

Bolivia cancels controversial Amazon highway

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Amazonian natives women arrive to the Plaza de Armas square in La Paz, on October 20 after a two-month march from the Amazon against a government plan to build a highway through their ancestral homeland. President Evo Morales has announced he was cancelling the controversial plan.

Bolivian President Evo Morales announced Friday he was cancelling a controversial plan to build a highway through an Amazon ecological reserve that has triggered widespread protests.

Morales told reporters he had sent an amendment to Congress, controlled by government supporters, halting the plans for the road through the Isiboro Secure National Park and Indigenous Territory (TIPNIS).

"Therefore, the issue of the TIPNIS has been resolved," Morales said. "This is governing by obeying the people."

Morales made the announcement just ahead of a meeting with representatives of some 2,000 [indigenous people](#) who entered La Paz on Wednesday after a two-month march from their [ancestral homeland](#) in the Amazon [lowlands](#) to press Morales to cancel the project.

The marchers, who set out in August and trekked 600 kilometers (370 miles) to the capital, were met as heroes as they entered the city in the high [Andes](#) and made their way to the presidential palace.

About 50,000 people from three different native groups live in the remote territory in the humid Amazon lowlands.

Amazon natives also feared that landless Andean Quechua and Aymara people -- Bolivia's main indigenous groups and Morales supporters -- would flood into the road area and colonize their land.

The government has said it would be too expensive to build the highway around the preserve.

The Brazil-financed road was part of a network linking land-locked Bolivia to both the Pacific through Chile and the Atlantic through Brazil, a key outlet for Bolivian exports.

Morales, the country's first indigenous president, has come under tremendous popular pressure to end the project.

A police crackdown on a march against the highway that left 74 people injured in late September triggered widespread anger, a general strike, and the resignations of several top [government officials](#), including two ministers.

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