

BOLIVIA

SOCIAL PROTEST

STARTING DATE: 21 OCTOBER 2019

TRIGGER • **20 October presidential elections** : suspension of the vote count at 83% by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) - cancelling the 2nd round of elections - and announcement of Evo Morales's victory. Massive allegations over electoral fraud.

GOALS

- Resignation of Evo Morales.
- Effective formation of a transitional government.
- New and transparent presidential elections.

STATE OF PLAY

- Nationwide protests, including massive demonstrations and strikes, mostly affecting the cities of La Paz, Sucre, Potosi, Tarija, Santa Cruz and Cochabamba.
- Violence quickly erupted through lootings, arsons, roadblocks, paralyzing traffic and services and damaging infrastructures in some cities. Clashes between security forces and demonstrators occur frequently.
- 10 November: Resignation of Evo Morales after the OAS confirmed irregularities in the election process and after he lost the support of the army and police officials (mutinies). Yet, demonstrations are still ongoing and have turned even more violent, as pro-Morales militants are increasingly taking part in acts of vandalism in La Paz, El Alto, or Potosi. Indigenous communities called for an indefinite strike on 11 November in support of Morales. The army has stepped up in order to maintain public order in the streets of the capital. Morales was granted asylum in Mexico, promising that the "fight will continue".
- 12 November: Second Vice-President of the Senate, Jeanine Anez, self-proclaimed interim President. New elections are to be held at the end of January. Many supporters of the opposition have rejected the new cabinet, which underrepresents the indigenous community. Yet talks have begun between the MAS party (affiliated to Morales) and the interim government.

IMPACTS: IMPORTANT



- About 10 people dead, 200 injured.
- About 300 people arrested.



- Deterioration of public infrastructures (e.g. local electoral offices) and businesses in lootings, sackings and arsons
- Alteration of the goods and services provisions because of roadblocks and demonstrations.



- Disruption of ground transport (e.g. mining transport) by important roadblocks and border closures, especially in Santa Cruz and Potosi,
- Accesses to La Paz, Santa Cruz, and Potosi airports temporarily blocked.



POTENTIAL TRIGGERS FOR ESCALATION

- Pursuit of violent demonstrations by pro-Morales militants (including indigenous communities) and growing confrontations with opposition partisans, the former accusing the latter of staging a coup against Morales.
- Lack of support toward the interim-president, questioned for her legitimacy.
- Internal political divisions between the different opposition parties and deeper polarization of the political landscape.
- Delays in forming a transitional government and organizing new elections (under 90 days).



POTENTIAL TRIGGERS FOR DE-ESCALATION

- Interim president backed by the political class, the army and the international community.
- Political coalition to form the transitional government, widely supported by the civil society.
- OAS remains in the country to ensure smooth political transition and monitor the election process.