

Bolivia

No me borren de la historia

Truth, Justice and reparation in Bolivia (1964-1982)

Update

Internal document

To : AI Sections (especially AI Argentina, AI Chile, AI Spain, AI México, AI Paraguay, AI Peru, AI Puerto Rico, AI Uruguay and AI Venezuela and the office of AI Brazil, AI South Africa, AI Morocco), country coordinators in South America

From: South America Team – IS

Date: July 2014

1) UPDATE

On 11 March, Amnesty International published the report “*No me borren de la historia. Verdad, justicia y reparación en Bolivia (1964-1982)*”.¹ The report is calling on the authorities for concrete measures to be undertaken to put an end to impunity for human rights violations perpetrated during military governments, to establish the truth and to review the reparation process so that victims have access to full reparation for the human rights violations they suffered. The report was picked up by the Bolivian and international media. Organisations of victims welcomed the report and the publicity of their demands. Last June, in a meeting with representatives of these organisations, they told AI that the report had become a new tool that is enabling them to keep claiming their rights. Several victims of the *Plataforma de Luchadores Sociales*, keep the campsite in front of the Ministry of Justice in La Paz.

Update since the release of the report:

- New initiatives have been decided by the authorities to establish the whereabouts of the victims of enforced disappearances. Currently, according to information received, 17 bodies have been found and identified (Around 150 persons were victims of enforced disappearances during the 18 years of military and authoritarian regimes). Back in April, the Inter-institutional Council for the Clarification of Forced Disappearances (CIEDEF) agreed further actions in the area of Teoponte where the remains of several people killed during Alfredo Ovando Candia's administration (1970) could be found.
- Also, efforts are planned to identify the bodies located in the Mausoleum of The Disappeared Detainees Families Association and the martyrs for the National Liberation (ASOFAMD) in the General Cemetery of La Paz City.
- A round table was set up between the *Plataforma de Luchadores Sociales* (the organisation that set up a campsite in front of the Ministry of Justice) and the Ministry of Interior to address the organisations' demands.

Nevertheless...

- The Ministry of Justice – one of the key ministries– is not willing to review the mechanism to ensure full reparation to victims. Generally, there is very little political will by certain key actors –including the President and Vice president of the country. To increase the visibility of the problem in Bolivia and abroad remains crucial.

¹ Don't erase me from the history. Truth, justice and reparation in Bolivia (1964-1982). The report is in Spanish only.

2) RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

ACTIONS TARGETING THE BOLIVIAN AUTHORITIES AND SOLIDARITY ACTION

17 July marks the 34th anniversary of General Luis García Meza's military coup. The government of García Meza (17 July 1980 – 4 August 1981) is considered as one of the bloodiest of that time. It was during the García Meza's coup that the attack on the [Bolivian Workers' Centre](#)'s headquarter occurred. Political leader and writer, Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz and political leader Juan Carlos Flores Bedregal were detained and killed. To date, their whereabouts remain unknown. Also, on 15 January 1981, the so called "Harrington Street massacre" occurred in La Paz in which nine leaders of the Revolutionary Left Movement were killed.

In the context of this anniversary, Annex I has a model for an online petition targeting the President of Plurinational State of Bolivia, Mr. Evo Morales Ayma. We would like you to consider this date to encourage members to participate in this online petition. The petition can be posted on Amnesty International AI sections websites or members can promote the petition carried out by another AI section (Amnesty international Spain is planning an online petition from 17 July).

Should you start the action on another date, the proposed introductory text can be amended. However, please don't change the recommendations addressed to the President. The action is available until August 30th. Please send all letters directly to the email address provided in the Annex I and make sure you count the numbers of people that participates in this action.

Some photos to support this action are available in the database ADAM

<https://adam.amnesty.org/asset-bank/action/viewAssetBox?CSRF=FcfDPkRJKFPIs9EvsTwi¤tAssetBoxId=7636>

We are aware that 2014 is an electoral year (general elections are planned to take place in Bolivia on 12 October), and that some of the demands won't be implemented during this year. However, it remains important to continue to make progress and get concrete commitments in 2014 that could be taken on board by the new administration from January 2015 onwards.

We would also like to encourage you to send solidarity messages to the local organisations to the following addresses:

Asamblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos

Avenida 6 de Agosto 548
Entre JJ Perez y Aspiazu
La Paz
Bolivia

Plataforma de Luchadores Sociales (*This group is the one that keeps a campsite in front of Ministry of Justice*)

Frente el Ministerio de Justicia (Av. Prado/ Av. 16 de Julio 1769)
La Paz, Bolivia

Also you can send messages through their Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/PlataformaDeLuchadoresSociales?fref=ts>

ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING WORK

Recommendations of the action circular sent last March (AMR 18/004/2014) are still valid. Approaches to the foreign affairs ministry officials in your country should continue so they can raise the concerns with the Bolivian authorities.

Universal Periodical Review (UPR)

In October this year, the Plurinational State of Bolivia will be “under examination” before the UN Universal Periodical Review. Ahead of the review, Amnesty International prepared a submission that summarises the most relevant human rights issues documented in Bolivia with a special focus on the duty of the State to respond to the concerns raised by many of the victims of human rights violations during the past military governments.

In the last Universal Periodical Review (2010), there were some specific questions and recommendations on impunity and administration of justice but no specific recommendations were raised on this particular topic. It is important that in this occasion, the recommendations of the final report to Bolivia include a concrete demand for truth, justice and reparation.

Some States that raised concerns in 2010 in relation to administration of justice in Bolivia are the following: **Slovakia, France, Turkey, United Kingdom, Denmark, United States and Nicaragua** (see Annex II). Other countries that have made recommendations on the issue of past impunity in several UPR sessions are: **Argentina, Norway, Finland, Brazil and Mexico**.

