

In Bolivia the hard vote was broken and MAS loses all four provinces

Via [Rebelión](#)

On April 11, in the second round of elections for the governorships of La Paz, Tarija, Pando and Chuquisaca, the ruling Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) lost with a margin of 10 points of difference in each one, which means a reconfiguration of territorial political power in the country, which may determine the presidential election of 2025.

In Tarija, Oscar Montes won for “Unidos por Tarija” (UXT) with 55% against 54% of MAS, in Chuquisaca, Damián Condori of Chiquisaca Somos Todos (CST) won with 57% against MAS which obtained 43% -14 percentage points of distancia-, and in Pando, Regis Richter of Movimiento Tercer Sistema (MTS) won with 55% against MAS which obtained 45%.

In La Paz, the new governor is Santos Quispe of Jallalla La Paz with 55%, against 45% obtained by Franklin Flores, the MAS bet. The young Aymara and professional replaced in his candidacy his recently deceased father Felipe Quispe, El Mallku, historical indigenous leader who had assured his triumph as governor.

It is clear that no son inherits the knowledge and experience of his father, but Santos Quispere updated a historical dispute of his father with what he described as a “dome of white middle class intellectuals” that make up the MAS, whom he accused of “using the indigenous as a ladder” to gain access to power, of “being racist” and “closing the way to new indigenous leadership”.

Within MAS there are many long-standing critics of the party

leadership, among them Chato Peredo – the last member of Che’s guerrilla -, the mining leader Orlando Gutiérrez (both deceased), and Segundina Flores of the Confederation of Indigenous Women Bartolina Sisa.

Recently, Segundina affirmed that “There is a team of liars of the MAS who make Evo Morales wrong” and who still maintain their influence. Santos Quispe and Eva Copa, from Jallalla La Paz, also point to this sector.

Map of territorial power

The final results of the sub-national elections of 7 March and the ballot of 11 April confirm that MAS won only three out of nine governorships (Cochabamba, Oruro and Potosí). At the mayoral level it did better, but it must be taken into account that there are no other options in the municipalities, such as Jallalla La Paz, and the dispute was between the right wing and MAS.

Out of 336 mayoralties, MAS won 239, 67% of the total. It also won and maintains a majority in the composition of the legislative assemblies at the national level. It lost in the metropolitan areas in Santa Cruz, La Paz and Cochabamba to the coup supporters.

Fernando Camacho was elected governor of Santa Cruz with 55.62% of votes, Iván Arias, former minister of Public Works of the president Jeanine Áñez, was elected mayor of La Paz with 49.52%, Manfred Reyes Villa, leader of what was called the Media Luna from where the coup attempt of 2008 was articulated, won the mayoralty with 55.63%.

This victory of the coup leaders in strategic places opens a way for a possible rearticulation of the ultra-right wing, although for the moment, they only maintain regional centers of power, since they lack a national political project. Although MAS never won in Santa Cruz, the fact that Camacho won the governorship after the coup d’état is not to be

underestimated.

On the other hand, Carlos Mesa, former president and presidential candidate in 2020, was blurred in this election, where he could not capitalize what he had won.

New Leadership

MAS lost in El Alto in a resounding way to Eva Copa, former president of the Senate, who was expelled by MAS. As candidate of the Jallalla La Paz group, she won with 68.70% of support, generating the Eva Copa phenomenon in the country.

In this way, the breakage of the indigenous hard vote and the fracture within the MAS, originated by her expulsion, which dragged part of the MAS vote towards other options. This phenomenon is taking place in El Alto, a historical place of vital importance in the political scene of the country, a core of indigenous resistance, which was a vanguard of the MAS.

It is the second most populated city in Bolivia and the first in La Paz. It is the city where the insurrection of the so-called "Gas War" took place in 2003, which allowed Evo Morales to come to power in 2005, and it was also strategic for the overthrow of the government that emerged after the last coup d'état.

