

Civil Unrest



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Bolivia Alert: Three military bases taken over by Evista protesters in Cochabamba on November 1, Morales calls for temporary pause of blockades; intensity, scale of blockades liable to reduce in coming days

Current Situation

Military Takeovers

- Reports indicate that supporters of former President Evo Morales (Evistas) stormed and took over three military posts in Cochabamba department, while also taking soldiers hostage, on November 1.
- The incidents were recorded at the Cacique Juan Maraza base in Villa Tunari, Chapare province, the 31st Infantry Regiment base at an unconfirmed location, and the Puerto Villarroel Naval Base in Puerto Villarroel.
- According to local media visuals, protesters armed with sticks held over 20 soldiers as hostages at the Cacique Juan Maraza military base. In the video, one soldier appeals to the President Luis Arce-led government to stop intervening in the blockades, while stating that the soldiers had been cut off from basic necessities. The identity of the soldier in the video has not been confirmed by the armed forces as of writing.
- As per reports, the takeovers were triggered by the efforts of the military to clear Evista-led road

blockades, as part of protests against the Arce-led government which [began on October 14](#) demanding the government cease legal proceedings against Morales related to a statutory rape case and address socio-economic concerns.

- Arce alleged Morales of orchestrating the takeovers, calling the act “criminal” and accusing the suspects of treason.
- Following this, Morales urged his followers to “temporarily suspend” the road blockades and announced that he will begin a hunger strike until Arce agrees to enter dialogue, adding that international mediation may be required. Leaders of pro-Morales groups rejected the proposal.

Blockades, unrest

- According to the [Administradora Boliviana de Carreteras](#) (ABC), highway administration agency, 15 road blockades are ongoing in and around Cochabamba.
- On November 1, police, along with military personnel, intervened in the Evista blockade on the highway between the cities of Cochabamba and Oruro near the town of Parotani. Around 66 protesters were detained during the operation. Vehicular traffic was restored on the highway following the operation.

Source: [Los Tiempos](#)

Assessments & Forecast

1. The storming of three military bases indicates a major escalation of unrest by Evista groups amid the ongoing blockade protest actions since October 14. The incidents, including the hostage-taking of soldiers, appear to be largely in response to security forces dismantling road blockades on highways around Cochabamba, as a strategy to pressure the government into withdrawing its forces. The Evista-led protests escalated particularly following the [alleged assassination attempt on Morales on October 27](#). Following which, demonstrators had similarly entered a military barracks in Villa Tunari on October 27 and torched the vehicles used by the perpetrators of the alleged assassination attempt. The recent unrest carried out by Evista protesters comes amid a stricter law enforcement response to blockades after October 27.
2. However, Morales’s sudden call to pause the blockades and conditional offer for dialogue with Arce’s government likely indicates perceptions about the military takeovers being a potential liability for Evistas amid the prolonged unrest. This suggests concerns that the takeover could prompt a harsher government crackdown on protests and provide grounds for Arce to discredit Morales on accusations of inciting violence against the military. **FORECAST:** On that note, Morales’s call for a temporary pause may trigger a reduced scale and intensity of blockades in the coming days. However, considering the refusal of Evista groups, including the Confederacion Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (CSUTCB), to adhere to Morales’s request, blockades are liable to persist in the immediate term in a show of support for Morales, particularly in Cochabamba, which is an Evista stronghold. Law enforcement response to potentially recurring blockades will continue to be prompt. Police are likely to resort to mass arrests and use tear gas to clear blockades.
3. **FORECAST:** Going forward, the Arce-led government could likely heighten the rhetoric surrounding the military base takeovers, with Arce already calling it “a crime of treason against the homeland and an affront to the country’s Constitution.” Despite Morales’s urging to suspend blockades in exchange for dialogue, Arce is unlikely to show willingness to engage in negotiations, possibly to avoid legitimizing Morales’s claims for leadership of the ruling Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) party ahead of the August 2025 general elections. This will thereby reduce the scope for any such dialogue and diminish the potential for reconciliation between MAS factions. Evista activism can resurface and intensify in the form of road blockades, potentially during periods of political competition, including the December 15 judicial elections to elect judges to the Tribunal Supremo de Justicia (TSJ) y del Tribunal Constitucional Plurinacional (TCP). The possibility is reflected in the fact that the judicial elections were initially scheduled for December 1 but

postponed on October 31 due to Evista-led blockades, with Morales liable to assert political influence and call for protests as a leveraging tool in days leading to December 15.

Recommendations

1. Those residing or operating in Bolivia on November 2 and the coming days are advised to maintain heightened vigilance near protest or blockade locations.
2. Allot for disruptions to travel and supply chains.
3. Avoid nonessential travel in the vicinity of political protests or gatherings in Cochabamba, where the potential for unrest is higher.
4. Avoid overtly referring to or making critical statements of the government or political institutions in public spaces and avoid discussing potentially sensitive topics.