

THE MASSACRE AT THE “LAS AMÉRICAS” HOTEL

¿A PLOT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF EVO MORALES?

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“The research done by journalist Martínez covers the contradictions in the official version of what occurred, the information the government avoided making public, and irregularities in the proceedings, and presents a series of conclusions based on evidence, indicating that *It is probable that there was manipulation by the government in the Rozsa case, and that the massacre can be explained as a virtual staging to cover up and justify a self-coup by Evo Morales.*

Emilio Martínez explains that *journalism is not a descriptive technique, rather the art of understanding* and as such should help us compile dispersed information in order to better understand reality. He adds that his work is based on both synthesis and analysis of the *flood of information* generated by the controversial police operation that took place on April 16th, under personal orders from Evo Morales”.

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The investigation of the police operation that took place under direct orders from President Evo Morales, in which three people were shot to death, is turning up more and more evidence of probable connections between high-ranking government officials and members of the Rozsa group.

Contradictions in the official version, unreliable witnesses, testimonies given under torture, and multiple irregularities by the Public Prosecutor's Office are part of the virtual staging with which the Bolivian government sought to overthrow members of the opposition in Santa Cruz, at a time when the country was beginning electoral campaigns.

1. CONTRADICTIONS IN THE OFFICIAL VERSION

1.1. The massacre at the “Las Américas” Hotel

The “official version” presented by government spokespersons indicates that at dawn on the 16th of April, a group of elite police personnel entered the Las Américas Hotel in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, and were involved in a shootout with a group of “terrorists” who had resisted arrest by detonating explosives and firing weapons.

As a result of this confrontation, Eduardo Rosza Flores (Hungarian-Bolivian), Árpád Magyarosi (Rumanian) and Michael Dwyer (Irish), were shot and killed. Mario Tadic (Bolivian-Croatian) and Elod Toaso (Hungarian) were detained and taken to the city of La Paz.

President Evo Morales himself affirmed this hours later at the ALBA Summit in Venezuela, stating “I was told this morning that there has been a shootout in which three foreigners were killed and two detained. (...) They resisted by shooting and setting off a bomb. They resisted”. Morales added that the operation took place under his direct instructions “I gave the order before traveling”.

According to the President and other government spokespersons, the group was formed by “foreign mercenaries” brought to Bolivia by groups of businesspeople from the “fascist oligarchy of the ultra-right” of the department of Santa Cruz in order to kill Evo Morales and “take power”.

1.2. The evidence belies the government

However, the initial Bolivian government version began to fall apart quickly. During a televised interview the national police commander, Víctor Hugo Escobar, acknowledged that the élite group had used an explosive devise to enter the hotel rooms, contradicting prior police

reports that stated the executed men had detonated a bomb from inside one of the rooms.

Later, several investigations revealed evidence that the three dead had been executed in their hotel room, with no exchange of fire. Photos, which were provided to television stations UNO and PAT, show semi-naked, disarmed bodies, suggesting the executed men had been taken by surprise and did not defend themselves.

According to the insurance company investigators' report, in room 458 in which Eduardo Rozsa was found, there were 10 bullet holes around the area where his body lay. Not one in the door or in the hallway. Room 457 had three bullet holes in the wall near the bed where Árpád Magyarosi died. And in room 456, where Michael Dwyer died, there was only one bullet hole. In room 455 there were eight bullet holes, six in the wall near the bed, one at the height of the television, and another in a framed picture. In room 454 there was blood on the floor and on the door. And in room 453 the elite police found no guests, yet they shot at the bathroom.

The insurance report revealed that there were no bullet holes to suggest the executed men had responded to the shots fired by the police group. The Las Américas Hotel and several members of the Congressional Multi-Party Commission that investigated the case came to the same conclusions. Congressman Pablo Banegas clearly indicated that "there was no crossfire, it was a direct execution".

Everything indicates that Rozsa, Magyarosi and Dwyer were victims of an extrajudicial execution. Should this be proven, Evo Morales could be found to be directly responsible, according to his own confession that he ordered the operative to take place. The fact that the violent incursion into the hotel was carried out by members of the Unidad Táctica de Operaciones Policiales (UTOP, Tactical Police Operations Unit) and the Delta Group should be taken into account. The latter has a past reputation for being "quick to pull the trigger". Such is the case with the deaths of five people in Santa Cruz in mid-2008, a well-known case that is still going through the justice system and in which there has also been talk of executions.

Far from being a "flagrant assault", as the government claims, the actions taken at the Las Américas Hotel were part of a precise Cuban-style operation. The hotel's closed-circuit cameras were tampered with and someone accessed the hotel's computerized system, erasing all that had been taped as of Tuesday the 14th, the day on which the foreigners arrived at the hotel. They also eliminated Internet records, all without a court order.

An important detail to take into account is that the national police commander stated that his officers entered “the 5 rooms”. However, the insurance report recorded shots had been fired in 6 rooms.

During the night, after the bodies had lain in the hotel rooms for some 15 hours under absolute secrecy, the police took them to the morgue. The report prepared by the IDIF (Instituto de Investigaciones Forenses, Forensic Research Institute) was conclusive and contradicted the bullet work-up done by the police themselves to justify their actions. According to the forensic report, the victims had bullet wounds with an up-to-down trajectory, in some cases there were signs that they had been shot from a point blank range, and another had been shot in the back. These facts once again suggest a virtual execution.

1.3. A very convenient “arsenal”

Immediately after the assault at the Las Américas Hotel, the police announced that they had confiscated an arsenal of rifles and explosives at one of the stands used by the Cooperativa de Teléfonos de Santa Cruz (COTAS, Santa Cruz Telephone Cooperative) at the Feria de Exposición trade fair site.

Police showed the armaments to TV journalists on camera and what could be seen were several old rifles from the Chaco War and rifles from the Second World War. Congressman Mario Cronenbold stated that these weapons “look very similar to” the weapons that had been confiscated by the police during a previous operation in 2008. A police colonel ironically added that this handful of obsolete weapons could not seriously be considered an arsenal.

The Vice Minister of Autonomy Saúl Ávalos requested the administrative offices of COTAS be intervened and other public officials announced that criminal proceedings would be initiated against the directors of the institution, who fully denied any relationship with the weapons.

President Evo Morales’ government has been eyeing the public works and services cooperatives in Santa Cruz for quite some time and the fear is that this assault will be used as an excuse to nationalize them.

1.4. The strange “Rozsa” group

Throughout the following days the government repeated that the executed men and detainees were “mercenaries for the extreme right”, something that is questionable if one simply examines Eduardo Rozsa’s ideological profile. Born in Santa Cruz in 1960, his father was Jorge Roszas, a Hungarian immigrant and descendent of Jews. He was one of the main promoters of the arts and theater in this department.

After the fall of the leftist Torres regimen, his family was exiled to Chile but their arrival coincided with the last year of Allende's government and once again they had to leave, so they returned to Hungary. There Eduardo Rozsa entered a military school, always intending to return to Latin America. "I won't deny it; back then the figure of the Che, the truncated guerrilla and the need to continue what they hadn't been able to successfully finish, shone in my eyes", Rozsa himself said once during an interview.

He continued with tactical guerrilla training at the Félix Dzerzhinski Academy in the Soviet Union, a true Communist school. Upon returning to Hungary he became a part of the intelligence service and met the famous terrorist Ilich Ramírez Sánchez, alias Carlos, or El Chacal. After this he studied comparative literature, linguistics and political science in Bucharest and Moscow.

He worked for the Cuban news agency Prensa Latina, the principal propagandist organ of the Fidel Castro regimen and then worked as a correspondent for the La Vanguardia newspaper of Barcelona and the BBC. As an envoy of the latter, he went to Croatia to cover the Balkan War, but somehow he ended up taking up arms in the volunteer foreigner brigades. There he was awarded honors and was also accused of killing a Swiss photographer. This experience was reflected in the movie "Chico", played by Rozsa himself. His relatives indicate that he arrived in Bolivia to film an autobiography as a continuation of "Chico" and that some scenes were also to be filmed in Santiago de Chile.

His blog reflects his motley beliefs: even though he confesses to being disenchanted with "royal socialism" he assures that Hugo Chavez "brings fresh air to Latin America". A convert to Islam, he arduously defends the Palestine cause and Iran, whose president Ahmadinejad is a close ally of the Venezuelan president and Evo Morales himself. His friend, the famous ultra-leftist terrorist Ilich Ramírez, laments Rozsa's death on a website and denies that this was a "hired assassin of the extreme right".

The remaining members of the group have a less ideological profile, although the young musician Árpád Magyarosi seems to have sympathized with the nationalist movement of the Hungarian minority in Romania. Michael Dwyer, on the other hand, had experience as a professional bodyguard and had worked with a Shell risk control group in Kuwait. His relatives affirm that he had traveled to Bolivia at the beginning of November 2008 to take a body guarding course along with 15 other people.

Around the same time Elod Toaso (now detained) had arrived in Santa Cruz de la Sierra. A systems expert, as he states, he came to Bolivia in

response to a job offer at a bank in the area of information systems. Mario Tadic is a Bolivian of Croatian descent who participated in the Balkan War.

Finally, the investigations revealed the names of two additional alleged members of the group whose whereabouts are unknown: Hungarians Tibor Révész and Gábor Dudog. The first had been an instructor at the body guarding course while Dudog was another of the students. Both had returned to their countries at the end of March 2009.

Photographs owned by the executed men and detainees were found and show that they took part in an intense nightlife in Santa Cruz de la Sierra and this seems to have been their main occupation for several months. This includes instant photographs taken at pubs and discothèques as well as photos in which they posed with weapons. How can these attitudes, that don't fit the profile of a subversive group (which instead would have sought to keep a low profile), be explained?

1.5. ¿Terrorism or self-defense?

The “official version” presented by Evo Morales’ government, indicated, as stated before, that the group led by Eduardo Rozsa was a “terrorist” group and that its main objective was “magnicide” (the assassination of a great political figure). Rozsa’s own version, through an interview that he had previously taped and left with a Hungarian Television station (MTV) in September 2008, contradicts these statements.

