

Evo Morales a The Grayzone: «El pueblo ha llegado a su punto de ruptura»

English cut: <https://youtu.be/SQTJ57LoPMo> Oscar Leon, de The Grayzone, conversó con Evo Morales sobre el rumbo que tomarán las protestas de ahora en adelante, el contexto que las originó y las acusaciones en su contra. Esta es la entrega más reciente de una serie de conversaciones con el expresidente boliviano en torno a la agresión contra la soberanía de su país, proveniente tanto de Washington como del interior de la propia nación. ||| The Grayzone ||| Find more reporting at <https://thegrayzone.com> Support our original journalism at Patreon: <https://patreon.com/grayzone> Facebook: <https://facebook.com/thegrayzone> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/thegrayzonenews> Instagram: <https://instagram.com/thegrayzonenews> Minds: <https://minds.com/thegrayzone> Mastodon: <https://mastodon.social/@thegrayzone> #TheGrayzone

#Oscar Leon

In Bolivia, a strike by the mining union demanding better working conditions has evolved into a massive mobilization of indigenous and peasant peoples, which threatens to overthrow the new pro-American president, Rodrigo Paz. A series of leaked documents reveal that Paz is conspiring with American President Donald Trump to kidnap Evo Morales, ex-president of Bolivia and historical leader of the indigenous, mining, and peasant movements, accusing him of mistreating a minor. Morales responded to the threat by reinforcing the vigilance cordon around his residence and even took control of the local airport to prevent American and national forces from accessing the area. As the crisis intensified, The Grayzone talked to Evo Morales. Hablamos un poquito de las protestas y la manifestación masiva del pueblo boliviano. ¿Cuál es su principal pedido, digamos? ¿Y cómo le ha ido la protesta?

#Evo Morales

Well, thank you very much for this interview, brother Oscar León Tigre. Where are you from, Oscar León? I'm very sorry that the current president is there by accident. Because of the disqualification, there was a second round, and the three candidates were from the right, the far right. Gloria, Tuto, and Rodrigo Paz, from the same family. They ruled for 20 years, the 20 years of neoliberalism, 1985 to 2005. They left a beggar state, a limousine state. In 2005 we took over, and in 14 years we left a state with an average economic growth of almost 5% annually.

#Evo Morales

Thanks to the people's policies, the recovery of our natural resources, the nationalization of basic services, and economic policies addressing social problems that contradicted the capitalist recipe. We

never submitted to the recipes of the International Monetary Fund, the minimal state. That minimal state only regulated and did not invest. So, in our administration there was growth and stability. From 38% poverty, we reduced it to 12%, and our goal for the bicentennial is 0% poverty.

#Evo Morales

In 180 years, that is, from 1825 to 2005, they left us with 9 billion dollars of GDP. In 2019, the year of the coup, 42 billion dollars of GDP. A coup to stop our economic model. I realized.

#Evo Morales

Capitalism does not accept another economic model better than the economic model implemented by neoliberalism. Our political movement, formerly called MAS-IPSP, now Evo-Pueblo, has a vision for the country. For example, in 2013–2014 we projected, by 2030, 41 lithium plants. And now they want to deliver lithium to the transnationals. I can comment a lot on this, but the new government, submitted to the American empire, becomes a neoliberal model, a neo-colonial state. And this short time has shown.

#Evo Morales

That the plurinational state is not touched, the Constitution is not modified. This means that basic food and natural resources are not privatized, and there is respect for our identity, solidarity with identity, and respect for political and economic sovereignty.

#Oscar Leon

Triggered by the rise in prices and the lack of fuel, aggravated by the neoliberal policies of Paz, the national revolt is gaining intensity day by day. The government has reacted by deploying security forces against the huelguistas, rejecting dialogue. President Paz seems determined to neutralize the leaders of the left, who are responsible for the uprising against their government. He also contemplates plans to privatize the vast mineral reserves of the country, putting them in the hands of transnational oligarchs.

