



Reporting Period: 9 to 25 November 2019

## Highlights

- After serious questionings to the integrity of the results of the presidential elections held in Bolivia on 20 October, demonstrations and violent clashes erupted throughout the country. On 10 November, the President and Vice President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and the President and the First Vice President of Senate resigned. The second Vice President, Jeanine Añez, assumed on 12 November the Presidency of the Senate and the Presidency of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for a transition period before calling new elections.
- During the following days, protests escalated into broader demonstrations and strikes. Barricades, and violent clashes between citizens, the police and Armed Forces, erupted throughout the country, but with higher intensity in main cities such as La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba, Sacaba, Punata, Montero, Warnes and Yapacani. Vandalism included burning of private homes, public offices, police modules, and 64 public transport buses.
- About 960,000 children have been exposed to violence and social conflict, impacting their emotional wellbeing. At least 21 children and adolescents have been injured during clashes. Two adolescents remain in detention from a total of 47 arrested during confrontations. Approximately 5,350 vulnerable children have been at risk of food, water and medicine shortage; out of them, 1,350<sup>1</sup> have been exposed to violence in the streets.
- Main cities have been under siege by supporters of the MAS (former ruling party), limiting the provision of food, medicine and fuel.
- On November 23, the points of the agreement reached at the end of the dialogue that took place in recent weeks were presented. It was requested to UN in Bolivia to increase the activities to reach the most vulnerable populations and to contribute to a peaceful resolution of the crisis and a transparent, credible, and inclusive electoral process.
- On 24 November, a special law for new elections was enacted, and an agreement was reached for a law on “guaranties” for politicians and social leaders who feel persecuted. Blockades are being lifted gradually, and fuel and food are starting to reach main cities. There are still some sectors that do not endorse the agreements, and even though a sense of normalcy is coming back to the country, the situation is still fragile.
- With UNICEF's support, 33 Children's Welfare Offices receive technical assistance to recover lost data and case management information, elaborate contingency plans and strengthen their resilience capacities.
- Guidance materials for parents were disseminated to ensure learning continuity while some schools remained closed, as well as a teacher's manual to provide psychosocial support activities as schools reopen.
- Through UNICEF-supported activities, around 50,000 children received care and emotional support from family members, who received information through messages in Spanish, Quechua and Aymara languages, and around 100,000 people are informed about the risks of involving children in political demonstrations. In addition, 56 Venezuelan child migrants and their families receive emotional support and basic needs.
- A psychosocial support guide was developed for families with young children affected by social conflicts, which includes orientations on care, support, and playing activities.

# Bolivia

## Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1

unicef   
para cada niño

## Situation in Numbers



**21**  
children and adolescents  
injured during conflicts



**804**  
people injured during  
conflicts



**33**  
People died during  
conflicts



**53**  
people currently  
detained from a total of  
**1511** initially arrested

**2**  
adolescents currently  
detained from a total of  
**47** initially arrested  
(Fiscalía General del  
Estado)

Source: Ombudsman's Office, 'Afectación a derechos en conflicto elecciones 2019', accessed on 21 November 2019.  
<https://www.defensoria.gob.bo/contenido/afectacion-a-derechos-en-conflicto-elecciones-2019>

## Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

On 9 November, different police units in the country started a mutiny defending citizens from attacks and vandalism in the main cities (La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba and around Santa Cruz). Most of the police units in the country and the armed forces announced that they were united and would not fight civilians. The President, on the other hand, called for urgent dialogue with the most relevant political parties and invited the UN and the Church to participate. The political parties declined the call.

In the aftermath of the OAS's report<sup>1</sup> - which questioned the integrity of the results of the election on 20 October - on 10 November, President Evo Morales declared that new elections would be held, and the Country's electoral council replaced. However, just hours later, the president resigned and sought political asylum in Mexico. He left the Country on 11 November with Vice President Alvaro Garcia and the Minister of Health Gabriela Montaña. Most members of the Ministerial Cabinet resigned, including some sub-national authorities (departmental governors and municipal mayors), representatives in the Legislative Assembly (among them the President and the first Vice President of the Senate and the President of the Chamber of Deputies) and authorities responsible for state enterprises.

