

Seven Special Seats Reserved for the Indigenous Community in Bolivian Elections

By [David Dougherty](#)

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Bolivia's national elections on October 12 will include 7 "special seats" in the House of Deputies in Congress reserved for indigenous leaders.

The country's Supreme Electoral Tribunal, responsible for overseeing elections, has established this measure in accordance with a law signed into effect last year on the distribution of seats in the Bolivian Congress.

The Communications Director of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal Juan Carlos Pinto says that the inclusion of seats for the indigenous community is part of Bolivia's efforts to construct a "Plurinational" society.

"We are about to hold the fifth round of discussions among different indigenous leaders and candidates for the 7 special seats," he said.

The government of indigenous President Evo Morales has given priority to dismantling centuries of social, political and economic exclusion of Bolivia's indigenous majority.

Indigenous campesino union leader Rodolfo Machaca says that indigenous people in Bolivia now play a fundamental role in state decision-making processes, which is reflected in their special congressional seat designation in this year's upcoming elections.

"Bolivia is one of the few places in the world where indigenous people are taken into account and are given responsibility and influence in the political sphere of administrating the state.....in our country we are experiencing a high intensity democracy, " he said.

Bolivia's upcoming elections have been characterized by the government as an exercise in "Intercultural Democracy," promoting the inclusion and participation of all different social groups in Bolivia's political process.

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