The interview, done by Andras Kepes, had been kept under lock and key by order of Eduardo Rozsa who had asked him not to broadcast it “unless a fatality occurred”. Just a few days after the massacre in the Las Américas Hotel, Hungarian Television aired it. In it he declares, “I’ve been called upon to organize defense for the city and province of Santa Cruz (...) I am not going to the Bolivian jungle to play Che Guevara (...) I am not going there to attack La Paz, nor to help the organization attack the capital or overthrow the president (...) A defense, a resistance must be organized (...) The situation is worsening and there is fear there will be violence in the country (...) there is fear the government will attack the province”.

Rozsa adds that his objective would be to create a “show of force” so that the government would stop harassing Santa Cruz, remembering that “the militia members didn’t march with flags or sticks, they marched with weapons”. With these words he was referring to the “march by indigenous people” promoted by organizations that support Evo Morales, and possibly also supported by the Vice Ministry of Coordination with the Social

Movements, which threatened to provoke violence in Santa Cruz de la Sierra at the end of September 2008¹.

There were approximately 15,000 marchers and many of them were carrying weapons and also had covered their faces with ski masks. A Departmental Public Prosecutor's Office commission attempted to dialogue with them and requested they turn over their weapons, but they brutally attacked the prosecutors and a Public Ministry driver was seriously injured in one eye.

Eduardo Rozsa declared that his group wanted to demonstrate that "if Santa Cruz isn't given more autonomy, if peaceful coexistence can't be achieved, then we'll declare independence and create a new country".

An analysis of the interview indicates that neither magnicide nor a takeover were part of his group's plans and their objectives could not be qualified as "terrorist". It would be more adequate to say that what was being projected was a type of "self-defense" to counter the government party's shock troops after repeated threats that had Santa Cruz in a state of distress.

After the interview was broadcast, government propaganda subtly changed from an accusation of "magnicide" to one of "separatism", although without fully ruling out the first. It should be noted that Hungarian citizens who reside in Bolivia have questioned the translation of the interview, which was done in Venezuela, and indicate that "Rozsa's statements were not so forceful".

It is also clear from Eduardo Rozsa's statements that eventual "separatism" was, rather, a sort of "Plan B" which could be put into action if Evo Morales' government continued to promote violence and refuse to accept the results of the autonomy referendums of the region.

Security experts, such as former departmental police commanders Freddy Soruco and Wilfredo Torrico, agreed and indicated that the Rozsa group could not be qualified as a terrorist organization. Both stated that in order to be qualified as such, it would have had to have had certain characteristics that it did not have.

1.6. The attempt against Cardinal Terrazas

The government also accused the executed men and detainees of being responsible for an attempt, using explosives, that caused damage to the

¹ See the book *X2: lo que Unasur no dijo* by this author. Ediciones Día a Día, Santa Cruz 2009.

entry gate at the residence of Cardinal Julio Terrazas, which happened on the evening of the 14th to 15th of April. Once again numerous testimonies deflated this accusation. Hernán Rosel, the manager of the Las Américas Hotel, reported that the accused had not left their rooms that evening. He added that “it is impossible for them to have left without being seen. And for security reasons, everything is recorded”.

The police presented as proof a vehicle that had been used by the Rozsa group, a Hundai Accent, which they stated had been used when the explosives were being put into place. However, the security guard that works across the street from the Cardinal’s house indicated that the suspect vehicle was a Toyota Starlet.

It is important to note that Cardinal Terrazas has publicly criticized the government on various occasions and he has been the subject of virulent verbal attacks by Evo Morales. The Catholic Church has suffered numerous aggressions during the past three years. Government-supporting shock troops entered the San Francisco church in the city of La Paz, overtook a church property in Copacabana, and insulted and threatened Monsignor Tito Solari, the Archbishop of Cochabamba.

The attempt against the Cardinal’s residence generated a wave of criticism against the government throughout the country, and had widespread international repercussions, which could have resulted in the search for a “scapegoat”.

After the massacre at the Las Américas Hotel the government claimed the Rozsa group was responsible not only for the attempt on the Cardinal, but also for other similar actions that had taken place over the past few years that have not been clarified by the police. Among these are the detonation of explosives at the front of the home of Saúl Ávalos; at the CEJIS (Centro de Estudios Jurídicos y Sociales, Center for Legal and Social Studies), a powerful NGO that is part of the governmental framework; at the patio of the Comité Pro Santa Cruz (Pro Santa Cruz Committee), at the radio station of senator Guido Guardia, a dissident who has been expelled from the government’s political party.

Both Guido Guardia and the Comité Pro Santa Cruz have rejected this official version, which instead of attributing these violent acts to hotheads from both sides as a result of the climate of polarization, blames the members of the Rozsa group for all of these events.

1.7. Airsoft terrorism

The recklessness with which high-ranking government officials make their accusations became evident when the Government Minister, Alfredo Rada, presented the press with “proof” to demonstrate the existence of “terrorist

cells” in Santa Cruz. The photographs Rada wielded showed a group of young people wearing camouflaged clothing and carrying what appeared to be weapons, in what could be perceived as a training field.

The accusation was once again deflated when the young people in the photographs went to various media outlets and the departmental Public Prosecutor’s Office to explain that they were members of a sports association that practices Airsoft, a war game similar to paintball. They explained that their group had existed for about four years and indicated that the photographs shown by the minister had been published by them on Facebook. They also showed their toy guns which have an orange-colored tip, according to international standards.

Once the photographs shown by Minister Rada had been examined, it was proven that the alleged weapons shown in the images did have the orange tip. However, the Government Minister obstinately insisted that the young people would be taken to the city of La Paz to make statements and affirmed that the photographs had been delivered to him by government security organisms.

Finally, in view of the ridiculous evidence, Alfredo Rada went silent for several days and did not speak of this accusation again. In the meantime, members of congress were categorically forbidden from using Facebook².

2. FACTS THAT THE GOVERNMENT CONCEALED

2.1. The president’s pilot and Venezuelan military personnel

The progressive revelation of facts connected to the massacre at the Las Américas Hotel has made a series of elements public that the government had apparently had tried to conceal from Bolivian and international opinion. These are facts that, when assembled in this hard-to-solve puzzle, could point to a link between members of the Rozsa group and high-ranking government officials.

One of these facts was uncovered during press investigations and was confirmed by hotel managers. Afterward, the government had no choice but to admit it, although it did so while minimizing its importance: Evo Morales’ pilot and a group of Venezuela military personnel assigned to the presidential helicopter had lodged at the Las Américas Hotel at the same time as the alleged “terrorists” between April 13 and 15, and had left one day prior to the operative. It should be noted that their stay included the night on which the attempt on the Cardinal’s house took place.

² See the note by the author titled *Antiterrorismo cantinflasco*. El Deber newspaper and other media.

They are aviation major Pastor Durán, who is Bolivian, and the following Venezuelan military personnel: captain José Ordaz, Lieutenant José Garrido Salcedo, and technicians Alirio Ortega and Daniel Sánchez. The head of the Casa Militar (Military House), General Ramiro Orellana, confirmed that the five are assigned to transport President Evo Morales on his Superpuma helicopter.

They occupied rooms 222 and 343 on the third floor, below the alleged “subversives”. Tropical Tours travel agency made the reservation and explained that the Venezuelan Embassy had requested they do so. What draws the most attention is that the Department of the Interior has confirmed that it knew of the existence of an alleged “terrorist cell” as far back as February 2nd. Why then did it not warn the presidential transportation team of the presence of “dangerous assassins”?

Even more alarming is the thesis of journalist Carlos Valverde of the TV program “Sin Letra Chica” who asks: “The president’s pilot was here and then he wasn’t here when the events occurred? Did he travel with the president or not? Was the president in Santa Cruz when all of this happened? (...) the president’s security corps left La Paz at 2:00 a.m. on the morning of the 16th of April and the president of the republic arrived at the airport of Maiquetía (Venezuela) at 10:30 the same morning (...) which causes me to conclude that the president of the republic was not informed in-flight of the operation that took place, but that he was in Bolivia when it happened and left from Santa Cruz after the operation took place”.

2.2. The Clavijo enigma

Another element detected by journalists was the presence at the hotel of Luis Norberto Clavijo Castro, director of the Interior Regimen, that is to say, the third from the top in Department of the Interior hierarchy, who stayed in room 453 beginning on the 15th of April, next door to the five alleged “terrorists”.

Once again, after these revelations by the press and confirmation by hotel management, government authorities were forced to make it public and acknowledge this fact.

The Government Vice Minister, Marcos Farfán, alleged that Clavijo had been sent as a spy: “He was ordered to go to the city of Santa Cruz on the 15th of April and to check in at the Las Américas Hotel in order to verify if the Eduardo Rozsa group was lodging there. Once he had completed his task of verifying this, and in order to avoid making any errors after his work had been completed, he left the hotel”.

According to Farfán, Luis Clavijo had for some time been working in intelligence, investigation, public order, and State security. What the Government Vice Minister did not explain is why there is a bullet hole in the bathroom of room 453 where Clavijo stayed. This sixth room was omitted from the national police commander's statements.

Clavijo didn't advise police forces that there was no one in that room? Or did things take place differently than the authorities are reporting? Wasn't there a great number of government officials lodged at this hotel all at the same time?

2.3. The Vice President's brother

A few days after the massacre the government detained two members of the Unión Juvenil Cruceñista (Santa Cruz Youth Union), Alcides Mendoza and Juan Carlos Gueder, accusing them of being a part of the Eduardo Rozsa "terrorist cell". After being taken to La Paz under subhuman conditions, the most surprising thing was the revelation that their defense attorney would be Denver Pedraza, a known militant of the MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo, the government's political party) and a fervent supporter of Evo Morales.

But even more surprising were Dr. Pedraza's statements when he announced that he had proof that high-ranking government officials were linked to the Rozsa group and he stated that on the following day he would make them public. The next day he did not reveal anything but, suggestively, his defendants were released from jail and given house arrest. Had a deal been made?

