

Bolivia's recount progresses, MAS to lose all four departments in the ballot

Via [France 24](#)

The Plurinational Electoral Body continues with the recount of the second round elections in the departments of La Paz, Chuquisaca, Pando and Tarija. The process could take several hours yet, although the first results point to a loss of these areas by the Movimiento al Socialismo of Arce and Morales. For now, they are behind in all percentages, giving a victory to the opposition.

After a 'super Sunday' of Andean elections, it would be difficult for the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS Movimiento al Socialismo) to celebrate a comfortable triumph like that of Guillermo Lasso, in Ecuador. According to the preliminary vote count, given this Monday, April 12, the historic party would have lost the four departments in the ballot, and with which it aspired to consolidate its leadership in most of the nine regions that make up Bolivia.

Yesterday, after the closing of the polling stations at 17:00 local time, in the departments of La Paz, Tarija, Chuquisaca and Pando, and especially at night, it was intuited that the MAS of President Luis Arce and former leader Evo Morales was behind in the second round of these sub-national elections.

In fact, up to 20.00 hours this Monday, in La Paz, with more than 80% of the tallies counted, the opposition candidates were in the lead, to the detriment of the Movement's candidates.

A few extra hours are needed to confirm the count, but this would be the trend in the other three departments, which could

improve for MAS with the votes in rural areas, where it is strong, as reported by journalist Javier Aliaga.

If so, with triumphs for the opposition, it would be a bitter closing of the electoral calendar for the socialism group. A calendar labeled by the president of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, Salvador Romero, as “the most complex electoral cycle” in the history of Bolivia which, in spite of its relevance, was marked by absenteeism at the polling stations.

Evo Morales acknowledged defeat in the four departments

When the last vote tally sheets are still to be closed, the leader of the ruling Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) acknowledged the defeat of his party in all the ballots that were disputed in four of the nine regions of Bolivia this Sunday.

The result in La Paz, Tarija, Pando and Chuquisaca is a hard blow for MAS, which currently governs the country under Luis Arce. In view of the situation, Morales was forced to call an “emergency meeting” to deal with the party’s crisis.

With this electoral setback, MAS could only control three of the nine regions into which the Andean country is divided. Its victory could only be confirmed in the first round in Cochabamba, Oruro and Potosí.

The socialist leader assured that the result is “disappointing” for the party’s aspirations, which was confident of winning three of the four departments at stake. The result of this Sunday’s elections “leaves much to be desired”, “hopefully we can win” but “I think we have lost in the four departments”, asserted Morales.

A balance still to be defined at 100%, but which continues to place MAS behind

According to the counts issued by the Plurinational Electoral

Body, the ruling party is behind its political opponents in the second round elections in four regional departments.

In La Paz, Santos Quispe of the Jallalla political group is in first place, with 56.2%, against 43.8% of the MAS candidate, Frankin Flores.

In Chuquisaca, Damián Condori of the Chuquisaca Somos Todos party, would obtain the first place with 59.6% of the endorsements, against 40.4% of Juan Carlos León of the Movimiento Al Socialismo (MAS). In this department the count is somewhat more advanced and is close to 90%.

In Pando, MAS would also be left behind with 44.36% of the votes of its candidate, Regis Germán Richter Alencar, while his opponent Miguel Becerra Suárez, of the Movimiento Tercer Sistema (MTS), would obtain 55.54%.

And in Tarija, the first place for now goes to the representative of Unidos por Tarija, Óscar Montes, with 54.44% of the votes. The MAS candidate, Álvaro Ruiz, would exceed 45.56% of support.

Although the MAS has gone up in percentages compared to last night, none of them would give him the victory.

Key elections for the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS)

The four Bolivian departments concluded this Sunday the subnational elections in the country, in a politically tense second round. During the first round of last March 7, no candidate reached more than 50 % of the votes or more than 40 % with ten points of difference over the second in the regional and municipal elections.

This is the reason for the return to vote, putting an end to what is considered "the most complex electoral cycle in our history", in the words of the president of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), Salvador Romero.

“This electoral cycle was preceded by a difficult stage, which included the annulment of a general election and the destruction of almost half of the infrastructure of the Departmental Courts. The echoes of the bitter confrontation between Bolivians still resonate in the antagonisms and polarizations that deepen the political, social and regional gaps,” said Romero.

In the first round, MAS won in Cochabamba, Oruro and Potosí, while in Santa Cruz, former presidential candidate Luis Fernando Camacho, of the opposition Creemos party, won. In Beni, Alejandro Unzueta, of the opposition Movimiento Tercer Sistema (MTS), also won.

Early in the morning, the Bolivian president exercised his right to vote

Bolivian President Luis Arce voted in the area of Miraflores (La Paz), but did not participate in the inauguration of the vote due to the presence of observers from the Organization of American States (OAS).

For his part, former President Evo Morales made a statement during the day on Saturday, April 10, criticizing the fact that the Bolivian justice system has been “very backward”, allowing – in his opinion – that former members of the interim government of Jeanine Áñez and opponents to MAS were candidates and were elected to governorships and mayorships. Something that could be reinforced with the final results.

“If Justice in December last year (2020) had arrested the coup plotters, there was no Camacho as governor. There would be no Iván Arias or Manfred Reyes Villa as mayors”, asserted Morales, during an event of the coca growers federations of Cochabamba.

By law, the departments will have one week to announce the results of the elections. On May 3, the new heads of municipalities and departments will take office.