

Morales: Bolivia Suffers an Assault on the Power of the People. Self Appointed “President Jeanine Añez

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As the military coup continues to entrench itself in Bolivia, the first goal of the perpetrators is to appear to be following the constitutional process. But the façade is not enough to hide the real disaster of yet another self-proclaimed president in Latin America. When you thought that the Juan Guaidó experiment in Venezuela was a total failure in every respect, Bolivia repeats the same pathetic tragedy.

The main character is Jeanine Añez, the second vice-president of the Bolivian Senate who proclaimed herself to be the “president” of Bolivia supposedly according to the constitution. She declared, “I immediately take the presidency of the State.” She is a senator for the rightwing party Democratic Unity and has been an adamant opponent of Evo Morales who was forced into exile in Mexico by the Bolivian armed forces top brass, who now have enthusiastically recognised the new “president”.

A couple of farcical moments maybe first, when Añez stood in the middle of an almost empty Senate hall. At least Juan Guaidó had a small crowd when he self-proclaimed in January 23. The second moment may have been when she walked into the presidential palace barely able to carry up high an oversized bible and [declaring](#),

“The bible returns to the [presidential] palace”. Later she added, “our power is God, the power is God.”

Her religiosity is apparently very prominent.

But more seriously, what makes this a tragedy is that she appointed herself “president” in an almost empty Senate because the majority of senators are members of the government party, Movimiento Al Socialismo (MAS), and they were not present. Consequently there was no required quorum for the “vote” to take place. Prior to that, she quickly had to appoint herself president of the Senate because the MAS president and first vice-president were not present. So she skipped quite a few steps of the hierarchy breaking the constitution in order to appear to be entitled to the presidency...according to the constitution.

Evo Morales from Mexico twitted:

“This self-proclamation is against articles 161, 169 and 410 of the State Political Constitution [[Constitución Política del Estado](#)- CPE] that determine the approval or rejection of a presidential resignation, the constitutional succession from the Senate or Deputy [Assembly] presidents and the higher authority of

the CPE. Bolivia suffers an assault to the power of the people.”

In fact, Article 161 has two functions relevant in this case, one is “accept or deny the resignation of the President and of the Vice President of the State.” This has not been done. And secondly, “receive the oath of the President and the Vice President of the State.” We have not heard if the new “president” has done so, but regardless, all has to take place when “The [Senate and Deputy] Chambers will meet in Plurinational Legislative Assembly.” As we know, no such assembly is functioning.

Article 169 is crucial: “In case of impediment or definitive absence of the President of the State, the Vice President will replace him/her, and in case of his/her absence [in turn] the President of the Senate will replace him/her, and in case of his/her absence, the President of the Chamber of Deputies will replace him/her. In the latter case, new elections will be called within the maximum deadline of ninety days.” We have just indicated that this process has not been followed because the presidents of the two Chambers were not even present.

Article 410 states who will have to abide by the constitution. “All people, natural and legal, as well as public bodies, public functionaries and institutions, are all subject to this Constitution.” This clearly applies to all the coup perpetrators without exception. But they have not.

To invalidate even more this absurd unconstitutional scenario is that when the legitimate president of the Senate, Adriana Salvatierra, representing the MAS government Party, attempted to enter into the Senate to claim to be elected president of Bolivia according to the constitution she was not even allowed to enter. Admittedly she had resigned but her resignation was never formally accepted.

To conclude, we have to note that constitutions are written to lay down basic fundamental rights, guarantees and rules of the State. Everything else, including clarifications of any constitutional matter, is the attribution, in the case of Bolivia, of the Plurinational Constitutional Court. But this court in turn is composed of elected members who are now literally dysfunctional or disbanded, or nor legitimate.

But what is really important to note is that constitutions are written assuming normal circumstances in the country and that those normal circumstances will continue indefinitely. The reality is that there is nothing normal following a coup. All standard basic definitions and notions of democracy, independence, sovereignty and foreign intervention break down creating a vacuum that is immediately filled with ideology and interests. What really makes the whole event in Bolivia tragic is that it is triggered by a foreign induced [Hybrid War](#) not for the benefit of Bolivians.

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Featured image: Deputy Senate speaker Jeanine Anez speaks from the balcony of the government Quemado Palace in La Paz after proclaiming herself the country's interim president (Source: AFP / Aizar RALDES)

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