After the resignation of the President, the second Vice President of Senate, Jeanine Añez, assumed the Presidency of the senate camera, and in this faculty the Presidency of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for a transition period before calling new elections.

Protests triggered by the establishment of the interim government, led by groups related to the MAS party, especially in territories that have a high number of supporters, such as the city of El Alto and the departments of Cochabamba and Oruro. Ten days after the installation of the new transition government, two events stand out due to the large number of deaths and injuries causing consternation.

Negotiations initiated between the new government and the opposition for calling new elections generated intense political activity between the new government and the MAS assembly members, and the parties that participated in the annulled elections.

Main cities have been under siege, preventing the entry of food and gasoline, as a response to the new political situation. The availability of some basic products decreased mainly in La Paz and El Alto, so the population reacted stocking food, generating speculation, and increases in the prices of various consumer products.

UNICEF is in regular contact with Child Protection partners to monitor the situation. As of 21 November, the impact of conflict on children is as follows:

- About 960,000 children have been exposed to violence and social conflict, impacting their emotional wellbeing<sup>2</sup>. At least 21 children and adolescents have been injured during clashes.<sup>3</sup>
- Approximately 5,350 vulnerable children<sup>4</sup> are at risk of food, water and medicine shortage; out of them, 1,350<sup>5</sup> are particularly exposed to abuse and violence in the streets.
- Four Children Welfare Offices (DNA) have been destroyed, leaving about 313,000 children without protection services.
- Two adolescents remain in detention from a total of 47 arrested during confrontations.
- The risk for girls to be exploited in commercial sexual violence is increasing due to police withdrawal from exploitation sites.

With regards to access to education, a total of 1,393 schools have been closed for different periods of time due to security risks, such as confrontations or blockades, or due to lack of transportations means, in particular in certain areas of La Paz, Cochabamba, Potosi, Sucre and Santa Cruz. As a result, education continuity was compromised, affecting around 1 million pre-school, primary and secondary school-age children. Schooling has resumed since the week of 18 November, except in the department of La Paz and some areas within the department of Cochabamba. A new Education Minister was appointed on 18 November, and announced that the school year will be maintained, with the necessary reorganization of the school calendar in various education districts.

Several schools were directly affected by violence. On 11 November, a major school in Cochabamba was attacked by conflicting parties, students were evacuated, and the school infrastructure suffered damages. On 15 November, two preschools in the city center of La Paz were affected by dynamite explosions which broke all the windows. No children or teachers were present in the school during the event.

With regards to Early Childhood Development (ECD) Services, activities were suspended in 118 child care centers (78 in El Alto and 40 in La Paz), leaving 4,463 children without access to these services.

---

<sup>1</sup> Organization of American States (OAS), Secretariat for Strengthening of Democracy (SSD), Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO), 'Electoral integrity analysis - General Elections in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, October 20, 2019. Preliminary findings. Report to the General Secretariat', 10 November 2019, <<http://www.oas.org/documents/eng/press/Electoral-Integrity-Analysis-Bolivia2019.pdf>>.

<sup>2</sup> This is an estimation based on the number of children and adolescents living in the most affected areas during the conflict.

<sup>3</sup> Ombudsman's Office, 'Afectación a derechos en conflicto elecciones 2019', <<https://www.defensoria.gob.bo/contenido/afectacion-a-derechos-en-conflicto-elecciones-2019>>, accessed 21 November 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Including children in institutional care and adolescents in conflict with the law in remedial homes.

<sup>5</sup> Migrant children from Venezuela and Children in street situation.

