



# Global Nonviolent Action Database

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## Bolivians strike and demonstrate against raised fuel prices, 2010

26 December

2010

to: 31 December

2010

**Country:** Bolivia

**Location City/State/Province:** *La Paz, El Alto, Santa Cruz, Potosi, Oruro, and Cochabamba*

**Goals:**

To prevent the elimination of fuel subsidies and thus the raising of fuel prices.

### Methods

**Methods in 1st segment:**

- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 039. Parades
- 104. Professional strike › by teachers
- 106. Industry strike › Transportation

**Methods in 2nd segment:**

- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 039. Parades
- 104. Professional strike › by teachers
- 106. Industry strike › Transportation

**Methods in 3rd segment:**

- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 039. Parades
- 104. Professional strike › by teachers
- 106. Industry strike › Transportation

**Methods in 4th segment:**

- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 039. Parades
- 104. Professional strike › by teachers
- 106. Industry strike › Transportation

**Methods in 5th segment:**

- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 038. Marches
- 039. Parades
- 104. Professional strike › by teachers
- 106. Industry strike › Transportation
- 172. Nonviolent obstruction › Blockades in the streets

**Methods in 6th segment:**

- 039. Parades
- 104. Professional strike › by teachers
- 106. Industry strike › Transportation
- 172. Nonviolent obstruction › Blockades in the streets

## Classifications

**Classification:**

Defense

**Cluster:**

Economic Justice

**Group characterization:**

- civilians
- teachers
- truck drivers
- union members

## Leaders, partners, allies, elites

**Leaders:**

Confederation of Drivers

**Partners:**

Central Obrera Boliviana, Teachers

**External allies:**

Not known

**Involvement of social elites:**

La Paz Mayor Luis Revilla

## Joining/exiting order of social groups

**Groups in 1st Segment:**

- Teachers
- drivers

**Groups in 2nd Segment:**

**Groups in 3rd Segment:**  
**Groups in 4th Segment:**  
**Groups in 5th Segment:**  
**Groups in 6th Segment:**  
**Segment Length:** 1 day

## Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

**Opponents:**

Police, President Evo Morales

**Nonviolent responses of opponent:**

Not known

**Campaigner violence:**

Protestors threw rocks at police. The violence was not endorsed by the union organizers and was committed by a small fraction of those who participated in the campaign.

**Repressive Violence:**

Not known

## Success Outcome

**Success in achieving specific demands/goals:**

6 points out of 6 points

**Survival:**

1 point out of 1 points

**Growth:**

3 points out of 3 points

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On Sunday 26 December Bolivia's government abruptly ended a six-year freeze on fuel prices, raising the price of gasoline by 73% and diesel by 83%. Vice president Alvaro Garcia said this change in policy was necessary because the subsidy cost US\$380 million a year- 2% of Bolivia's gross domestic national product and US\$150 million of the gasoline was smuggled into other countries and sold at higher prices. The cost of the subsidies was projected to increase to over US\$1 billion in 2011. The artificially low prices discouraged development of Bolivia's gasoline resources and created a reliance on oil imports from Venezuela. Bus drivers said they would strike and teachers said they would hold street demonstrations.

On Monday 27 December the Confederation of Drivers (CCHB), representing 175,000 workers, began to strike bringing bus and taxi services to a halt, and teachers began a partial work-stop strike. The government used military vehicles to transport citizens for free during the strike.

Other unions from around the country not directly related to transportation including Bolivian Workers Central or Central Obrera Boliviana (COB) supported CCHB and met in La Paz to discuss further actions on 28 December.

On 29 December President Evo Morales announced a plan to raise the national minimum wage by 20% to compensate for the fuel price hikes. The COB threatened to organize a national strike if the President did not keep this promise to raise the minimum wage.

On 30 December the protest demonstrations, which became known as "gasolinazo," engulfed the country. Transportation was crippled due to the transportation strike. Truck drivers blocked key intersections in Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, and outside La

Paz. In the mining cities of Potosi and Oruro workers went on strike and staged street demonstrations.

In the capital city of La Paz, police used tear gas to disperse protestors marching on the Presidential Palace. Nearby, thousands of demonstrators barricaded roads in El Alto, the residential neighborhood where the international airport is located. Demonstrators burned tires, automobiles, and a Venezuelan flag. They threw rocks at government buildings and police officers, injuring fifteen, two of them seriously.

Police responded by lobbing tear gas at demonstrators in El Alto and at angry mobs burning tollbooths on the highway between El Alto and La Paz.

La Paz Mayor Luis Revilla, a former ally of Evo Morales, then led a protest march against the fuel hike in La Paz. Five police were injured, one in critical condition, and 16 protestors were arrested for use of violence. Protestors damaged buildings across Bolivia containing government offices or offices of organizations tied to Evo Morales.

Evo Morales mobilized the military to distribute basic supplies to civilians for free during the crisis.

Late on Friday, 31 December, Evo Morales reinstated the fuel subsidy stating "There is no justification for raising transportation fares or food prices right now." He maintained that it was necessary to raise fuel prices eventually.

## Research Notes

### Influences:

This campaign was influenced by protests that removed Evo Morales' predecessor from office. (1)

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**Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:**

Jonathan White, 16/03/2013

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