

World Affairs :

US-backed Coup in Bolivia

South America's most impoverished country; Bolivia is on the verge of a civil war in the wake of US-backed coup. On November 10, president Evo Morales, Vice president Alvaro Garcia Linea and other ministers fled to Mexico seeking asylum. Gen. William Kaliman, the Chief of the Army, took over the government and asked Morales to resign. Morales resigned saying that they were doing so to "avoid bloodshed" and "genuine peace".

Yet Bolivian peasants, workers and indigenous people heroically faced the military fascist repression. Thousands had taken to the streets of La Paz and in working class district El Alto, where they burned down police stations and confronted armed forces. In other places miners and peasants have blocked highways and confronted army troops firing live ammunition.

The military unleashed a reign of terror using the opponents of Morales who burned down homes of those linked to government, kidnapped family members of officials and carried out violent assaults against those belonging to the Movement towards socialism (MAS), the party of Morales.

Some 15 years ago, following the resignation of President Carlos Mesa amid mass protests, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Eduardo Rodriguez Veltze, took over as interim president. He conducted elections and handed over the presidency in less than a year in January 2006 when Evo Morales won the vote. In 2009, after a successful first term Morales won another election by a resounding margin.

The 2009 constitution introduced a two-term limit for presidents. Morales ran for a third term in 2014, arguing that the term he served prior to the introduction of the limit did not count. He once again scored an easy victory on the back of his achievements as president.

But in February 2016, when a referendum was held on whether Morales should be allowed to run for yet another term, the charismatic and popular president's fortunes nose dived. In a country with a long and painful history of dictatorships, alarm bells went off. Despite support for both the president and the ruling party remaining high, Morales's proposal to abandon term limits was voted down by a 51.3 percent majority.

However, Morales and MAS refused to take the Bolivian public's message on board. A year and a half later, in a feat of legal maneuvering, the constitutional court ruled that to not allow Morales to run again would violate his human rights. As a result, all term limits were promptly annulled, and Morales was once again declared the presidential candidate for the MAS. The election in October became controversial with allegations and counter allegations. This gave the opportunity to the right wing to take over the government with the backing of US imperialism.

Evo Morales has claimed he was forced from office by US-backed coup at gaining access to the vast resources of Lithium. Bolivia is known to have world's largest Lithium resources and Evo Morales had signed agreements with Russia and China for its extraction. This enraged US imperialism. As Morales said Washington had not 'forgiven' his country for not choosing US for Lithium extraction.

This is the continuity of US imperialist policy in Latin America considering Latin America as its own backyard. Whoever may be in power, the Republicans or Democrats, US imperialism never allowed any independent action by these countries. Latest being. The abortive 2002 coup against Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, the 2009 US backed overthrow of president Manuel Zelaya in Honduras and today's ouster of Morales.

Morales and his party's apparent disregard for the constitution undoubtedly played a role in creating the circumstances for the illegal confiscation of Bolivia's presidency by the right. But still he was revered by his people for the policies implemented by him and as the indigenous person to become the President of Bolivia.

The US imperialist interference in the internal affair of Bolivia should be condemned by the entire people world and express their solidarity with the people of Bolivia in their struggle against US imperialism.