The provision of essential health care services continues throughout the country. Nonetheless, in conflict zones in Cochabamba (Chapare) and El Alto (Senkata), there is a lack of supplies, difficulties for the personnel to reach the health units, and limitations to transfer patients by ambulance, due to fuel shortages and road blockages.

On November 23, representatives of the UN Nations, the Episcopal Conference, and the European Union presented the points of the agreement reached at the end of the dialogue that took place in recent weeks. Commitments include working through dialogue and support efforts to prevent and overcome conflict, particularly in areas of the country most affected by violence. It was also decided to increase the activities of the United Nations in Bolivia, to reach the most vulnerable populations, and to contribute for a peaceful resolution of the crisis and a transparent, credible and inclusive electoral process.

On November 24, a special law for new elections was enacted, and an agreement was reached for a law on “guaranties” for politicians and social leaders who feel persecuted. Blockades are being lifted progressively, and fuel and food are finally reaching the main cities. There are still some sectors that do not endorse the agreements, and even though a sense of normalcy is coming back to the country, the situation is still fragile.

## Summary Analysis of Programme Response

### Child Protection

UNICEF is in regular contact with counterparts to provide technical support and advice, as well as to monitor the situation of children on the ground. Main results of UNICEF support include:

- **195 children in 6 care homes** affected by conflicts have received emergency assistance. **43 children** in 2 care homes in La Paz and Cochabamba were evacuated to safer locations. **2,180 children** of 69 care homes receive emotional support and their caregivers are better prepared to respond to possible emergencies. Additionally, UNICEF has mobilized the support of the Ombudsman Office to ensure that one care home in La Paz- in difficulties to transport food due to blockages – has adequate and regular capacity to access markets. UNICEF also provided guidance to protect children in two care homes affected by tear gas and conflict in Cochabamba and another two in La Paz. UNICEF regularly monitors the situation of 90 care homes in La Paz and Cochabamba.
- Around **50,000 children** receive better care and emotional support from family members, who received information through messages in Spanish, Quechua and Aimara, and around **100,000 people** are informed about the risks of children’s participation in demonstrations and mobilizations
- **56 Venezuelan child migrants** and their families in La Paz receive emotional support and basic needs (food, medicines, clothing, etc.).
- **1,196 adolescents** in conflict with law in Santa Cruz, La Paz and Cochabamba receive emotional support and legal service to ensure the continuity of their legal processes<sup>6</sup>.
- **1,343 children in street situations** (La Paz, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz and El Alto) receive emotional support and assistance through preventive actions carried out by 43 educators trained by UNICEF. Additionally, UNICEF has provided technical assistance and coordinated with municipal authorities to ensure prompt emergency intervention to 286 children and adolescents affected by tear gas and fighting.
- **33 DNA** received technical assistance to respond to conflict situations and preserve the continuity of open cases (502 cases of children with and without imputation, loss, legal status, and cases of violence due to social conflict).

To respond to the unconfirmed reports of children and adolescents participating in demonstrations, UNICEF continues disseminating information on how to protect children and adolescents from violence, as well as how to provide basic psychosocial support at home. UNICEF continue monitoring the number and situation of adolescents arrested during mobilizations and confrontations, promoting the application of socio-educational measures in freedom, respect for the minimum age of criminal responsibility, and procedural guarantees.

UNICEF is monitoring the situation of 55 families and 141 children and adolescents who have left the San Pedro prison early in 2019. They are doing somehow well, although some of the most precarious families are struggling to provide to their children on daily basis. UNICEF’s partner is providing small cash grants to get the families through this crisis. Families are also provided with important information and guidance to protect their children from the conflict. UNICEF has conducted a rapid assessment on land transport terminals in El Alto, La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. No family was found stranded or staying overnight in the terminals.

### Education

To respond to the closing of almost 1,400 schools, affecting over 1 million children throughout the country, UNICEF conducted the following actions:

- Production and dissemination of a **guide for parents to ensure education continuity at home** while children cannot go to school. The guide provides general recommendations on maintaining an education routine, as well as specific tips according to children’s education level and what activities to prioritize for preschool, primary and secondary school age children.

