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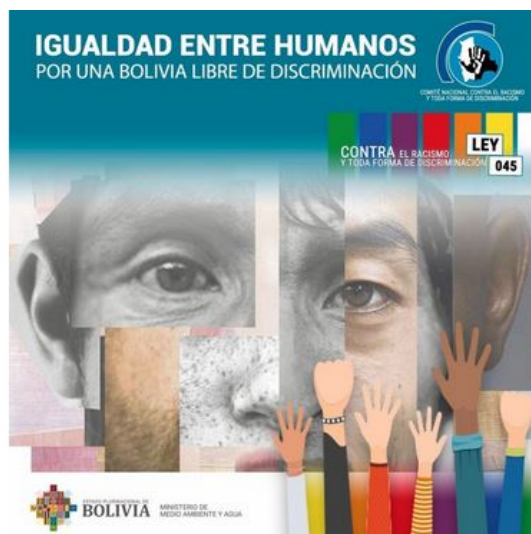
زبانهای اروپایی

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## *Bolivia: The fight against racism and discrimination*

The fight against racism is of a continental nature, therefore, a new imaginary is brewing that breaks borders and demands the establishment of the diplomacy of the peoples".



On May 24, the Consulate General of Bolivia in Santiago de Chile, held a virtual discussion called "Racism and discrimination in the migration of our peoples", in the context of the National Day against Racism and all forms of Discrimination.

The activity, whose opening was made by the Consul Fernando López Ariñez, and its moderation was in charge of the Vice-consul, Marco Caballero, had the participation of the National Coordinator of Migrants of Chile, Vanessa González; former Afro-Bolivian deputy Jorge Medina; the constitutionalist Gustavo Medina; and sociologist and social analyst Antonio Abal.

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In his speech, Jorge Medina referred to the Constituent Assembly process that began on August 6, 2006 and concluded on December 10, 2007, emphasizing that, "the assembly resolved that indigenous, peasant and Afro-Bolivian peoples have special reserved seats in the Chamber of Deputies, without the need for 'others' to speak for us." and added that, "for a long time the Afro people have been demanding an end to discrimination against us. And I can affirm it with all conviction because I have lived it."

Jorge Medina said that, already as a deputy of the Plurinational Assembly, he presented the Bill against racism and discrimination against his people. He even recalled that in La Paz there was a time when Afro-Bolivians were treated as "a kind of lucky charm, a simple object," adding that, "the mass media played a very important role in promoting discrimination. They even showed some of our brothers on television to say that they did not agree with Law 045 against racism. In the long run, the population, especially the most humble, made the contents of the law their own, after a long work of information. There is still a great cultural work to modify prejudices rooted for so long in the country, but, without a doubt, sob".

#### *A current scourge*

For his part, the constitutionalist Gustavo Medina said that, "for many people racism is a problem of the past, when today acts of brutality occur in the name of a supposed 'racial supremacism'. Suffice it to recall that in 2008, fifty peasant brothers were beaten,

humiliated, subjected to crawling on their knees through the streets of Sucre for the mere fact of defending the inclusive principles of our Constitution. Not to mention even what often happens in the United States. Unfortunately, racism continues to operate just as it did yesterday."

"Because of this, our Constitution includes in several of its articles the substantive elements that strongly reject all forms of racism and discrimination," said Gustavo Medina, adding that, "the scourge of discrimination not only remains in a principle and a law; the State is provided with a battery of concrete tools that effectively make racist actions punishable."

### *Migration: a human right*

The National Coordinator of Migrants of Chile, Vanessa González, said that her platform "fights for the human right to migrate and for people to be subjects of law, regardless of their origin, ethnicity, documentary situation, combating xenophobia and racism" and added that, "during the pandemic our situation has been critically exacerbated due to the fact that national security policies have been applied that have affected the various migrant communities, even racializing them, as is the case with Afro-descendant migration."



González reported that in Chile, "during the worst moments of the pandemic, there were episodes of racial discrimination in terms of public health care. Likewise, Afro-diasporic communities were harshly stigmatized and associated with crime and organized crime.

The paradox of these levels of discrimination is that in Chile itself, although some of its sectors intend to 'whitewash', it is a space where different nation peoples coexist," and explained that, "in recent years the Chilean authorities further militarized the borders and we have news of migrants who died while crossing the desert. All this within the framework of legislation based on selectivity, arbitrariness and migratory restriction, and on the internal security of the State, after which we notice a xenophobic, aporophobic and racist mood. We also had to observe the illegal expulsions of groups of migrants, which fortunately began to cease. Similarly, we note the political instrumentalization of migrant communities by openly supremacist groups. Quite the opposite of a policy of welcoming migration."

*Against racism, the diplomacy of the peoples*

The Bolivian sociologist and social analyst, Antonio Abal, said that, "one thing is the law, the good intentions behind it, but racism is an attitude anchored in the minds of many, since Latin American countries have suffered colonialism. That is why, to a large extent, our social and state structures are still colonial, as well as our subjectivities come from the phenomenon called coloniality", and pointed out that, "from Canada to Tierra del Fuego we have been territories of European conquest. And beyond the limits of nation states, today peoples have common goals. The fight against racism is of a continental nature, therefore, a new imaginary is brewing that breaks borders and demands the establishment of the diplomacy of the peoples".

*Andres Figueroa Cornejo*

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