

November 25, 2019

Honourable François-Philippe Champagne  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Champagne:

**RE: Condemning the Military Coup and Respecting Democracy in Bolivia**

Unifor strongly condemns the military coup in Bolivia that saw the recent ousting of democratically elected President Evo Morales.

We are dismayed that the Canadian Federal government has chosen to support the interim leadership of Jeanine Áñez Chávez – a representative from a party that received only 4% of the vote in the latest October elections, and whose support is derived largely from the backing of the Bolivian police and military. We are also troubled given Áñez's hostile and discriminatory anti-Indigenous remarks, especially in a country where more than half the population is Indigenous.

As Bolivia's first Indigenous President, Morales made significant progressive economic and social policy changes that have resulted in strong economic growth, drastic reduction in rates of poverty and overall improvements of human rights. However, we have seen how actions of independent states with socialist policies often provoke the ire of corporate interests and Western countries such as the United States, which has a long history of Latin and South American government intervention and ousting democratically elected leaders by way of violent military coups.

We are now once again witnessing waves of violence and atrocities rock Bolivia, along with deaths of protesters who are resisting the usurpation of their democratic process. With Áñez recently making changes to allow security forces to be protected from prosecution in order to quell protests, we will only see a further escalation of state violence and repression. By not condemning these actions as a coup – actions contrary to the fundamental principles of democracy – Canada is complicit in these human rights violations.

.../2

In an effort to understand the current and evolving situation, Unifor dispatched its Director of International Department, Mohamad Alsadi, to Mexico City in order to meet with President Morales directly. This meeting helped to solidify our support and solidarity with the people of Bolivia.

Unifor urges the Federal government to publicly condemn the coup and reject Áñez's illegitimate interim position. We demand the safe passage and return of Evo Morales to his home country, and to let Bolivians exercise their own democratic right in choosing a government through a new round of elections – elections Morales himself initially agreed to before being forced into exile. We also encourage you to visit and dialogue with Evo Morales directly, as we have done, to receive a firsthand account on what has transpired in Bolivia and areas in which Canada can provide support. Canada cannot proclaim to support democracy while also enabling a repressive military dictatorship to unfold and go unchallenged. We trust you and your government will reverse course and stand by the people of Bolivia.

Please also see these links to statements from other like-minded organisations:

<https://www.ituc-csi.org/Bolivia-crisis-must-be-settled-at-the-ballot-box>

<http://www.industrialunion.org/industrial-condemns-the-coup-in-bolivia>

<https://www.ueunion.org/statement/2019/ue-condemns-coup-in-bolivia>

Sincerely,



**JERRY DIAS**  
**NATIONAL PRESIDENT**

JD\sd cope343

cc: The Right Honourable Prime Minister Justin Trudeau