

Bolivian Senate session ends amid protests and tear gas



El Alto, March 6 (RHC)-- Amid intense protests, Bolivia's de-facto president Jeanine Añez participated in a session of the Senate in the Senkata region, El Alto, where 11 deaths and several injuries at the hands of police and military forces were recorded last November following demonstrations against the coup d'état.

The session was held in this region after the decision of the president of the Senate, Eva Copa, to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the city of El Alto. However, after a Mass in memory of the victims of the Senkata massacre -- following an operation by the armed forces ordered by Añez -- several protesters and family members went to the place where the Senate session was being held, which triggered attacks and tear gas by the police.

The tension increased when the demonstrators demanded the presence of the right-wing senator for the Democratic Unity Party (UD), Oscar Ortiz, his colleagues, and Añez, whom they blamed for the deaths. "Murderers!" they shouted amid pain and crying.

The banners said, "Justice for our dead, wounded and tortured!" "Justice for my son was not a terrorist; he was a student!" "We demand full freedom for the political prisoners who are victims of the persecution begun in the November crisis!" among other slogans that showed the anger and impotence of the people of El Alto.

The police forces, for their part, did not hesitate to use chemical elements to disperse the people concentrated in the place, whose actions also affected the students of a nearby school. Videos showed how the children affected by the gas, dismayed expressed "cops are mean to us!"

For his part, the senator of the MAS party, Omar Aguilar, stated that both he and his colleagues understand "the discomfort and anger of the citizens of El Alto," particularly concerning the pain caused in November.

He also announced that a legislative committee would be set up with representatives of the three political forces to investigate the "deaths and illegal detentions" of Nov., which, according to him, were executed "without due process, in complicity with the Justice system."

"It is not fair that Justice is only persecuting ex-authorities, leaders and citizens who have mobilized and to this day there is no single prosecuted for the 35 dead (added the deaths of the Sacaba massacre), a single military processed," Aguilar said.

During a police operation, the de-facto authorities had to be evacuated, and the Senate session suspended.

Bolivia is immersed in a profound social and political crisis since Añez took power after the coup against the first Indigenous president in the country's history, carrying out since then a series of human rights violations and political persecution.

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