

Bolivia's vice president talks about upcoming elections and the opposition



La Paz, October 16 (RHC)-- Bolivia's Vice President Alvaro Garcia Linera gave an interview to Nodal in which he talked about the upcoming October 20th elections and the prospects for the country's leftist President Evo Morales. Garcia Linera also addressed the failure of the right-wing opposition to articulate a credible alternative program.

When asked about opinion polling, Garcia Linera said he is confident that Morales' 'Movement Towards Socialism' (MAS) party will win. He says that polls underestimate support for the MAS in poorer areas. Bolivia's thinly spread population across a large geographical surface area also makes it hard for pollsters to get an accurate picture.

"The MAS always has a hidden vote. In 2014, when we won with 63 percent, in the best case the surveys gave us between 49 percent and 51 percent. The same happened in 2009," the Bolivian vice president told Nodal.

"There is a hidden vote of the MAS that comes not only from remote rural areas, where no pollster arrives and where support for the President is the majority but also from the urban surveys themselves, where

people from the popular classes do not necessarily engage with the interviewer. There is always a popular vote that does not tell you until the last moment who they are voting for, and in the case of the MAS, the hidden vote is a golden rule of the last three elections. What percentage will it be? 7% or 11%? We trust that that vote always appears in the final result but not in the polls."

The issue of surveys and polls have become a contentious issue in Bolivia. One outlier poll, published by a religious NGO and the UMSA University, gave Morales a lead of just 7 percent. However, that poll was ruled inadmissible by the country's electoral authorities due to issues relating to its funding. It later emerged that the U.S. government had funded that particular poll.

Other polls by independent institutions give Morales a lead of around 13 percent. Garcia Linera then commented on the failures of the opposition to propose a program, that they pledge to not reverse progressive gains of the Morales era, despite their track record as neoliberals.

"They have failed to awaken an electorate interest for something different, for a different economy, for a different state & power relationship," he said adding that such failure hits at the heart of their campaigns as they end up having to make promises to keep policies that already exist and promoted by the Morales government, with nothing new to bring to the table. "So what are the candidates running for? It's not serious."

He went on to stress how "nationalization, distribution of wealth, an extension of social rights, equality of indigenous people decentralization of wealth. Those are the pillars of our program, but they [opposition] have nothing new, not a single pillar."

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