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Bolivia: The authorities must put forward viable solutions in times of crisis

The authorities and political groups must take effective action to bring about national reconciliation and overcome the current situation, which has produced clashes between groups of Bolivian citizens, thus avoiding further deaths.

In the city of Sucre during the weekend of 24 November, over one hundred people were injured and four people died, including a police officer. The disturbances came about because of the opposition's disagreement with the recently passed new Constitution, which it has been announced will be put to a referendum.

Amnesty International believes that it is particularly in times of crisis such as those Bolivia is going through, that the elected authorities need to demonstrate their ability to govern the country. They must use the security forces to contain any outbursts of unrest within a framework of respect for human rights and take all necessary steps to facilitate dialogue so that the situation does not end in clashes that endanger the lives and safety of individuals.

The authorities must maintain order by respecting human rights and find mediators and solutions that allow dialogue to take place. In recent months Sucre has been the scene of several clashes owing to differences over what should be covered in the new Constitution. On more than one occasion, deaths have occurred in other cities as a result of clashes between citizens and followers of opposing political parties.

Amnesty International is calling on opposition leaders to comply with their commitment and duty to send out clear signals to their followers calling on them to settle matters through dialogue and peaceful protest, thus avoiding confrontation.

The appeal to avoid confrontation and push for alternative solutions is addressed to both the national and departmental authorities as well as opposition groups and the population in general.

The authorities should investigate the incidents that took place on 24 and 25 November and develop policies that offer short- and long-term guarantees.

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