#Evo Morales

Two problems led to this situation. One, the reconversion of small agricultural property to medium property. And by constitution, the medium and large pay taxes. Small property of 500 hectares or less is considered family property; it does not pay taxes. When it goes up, it pays taxes. In addition to that, it is subject to the FES, Social Economic Function. If it does not work its land, it loses it. The state reclaims that land, but from the medium and large property, not from the small property. That caused a reaction from the indigenous movement of the west, the valley, and the east.

Second, well, he approved Law 1720, although yesterday, the day before yesterday, he repealed it. But it's already too late. Second, in La Paz, the null vote was almost 25% for the departmental government. If we take into account the null and blank votes, the computation to decide who won, the current departmental government of Villa won with only 13%. There should have been a second round. By instruction of the government, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal said no, he won in the second round because the party that brought the candidate for the second round withdrew. That is totally illegal and unconstitutional. The people of La Paz are angry. It's not democracy.

#Oscar Leon

The looting of resources is done through politics, right?

#Evo Morales

Yesterday, the president said those who do not respect democracy will go to jail. Now, those who do not respect democracy and peace will go to jail. In a matter of days or weeks, the parties would be unlawful. When we were in the Morena state, it took us three hours to finish enrolling candidates for the elections. Where the winner was the MAS-IPSP, sorry, Evo Pueblo, with loans, it was impossible. Or where a governor was going to win, the governor's candidate, or the national government, it was impossible. And it was unfair.

#Evo Morales

It all started with salary demands. He said, I don't have any money, I don't have any money. It became a political problem because he doesn't serve. Now it goes to another level and outside Rodrigo Paz. But in addition to that, a lot of corruption. The government in drug trafficking. Look, just two little facts. It is not possible to understand how, in a state plane, and today the TAB is founded, Bolivian Air Transport for Cargo, which was in charge of the Bolivian Air Force, they bring from Miami liquid marijuana to Santa Cruz. How is that? And they have not been detained until now. They decommissioned it in customs, it was in customs. A week passes, the liquid marijuana disappears in customs.

It's in the communication networks. Second, 32 suitcases full of dollars, a charter plane from Miami to Santa Cruz. There is an ex-deputy of Camacho, a hitman, ex-governor of Santa Cruz, who is detained. But it's not 32 wallets with money. What is that? The government broke the record on drug trafficking. There are so many things. Then people got tired. And in the process, they forgive or raise taxes or fortunes to the great businessmen. And why do I say a neo-colonial government? To proscribe our political movement, eliminate it, but in addition to that, a tribute to the indigenous. That small property ends up worse off, having to pay per hectare. Now they've already proposed a law: small producers have to pay taxes.

5%, from every 100 bolivianos of sales, less my potato, my fish, me, 5% tax. From every 100 bolivianos, 5 bolivianos. If it's 10,000, 20,000, that's it. People got angry and rose up. Now this mobilization is unstoppable. This morning, this night, they applied a de facto state of exception. They took the military out to the streets at 1 in the morning to clear the mobilizations. Until 8, the confrontation; since 10 in the morning, they made them retreat. Soldiers, police, ambushed. There is one dead and several injured. They have withdrawn to their barracks. He failed with his de facto state of exception, also called a de facto state of siege. Or here, state of siege, or the law of the assembly. There is no law in the assembly.

#Oscar Leon

This repression also coincides with what we have called a new Condor Plan — a wave of repression and persecution on a continental scale directed against leaders of left-wing parties and indigenous movements, especially those who defend sovereignty over natural resources. The Dunrow Doctrine, Trump's version of the Monroe Doctrine, holds that the entire American continent constitutes an exclusive domain of the United States and its swarm of corporations and allies, particularly Israel. It's said, and it's been seen on Twitter, that supposedly there's a leak of a document that whispers and suggests that the North American empire and Trump want to kidnap you, let's say, as a solution to this indigenous uprising. What's your opinion about that?