Pedraza once again spoke up a little later to state that the government and even Raúl García Linera, brother of the Vice President and also a former member of the Ejército Guerrillero Túpac Katari (EGTK, Tupac Katari Guerrilla Army) had full knowledge of arms trafficking by the alleged irregular group in Santa Cruz.

The attorney added that the Vice Presidency had been paying his flights to go to La Paz and stated that he would like them "to ask Raúl García Linera and the man who made others call him Clavijo about that". He insisted that Raúl García Linera knew of "many meetings, phone bills, and airline tickets paid for" and about the activities of the "terrorists".

"Clavijo worked with García Linera. You go and find Pony, the driver who drove his white vehicle and you'll see them going out every day with them", he affirmed. He also indicated that the District Attorney's office "should form a commission of prosecutors because the proceedings are not being carried out well".

As if this weren't enough, Denver Pedraza commented that arms trafficking was done from Brazil, passing through rural properties in Beni, and that among the heads of the organization that carried out logistics was someone whose last name was Farfán.

Pedraza headed the Dirección de Bienes Incautados (DIRCABI, Government Office of Confiscated Goods) in Santa Cruz during the current governmental period. He had to leave his job after a series of disputes between factions of the MAS party. It is probable that this underground battle within the government's party could explain some of the most complex angles of the Rozsa case.

At the end of May the attorney for the Department of the Interior, Boris Villegas, officially requested prosecutor Soza to order the apprehension of Denver Pedraza and charge him with "obstructing the investigation".

2.4. "Commander Gonzalo"

The first version that spoke of a connection between the government and the executed men in the massacre at the Las Américas Hotel was provided by the newspaper La Razón, which mentioned a document received by its newsroom on April 22nd, signed by a "Commander Gonzalo". The document ensured that the Government's security had contacted Eduardo Rozsa in Spain in August of 2008.

The document was sent by fax from the phone number 4131752, which belongs to an Entel phone calling center. The note said that "the Santa Cruz plan was mounted by Government security organisms, headed by the Vice President and Minister Juan Ramón Quintana".

It added that "since they killed them, the plan is reinforced" and that "in addition, there weren't five, there were seven of us at the Las Américas Hotel, and two of us are in Cochabamba".

The next day the Department of the Interior reported that two members of the "terrorist cell" had gotten away and were fugitives. Soon afterward their names were said to be Tibor Révész and Gábor Dudog.

Still, doubt remains about three additional people. Names the government has not mentioned, but which journalist Carlos Valverde found on hotel records, show these people were lodged next to the others: the Slovenian Iván Pistovak, and Hungarians Ivor Reje and Tamas Lago Najis.

2.5. Online claims

Another similar claim circulates the Internet and is signed by the pseudonym Juan Morales. It was sent in from this email:

santacruz_denuncia@yahoo.com with the subject line “I’m sending you the name of the person who brought Rozsa over”, in a message sent to a group of female civic leaders from Santa Cruz.

The aforementioned email has the name of a person – which we abstain from reproducing since she made the claim anonymously – who is accused of having been the business partner of Marco Marino Diodato, a well-known case involving clandestine gambling machines. “Juan Morales” adds that this person “from the MAS government brought Rozsa over deceiving him and telling him that he supported autonomy and was a “cruceño” at heart”. She continues by affirming that the accused “is the ‘autonomist’ who invested government money so that Rozsa and his people could be at a 5-star hotel. Citizens should be told who is selling us out for money”.

The claimant also states that his objective, and that of others, was to open gambling halls using the government money and that they acted “only and exclusively for the money”, offering to “disarticulate and create convulsion in Santa Cruz under order from the MAS”, and to take actions to involve the main representatives of regional leadership. The email suggests that the group that participated in the doubtful operation was large: “The list of traitors is not short...”

It should be noted that in the recent past there have been several claims and versions in the press that connect or claim the Minister of the Presidency Juan Ramón Quintana and the former presidential delegate Gabriela Montaña are behind the lucrative business relating to the proliferation of gambling halls in Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

2.6. Nava Zurita’s memory stick

Although it happened nearly one year beforehand, it is important to remember the attempt made against the Unitel television station in Villamontes, Tarija using explosives. The author was identified as second lieutenant Peter Nava Zurita, a member of Evo Morales’ presidential guard.

It is important to mention this case because a memory stick was confiscated from Nava that contained a plan to take over the country, ending with an alleged magnicide. Nava Zurita was trained in Venezuela and had returned to Bolivia just one week before the attempt occurred. After just a few months, the government took him out of jail, returned his uniform, and awarded him honors.

It is symptomatic that many of the claims of “conspiracies” or “assassination attempts” against Evo Morales come from the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, and on several occasions he has said that “if the

oligarchy kills the Indian, they will be giving me a green light to intervene in Bolivia”.

Chávez’ statements seem too much like a deliberate and gradual construction of a *casus belli*, opening up legitimate questions about whether the only real risk of magnicide for Evo Morales isn’t, paradoxically, from his Venezuelan tutor³.

3. THE GOVERNMENT BLOCKS AN INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATION

3.1. Protests from Ireland, Croatia and Hungary

The tight secrecy kept by Bolivian authorities and the contradictions in the official version have motivated the governments of Ireland, Croatia and Hungary, to make complaints demanding precise information on the operation and questioning violations of the detainees’ human rights.

From Dublin, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ireland, Michael Martin, stated that his country “has the right” to know about the circumstances surrounding the young Irishman, Michael Dwyer. The government of Croatia has also demanded information on the execution and detention of Eduardo Rozsa and Mario Tadic, respectively.

The Hungarian government “cannot exclude” the possibility that those who were killed in the operation “were victims of internal political struggles”. The ambassador of Hungary to Argentina, Matyas Jozsa, traveled to La Paz and defended the right to be informed regarding the situation of Elod Toaso, who is imprisoned in the San Pedro Prison. The diplomat stated that it appeared to him Toaso “was far from being a terrorist” and that during his visit he was very frightened and confused. Matyas stated that the government did not give him any official information on the case, as it should according to international agreements, and that he was given simply a verbal report by the Minister of the Presidency. “They didn’t even communicate with us regarding the deaths”, he added.

“We are approaching the problem prudently and with caution. The Bolivian government took serious steps ... I hope it can justify its steps with evidence and we’ll see how the defense can cast doubt on that evidence (...) I think the police didn’t allow (the executed men) to take even one step. In a police intervention what counts is an apprehension”, he

³ See the note by the author, *El misterio del Superpuma*. La Estrella del Oriente newspaper and other media.

indicated, and then commented that Toaso had survived because he had thrown himself face down upon the floor when he heard shots being fired and the police burst into his room. The diplomat also placed doubt upon the translation of the interview done of Eduardo Rozsa on Hungarian television.

The British Embassy, which chairs the European Union in Bolivia pro-témpore, reported in a communiqué that “information was received from the Ambassador of Hungary, Matyas Jozsa, and the case will be followed up on”.

3.2. “I could prosecute them”

The international protests ended up provoking an irate reaction from Evo Morales, who insinuated that those governments could be implicated in the alleged attempt at magnicide against him: “If they are authorities, institutions from Croatia, Hungary and Ireland, they don’t have any authority to request an investigation of these people, who came here to attempt to assassinate the president.” Faithful to his authoritarian style, he even threatened them, perhaps thinking that the rest of the world handles things the way he does in Bolivia: “It’s very serious. I could prosecute them. That’s my desire, but I’m not a legal expert”.

Opposition Congress people, civic institutions and human rights organisms in Bolivia agreed in highlighting the need for an international investigation, to guarantee that the truth about what happened will be clarified. Although Evo Morales appeared to accept an external investigation at the United Nations Assembly on the 23rd of April, in practice he has blocked this possibility completely. The secretary general of Interpol, Ronald K. Noble, has made his entity available to carry out the investigations, but the government has not issued a response to this at all.

4. THE SENATE IS DENIED INFORMATION

4.1. Reports only in writing

Given the gravity of the case, the Senate called the Government Minister Alfredo Rada to report in person. However, the minister excused himself stating that the information Congress requires will be delivered only through written documents to the Congressional Multi-Party Commission and the Public Prosecutor’s Office. Presumably, the secretary of state desired to avoid answering uncomfortable questions in a Congress that was not controlled by government supporters.

The director of the Régimen Interior (Interior Regimen) of the Department of the Interior, Luis Clavijo, has taken similar steps, and has

not given a personal testimony, but rather did so through a report to the Department of the Interior. Congressman Pablo Banegas, a member of the Congressional Multi-Party Commission, indicated that Clavijo will be summoned to give an explanation in person.

4.2. Complaints made to the CIDH

In view of the numerous irregularities evidenced regarding the Las Américas Hotel operation, and after the investigation, the president of the Senate Chamber, Oscar Ortiz, asked the Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH, or Interamerican Human Rights Commission) to investigate the actions of the National Police. The Congressman placed doubt upon the government's claims of magnicide, believing some had lost credibility due to president Evo Morales' repeated declarations of plots against him.

5. IRREGULARITIES AT THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

5.1. Congress people denounce anomalies

Members of the Congressional Multi-Party Commission identified significant irregularities in the proceedings handled by the Public Prosecutor's Office. Congressman Bernardo Montenegro indicated that these anomalies "put the investigation process itself at risk".

One of the most relevant is that no prosecutor was present during the incursion on the Las Américas Hotel. In addition, the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Department of Santa Cruz was not allowed to participate in the operation or in the investigations afterward.

The detention of Juan Carlos Gueder and Alcides Mendoza without an arrest warrant, will be the object of a criminal complaint, announced by Oscar Urenda, president of the Brigada Parlamentaria Cruceña (Santa Cruz Congressional Brigade). As to the men's situations, Congressman Peter Maldonado revealed that they were "forced by the Public Prosecutor's Office to sign their statements".

One of the irregularities observed is the fact that defense attorneys have found it impossible to gain access to the file and investigation records. Another anomaly of primary importance is the violation of the principle of natural jurisdiction, as the proceedings are being carried out in the city of La Paz, when legally this should be done in Santa Cruz.

