



**DECENTRALIZATION IS NOT DIVISION**  
**RELIAL supports the Referendum in Santa Cruz, Bolivia**

The referendum of May 4<sup>th</sup> in Santa Cruz province, Bolivia, has a very important connotation. It is the first of a series of referendums in the country. The purpose of the referendum is to turn the administration of Bolivia, a traditionally centralized country, into a decentralized and therefore accessible and useful administration for its citizens.

The Government of Evo Morales rejects the idea of democratic decentralization. Thus, Morales is using different and dangerous tools against this initiative, generating a violent and repressive atmosphere.

Evo Morales is trying to follow the footsteps of his role model Hugo Chavez, by trying to centralize the entire state power on his own person, to accomplish his dictatorial project. For example, he annulled a resolution of the Bolivian Congress to determine a new law in favor of his own purposes. The “Movimiento Autonomista Boliviano” emerged in response of this illegal Constitution.

In countries with a solid federal tradition, such as Spain, the autonomy did not threaten the national unity but reinforced the democracy. Therefore, we support this referendum. This initiative searches for a governmental decentralization, respecting the regional autonomy characteristics, and we can find successful similar models in Europe.

To clarify confusing and false versions: the referendum respects Bolivia as a sovereign and indivisible state. This is not a division process. The Bolivarian provinces wish to decide about their autonomy, and are therefore urging the government of Evo Morales to respect their civil rights.

Thus, the members of RELIAL (Liberal Network of Latin America) invite the international community to watch and escort the referendum. The Santa Cruz citizens will express their will voting next Sunday for this legitimate referendum. And their voices must be respected.

**Liberal Network of Latin America**

<http://www.reial.org/Integrantes/>

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