

Bolivia's U.S.-backed Coup Government Has Given the Military a License to Kill Protestors

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*The de facto and unelected president of Bolivia, **Jeanine Áñez**, signed a decree that exempts all military personnel from being criminally responsible, even in the cases of murder, in the midst of demonstrations against the coup d'état that ousted democratically elected first Indigenous President of Bolivia, Evo Morales. Effectively, Bolivian security forces have a license to kill now.*

Since the decree was signed last Thursday, it has inevitably caused controversy with demonstrators and social media users alike. And it very well should – it is a blatant U.S.-orchestrated coup against [Morales](#) who helped his country reduce unemployment, poverty and illiteracy by at least 50% from 2006 to 2018, and liberated his country from strangling neoliberal policies of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

The decree was immediately denounced by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), by Morales, and by regional leaders such as the newly elected president of Argentina, **Alberto Fernández**.

Although the decree is dated November 14, it was only made public on Saturday, a day after an anti-government march of coca growers in the department of Cochabamba left at least nine dead and 115 injured, according to the Office of the Ombudsman. For its part, the United Nations High Commissioner, **Michel Bachelet**, [has expressed concern](#) about the growing violence in the Andean country and the actions taken by the unelected government.

There is “information that at least seventeen people have died in the context of the protests, including fourteen only in the last six days,” Bachelet said in a statement from Geneva, adding that “while the first deaths occurred as a result of violent clashes between rival protesters, the most recent seem to derive from an unnecessary or disproportionate use of force by police or military personnel.”

However, this should not even be the least bit surprising for the UN commissioner since the U.S. has a long history of violent regime change in Latin America. It was revealed in a report by [the Gray Zone](#) that at least six of the main coup plotters were alumni of the infamous School of the Americas (SOA) at Fort Benning, a notorious training center that since the times of the Cold War has orchestrated regime operations against anti-U.S. Latin American leaders. The report explained that “brutal regime change and reprisal operations from Haiti to Honduras have been carried out by SOA graduates, and some of the most bloodstained juntas in the region’s history have been run by the school’s alumni.” While U.S. [President](#)

[Donald Trump](#) cheered on a “a significant moment for democracy in the Western Hemisphere,” the U.S.-trained Bolivian military have now killed at least 23 people, mostly Indigenous.

Although the U.S. espouses the endless mantra of ‘freedom and democracy’, it has continuously demonstrated, such as in Venezuela and Syria, that it is willing to move away from its ‘peaceful’ liberal ideology and utilize reactionary forces when its political and economic interests are under threat. Morales managed to re-found the country politically and economically by embracing the Multipolar World, where the U.S. is no longer the sole power in the world, by improving ties with China and Russia, and by nationalizing natural resources and strategic companies.

Evo Morales said during an interview in June 2016:

“We had a beggar state in 2005. In the economic part everything was imposed by the International Monetary Fund. The Fund had its office in the Central Bank of Bolivia. The CIA was a parasite that had its offices in the National Palace. The U.S. military group had its own at the headquarters of the Armed Forces in the Great Barracks General Miraflores. When there was political conflict and the parties on the right fought, the United States ambassador was the godfather... We had an agreed democracy. Everything was pact. It was legal, but there was no legitimacy.”

Although Morales ran Bolivia, one of Latin America’s poorest countries, mostly uninterrupted for 13 years unlike Venezuela’s Nicolás Maduro and Brazil’s Lula, the discovery of massive amounts of lithium was a gamechanger. The precious resource is necessary to power all batteries, a demand that is ever increasing for our technological world.

Although Morales’ impressive records speaks for itself, as he never prioritized the indoctrination of the Bolivian military, the SOA-trained officers were able to remain dormant until called upon by the U.S. to conduct a coup in the South American country. Two days before the Gray Zone report, in [a previous article](#) I already made the argument that former Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez had radicalized and ideologized the military to the constitutional national ideology and built a people’s militia capable of defending the government from internal and external, which is why even to this day, Maduro has not been ousted in a coup despite endless U.S.-backed attempts. This is something Morales did not do, allowing the U.S. to gain a strong foothold in the Bolivian military.

Morales created the Anti-Imperialist Command School in 2016. Completing several courses related to the ideology of the Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas (ALBA), as well on geopolitics and imperialism, became the only way to become a Captain in the Bolivian military. However, this is only a recent initiative, that began a decade after he became president, not even nearly enough time for him to reform the military ideology, especially since he never expelled pro-U.S. officers from the military, opting to wait for their retirements.

And now that Áñez is running the country with the military’s blessing, the years of advancements in Indigenous rights and living standards made by Morales will surely be reversed, especially as she considers their culture to be “[Satanic](#)” that is not compatible with modern life and should remain in the mountains or swamplands. Áñez criticizes

socialism and expresses her fear that one day Bolivia will become like “[Cuba](#)” – this is mostly influenced by her adherence to radical Christian Evangelicalism that believes socialism to be the work of [the devil](#).

Guided by her Evangelical beliefs, she is now an ally of [Evangelical Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro](#), a staunch supporter of the Brazilian dictatorship and [has said](#) that “too bad the Brazilian cavalry was not as efficient as the American cavalry that exterminated the Indians,” in reference to the American Indian genocide. Supporting reactionary pro-U.S. forces in Latin America has always meant a contempt and hatred of the Indigenous people – and it has often been the Evangelicals that were [used in Latin America](#) alongside paramilitaries or coup plotters to carry out U.S. interests in this region.

Although Bolsonaro dreams of a Brazil that is purged of most of its native population, like what was achieved in the U.S., [Áñez](#) has begun her own U.S.-backed campaign against the Indigenous populations by already greenlighting the murder of Morales supporters, who are overwhelmingly Indigenous just as the population of Bolivia is.

Her license to kill has not just seen many Indigenous murdered, but it will mean we will continue to see the Indigenous being murdered by the Bolivian military as they continue their peaceful mass demonstrations in support of the exiled Morales.

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