Symptomatically, when asked about advances made on the "terrorism" case investigation process, Minister of Autonomies Carlos Romero said that "it is a *political proceeding* that runs on its own time".

5.2. A questionable prosecutor

Congressman Bernardo Montenegro has indicated that the investigation is marked “by the violation of human rights and the discretionality with which prosecutor Marcelo Soza acts”.

It is noteworthy that Marcelo Ricardo Soza Álvarez has eight criminal proceedings against him, for no less than the crimes of rape, extortion, fraud, corruption, passive subornation, material falsehood, non-fulfillment of duties, criminal conspiracy, and the use of influence. Under these conditions, he could easily be manipulated by the government.

Senator Róger Pinto has stated that “this rosary of criminal accusations against the extraordinary prosecutor Soza demonstrates that he is not an adequate and honest prosecutor. When a person lives surrounded by proceedings and criminal lawsuits he ceases to be considered reliable and responsible and that contaminates the execution of a transparent investigative process”.

5.3. An unreliable witness

Ignacio Villa Vargas, alias “El Viejo”, has been qualified by the government as a key witness in the “terrorism” case, above all because his testimony implicates several regional authorities, leaders and businesspeople from Santa Cruz with the allegedly irregular group.

According to his own version, he was a member of the Rozsa cell, as a driver; however, he was called by the Public Prosecutor’s Office as a witness and not as a defendant. Recently, after criticism by several members of the Comisión Multipartidaria de la Cámara de Diputados (Congressional Multi-Party Commission), who denounced that Villa Vargas had not been charged and that precautionary measures had not been taken against him, prosecutor Soza announced that “El Viejo” would no longer be an “accuser” but one of the “accused”.

His testimony has been seriously questioned by the Congressional Multi-Party Commission, due to its incoherence and contradictions. According to Congressman Montenegro, Villa Vargas reiterated several names of people possibly connected who had previously been announced by high-ranking government officials, but when interrogated and asked to supply data, he changed his version and alleged that he knew about everything “because Germán told me”. According to Villa Vargas, “Germán” was the alias Eduardo Rozsa used. That is to say, his entire testimony is based on conversations he supposedly had with someone who is now dead and cannot disavow his statements.

Among these incoherencies is his version of the attempt on Cardinal Terraza's residence. "El Viejo" affirms that he took Eduardo Rozsa there and that they circled it twice at 22:30 p.m. and he then took the latter back to the hotel. He adds that the following day Rozsa called him by telephone to tell him about what he had done later on that evening: he rang the doorbell twice so the Cardinal would come out and lit the explosives' fuses on both occasions. The problem is that, according to the police report, the explosives used in the attempt on the Cardinal's residence are not fire-activated; therefore, Villa Vargas' version wouldn't be valid.

In reality, media investigations found, "El Viejo" is a fugitive of justice with a long file of twelve criminal cases against him, four of which are for fraud. In addition, he suffers from terminal diabetes which constantly causes him weakness and puts him in danger of dying. Despite his illness, the government stated that this man was recruited so he could infiltrate the Rozsa group beginning in January 2009, and that on the 2nd of February he reported the first details regarding the activities of the alleged "terrorist cell" to the Bolivian government's intelligence apparatus.

The government recruited a sick person who is near dying to work as a spy, who successfully infiltrated a group of dangerous terrorists, worked hand in hand with the leaders of Santa Cruz, and obtained absolutely all the information? The government knew about the plans of the terrorist group and allowed the attempts to take place? The government knew about the attempt on Cardinal Terraza's house and did nothing to prevent it? The government bases an entire alleged terrorism case, with which it attempts to involve the leadership of an entire region, based on statements made by "El Viejo"?

6. DETAINEES ARE TORTURED AND THREATENED

6.1. Toaso and Tadic

Serious claims and evidence of torture inflicted upon the survivors of the Las Américas Hotel massacre and others detained later cast serious doubt on the validity of their statements as they could have been obligated to incriminate themselves and involve other people.

The ambassador of Hungary, Matyas Jozsa, warned that Elod Toaso "has unfortunately been mistreated and this can be seen on his face and other parts of his body. That's why we are taking initiatives to ensure human rights are respected".

Toaso's defense attorney, Rigoberto Paredes, presented photographs to the media that show the Hungarian citizen with bruises on his right leg and right eye, as well as wounds from cuts on his arms and other parts of his

body. Paredes also denounced that Toaso “was given an injection prior to his statement” at the Public Prosecutor’s Office and indicated that the composition of the injection’s substance was unknown. Could it have been Pentotal, the drug known as a “truth serum” and could it have been used illegally by certain interrogators?

Attorney Rigoberto Paredes believes that “there was a serious violation of human rights which we will denounce that will annul the case (...) This definitively proves that there was not only irrational use of force during the operation, but also afterward”. He announced that he would present a claim to the Interamerican Human Rights Commission for the physical aggressions suffered by his defendant, in addition to a lawsuit against the official defender Willmar Argote, named by the District Attorney’s Office prior to the hearing on April 18th, because she did not denounce Toaso’s mistreatment.

Paredes stated the government did not provide the information needed to undertake a defense (“Treating the case as in the times of the Inquisition”) and added that it acted unconstitutionally: “there is a violation of the “judge of natural jurisdiction” principle. Toaso should not have been transferred from Santa Cruz to La Paz”. He also indicated that he fears for his client’s life, as both Toaso and Tadic had received death threats.

6.2. Gueder and Mendoza

Juan Carlos Gueder and Alcides Mendoza, accused of being the contacts that sold the weapons to the allegedly irregular group, were detained on April 28th. As already indicated, they were arrested without an arrest warrant. Both were taken the same day to La Paz with their hands tied and their eyes blindfolded with cardboard and packing tape.

The Interim Ombudsman, Rielma Mencías, stated that the Police submitted the two citizens to “cruel and degrading” treatment. Mencías said that “This implies a violation of rights, as depriving someone from one of their senses (eyesight, hearing, smell or feeling) prevents people from knowing their location in time and space”.

7. INTIMIDATION OF THE PRESS

7.1. Aggression, threats and trials

All of the irregularities mentioned and the not-at-all transparent investigation proceedings took place while a campaign to besiege the media, in an effort to “domesticate” the press and obligate it to align with the official version of the facts was taking place. These pressures have been habitual since Evo Morales began to govern and have intensified lately.

The measures put into practice range from physical aggression to journalists, to the government initiating criminal proceedings against them, and include public humiliation, death threats, attempts with explosives, disqualifying journalists in state media, and the selective assignment of government advertising.

Among these, the explosion of a bomb at the entrance of the newspaper El Potosí, that destroyed the reinforced glass security door stands out, as does the public ridicule to which president Evo Morales himself subjected the editor of the section Al Filo of the newspaper La Prensa, Raphael Ramírez. Later, he also received death threats by telephone and on a public street.

We also underscore the government information agency Agencia Boliviana de Información (Bolivian Information Agency), or ABI's attempt to disqualify the director of the newspaper La Estrella del Oriente, Centa Reck, by trying to link her to a fanciful plot that connected Argentine "carapintadas" (painted faces) with the Eduardo Rozsa "terrorist cell".

7.2. "Farm chickens"

The gravity of the situation motivated the president of the Sociedad Interamericana de la Prensa (SIP, Interamerican Press Society), Enrique Santos Calderón, to visit Bolivia where he observed the environment of hostility by the government toward the national media.

Santos Calderón stated that he found "a series of worrisome evidence such as physical aggression toward journalists, lawsuits (...), measures taken such as the union column, the case of physical and verbal aggression against journalists, and also threats". Likewise, he considered the public chastisement to which the editor of Al Filo was subjected to be "a humiliating act".

As if the president of the SIP sustained any doubts about Morales' animosity toward the press, during the meeting he had with the president at the Palacio Quemado, the head of state said journalists from La Paz seemed like "farm chickens" to him.

"Journalists from La Paz, first, seem like a chicken farm. When they have to ask something everyone yells, like chickens on a farm, and I can't understand anything. You don't know who to respond to (...). You can't hear anyone, you can't understand anyone, and when you explain, they twist things around, or lie, as we are seeing in the media". Evo Morales' words.

8. DISINFORMATION

8.1. The victimization strategy

The siege on the independent media includes widespread disinformation operations launched from the state propaganda apparatus, with manipulation that would have made Joseph Goebbels pale with envy. The *modus operandi* basically consists of covering aggressions to dissidents or against areas of the institutionalism that have not yet been dominated by the government party with a dense victimization smokescreen, in which Evo Morales or the “social movements” appear to be threatened by some sinister reactionary plot.

Within this context the government repeatedly makes claims about coups being prepared or “attempts at magnicide”, attributed to a nebula of “enemies of the people” that range from the CIA to the “separatist oligarchy”, to imperialism and the ubiquitous “neoliberals”.

As in Cuba, where each official claim about the disarticulation of a supposed attempt against Fidel Castro serves to justify violent measures and totalitarian control over the population, Bolivia appears to be heading down that worrisome anti-democratic path.

8.2. International operators

But the disinformation strategies could not work efficiently if a network of international operators didn't exist, capable of replicating overseas the various slogans emanated from the propaganda apparatus. These operators, among other functions, are to provide the use of the “bounce” tactic to the state media. This consists of sending out certain information overseas like test balloons, and then widely reproducing them at the national level.

In addition to the obvious coordination with organs like Prensa Latina, Telesur or the Agencia Bolivariana de Noticias (Bolivarian News Agency), linked to regimens like those of Castro and Chávez, the networks include picturesque characters such as the North American Eva Golinger, an employee of the Oficina de Información de Venezuela (OIV, Venezuelan Information Office), accused of fraud and illegally practicing law in the United States. Golinger has perpetrated books such as “El Código Chávez” in which she writes a far-fetched eulogy about the “bolivarian” regimen, and the delirious book called “La Telaraña Imperial” in which she accuses innumerable foundations and non-governmental organizations of conspiring unanimously against the governments of “21st Century socialism”, including of course, that of Evo Morales.

