

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

PUBLIC STATEMENT

Index AI: AMR 18/1405/2019

14 November 2019

BOLIVIAN AUTHORITIES MUST INVESTIGATE ACTS OF VIOLENCE AND PROTECT THE POPULATION

In the context of the social and political crisis in Bolivia, following the elections of 20 October 2019, the Bolivian authorities must investigate all acts of violence, establish criminal responsibility as appropriate and protect the population from such acts.

Amnesty International recalls that the security forces must refrain from excessive use of force in controlling demonstrations. Faced with allegations of violence perpetrated by demonstrators in some protests, the authorities must take all necessary and conducive measures to bring these episodes to an end, while ensuring that those who peacefully protest can continue to do so.

The authorities also have an obligation to promptly, independently and impartially investigate allegations of violent deaths and to provide clear and accurate information about the context in which they occurred.

In the current context, the role of individuals and human rights organizations is essential. Therefore, the Bolivian authorities have an obligation to publicly recognize the legitimacy and importance of the work of human rights defenders, to protect them and to guarantee an enabling environment that allows them to carry out their work without risk. The authorities must also respect the freedom of the press and ensure that those who exercise journalism can cover the events in a safe manner.

Finally, we point out that it is up to the Judicial Branch to establish the individual criminal responsibilities of any person suspected to have committed a crime, and it is not up to the authorities of other branches of the State to make public accusations without evidence. Criminal complaints should be investigated independently and impartially and must not affect the right to due process and judicial guarantees of the persons investigated.

MORE INFORMATION

Bolivia: Authorities must respect the right to peaceful protest, 22 October 2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/10/bolivia-autoridades-deben-respetar-derecho-protesta-pacifica/>