If Eva Copa performs well as mayor, her strength could radiate to the national level and she could dispute the presidency in 2025. It is something that already sounds strong in the streets.

Some analysts wonder if Eva Copa and Santos Quispe of Jallalla La Paz belong to the right, are Trotskyists working for the right, or are part of the emergence of a new option within the left in the country. The analysis is as complex as the diverse Bolivian reality, since there are sectors of the indigenous movement that do not identify with the traditional political poles: right and left, but are Indianists.

For example, El Mallku argued that the indigenous were historically used as a “ladder” to occupy political positions and that this action was replicated by both the right and the colonial left. He added that although the left “united” with the indigenous, once in power they did not allow them to occupy decisive positions of power and abandoned their Andean philosophy.

From the Western political thinking that reigns in the region, which analyzes everything from a right-left binary logic and with conceptual categories that are insufficient to analyze the reality of the native peoples, it is impossible to understand indigenous thought.

There are two hypotheses regarding these leaderships: The first argues that both are functional to the right wing as a kind of “Trotskyism” or that they are part of the same right wing. Even some sectors of MAS accused them of being financed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States and of being traitors allied with the coup.

The second hypothesis is that it is part of the conformation of a new option that basically postulates Andean thought and, from a western conception, could be catalogued as “leftist”. Let us remember that the philosophical principles of the Andean culture are in the Bolivian constitution and are the original principles of MAS.

Eva Copa stated in her campaign: “I am tired of listening to every stupid thing they say, that I am from the right and that I am a coup leader. I want to say to those gentlemen, that I did have the courage to stay here with my people and fight for my people and I did not hide”.

When everything indicated that she was going to be the MAS candidate for mayor of El Alto, she was discarded and Ratuki Maquera, unknown until then, took her place. Then, she was expelled from the MAS ranks and in order to dispute power and

not to be satisfied with minor political positions, she borrowed the Jallala La Paz party, ran for mayor and won with almost 70% of support. .

After her expulsion from MAS, she received support from several personalities of the party: Segundina Flores, former leader of the Bartolina Sisa, Esther Soria, governor of Cochabamba, Lidia Patty, former assemblywoman and denouncer of the “coup d'état case” that has Jeanine Áñez in jail, “el Gringo” Gonzales, former president of the Bolivian Senate, agreed in pointing out the expulsion as a “serious mistake”.

In this regard, Gringo Gonzales said: “I do not understand the mechanisms by which the MAS leadership chooses its candidates”.

How can these results be explained after the 55% MAS victory?

First and foremost, it must be taken into account that in the presidential elections, in which Luis Arce won, those votes were not MAS votes, but an anti-coup vote. The same Felipe Quispe “El Mallku” called to vote for MAS, without belonging to its ranks, in view of the resurgence of fascism in Bolivia.

Secondly, there was a punishment vote, as a result of the uneasiness produced by the imposition of candidates – “dedazos” (pointed) without the recognition of the bases -, many of whom were rejected. During the selection of candidates, strong fights broke out and came to a head when former president Evo Morales received a “sillazo” (a chair thrown over him), supposedly due to disagreements over his “dedazos”.

The former president denied that this is the mechanism by which candidates are elected and that the “sillazo” came from sectors of the infiltrated “right wing”. Eva Copa received the vote of those dissatisfied with the “dedazos”. The same happened with several ex-masistas who, discarded by the leadership, decided to compete with another party and ended up

winning the elections, as in the case of the governorship of Pando and Chuquisaca.

In third place, the “anti-MAS vote” which, for example, was capitalized by Santos Quispe: sectors of the right wing voted for him only out of hatred for MAS.

Also, several factors converge: the strong internal problems within the MAS, the various allegations of corruption, especially for the sale of positions, the presence of “pititas” (followers of the coup supporters) in the State, questions about the appointment of some officials, among others.

These factors interact with a generalized request for renewal and deepening of the process of change that was the promise of the presidential campaign of Arce and Choquehuanca in 2020.

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