

Bolivia flight barred from parts of Europe

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND: Bolivia will file a complaint to UN chief Ban Ki-moon over a move by several European countries to block President Evo Morales's plane from flying over their airspace, the Latin American nation's envoy said Wednesday (3 July).



"The decisions of these countries have violated international law. We are already making procedures to denounce this to the UN secretary general," Bolivia's ambassador to the UN Sacha Llorenti told reporters in Geneva.

Bolivia said France, Spain, Portugal and Italy initially denied Morales's plane over-flying rights, amid suspicions that fugitive US intelligence whistle-blower Edward Snowden was on board the plane.

Morales's plane eventually left Vienna after a stopover of more than 12 hours and on its way to the Spanish Canary Island of Las Palmas for servicing before continuing on to Bolivia.

Llorenti said the diversion constituted an "act of aggression" against Bolivia, was tantamount to "kidnapping" Morales and may cause "irreparable damage" to diplomatic relations.

Condemnation

"Bolivia not only condemns these acts, but will take all international legal steps so this is not overlooked," Llorenti said, declining to be drawn on what steps his country would take.

The plane originally departed from Moscow, where Morales had been on an official visit and where Snowden is holed up at in an airport transit area. The Bolivian plane was forced to land in Vienna en route to Bolivia.

"This has put the life of the president, his delegation, and the crew of the plane in danger," said Llorenti.

"We have no doubt that it was an order from the White House. For no reason whatsoever a diplomatic plane with a president in that plane should be diverted from its route and forced to land in another country," Llorenti said.

Bolivia is among 21 countries where Snowden's supporters say he is seeking asylum, although Llorenti said no application had not been received yet.

Llorenti mocked the countries that barred the jet, noting they were also among the most vocal critics of the US snooping on European countries exposed by Snowden.

"They are now tools of the United States. In the 19th century, the colonies were in Latin America and now

see the colonies are in some countries of Europe," Snowden claimed

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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