

Bolivia's Parliament Summons "Interim President" Jeanine Áñez to Clarify Corruption Scandal

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*The coup d'état carried out in Bolivia was the starting point for a major wave of social, political and economic setbacks in the country. Bolivia is the poorest country in South America, with very high poverty rates, however, during the years of **Evo Morales**, the country's growth was enormous, reaching the point of being the South American country with the greatest economic growth. The seizure of power by the coup d'état represented the return of the worst growth rates, in addition to a huge escalation of violence against indigenous populations - extremely respected previously by Evo Morales - and gigantic corruption scandals.*

Bolivia's interim president, **Jeanine Áñez**, recently proved the nature behind the new government by being indicted in a lawsuit. Áñez and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Karen Longaric**, were the first people summoned to provide information for a current investigation. The charge against both is of involvement in corruption networks during the purchase of ventilators and other medical supplies to - supposedly - fight the pandemic.

The corruption scandal in Bolivia started a few weeks ago, when health professionals reported that the Spanish ventilators acquired by the Bolivian State were of low quality and unfit for hospital use with the purpose of facing a pandemic. According to official sources, the Bolivian government has spent more than \$ 27,000 on each device (about 170 devices), while domestic producers (Bolivians) charge about \$ 1,000.

"This investigation will summon Jeanine Áñez, Longaric and other officials involved in this purchase that has become theft of the pockets of the entire Bolivian people," lawmaker **Édgar Montaña** told reporters.

According to the parliamentarian, Áñez must acknowledge that she knew all the details of the agreement, which she herself had ordered, while Longaric must explain why no action was taken after the Bolivian consul in Barcelona sent a report with the details of the contract. It is also worth remembering that, on Wednesday (May 20), Bolivia's Minister of Health, **Marcelo Navajas**, was arrested and dismissed from office on suspicion of involvement in the corruption scandal.

As investigations progress, the situation becomes increasingly serious for Bolivian domestic politics, as major corruption schemes and illicit deals are discovered, revealed, and meticulously used as political weapons in party disputes within the country. Some people and groups that support the legitimate Bolivian president, Evo Morales, are innocently celebrating the performance of the Bolivian Parliament "against the coup", but, in fact, there is no reason to celebrate so far.

If, on the one hand, there is something positive in the fact that the illicit activities of the coup government are being exposed, on the other, the central objective of the coup is being accomplished: the intention of the groups that financed and supported the overthrow of Morales was never to put Jeanine Añez (or any other politician) in power, but to completely destabilize the Bolivian State, creating a scenario of absolute political chaos, with total institutional bankruptcy, thus facilitating the transformation of Bolivia into a land of foreign interference.

In fact, we can predict that from now on it is likely that the next presidents of Bolivia, be they left or right (terms absolutely outdated and geopolitically irrelevant), will fall in succession, without completing their mandates and the country's command will remain, thus, vulnerable and without a central guardian of law and order. Within the chaotic scenario, the irregular action of external agents and foreign meddling in Bolivia will be simpler and, in addition to structural problems such as poverty and hunger, Bolivians would have to deal with a situation of total subordination to foreign powers - which it did not exist in the time of Morales, when the country tried to chart a sovereign and independent way, besides achieving diverse progress in many social indices.

What now happens in Bolivia can also be seen when we analyze several previous experiences. Countries victimized by the so-called "colorful revolutions" - hybrid wars disguised under the mask of democratic revolutions - tend to be characterized after the outcome of such "revolutions" by the establishment of true "zombie states", which consist of nothing more than innocuous institutions and without any strength to deal with the real problems of their countries.

With the presidential election situation still uncertain in the midst of the pandemic - the Executive Branch and the Judiciary made different decisions and, amid institutional chaos, nothing is yet fully defined - the future of the Bolivian government is really unknown, but the scenario is very pessimistic, with few expectations of overcoming the crisis. The tendency is for Jeanine to fall and, after her, the next president will also not fulfill his mandate completely. In contemporary hybrid warfare, attacks are continuous and "colorful revolutions" tend to be permanent.

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