



## BOLIVIA

**Capital**  
(constitutional, judicial) Sucre, 19°2's 65°15'w  
(administrative) La Paz, 16°29's 68°8'w  
**Largest city** Santa Cruz de la Sierra,  
17°48's 63°10'w

**Official languages** Spanish and 36 native languages

**Government** **Republic**  
– President Evo Morales  
– Vice President Álvaro García

**Independence from Spain**  
August 6, 1825

### Political Parties (elections 2005)

*Governing party*  
Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) 72

*Opposition parties*  
Poder Democrático y Social (PODEMOS) 43  
Frente de Unidad Nacional 8  
Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario 7

Total: 130

Total votes 3,102,417  
Registered voters 3,671,152

### State of Democracy Bolivia

Since 2006, when Evo Morales of the MAS – “Movimiento al Socialismo” became President, Bolivia has witnessed political turbulence and social unrest but also rising hope for more justice and equality for the indigenous population. Due to the rise of the MAS, the traditional parties have lost their grip on the political system and Mr Morales came to power. He had an agenda of reform, including a new constitution, to give excluded population groups a voice in the political process.

### Constitution

As the MAS clashed with the dethroned political establishment, the constitution making process led to political confrontation and violence until, in October 2008, the government and the opposition came to an agreement on the text of the new constitution. In January 2009, the constitution was approved by a referendum.

### Electoral Law

The new constitution focuses on issues of regional autonomy, the distribution of national resources and the balance of power. In light of the latter, a new Electoral Law was proposed in 2009. After weeks of disagreement in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, Congress passed a new Electoral Law in April, which was immediately signed by President Morales. A certain amount of seats (less than proposed by the MAS but more than the opposition desired) is to be reserved for indigenous candidates. Also, women and men are to be represented equally in the list of candidates.

### Elections and prognosis

The results of elections in December 2009 and April 2010, as well as the construction of the legislative framework based on the new constitution, sets Bolivia's political course in 2010 and in the following years. It is necessary for the pluri-national Assembly and the Autonomous Departmental Councils to build consensus to overcome the tendencies to confront and stalemate politically.

### Autonomous regions

A major issue in Bolivia is the political tension within and between the different regions, especially in the provinces of Santa Cruz and Tarija. On the one hand the central government has to count on the support of all the departments in order to implement public policies. On the other hand, each departmental government has to represent the interests of its citizens, which vary greatly per region in Bolivia, due to social economic diversity per region.

### NIMD Bolivia Programme

NIMD has been working in Bolivia since 2002. NIMD's partner in the country is the Fundación Boliviana para la Democracia Multipartidaria (fBDM). The general objective of the programme is to promote and support change in Bolivia's political culture - from confrontation to dialogue. fBDM approaches this by promoting dialogue of all political parties and movements in fBDM itself as well as by including disenfranchised groups in the political process. The programme also aims at strengthening the relationship between political parties, movements and citizens.

### Constitution

fBDM has supported the constitutional reform process, facilitating consensus when needed. Currently, the programme is focusing on the implementation of the political reforms provided in the new constitution. In this effort, the programme seeks to help shape a peaceful political environment by facilitating dialogue.

### Parties and Movements

Traditional political parties have lost their credentials and new parties and political movements have been formed. It is very important that these new political entities will build their organization in a transparent way. Party members should be able to hold their representatives in Congress accountable. Politicians may need training to develop party programmes and draft proposals for reform. Institutional and programmatic strengthening of political parties and movements are therefore key focus areas of NIMD's programme in Bolivia.

### Autonomous Regions

NIMD's programme has expanded to the regional level, in order to act upon the different political voices particular to the regions. Much efforts are put in promoting political dialogue, so that confrontation and potentially separatism can be avoided.



In 2009 fBDM played a major role in achieving multiparty consensus for the Electoral Law, just as it did in 2008, when the foundation helped the government and the opposition achieve agreement on the text of the new Constitution. fBDM was able to contribute to these agreements by bringing together moderates from both sides (government and opposition) and facilitate a process of consensus building.

#### Stakeholders

##### 1. Programme partner

Fundación Boliviana para la Democracia Multipartidaria (fBDM)

##### 2. National partners

Fundación Boliviana para la Democracia Multipartidaria (Bolivian Foundation for Multiparty Democracy – fBDM) – Corte Nacional Electoral (CNE, National Electoral Council) – Asociación Boliviana de Radiodifusoras (ASBORA, radio stations organisation) – Universidad Nacional

##### 3. International partners

Royal Netherlands Embassy – International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) – Friedrich Ebert Stiftung – Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales (FES-ILDIS) – Andres Bello International Institute – European Union (EU) – United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF)