
Right-Wing Victory: Rodrigo Paz Assumes Presidency of Bolivia

By: Arnaldo Musa
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For the first time in its history, Bolivians went to a runoff election this Sunday, granting victory to conservative candidate **Rodrigo Paz** of the **Christian Democratic Party** over fellow right-wing contender **Jorge “Tuto” Quiroga**, after a fragmented left suffered a resounding defeat in the first round, ending two decades of progressive governance.

Although the official results have yet to be formally certified, with **97.95% of the votes counted**, Paz leads with **54.57%**, well ahead of Quiroga’s **45.43%**.

The election unfolded peacefully, under the watch of **27,900 police officers** and the supervision of both the **Organization of American States (OAS)** and the **European Union** — institutions that have historically opposed Bolivia’s former leftist governments. The OAS, in particular, played a controversial role in the **2019 coup** that ousted then-President **Evo Morales**. Both candidates had previously announced their intentions to maintain close relations with the **United States**.

While Quiroga advocated for securing a loan from the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and privatizing state-owned enterprises — in a move reminiscent of Argentina’s Javier Milei — Paz opposed borrowing from the IMF. Nevertheless, he supports a form of **capitalism with moderation**, promoting private enterprise but without surrendering full control to foreign institutions.

Amid Bolivia’s severe **economic crisis**, marked by fuel shortages and a scarcity of foreign currency, it is believed that many left-leaning voters cast their ballots for Paz as a pragmatic choice.

Coming from a **prominent political family**, Paz is the son of former Bolivian president **Jaime Paz Zamora** (1989–1993) and great-nephew of **Víctor Paz Estenssoro**, who served four terms as head of state (1952–1956, 1960–1964, briefly in 1964, and again from 1985–1989).

Born in **Spain** during his family’s exile, Rodrigo Paz is an economist with a **master’s degree in Political**

Management from the **United States**. His political career in Bolivia began in 2002: he served as a **member of parliament (2002–2010)**, **councilman of Tarija (2010–2015)**, **mayor of Tarija (2015–2020)**, and most recently as **senator**.

His running mate, **Edman Lara**, a former police officer, is a well-known figure who played a pivotal role in spreading the campaign's **anti-corruption message** to the country's grassroots. "*We have had direct contact with the people; we've listened to what that deep Bolivia wants,*" Lara said. Dismissed from the police in 2024 for alleged misconduct, Lara had previously gained public attention for denouncing irregularities within the institution.

Paz's **government plan**, known as the *Agenda 50/50*, promotes a more **balanced distribution of Bolivia's wealth** while rejecting reliance on **multilateral loans** as a means to overcome the crisis.

This new administration officially ends **two decades of leadership by the leftist Movement for Socialism (MAS)**, under the presidencies of **Evo Morales** and **Luis Arce**. President-elect Rodrigo Paz is scheduled to **take office on November 8**.

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque / CubaSí Translation Staff