#Evo Morales

The government of Lucho, the chargé d'affaires of the U.S. embassy, right? They met in December 2021. They planned to detain the last commander of the Special Force for the Fight Against Drug Trafficking, Colonel Maximiliano Dávila. In January 2022, they detained him. I still don't realize it. But when they took him to jail, the judge, impulsively, shouted to the colonel, "They are only doing this to harm Evo." I heard it in the press, I still don't understand. In February, March, April, May, June, a colonel on active duty looked for me. I was afraid to meet him. I asked a mayor to accompany me. And the colonel told me, "Look, from above." "From who?" He didn't say anyone. "From above." We've been instructed that the relationship Evo, as president, had with my last commander of the Special Force for the Fight Against Drug Trafficking, Dávila, Maximiliano Nava, the colonel.

They have investigated for so many months and they didn't find a phone call. There is no relationship. And this colonel tells me, "Evo, stay calm. They want to involve you, there is nothing." The defenders of the detained colonel, they told him, "If you declare against Evo, you will be released." But there is nothing he is going to declare against Evo. And before taking him to prison, from his first hearing, they had already said, "If you declare against Evo, you will be released." And that is why he shouted, "This is what they are doing only to harm Evo." Since there is nothing, they

took him to the United States. Months ago, they took a statement from him in the United States. It says, "Everything for me to declare against Evo. Evo has nothing. Aquí estoy injustamente detenido. Intenta y no puede."

At that moment, I was talking with one of my former ministers. And he told me, "Evo, for 40 years they've accused you of being a drug trafficker, a murderer, a terrorist. And they haven't found anything." Look, during the coup d'état, when the right took over, they investigated Evo for corruption. They found nothing—corruption of Evo. With drug trafficking, a police officer—there are good officers—called me when I was in Argentina. "Look, Evo, Minister Murillo, the Minister of Government, has instructed us to link Evo with drug trafficking. Some comrades have been detained, and they've been offered 300,000 dollars to declare against Evo. But what are they going to declare, what are they going to invent?" And they haven't been able to tell me anything. And now Evo is no longer a drug dealer, Evo is no longer a terrorist, he is no longer a murderer—he is a pedophile.

#Oscar Leon

Morales is currently facing a trial for the treatment of a minor, accusing the former president of having a daughter with said minor, a charge that he strongly denied. Previously, Morales faced media accusations of fraud, corruption, and drug trafficking. Initially, a first-degree court canceled the charges and the arrest warrant against Morales, but the case was reactivated with abundant evidence by the prosecution. Morales did not attend the judicial hearing and was declared rebellious, eventually activating an arrest warrant against him. Morales's lawyers argue that the trial was reactivated in order to capture the historic Indigenous leader and thus calm social protests. His opponents claim that Evo is sowing chaos to avoid prison.

#Evo Morales

And this government, the government of Lucho, told a police officer supposedly to investigate Evo, to link him with drug trafficking. A police officer raised his complaint. Summing up, on May 5th, a girl I know presented a statement to the sentencing judge. She said, "I have never been a victim of anyone. There has never been any trafficking." With that, it should close and be over. Since there is no corruption or narco-trafficking with Evo, they use a girl. It seems like a novel.

#Oscar Leon

We have spoken with you and with other former presidents and authors about a potential new Condor plan of political domination of the continent and for the persecution of the political opposition, especially the left. And that has been clearly seen in Ecuador — the disinvestment, the looting, and the betrayal of the popular vote, right? And then the looting of natural resources. It's like a map of action they have. And now we see it in this Honduras Gate, in these texts and calls

that have come out of Honduras, where they talk about trying to turn the army against the people to oppress them, so there is blood, and then blame everything on the left, on this bad government, because they are looking to seize power — the corporations and also Israel, right?

#Juan Orlando Hernandez

Honduras needs strength, it needs logistics, it needs blood. If you want to have people to control it, you need to oppress them, expel them, counteract violence, generate violence. That's what President Trump says.

