



Statement about the situation in Bolivia

12 December 2019

As member organisations of the CIDSE network and Welthungerhilfe, we welcome agreements reached in Bolivia to hold new elections next year and we hope that the constructive dialogue between the parties involved will be maintained. At the same time, we are deeply saddened at reports of the victims of the conflict and the damage caused, not only in material terms, but also and especially to the social fabric of Bolivian society.

As international agencies working in solidarity, we work hand in hand with a wide range of grassroots organisations and indigenous movements in Bolivia, in rural and urban areas, from the Amazon to the Andes. We support those in most need and the most vulnerable sectors of the population. We seek to ensure the defence of the human rights of each Bolivian, the collective rights of indigenous peoples and the rights of nature.

In Bolivia, serious violations of human rights and democratic principles have taken place. In the wake of the death of 35 people between October 20 and November 28¹, we express our condemnation of:

- All acts of violence and human rights violations, including attacks, the burning down of private institutions and homes, harassment and aggression, the attempts of violent and irregular armed groups to increase polarisation and protect their vested interests, as well as the excessive use of force and human rights violations by the Armed Forces and the National Police.
- All repressive actions and restrictions of freedom of expression, association and protest².
- All acts of violence manifest in expressions of racism and hatred, and using social media for the intentional spreading of misleading information for dubious ends, undermining the right to information and contributing to greater tension and social upheaval in the country.

We express our deepest concern about polarised discourse at national and international level. The alignment of international voices with the positions of radicalised groups on both sides increases the isolation and invisibility of many Bolivian grassroots organisations in a highly complex context. Without a fair and impartial assessment of the conflict, its causes and consequences, it will not be possible to support peace and true reconciliation within Bolivian society.

¹ <https://www.defensoria.gob.bo/>

² <https://www.defensoria.gob.bo/>

We call on international civil society, intergovernmental organisations at the international level (United Nations, etc.) and regional (OAS, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights), as well as the European Union, its member states and the diplomatic corps to:

- Adopt a nuanced stance on the the crisis in Bolivia and **make a fair and impartial assessment** of the conflict, its causes and consequences, which is essential to contribute to true reconciliation within Bolivian society.
- Point out and remind the interim government of its main responsibility to launch new elections, ensuring transparent and equal conditions for all participants, and to promote a democratic and peaceful process of resolution of the current conflict.
- Follow through on efforts to achieve a peaceful and democratic exit from the conflict and support the holding of new presidential and parliamentary elections that are free, transparent and on equal terms for all participants.
- **Make every possible effort to support dialogue** amongst the actors involved in the conflict and the process of reconciliation among the different groups and deeply divided sectors of the Bolivian population, in favour of creating a just, inclusive and democratic society.
- Continue supporting the initiatives of different regional and international bodies aimed at the deployment of human rights missions, ensuring their impartiality and truthfulness, and following up on their recommendations.
- **Recognise the voice and essential role of Bolivian people and organisations to defend human rights, the rights of indigenous peoples and the rights of nature, as well as the legitimacy and significance of their work, and support them to achieve their important tasks.**
- Support the appropriate institutions and authorities in the impartial, exhaustive and transparent investigation of any act of violence and violation of human rights.

As agencies working in solidarity, we believe that our place is to be on the side of vulnerable and marginalised communities in Bolivia, and we offer our support to Bolivian civil society in their efforts to heal the wounds of conflict and (re) build a truly democratic, fair and inclusive society.

Signatories:

CIDSE:

- Broederlijk Delen, Bélgica
- CAFOD, Inglaterra y País de Gales
- CCFD-Terre Solidaire, Francia
- Development and Peace, Canadá
- DKA (miembro de KOO), Austria
- Manos Unidas, España
- Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, EE.UU.
- Misereor, Alemania

Welthungerhilfe