Shortly after the massacre at the Las Américas Hotel, and coinciding with the campaign of irregular detentions, threats and disqualifications taken on by the government, Eva Golinger toured several cities of Bolivia offering a series of conferences that were intensely covered by the state media. In her speeches the North American spokesperson for Hugo Chávez poured out her usual accusations against civilian organizations which she identifies as “agents of imperialism”, this time accusing them of being responsible or backing the alleged Eduardo Rozsa “terrorist cell”.

Other operator in this international network is the Argentine Horacio Verbitsky, who in the 1970’s was one of the heads of the intelligence apparatus of the Montoneros terrorist group. In the newspaper *Página 12*, a radical leftist expression founded by Verbitsky in Argentina, he launched a bizarre conspiracy theory about an alleged connection between the Rozsa group and a secret battalion of “carapintadas”, ready to participate in an overthrow of Evo Morales. The malicious story completely lacked repercussion in the Argentine media, but was used by the official media in Bolivia for its aforementioned “bounce” tactic.

9. PERSECUTION OF REGIONAL LEADERS, BUSINESSPEOPLE AND MILITARY PERSONNEL

9.1. Criminalizing the opposition

It is possible that, with the executions at the Las Américas Hotel, the government had intended to kill several birds with one stone. Literally.

“Evo Morales takes advantage of an alleged plot against him to attack the opposition”, ran the title of an article in the *Wall Street Journal*, faithfully summarizing the situation in Bolivia. Because in reality the entire matter is being used to criminalize the opposition, especially the opposition based in Santa Cruz, which is the main bastion for democratic resistance against an ever more authoritarian project.

After the executions on April 16th, government officials reported that they had found that the executed men had a list with several names on it, including that of the Prefect of Santa Cruz, Rubén Costas. Presented initially as a list of possible “targets of the terrorists”, the official version gradually mutated until those named on the list were being accused of being “financiers” of the Rozsa group.

Day after day new names are announced and lengthen the blacklists of people connected with “terrorism”, like chapters in a suspense novel that ministers and spokespersons narrate little by little. Within the government there is already talk of applying the figure of “treason against the country” to the alleged collaborators of “terrorism”, the intent of which is to

sentence opposition members to 30 years in prison without the right to be pardoned in the worst “castrista” style.

Within this context Evo Morales’ administration mounted a propagandist show convoking the various sectors to sign a “pact against terrorism”. As was foreseeable, the spectacle turned into a congress of paragovernmental organizations all with a uniform discourse, the only exception being the national private business leadership. However, they refused to sign the text and demanded censure be expanded to include all forms of violence, in allusion to the abuses committed against the detainees and in protest against the lynching of the leadership of Santa Cruz in the media.

The total violation of the principle of innocence and guarantees for due process became clear through the words of Vice President Álvaro García Linera: “Prove your innocence, otherwise the devil will take you”. This expression of psychological terrorism shows the little respect this former EGTK combatant, who took up arms during a fully democratic period, has for Rule of Law.

Amidst persecution, and taking advantage of the effects of the assault on opposition sectors, the government intends to not comply with the Transitory Electoral law regarding the new biometric census, paving the road for fraud during December elections.

9.2. Xenophobia

Harassment in the media, by the police, and judicially has some preferred victims who fulfill defined ethnic patterns. Sometimes it’s the descendents of Croatians, who are numerous in the department of Santa Cruz and are also present in other parts of Bolivia. It’s a particularly active and successful community in business terms, which perhaps activates certain Movimiento al Socialismo hate mechanisms, including racism and anti-capitalism.

On numerous occasions, despite being Bolivian by birth, they have been qualified as “foreigners” by high-ranking government officials, who have threatened to expel them “to their countries of origin”. Among those harassed for this reason is the former president of the Comité Pro Santa Cruz, Branko Marinkovic.

The fact that Rozsa and Tadic fought along with the army of Croatia in the Balkan War has provided state TV Channel 7 the perfect excuse to broadcast a series of denigrating advertisements against descendents of this nationality. As always, the operators of the international networks

amplified the Anti-Croatian xenophobic campaign overseas, accusing them of being “fascist ustachis” who plotted against progressive Evo Morales.

Another of the targets of the growing governmental xenophobia is the Jewish community in tune with the ever more evident anti-Semitism of Hugo Chávez. Soon after the massacre at the Las Américas Hotel, the National Police searched the Jewish religious studies center in the city of Rurrenabaque, near La Paz. This was repeated several times over just a few days. The Police ordered the center to close and detained several Israeli tourists who were in the area.

Rabbi Aarón Fraiman, who directs the center, declared that the Police had refused to give them a reason, but rumors in Rurrenabaque linked this event to the police investigation of “terrorism”. He added, “we hired an attorney to handle this case, but this is not a government that respects the law and to date no one has told us what is going on. I’m working to get the detainees freed and I’m also trying to contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or some other type of representative of Israel here”.

It is important to add that on various opportunities Evo Morales has launched aggressive critiques against the State of Israel, while intensifying his alliance with fundamentalist Iran’s President Mahmud Ahmadinejad. There is growing concern that the uranium mines in Bolivia are being used to supply Iran’s nuclear program⁴. The Israeli government itself has officially denounced this.

Hugo Chávez is the main proponent of the alliance between the governments of the ALBA and the regimen of the ayatollahs. During recent times, acts of aggression against synagogues and other Jewish centers have proliferated. In addition, the Israeli government report regarding the Latin American supply of uranium to Iran also includes the exploitation of Venezuela’s mines.

9.3. Confiscation decree

“Research of the alleged plot to assassinate Bolivian President Evo Morales has provided the leader a new target: the properties of key political adversaries”, warns the Wall Street Journal. “Morales has taken advantage of the incident to take measures against his enemies. (...) His ministers approved an anti-sedition decree that allows the government to confiscate the goods of anyone suspected of being involved in cases of terrorism. (...) According to the government, the decree is mainly directed at those who oppose Morales in Santa Cruz, including Prefect Rubén Costas, and cooking oil magnate Branko Marinkovic. (...) The government

⁴ See the book *CiudadanoX: la historia secreta del evismo* by this author. Editorial El País, Santa Cruz 2008.

has also threatened to take over control of key institutions in Santa Cruz that helped fund political campaigns that opposed Morales”.

The law mentioned by this influential North American newspaper is Supreme Decree 0138, which many are already comparing to the Patriot Act sanctioned by the Bush administration or, more precisely, the terrifying Intelligence Law that Hugo Chávez attempted to impose in 2008. The decree authorizes the representative of the District Attorney’s Office, when beginning an investigation or during one, and even prior to sentencing, to request the expropriation of goods subject to confiscation. In addition, it establishes the district of La Paz as the headquarters for all cases, including those that could take place in Santa Cruz.

The objective is clear: freeze all possible sources of the opposition’s funding during the electoral campaign. With a simple accusation the accounts and goods of potential funders can be confiscated, and even if the proceedings are dismissed, December and April elections will have already passed.

The prestigious constitutional lawyer Jorge Asbún has stated that “the decree violates the Constitution approved by the MAS itself and current valid laws, because in Rule of Law, rules regarding authorization can only be created by law, never by a decree”.

Coincidentally, Ombudsman Sonia Soto indicated that “from a human rights point of view, it is worrisome that penal measures should be taken to restrict rights by means of a decree, because only a norm with the rank of law can be used for this objective”.

The key institutions the Wall Street Journal mentions are the telephone, electricity and water cooperatives of Santa Cruz: COTAS, CRE, and SAGUAPAC.

9.4. Militarization of Santa Cruz

Along with violent police actions, irregular judicial proceedings, and the diverse uses of intimidation and psychological warfare, the government ordered the militarization of Santa Cruz, and sent in a contingent of 1500 soldiers, distributed among various points of the region, creating a type of enclosure around the department’s capital city. The declared purpose: to repress “any attempt at separatism”. The real motive, however, could be to contain an eventual social outburst in view of the increasing intimidation and persecutions.

The strongest military presence is the Comando Conjunto (Joint Command), formed by members of the Army, the Air Force, and the Navy, installed in the town of San Ignacio de Velasco. Coincidentally, this is very

near the Manomó mountain, where the most important uranium exploration activities seem to be taking place.

9.5. Possible purge of the Armed Forces

Although he follows the Venezuelan model by using the military politically, Evo Morales appears to be showing signs of becoming worried by the surge of possible dissidents within military ranks, in view of the authoritarian direction his regimen is taking.

His denouncements against former Armed Forces commanders, who according to him have been involved in “separatist groups” could be interpreted in this sense. These allusions are directed at retired generals Lucio Añez and Gary Prado, whom he accuses of having met with Eduardo Rozsa.

Evo Morales asked military justice to punish them severely: “And if it is confirmed that the former generals, retired generals, planned the division of Bolivia, I call upon the High Command to punish these military men who want to divide Bolivia harshly, because no division is acceptable”. And he added: “I hope that officers who are actively in service are not involved”.

The latter could be in anticipation of a possible purge of the Armed Forces, to eliminate elements not co-opted through “petro-checks” from Hugo Chávez. The purge would also pave the way to implement the military reform projected by the minister of the presidency, Juan Ramón Quintana, that includes ideological indoctrination of the troops within the framework of “de-colonizing and revolutionary education” established by the new Constitution of the Plurinational State. The reform follows the Chavez parameters of “asymmetrical war”, proposed as a hypothetical confrontation with “the forces of imperialism”, a redesign that, simply put, would seek to turn the Armed Forces into a political militia at the orders of the revolutionary government.

10. INTIMIDATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISMS

10.1. Human Rights Foundation

Among the institutions the government attempts to connect to the alleged “terrorists” are independent human rights organizations, which have not been successfully co-opted by the official apparatus, unlike other organizations that received high-ranking government positions in exchange for their functionality and alignment.

The governmental media artillery has, above all, been directed at the Human Rights Foundation-Bolivia (HRF-Bolivia), an institution created in March 2007 that has prepared numerous reports on the violations of human rights committed during the current government term.

