

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: AMR 18/004/2005 (Public)
News Service No: 145
27 May 2005

Bolivia: The solution to the crisis lies in respect for human rights

“The serious nature of the situation facing the country requires a united response from the authorities and all sectors of society in search of solutions that lie within the context of the constitution and international human rights standards. The validity of the country’s rule of law depends on this and it is everyone’s responsibility to ensure it,” said Virginia Shoppee, Amnesty International’s Bolivia researcher, today.

The mass demonstrations and roadblocks in protest at the approval of a new Hydrocarbons Law by Congress have spread over the last few weeks.

Some social sectors are demanding nationalisation of the oil industry while some regions, including the departments of Beni, Santa Cruz, Pando and Tarija, are demanding greater autonomy.

In addition, clashes have been noted between demonstrators and the security forces.

Non-governmental human rights organizations, the Church and the Ombudsman have called on the different government sectors and civil society to enter into negotiations and dialogue.

“A continuation of the clashes could unleash a cycle of violence, harassment and polarization that would seriously affect the human rights of the whole population.”

Amnesty International urges the Bolivian authorities and all sectors of society to comply with basic and immediate measures to defend the rule of law and maintain governability.

Amnesty International has called on the opposition sectors to take responsibility for choosing protest methods and tactics that do not undermine constitutional guarantees and on the security forces to act in strict accordance with norms governing the use of force in the context of demonstrations.

In addition, the organisation has called on the international community, and particularly the regional and international human rights organisations, to cooperate in facilitating a resolution to the crisis and to provide adequate mechanisms and resources with which to observe the country’s human rights situation and prevent its deterioration.

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