#Oscar Leon

This is a pattern that we're already seeing at the continental level. What do you think about this possible pattern we're seeing?

#Evo Morales

I would say a genocidal triumvirate that does not respect life or humanity, much less peace with social justice: Donald Trump, the president of Israel, and Milei from Argentina. Milei, and those who accompany him as presidents of Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile, and some others. But they are in decline. In the new geopolitical world context, the North American empire recognizes that it is no longer the world's general. And it replies with Andean America to implement again the Monroe Doctrine — America for the Americans. The Cold War no longer works for them. But the Condor Plan is still in force. Before, the Condor Plan was carried out by colonels and generals.

Now the Condor Plan is carried out by judges and prosecutors. The case of Ecuador, the case of Argentina, Bolivia — that also happened with Lula. When Lula was in prison, I made his claim. I think the prosecutor said, "I have no evidence against Lula, but I have convictions." Textual. So, the strength, I say, is Donald Trump. Seventy-five percent of these non-living people ask for their removal. I think more than 70% disapprove of Milei. Milei has sent two Hercules full of anti-riot material — now, yesterday. And in Bolivia, with six months of government, more than 60% disapprove of Rodrigo Paz. I am very optimistic.

I am almost sure that in Colombia the line of the president will be ratified. What is the name of Colombia? Petro. Petro. Mexico, we are fine. Lula will be ratified. We are fine. Argentina, I am sure they will recover. If Evo were a candidate, we would win at least 60%. If I were allowed to be a candidate, they would not disqualify me, and I would have won with more than 60%. It is another, which is really not democracy — their pretext of freedom to privatize health and education. What kind of freedom is that? The right, freedom, freedom, freedom to privatize basic services. There are some who cook with firewood.

#Evo Morales

It is fatal. And in addition to that, it is imposed on the little ones and not on the big ones. So the people rise up with reason to stop this way of subjugating ourselves to humiliation, to plunder, to slavery. I hope the captive families do not return.

#Oscar Leon

Another similarity that Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia share is the strength of the indigenous movements. I think that Bolivia is where the strongest indigenous movement is, but one that was also very strong was in Ecuador. And in the last uprisings they have had, they have not been successful. The state has become more violent, let's say, and has even waged warfare, like a war of law, against them. So, let's say, the state and the U.S. and transnational corporations go after and persist in hunting and fighting the indigenous movements, especially for their defense of natural resources and sovereignty, of natural resources and of nature itself, when those natural resources are exploited.

So, one could say that they have conquered Ecuador, and now their biggest challenge, their next challenge, is what we see developing in Bolivia, where the indigenous movement, which is so strong and we see it now in the streets, is possibly the most capable in Latin America and one of the last hopes to be able to fight this model of plunder, let's say, that is being imposed throughout the continent, and to impose a bit of their sovereignty and their desire for preponderance, because we see that right-wing governments don't invest and then basically beat up on the poor.

#Evo Morales

In Ecuador, the CONAIE of Ecuador and FENOCIN were our allies. In neoliberal times, in the 80s and 90s, we shared great struggles and great encounters with the CCP of Peru, the CNA of Peru, the CUC of Guatemala, and many indigenous movements. The indigenous movement is the absolute owner of this noble land, origins, millennial. But also those who came to Latin America after the First and Second World Wars, or after the war in Spain, they escaped. Their children were born here; they are also original. I say they are contemporary originals. We are at the moment indigenous to the plurinational state. What is plurinationality? It is unity in diversity. Diversity is our pride, of a movement with dignity. But the experience of the indigenous movement is in solidarity, in complementarity, but fundamentally the experience is in harmony with Mother Earth.

Our ancestors never met judges or prosecutors. Our ancestors never met military or police officers. But it has been accumulated. We organized ourselves out of necessity, which is social claims. But when social claims are not met, we go to the claim of structural change to the neoliberal model. We combine social justice and structural change. With marches, mobilizations, you can get a school, a little road, a sports field, a hospital. But first, you can't close the military base. You can't nationalize the basic necessities of natural resources. Therefore, you need political power. Nuestro movimiento nace de la lucha sindical comunal a una lucha electoral política, con principios y valores, recuperando la lucha histórica en tiempos de colonia de nuestros antepasados.