The procedures used by Evo Morales' administration to intimidate HRF-Bolivia coincide with the methods already condemned by the Interamerican Human Rights Commission (CIDH) in its *Report on the situation of human rights defenders in the Americas*. Among these procedures are attempts to disqualify human rights organizations as being associated with irregular armed groups:

“The Commission has knowledge that in some American states human rights defenders have seen their work undermined by discourses that disqualify their work. In public statements, agents of the State identified the work done by defenders as illegal, or they have been accused publicly of being delinquents, subversives or terrorists”.

“The Commission observes that these statements delegitimize and discredit the work done by these social actors and increase their vulnerability. On several occasions, these statements suggest that non-governmental human rights organizations collaborate with armed dissident groups, or project campaigns that make attempts against State security”.

In his speech on May 1st, Evo Morales accused “Human Rights” of being behind the “magnicide” against him. He also threatened to expel foreigners who work with the foundations and send Bolivian members to jail.

Another of the procedures detected by the CIDH is the initiation of criminal prosecution for the alleged formation of illegal groups:

“The Commission notes that in several cases the defenders are intimidated by the states through the initiation of criminal proceedings. (...) These proceedings habitually include accusations of crimes of rebellion, attempts against public order or State security, and the formation of illegal groups”.

A third case seen by the CIDH and put into practice in Bolivia, is that of “arbitrary administrative controls”. The Commission has observed “policies or practices that restrict or limit the exercise of human rights organizations through abusive administrative, taxation, or fiscal controls”. Regarding this, the Special Representative to the United Nations for Defenders of Human Rights has shown concern “for the growing restrictions States impose, using legal maneuvers, to limit the freedom of association, and for the fact that States are resorting more and more to the

legal system to intimidate human rights defenders and obstruct their work”.

In the case of Bolivia, the onrush to disqualify Human Rights Foundation-Bolivia within the legal-administrative framework was played by the Vice Minister of Coordination with the Social Movements, Sacha Llorenti, former president of the Permanent Human Rights Assembly in Bolivia (APDHB), an NGO co-opted by the government through the concession of three vice ministries.

Repeatedly the aforementioned government official and other representatives of his paragonovernmental organization have made known their intention to retain a monopoly on the subject of human rights, and even proposed the respective legislation regarding this. At the beginning of May, Llorenti repeatedly made statements on state media, accusing the Human Rights Foundation-Bolivia of not having a legal status and of not being legally registered. These unfounded accusations were refuted in a timely manner and documented by the questioned organization.

It is interesting to remember that the Vice Ministry of Coordination with the Social Movements, has been accused several times of organizing and funding militias that support the government party in violent actions against Cochabamba, Sucre, Tarija, Pando and Santa Cruz.

In view of the exhaustive violations of the limits of democratic behavior in the relationship between the government and human rights organizations, it could be thought that Evo Morales’ advisors read the CIDH Report like a manual on infractions to commit, rather than a summary of observations on anti-ethical or illegal practices.

10.2. UnoAmérica

In March of this year, a commission formed by representatives of human rights NGOs from Colombia, Uruguay, Argentina and Venezuela, along with HRF-Bolivia, initiated in investigation of the massacre in Pando, which took place in September 2008.

After a field investigation that included interviews with survivors and witnesses, the NGOs that are members of the Unión de Organizaciones Democráticas de América (UnoAmérica, Union of Democratic Organizations of America) established that as a preliminary result, Evo Morales’ government was responsible for planning and executing the massacre, which it later blamed on the opposition. For this reason, the investigative team announced a press conference to take place in Santa Cruz de la Sierra in March in which it would present an accusation before the Interamerican Human Rights Commission against the Bolivian government, for crimes against humanity.

To impede the truth from being known, Evo Morales' government began a campaign to discredit and criminalize the members of the UnoAmérica international commission that participated in the investigation. Thus the newspaper *Página 12* began a fictitious story about a meeting between one of the members of the commission, Jorge Mones Ruiz, with Eduardo Rozsa during his visit to Bolivia.

The next step was to place loquacious witness Ignacio Villa Vargas, alias "El Viejo" at the scene, who was told to say that he knew about the encounter. However, he apparently didn't pull it off well because he identified the retired Argentine army major as "La Mona Ruiz".

The truth is that Jorge Mones Ruiz is far from being the clandestine character Verbitsky's newspaper painted him as: he is a political analyst whose intellectual abilities are well-known, a frequent collaborator in various Argentine media, and first-chair guitar in the folklore group "Conjunto Patria", whose zambas to the Virgin of Luján were, by the newspaper *Página 12*, apparently a dangerous cryptogram of insurrectionary lines.

On May 14th Mones Ruiz, along with architect Liliana Raffo, went to the Casa Rosada, headquarters of the Presidency of Argentina, to deliver to Cristina Fernández de Kirchner a letter requesting Rodolfo Mattorollo be removed as Under-Secretary of Human Rights in that country, due to his terrorist background with the ERP (Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo, People's Revolutionary Army) and the JCR (Junta Coordinadora Revolucionaria, Revolutionary Coordinating Junta), and due to his contacts with the upper ranks of the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, Colombian Revolutionary Army)⁵.

We should remember that Mattorollo was the top person responsible for the report produced by the UNASUR (Unión de Naciones Sudamericanas, Union of South American Nations) on the massacre in Pando, a document plagued by grave errors, that attempts to confirm, not in a very credible manner, the Bolivian government's official version.

In the letter to the president of Argentina, Mones and Raffo also claimed that "given that we are members of UnoAmérica that investigated the events in Pando, a persecution campaign was begun against us, linking us with an alleged plot against the government of Evo Morales".

There is no better summary of what happened than what was written by congressman Walter Arrázola, in an opinion piece titled *Se cae la tesis carapintada*: "Evo Morales' government was so scared of the report

⁵ See the note by the author *Mattorollo y las FARC*, HoyBolivia.com and other media.

prepared by the international commission to which Mones belongs, that it decided to contrive a plan to criminalize him, and transform a graying, somewhat overweight man into a fearsome southern Rambo”.

10.3. Human Rights Councils

The wave of persecutions and abuses of authority unleashed by the “false war on terrorism” undertaken by the Bolivian government motivated the formation, in several regions, of interinstitutional organisms to protect fundamental guarantees, and these came to be called Consejos de Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (Human Rights Defense Councils).

In Santa Cruz, the Council was formed by people such as the former president of the Constitutional Court, Wilman Durán, the spokesperson for the Conferencia Episcopal (Episcopal Conference) Marcial Chupinagua, the president of the Colegio Nacional de Abogados (National School of Attorneys) Edwin Rojas, the constitutionalist Jorge Asbún, the second vice president of the Comité Pro Santa Cruz Nicolás Ribera, the analyst Centa Reck, the historian Alcides Parejas, the president of the Colegio Departamental de Abogados (Departmental School of Attorneys) Fernando Cuéllar, the president of the Federación de Profesionales (Federation of Professionals) Rubén Darío Dabdoub, and Isabel Saavedra, Isaac Sandóval, Rolando Roca, Williams Herrera, Carlos Subirana, Fernando Marttorell, and René Baldivieso.

Almost immediately government spokespersons proceeded to disqualify these entities as well, accusing them of being “paper organisms” in charge of “defending terrorists”.

The persecution of critics and dissidents by the Bolivian government has motivated protests by organizations in other countries such as the Centro de Estudios de Derechos Humanos del Uruguay (Uruguayan Center for Human Rights Studies) and the Comunidad de Trabajo Internacional “Libertad y Democracia” (International “Liberty and Democracy” Work Community), based in Berlin, Germany.

11. A COUP AGAINST THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

11.1. Persecution of Supreme Court magistrates

While the entire country followed the staged show about the “terrorists-mass murderers-separatists”, the government dealt a well-aimed blow to the independence of the Judicial Branch, by suspending and filing charges against the President of the Supreme Court, Eddy Fernández, and filing an arrest warrant against its magistrate, Rosario Canedo.

Thus ended the long process of eroding the judicial branch, and after three and a half years of Evo Morales' government, all of its organs are incomplete due to forced resignations through trials and multiple pressures. The objective is to ensure justice is subordinated to the Executive Branch to intensify the juridification of politics, meaning, the systematic filing of lawsuits against members of the opposition.

11.2. The Constitutional Court lacks a leader

As part of this strategy one of the fundamental pieces was the disarticulation of the Constitutional Court, which enabled the Constitution to be imposed and approved illegally. After its building was damaged by dynamite and lawsuits were filed by a commission of congress people controlled by the government, the magistrates of the Constitutional Court resigned one by one. The last to go was Silvia Salame. When she left, she stated categorically, "There is no Rule of Law in this country. We are now being governed by decree".

12. CONCLUSIONS

In sum, and in view of the above, the following can be deduced:

- I) The massacre at the Las Américas Hotel was most likely an extrajudicial execution, for which Evo Morales is directly responsible.
- II) There are too many contradictions in the official version.
- III) Relevant information was concealed, which includes the possible connection between government officials and the Rozsa group.
- IV) The irregularities committed by the Public Prosecutor's Office affect the validity of the process.
- V) The accusers' testimonies are not reliable because they were obtained through torture or because they come from inconsistent witnesses.
- VI) Evo Morales' government uses the facts to unleash a witch hunt against regional opposition leaders, businesspeople, military personnel, and human rights organisms.
- VII) Attempts were made to block possible sources of funding for the opposition during the electoral campaign.
- VIII) The crisis was used to deal a technical blow to the Judicial Branch and violate the independence of justice.

- IX) The press is intimidated to impede clarification of the truth.
- X) Disinformation is employed to distort the reality, disqualify and cause confusion.
- XI) The current crisis is used to block an independent investigation of the massacre in Pando.
- XII) It is likely there was governmental manipulation of the Rozsa groups, which could explain the massacre as a virtual set-up to conceal and justify a self-coup by Evo Morales.

POSTSCRIPT: At the time the first edition of this book was about to be printed, two new events took place and now form a part of the absurd happenings produced by the apparently unstoppable imagination of those who promote this curious “socialism”, which may be better defined as “the magical realism of the 21st Century”.