---

<sup>6</sup> Due to instability and restriction of movement there have been delays in the legal administrative processes of the adolescents in conflict with law.

- Production and dissemination of a **handbook for teachers to restart schooling once security allows**. The handbook emphasizes the importance of providing psychosocial support to children, as well as which subject matters to prioritize to complete the school year, and tips to engage parents and the education continuity in supporting students in the current context.

### WASH, Health, ECD

Water supply across the country has not been affected. Nonetheless, considering the potential impacts for the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector, UNICEF has been monitoring water services and provide technical assistance to improve the operation of the information system of the AAPS (National authority for the regulation of water supply and sanitation), ensuring efficient and timely reports from the nine EPSAS (National Enterprise for Water provision) at the departmental level. UNICEF is monitoring the availability of essential health supplies in Health Centers located in affected areas.

In ECD, in coordination with municipal technicians, a psycho-support guide has been developed for families affected by social conflicts, this guide has orientations for caregivers to develop affective support and play activities, this guide is currently being applied by educators and will be disseminated via virtual media in animated versions.

### Partnerships

UNICEF produced two informative briefs on the impact of the crisis on children and adolescents and UNICEF's response targeting [Natcoms](#) and [Bilateral donors](#).

### Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

The UNFPA Representative continues acting as Resident Coordinator. An interagency task force was organized and met regularly for conducting a situation analysis, coordinating the response, and strengthening the role of the UN system on political management advice, investigation of violent events and possible human rights violations, electoral assistance, as well as to contribute to the Peacebuilding process in the country.

A personal envoy of the UN General Secretary has been conducting a mission in Bolivia since the 14 November to facilitate the dialogue with the transition government, and to assess opportunities to support the government transition and the continuity of the UN System mandate in line with the UNDAF framework for 2018-2022.

Ever since the beginning of the crisis, UNICEF put underway a contingency plan to respond to children's immediate needs in the most affected municipalities (La Paz, Cochabamba, and El Alto). Priority actions include restore the child protection services, provide psychosocial support to children and adolescents affected by the conflict, and to ensure education continuity and essential services for the most vulnerable children and adolescents. UNICEF continues contributing to the UN's efforts to promote peace, human rights, and democracy in Bolivia and scaling up actions in the Country Programme to positioning children and adolescents' rights as a foundation for the country's sustainable development.

### External Media

On 21 October, UNICEF Bolivia continue broadcasting, via social and traditional media, messages in Spanish, Quechua and Aymara related to the importance of protecting children and adolescents during social conflicts. The content of the messages is focused on:

- Preventing the participation of children in demonstrations that can turn violent.
- Equipping parents and caregivers with tips to explain and talk about the situation with children.
- Informing the public about the law in Bolivia that punishes the use of children for political purposes.

The guide for parents to ensure education continuity at home was broadcasted via social and traditional media.

A press release<sup>7</sup> with audio materials was disseminated, calling for the protection of children in the context of demonstrations.

Who to contact for further information: [Rafael Ramirez](#)  
Representative  
Bolivia Country Office  
Tel: +591 72061615  
Email: [raramirez@unicef.org](mailto:raramirez@unicef.org)

[Maria Elena Ubeda](#)  
Deputy Representative  
Bolivia Country Office  
Tel: +591 72092223  
Email: [meubeda@unicef.org](mailto:meubeda@unicef.org)

[Irma Peredo](#)  
WASH Specialist and Emergency  
Focal Point  
Bolivia Country Office  
Tel: +591 77296253  
Email: [iperedo@unicef.org](mailto:iperedo@unicef.org)

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF Bolivia, 'UNICEF insta a proteger a niños, niñas y adolescentes de las protestas', Press Release, 22 October 2019, <[https://www.unicef.org/bolivia/media\\_39757.html](https://www.unicef.org/bolivia/media_39757.html)>.