesters.

Bolivian social movement leaders have denounced that the coup regime leaders have been explicitly promoting acts of violence against the protesters and participating in the violation of human rights of the protesters. The defense minister, Fernando Lopez, expressed support for the armed paramilitary group, *Unión Juvenil Cruceñista* (UJC), which has been attacking pro-democracy protesters. Meanwhile, the health minister, René Sahonero, called on the doctors to deny medical attention to the protesters. Bolivian citizens denounced Sahonero's call as a violation of the human right to public and universal health.

Source: [Peoples Dispatch](#)