Prosecutor Soza was responsible for the first. He included Cardinal Julio Terrazas among the people summoned to make statements in La Paz. The main questions he was to answer (worthy of Inspector Clouseau) were: *where were you and what were you doing at 3:00 in the morning, the approximate time when the attempt against your home took place?* Let’s hope the Cardinal will not now be put on the list of those accused of collaborating with “terrorism”.

The second episode was played by the “Bolivarian” president of Nicaragua, former Sandinista dictator Daniel Ortega, who reported that his fellow supporters Hugo Chávez and Evo Morales did not travel to the inauguration of Mauricio Funes in El Salvador *because there was a plan to assassinate them.*

Shortly after, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, put the cherry on the sundae by adding that among those suspected of this double attempt at “magnicide” was the president of UnoAmérica, Alejandro Peña Esclusa.

THIRD EDITION APPENDIX

“Rozsa was brought over by the Embassy of Venezuela”

Between June and July 2009, new data and events were added to the Rozsa case, ratifying several of the hypothesis proposed in the first edition of this book.

On June 4th, opposition congressman Pablo Banegas, a member of the Congressional Multi-Party Commission, made one of the most significant revelations on the TV program “Sin Letra Chica”, which Carlos Valverde conducts. There Banegas questioned the veracity of a list of airline tickets that were exhibited by pro-government congressman César Navarro. The tickets had been issued to a Jorge Hurtado, the alias used by the executed Eduardo Rozsa.

With this list, which included scores of airline tickets, Navarro attempted to implicate several institutions and businesses in Santa Cruz in the alleged funding of the Rozsa group’s activities. However, after Banega’s review of the list, it became evident that it contained several similar names and that the tickets didn’t correspond to one single person. Among those named was a 12-year old boy called Jorge Luis Alejandro Hurtado, and in addition, Jorge Hurtado Heredia, Jorge Antonio Hurtado Montenegro, Jorge Ángel Hurtado, Jorge Román Hurtado, Jorge Heber Hurtado, Jorge Miguel Hurtado, Jorge Arredondo Hurtado, and Jorge Mauricio Hurtado.

In an attempt to link Eduardo Rozsa to the events that took place on September 11, 2008 in Pando, César Navarro stated that the Prefecture of Santa Cruz had paid an airline ticket for “Jorge Hurtado” to travel a few days before that date to Pando. But it turned out to be chess champion Jorge Javier Hurtado Vargas. The Departmental Athletic Service, which depends on the Prefecture of Santa Cruz, had paid for him to travel to Pando to participate in a chess tournament in the city of Cobija.

Everything could have been written off as a big faux pas, similar to that committed by Minister Alfredo Rada with the Airsoft players, if things had not taken an unexpected turn: the list included an airline ticket for a Jorge Hurtado that had been paid for by the Embassy of Venezuela in Bolivia.

Congressman Pablo Banegas revealed that the diplomatic delegation paid for a round trip ticket La Paz – Cochabamba for a Jorge Hurtado in May 2007 through the Tropical Tours travel agency. “I challenge the government and embassy of Venezuela to tell us who is this Jorge Hurtado and to show him to us in flesh and bones”, said the Congressman.

This was taken up and extensively commented on by journalist Carlos Valverde in later editions of his television program. In view of the government's silence, and that of the Venezuelan embassy, who did not explain who Jorge Hurtado was, the journalist spoke against Minister Alfredo Rada in his characteristic style:

“Minister, once again I demand to know for whom the Venezuelan embassy purchased this ticket. Coward, tell me for whom was this ticket purchased? Do you have the courage to go ask the embassy of Venezuela who this Jorge Hurtado is? You didn't have the courage to go ask, you couldn't even set up a lie. (...) Probably, the national government itself brought Eduardo Rozsa over so that, of course, he could bamboozle more than one imbecile in Santa Cruz who might have participated in this adventure (...) If Rozsa was a separatist, then you know why he was brought over here ... But as long as you don't tell us, to me Rozsa was brought by you, was brought by the Venezuelan embassy”.

The government accused of crimes against humanity

On June 23rd, in Washington, D.C. (United States) one of the Bolivian government's main fears became reality: representatives of several NGOs affiliated with UnoAmérica went to the Interamerican Human Rights Commission (CIDH) to accuse Evo Morales' administration of crimes against humanity.

The campaign to disqualify this, which had been carried out by government spokespeople and media months before, in which they had attempted unsuccessfully to link the Unión de Organizaciones Democráticas de América with the Rozsa Group, was unable to impede the CIDH from receiving the accusation of presumable government responsibility in the “Massacre in Pando”.

In its main paragraphs, the accusation states that: “First, the aggression was planned; second the incursion took place at night; third, the aggressors were foreigners; fourth, military tactics were used; fifth, the objective was to assassinate, injure, kidnap, torture, and imprison a sector of the population because of the way they think (opposed to the government); sixth, the right to a fair trial and due process was violated; seventh, the right to information (Habeas Data) was denied; and eighth, in some cases, the State security corps used weapons of warfare to assault unarmed civilian citizens, and in others military and police officials were accomplices by omission”.

The document was written by Dr. Jaime Arturo Restrepo (Colombia) and is signed by the Asociación de Familiares Víctimas del Terrorismo (Association of Relatives of Victims of Terrorism, Peru), the Asociación de Víctimas Civiles de la Guerrilla Colombiana (Association of Civilian Victims of the Colombian Guerrilla Army), the Centro de Estudios de los Derechos Humanos (Center for Human Rights Studies) of Uruguay, the Federación Verdad (Truth Federation) of Colombia, the Fundación Orión (Orion Foundation, Venezuela), the Movimiento

por la Verdadera Historia (Movement for True History, Argentina), the NGO 1810 (Argentina), the Asociación Civil Fuerza Solidaria (Solidary Forces Civilian Association, Venezuela), congressman Wálter Arrázola Mendívil (Bolivia), Dr. Graca Salguero (Brazil), Dr. María Fernanda Cabal (Colombia), Dr. Marcelo Cypriano Motta (Brazil) and Mr. Josué Meneses (Peru).

UnoAmérica ensures that “planning violent confrontations and later blaming them on the opposition – to criminalize and pursue them – has become the *modus operandi* of Evo Morales’ government. Events similar to those in Pando had occurred previously in Cochabamba and Sucre”. It is possible to question, therefore, whether a variation of this *modus operandi* might have been applied in Santa Cruz as well, with the massacre at the Las Américas Hotel.

The law in Santa Cruz halts prosecutor Soza

The questionable handling of the Rozsa case by prosecutor Marcelo Soza, who has been repeatedly accused of politically manipulating testimonies and the investigation, suffered significantly due to a conflict of jurisdiction between judges in Santa Cruz and their peers in La Paz.

This prosecutor from La Paz acted within the framework of the “national jurisdiction” alleged by the government, on which the District Attorney’s Office is dependent. However, the country’s principal legal experts, among them the former president of the Constitutional Court, Willman Durán, have indicated that no such thing exists in Bolivian legislation and that the principle of natural jurisdiction should be respected at all times.

Centralizing prosecution in the city of La Paz was based on jurisdiction declared by judge Betty Yañiquez, who handled the case on the 15th of April. However, what wasn’t taken into account is that on April 1st judge Luis Tapia Pachi of Santa Cruz had already handled the case, after an explosive device exploded at the house of the Vice Minister of Autonomies, Saúl Ávalos. After this, the file was aggregated at the court in Santa Cruz when the attempt on Cardinal Terraza’s house took place on the 15th of April.

Bolivian law states the following are competent:

- “1) The judge at the location where the crime was committed or the location where the conduct is manifested or the results are produced.*
- 2) The judge at the place of residence of the accused or the location at which the latter is found.*
- 3) The judge at the location where material proof of the facts is discovered.*
- 4) When a crime committed in a foreign country has produced effects on Bolivian soil, the judge of the location where the effects were produced or the judge who first handled the case shall handle the case.*

5) When two or more equally competent judges concur, the judge who first handled the case shall handle the case.”

Clearly, the location where the alleged crime was committed, the location of residence of the accused, and the place where they were found, the site where alleged proof of the facts was discovered, and the judge who first handled the case lay the foundations for competency to lie with the legal system of Santa Cruz. The only doubt that would remain is regarding “the location where the results are produced”. It is likely that this is one of the main reasons that the official version talks about “magnicide”, in order for the case to be handled by the courts of La Paz, where it can be presumed there will be greater government influence.

The law indicates that “if two or more judges or courts simultaneously and contradictorily declare themselves competent or incompetent, the conflict shall be resolved by the Superior Court of the District of the judge or court that first handled the case. A conflict of jurisdiction between Superior Courts will be resolved by the Supreme Court.” Based on this, the case file is now in the Criminal Branch of the Supreme Court, where the conflict of jurisdictional competencies must be resolved.

Despite this situation, prosecutor Soza continued with searches and seizures, issuing subpoenas and emitting arrest warrants. Among those subpoenaed are two members of the Unión Juvenil Cruceñista, David Sejas and Alfredo Saucedo, who proposed a “Acción de Libertad” (Habeas Corpus) requesting the investigation be paralyzed until the conflict of jurisdiction between the courts of Santa Cruz and La Paz is resolved.

“Acción de Libertad” (Habeas Corpus) is included in article 125 of the National Constitution, and indicates that “a lawsuit may be interposed by any person who considers their life to be in danger, who is illegally pursued, or who is unduly processed or deprived of liberty”.

On July 7th the Santa Cruz Superior Court sustained the suit and ordered the investigations and warrants issued by prosecutor Marcelo Soza suspended until the conflict of jurisdiction is solved. Council members Adhemar Fernández, Samuel Saucedo and Edgar Molina voted unanimously that Marcelo Soza had exceeded his authority by continuing to take statements and issue arrest warrants, and in this manner put a stop to the actions taken by the controversial prosecutor.

“El Viejo” connects García Linera to the Rozsa group

Also on July 7th, congressman Wilfredo Añez revealed to the press a series of audio tapes in which Ignacio Villa Vargas, alias “El Viejo”, presented by Evo

Morales' government as the "key witness" in the Rozsa case, revealed the staging of events carried out by prosecutor Soza.