That is our history. And when we arrived, we closed the military base. When we arrived, we nationalized the basic services — electricity was in foreign hands, telecommunications were foreign, hydrocarbons and gas too. In the BTU billion, the transnationals paid only one dollar. I negotiated with Brazil and Argentina, and we raised it to eight dollars. In the BTU billion, Brazil — sorry, Argentina — ten dollars, in solidarity at that time. That's how we improved the economy of the country. So now, in Bolivia especially, the indigenous movement is leading. That's why I said, the indigenous movement. If we respect teachers, some teachers are also almost all indigenous. They are teachers. Miners are indigenous. All sectors are almost indigenous.

If they are indigenous, then that's enough. Of the neoliberal model, and we don't accept a neo-colonial state either. That's how I sum up our struggle, and how good it would be, again, well, before, when I was a leader, I had many alliances. Now, here, confined for more than a year, of course, we have some contacts. Hopefully Ecuador, Peru — hopefully Peru will do well in the second round. It has surprised me that the line of Pedro Castillo reaches the second round. But look, it reaches the second round. The justice of Pedro Márquez says he already has pending accounts, hermano Sánchez. It would be necessary that a few days before the trial he is disqualified. That would not be necessary. That is the subdued justice. That is why I say, now, those who listen to Plan Cóndor are fiscal judges.

#Oscar Leon

One more question, with your permission, Mr. Former President. You are one of the most representative and historic popular leaders left. And now you are in a difficult position where, as I understand it, there is a vigil around your house because people want to defend your safety against a possible invasion, a foreign military operation to... On October 27, 2024,

#Evo Morales

When I was being transferred from my home in Villa Tunari to the radio station at the headquarters of the Sixth Federation, Radio Kawsachun Coca, they tried to stop me. Three helicopters operating, military and police. Fortunately, we were saved, though they shot at us from the air. We barely made it out. The driver was injured.

#Evo Morales

Two cars were totally destroyed. They hit the tires, they changed the tires, they wanted to cross us. I said to myself, as long as I rest in peace, life saved me. But here, it is programmed with many problems, people are concentrated, right? But there they said, after three days, I said, it doesn't matter, I don't want the vigil here. The first thousand companions a day take turns permanently from the agrarian unions. I don't want them to detain me. No. No. Mandate from the bases. We have to take care. It's already been more than a year. With October, it will be two years. They can't

understand how. Yesterday they were in the meeting. Sign. Now they are improving because there is another attempt at detention.

Three helicopters. October 27, 2024, in that operation to detain or to kill Evo. We filed a complaint with the Prosecutor's Office during Lucho Arce's government, and there's no one being investigated for the shootings. I can't understand that. Twice, nothing. Well. I asked, they told me one helicopter was piloted by a Colombian. I said, I have colleagues, they were my deans, they were my pilots in the Bolivian Air Force. Why could a Colombian be flying a State helicopter, from the Bolivian Air Force? And he said the police were hired. Well, perhaps the police sent the armed forces.

A little time passes, and they tell me that that Colombian was CIA. Cross-checking of information confirmed it. He's still flying a helicopter to carry out detentions. So, there's a lot of awareness here. I feel good. In past weeks, I had some health problems. I got better, I'm doing very well. There's a lot of commitment in the region. Now, the youth have to identify the internal and external enemies. The internal enemies for me are the right-wing forces in each country. External ones are agents of the empire, the recipes of capitalism. Right? Like... like... both countries have been governed by the transnationals—privatizations, health, education. Thank you for this contact and for this interview.

#Oscar Leon

We thank you very much for your time, Mr. Former President. We're following what happens and we wish the best to the Bolivian people and to you.

#Evo Morales

Thank you, thank you. A big hug. See you soon.