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Bolivia: An action plan, essential for the future of Bolivia Open letter to the presidential candidates

In an open letter sent today, Amnesty International urged the Bolivian presidential candidates to produce an action plan that offers real solutions to the human rights crisis affecting the country.

Amnesty International's letter advises that the Action Plan must focus on a search for effective proposals in four key areas: protecting economic, social and cultural rights – particularly the right to work, health and education; the behaviour of the security forces – in terms of their excessive use of force against demonstrators and in detention centres; prison conditions and the justice system – particularly in cases of human rights violations.

"Whoever is elected President of Bolivia will have a responsibility to take urgent action on such issues as the deaths of demonstrators that occurred in February and October 2003. Cases such as these demonstrate the need for an effective justice system and a government that addresses the people's demands at all levels. Until situations of this kind are dealt with promptly and solutions proposed, Bolivia will not recover from the crisis", said Virginia Shoppée, Amnesty International's researcher on Bolivia.

"The roots of the crisis Bolivia is experiencing lie in violations of the economic, social and cultural rights of the historically most marginalised sectors of society, women, children, peasant farmers, indigenous and sexual minorities, and in the discrimination these groups suffer. Any measures the new government may decide to take will only have a real impact if they take the needs of these groups into consideration."

"Some of the necessary measures require only administrative guidelines, others the introduction of new legislation, many merely the implementation of national legislation, but to be effective they all need political support and will at every level."

Amnesty International considers the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to be a demonstration of the Bolivian state's desire to fight impunity but is concerned that national legislation is lacking the necessary elements for its implementation. In addition, the regrettable bilateral agreement signed between Bolivia and the United States, which offers complete immunity to nationals of this latter and to others accused of crimes against humanity, is worrying.

"The Bolivian state has been a party to important international human rights treaties over the last 30

years. The next President of Bolivia will be responsible for turning these words into action.”

General information

General elections will take place in Bolivia on 18 December to elect deputies, senators and prefects for the eight departments, along with the President of the Republic. The presidential candidates are as follows: Juan Evo Morales Aima, Movimiento al Socialismo (*Movement to Socialism* - MAS); Jorge Quiroga, Poder Democratico y Social, (*Democratic and Social Power* - PODEMOS); Felipe Quispe Huanca, Movimiento Indigena Pachakuti (*Pachakuti Indigenous Movement* - MIP); Michiaki Nagatani Morishita, Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (*Nationalist Revolutionary Movement* - MNR); Eliceo Rodriguez Pari, Frente Patriotico Agropecuario de Bolivia, (*Bolivian Agricultural and Livestock Patriotic Front* - FREPAB); Gildo Angulo Cabrera, Nueva Fuerza Republicana (*New Republican Force* - NFR); Samuel Jorge Doria Medina, Frente de Unidad Nacional (*National Unity Front* - UN) and Nestor Garcia Rojas, Union Social de los Trabajadores de Bolivia, (*Social Union of Bolivian Workers* - USTB)

For a copy of Amnesty International’s open letter to the Bolivian presidential candidates, please see: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ESLAMR180012005>

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