We encourage sections in these countries as well as in other relevant countries such as **Chile and Uruguay** to contact their foreign affairs ministries and/or other relevant ministries in preparation for the UPR, sending copies of Amnesty International’s report (see link below). Please, make sure you stress the importance of raising concerns and recommendations related to truth, justice and reparation in Bolivia for past human rights violations.

MEDIA WORK

International visibility is still essential in this campaign. We are encouraging you to share the media material prepared for the 17 July to your local press contacts and social networks. In case your media contacts are interested in interviewing a representative of Bolivian organisations, the IS Research and Campaign team in collaboration with the Media team can provide you with the relevant contacts.

3) MATERIALS

- Bolivia: Victims of military governments still awaiting a response to their demands <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR18/007/2014/es>
- Bolivia. Information from Amnesty International for the Universal Periodical Review (AMR 18/005/2014) <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR18/005/2014/en>
- “No me borren de la historia. Verdad, justicia y reparacion en Bolivia” (1964-1982) (March, AMR 18/002/2014)
- Gallery of images <https://adam.amnesty.org/asset-bank/action/viewAsset?id=188678>
- <http://www.amnesty.org/es/library/info/AMR18/002/2014/es?refresh=4106092979>
- Press release <http://www.amnesty.org/es/for-media/press-releases/bolivia-estado-condena-victimas-gobiernos-militares-borradas-2014-03-11>

4) FEEDBACK AND FOLLOW UP

Please share your comments and actions taken with the South America Team (mcosta@amnesty.org). Also, contact the team in case you are planning meetings or you get replies from authorities in your countries after some advocacy work.

ANNEX I: ONLINE PETITION

Introduction: Bolivia was under military and the authoritarian regimes from 1964 to 1982, a dark period of its history characterised by systematic violations of human rights. Victims and relatives of victims are still awaiting for truth, justice and reparation.

"In order to avoid further injustices people have to know what happened". Hugo Ticona, victim of torture

On July 17 1980, Luis Garcia Meza, led a military coup and established a regime during which grave human rights violations were committed, such as enforced disappearances and torture against political dissidents.

The regime of Garcia Meza (1980-1981) was one of many authoritarian and military governments that were well-established in Bolivia from 1964-1982. In 18 years, more than 150 people were victims of enforced disappearances and at least 200 people were victims of extra judiciary executions. Around 5,000 were arbitrary detained, many were victims of torture and thousands went on exile or were deported.

In 1993, during an historical trial, Luis Garcia Meza and his collaborators were found guilty of various crimes, including mass killings and other human rights violations. Unfortunately, this progress in the fight against impunity was not translated into farther actions to unveil the truth and ensure justice for all victims of human rights violations during the 18 years of military regimes. Additionally, in most cases victims of human rights violations have encountered serious obstacles to have access to reparation.

Efforts from the State have not been enough. Relatives of many of the victims of the enforced disappearances are living in permanent mourning, not knowing what happened to their beloved ones and unaware of their whereabouts. Many victims who were tortured, unlawfully detained or forced to go on exile have already grown old and know that this may be their last battle to ensure justice.

Write to the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Mr. Evo Morales Ayma
E-mail: correo@presidencia.gob.bo

Dear President:

I am writing to you to express my concern about the lack of actions by the State to ensure truth, justice and reparation for the victims and relatives of victims of serious human rights violations committed during the military and authoritarian regimes in Bolivia between 1964 y 1982.

There have been some important measures such as the establishment of an interinstitutional commission to deal with the search of the victims of enforced disappearances, and former general Luis García Meza was brought to justice for his responsibility in mass killings during his regime. However, truth and justice for the serious crimes committed during the 18 years of military and authoritarian regimes such as torture and enforced disappearances remains a pending task. Efforts to establish the truth and put an end to impunity must be accompanied with reparation measures that include not only an economic compensation but also rehabilitation measures and public actions that acknowledge their condition of victims of human rights violations.

Therefore, I call for concrete actions to:

- Guarantee immediate, impartial and independent investigations into the human rights violations committed in Bolivia during the past military regimes and ensure that those alleged responsible are brought to justice.
- Ensure access to classified military files that could provide important information to establish cases of enforced disappearances and other human rights violations occurred between 1964 y 1982.
- Set up a truth commission or a similar mechanism to establish the truth of what happened during the past military regimes in Bolivia that complies with the necessary Independence and impartiality.
- Guarantee a full and effective reparation to victims of human rights violations committed during the military regimes, including a fair and transparent mechanism to review the applications submitted according to the 2640 Act

Yours sincerely,

**ANNEX II: UNIVERSAL PERIODICAL REVIEW.
PARTICIPATION OF THE STATES IN THE REVIEW OF BOLIVIA IN 2010**

Administration of Justice, independence of the judiciary and impunity.	Slovakia, Canada, Italy, UK (including deaths in Pando in 2008) Denmark, Turkey, Norway, Germany, Switzerland, Slovenia, Austria, France, Netherlands and USA
Definition of the crime of torture	Argentina
The rights of Indigenous Peoples	Pakistan, Slovenia, Venezuela, Germany, Canada, Guatemala, Slovakia, Norway, Netherlands
Sexual and Reproductive rights	Turkey (maternal mortality), Colombia (maternal mortality), Spain, Bangladesh (maternal mortality), Sweden
Prison conditions	Italy, Turkey, Austria

The 2010 Working Group full report with the details of the recommendations can be found in the following link:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/BOSession7.aspx>