Añez explained that between June 17th and July 2nd 2009 on several occasions he received phone calls from Villa Vargas asking for guarantees and police protection for his family. Both are from the town of Cotoca, which is why Villa Vargas had sought out the Congressman to seek security.

From his place of exile in northern Argentina, "El Viejo" confessed that his testimony, in which he implicated several people from Santa Cruz connecting them with the allegedly irregular group, was written by officials at the Public Prosecutor's Office and that they tortured him to obligate him to sign it.

In the tapings of these phone conversations, Ignacio Villa Vargas also revealed that government officials brought Rozsa to Bolivia in order to disarticulate the opposition and that Luis Clavijo (former Director of the Interior Regimen of the Department of the Interior) was the person who had coordinated activities.

"El Viejo" added that Vice President Álvaro García Linera knew about everything and that he operated through his brother Raúl, who had paid \$75,000 dollars to Mario Tadic. In addition, he stated that prosecutor Soza took orders directly from García Linera.

Congressman Wilfredo Añez announced that the tapings would be delivered to the Public Prosecutor's Office of the District of Santa Cruz and he asked for constitutional guarantees for Ignacio Villa Vargas and his family. At the end of July, prosecutor Marcelo Soza stated that he wouldn't rule out issuing an arrest warrant for "El Viejo".

Possible Rozsa-YPFB nexus

Villa Vargas' statements were not the only element that turned all eyes once again on possible connections between government figures and the irregular group. The Latin American Intelligence Review blog⁶ also covered repeated versions of meetings that had taken place between Eduardo Rozsa and high-ranking officials of YPFB (the state-owned oil and gas company):

"One fact that the government has jealously concealed to date is that Eduardo Rozsa Flores (executed on April 16th, 2009 by police forces at the Las Américas Hotel) met with high-ranking officials of the state hydrocarbons company, Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos (YPFB).

⁶ <http://laintelligencereview.blogspot.com>

It is known that after he arrived in Bolivia, Rozsa met with his former classmate Luis Fernando Vincenti, current chairman of the YPF board, an entity where he represents the Ministry of the Presidency (Juan Ramón Quintana). Allegedly, Rozsa proposed to Vincenti that he finance the research and publication of a book on the “Ethnic Groups of Bolivia” and he had received a favorable response.

It is also known that Rozsa met with other YPF executives, such as the marketing director for Santa Cruz, captain Amílcar Soto, a controversial former aide-de-camp for Guillermo Aruquipa, whose nomination was defended by Saúl Ávalos. Another who met with Rozsa at Yacimientos was the board representative for the oil workers, Wilson Aparicio”.

“Narco-journalist” Julio César Alonso

After the flood of accusations against opposition members based on the forced testimony of Ignacio Villa Vargas and the legal paralization of prosecutor Soza’s actions, the case appeared to stall for Evo Morales’ government, who needed its reactivation during the electoral campaign, as an instrument to pressure and stigmatize critics and contenders.

This is when Spanish “journalist” Julio César Alonso makes an entry, arriving in Bolivia in mid July. He was widely interviewed by the various state media. Alonso presents himself as an experienced “war correspondent” who met Eduardo Rozsa in the Balkans. He said he had investigated Rozsa for several years, following his steps through various countries.

This Indiana Jones of “21st Century Socialism”, also showed off his abilities as a futurologist during interviews, affirming that with Rozsa’s death “Bolivia saved itself from having 35,000 dead” from an alleged civil war.

In contradictory declarations, in which he fluctuated between accusing Eduardo Rozsa of being the author of numerous conflicts (Yugoslavia, Congo, Sudan) and minimizing him as a simple fabricator of lies, Julio César Alonso took it upon himself to add oxygen to topics in the official version of the case. His statements also aimed to make the Rozsa group responsible for the deaths in Pando on September 11th, following the line of discourse already described above.

An Internet investigation done for this Index yielded no entries in Google under the name of this alleged Spanish journalist, prior to his arrival in Bolivia. This is difficult to explain if we give credit to his statements: there are no articles written by him from battle fronts, no notes or commentaries, not even an iota of his risky experiences. Nothing.

The truth came to light when congressman Ernesto Justiniano reproduced on his website an article from the newspaper El Mundo of Madrid, which stated that

Julio César Alonso had been imprisoned in the Carabanchel prison for trafficking cocaine from Buenos Aires.

In the November 28, 1997 issue, the Madrid newspaper included a note titled “El infierno del alma” in which Soledad Mayoral interviewed Julio César Alonso at the Carabanchel prison. There the alleged journalist tried to justify his situation, alleging that “they sent me to report on a Buenos Aires police mafia. The adventure ended with my companion showing up dead and I was found with seven kilograms of cocaine in my suitcase”. However, the judge did not believe his version of the facts and condemned him to prison.

After this information was made known, Congressman Pablo Banegas traveled to Buenos Aires to interview Federal Police authorities, who informed him that Alonso had entered Argentina on four occasions as a tourist, and never as a journalist, and that it was false that his intention had been to do research in the country. The police authorities remembered that Julio César Alonso was detained at the airport of Madrid as he arrived from Argentina, with the drugs in his luggage.

“In Buenos Aires nobody knew Alonso as a journalist or as a documentalist. They know him as a trafficker connected to European cartels, because he never published anything or did any research and everything he said in Bolivia is false”, indicated congressman Banegas.

In turn, the prefect of Santa Cruz, Rubén Costas, alluded to the government when he said “they wanted to bolster the case with a person who was convicted for drug trafficking”.

To the scandal that resulted from the revelation of the Spanish “journalist’s” true curriculum another was added when on the TV program “Que No Me Pierda”, TV presenter John Arandia presented a letter that Alonso had sent the embassy of Bolivia in Spain, offering to be hired to come to the country to make statements about the Rozsa case.

Julio César Alonso denied that Evo Morales’ government had paid his airline ticket from Spain to Bolivia, but admitted that when he found out Eduardo Rozsa was in the country he had decided to contact the Bolivian embassy, sell a story to a Spanish television chain, and contact former Movimiento al Socialismo member, Raúl Prada.

At the same time, he accused John Arandia of stealing private information from his memory stick when he was invited to the televised program, thus admitting the veracity of the letter.

In her article “*El truco del español salió de Palacio*” analyst Centa Reck revealed that the initial contact with Julio César Alonso had been made by the Minister of the Presidency, Juan Ramón Quintana:

“Alonso lacks no imagination and it increases when he gets any type of incentive which certainly is more (sic) than moral. This incentive was given him by Minister Quintana during a visit he made to Spain in March of this year and during which he was contacted by members of a Spanish newspaper whose sympathies for Evo Morales’ regime cannot be concealed. This newspaper facilitated the encounter with Alonso (...) Quintana entrusted the ambassador of Bolivia in Spain, Carmen Almendras, to personally take charge of Alonso’s trip and above all, that the trip appear to be the product of a “journalist’s” healthy intention to help Bolivia avoid being affected by a civil war, similar to that which shook up the Balkans in the 1990’s”.

The most interesting thing about this information is that, if proven, the connection between Alonso and the government and the decision to bring him to Bolivia, would have originated in March, that is to say, one month prior to the deaths at the Las Américas Hotel.

Finally, Julio César Alonso’s accusations against the president of Cooperativa Rural de Electrificación (the Rural Electricity Cooperative, CRE) and presidential candidate Germán Antelo, whom he accused of being one of the funders of the Rozsa group, resulted in a criminal slander and defamation lawsuit against the journalist in the Second Court of La Paz. Antelo’s defense attorneys warned that if Alonso did not appear in court they would proceed with the case by declaring him absent and in default, plea for bond, and, by means of Interpol, issue an international arrest warrant.

The lawsuit caused Alonso to rapidly leave and before abandoning Bolivia he left behind some very virulent statements against anyone who had dared to question him. He called the television journalists “screamers”, the reporters who had questioned him at the Parliament and the Public Prosecutor’s Office “hysterical”, the attorneys of those accused in the Rozsa case “cheap fight pickers”, the newspapers that had published the article on his drug trafficking past “periodicuchos (fraudulent newspapers)” and congressman Ernesto Justiniano a “mental dwarf”, while also threatening to “shut him up forever”.

If the government’s purpose was to revive the muddied Rozsa case with statements from this alleged Spanish journalist, *operation Alonso* ended badly.

Wálter Chávez and the Rozsa case

An article by the Servicio Informativo Datos & Análisis (Data & Analysis Information Service), linked to the Movimiento al Socialismo and electronic publications such as Kaos en la Red and Bolpress, last July 31st told of Wálter Chávez’s participation in the construction of the official version of the Rozsa case.

This is a former presidential advisor, of Peruvian origin, accused by Peru's justice system as "convicted for terrorism", who is linked to the Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, MRTA). From what is known, Chávez played an important role in Evo Morales' 2005 election campaign and although complaints by the opposition ensured he was nominally distanced from power, it is known that he continues to be one of the fundamental pillars of the governmental framework regarding communication strategies. And perhaps more.

During the cabinet meeting that took place in Huajchilla at the end of July, television cameras showed him meeting with ministers and vice ministers, confirming the fact that he remains within the intimate circles of the MAS *nomenclature*.

The aforementioned article in the pro-government bulletin, signed by Wilson García Mérida, indicates that "Wálter regularly enters the Palace to meet with Evo Morales, Álvaro García Linera, or Juan Ramón Quintana, coordinating a series of investigative tasks such as that which, for example, he has been doing along with Servicio Informativo Datos & Análisis regarding the Rozsa case".

Therefore, one of the main people in charge of shaping the discourse the government uses to accuse its opposition in Santa Cruz of being "terrorists" is exactly that.

Newspaper and digital sources consulted: daily issues of Los Tiempos, La Razón, El Deber, El Nuevo Día, La Prensa, El Mundo, La Estrella del Oriente, HoyBolivia.com and ernestojustiniano.org, between 17 April and 30 July 2009. Articles from The Wall Street Journal and El País of Madrid.

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