

## **Bolivia court allows President Morales to run for fourth term**

Al Jazeera and News Agencies, 5 Dec 2018



Morales became president of Bolivia in January 2006, becoming the first leader from the country's indigenous community to hold the post [File: Getty Images]

Bolivia has enjoyed relative prosperity and calm under Evo Morales, country's first indigenous president.

A Bolivian court has given a green light for President [Evo Morales](#) to seek a fourth term in office, which opponents say is unconstitutional.

"The full chamber of the Supreme Electoral Court, by virtue of the jurisdiction and competence exercised by law," approved nine candidates for primary elections in January, including Morales, according to the decision, which was read out at a press briefing.

The decision on Tuesday night came just as opposition to Morales's candidacy was building, with protesters marching in the capital, La Paz, last week.

A general strike was called for next Thursday to oppose Morales' re-election bid.

Morales had previously accepted the results of a 2016 referendum, when 51 percent of Bolivian voters rejected his proposal to end existing term limits.

He later reversed course and said that while he would happily give up the office, his supporters were pushing for him to stay.

Last year, the country's constitutional court lifted term limits, [paving the way](#) for Morales to run for a fourth term in 2019.

The landlocked Andean country has enjoyed relative prosperity and calm under Morales, the country's first indigenous president.

But his efforts to extend term limits have set off protests across the country, with opponents arguing Morales is trying to tighten his grip on power.

Morales came to power on the promise to tackle a history of inequality in the country.

Energy companies were forced to share more profits with the state, investing the proceeds on education and healthcare, while rewriting the country's constitution to speed up his reforms.

Morales also connected the city's poorer periphery to places of employment, and by 2012, the poverty rate dropped by more than half from a decade before.

"For us, we're proud to have justice after so many years of oppression," Israel, a supporter of Morales told Al Jazeera last year.

"President Morales has shown that he's a president loyal to the social organisations, to the indigenous people. We are indigenous," he added.

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