

# Coup attempt in Bolivia fails as president urges people to mobilize against democracy threat

LA PAZ, Bolivia — Armored vehicles rammed the doors of Bolivia’s government palace Wednesday in an apparent coup attempt against President Luis Arce, but he vowed to stand firm and named a new army commander who ordered troops to stand down.

The soldiers later pulled back as supporters of Arce waved Bolivian flags and cheered in a central square.

In a video of Arce surrounded by ministers in the palace, the Bolivian leader said: “Here we are, firm in Casa Grande, to confront any coup attempt. We need the Bolivian people to organize.”

Arce confronted the general commander of the army — Juan José Zúñiga, who appeared to be leading the rebellion — in the palace hallway, as shown on video on Bolivian television. “I am your captain, and I order you to withdraw your soldiers, and I will not allow this insubordination,” Arce said.

Before entering the government building, Zúñiga told journalists in the plaza: “Surely soon there will be a new Cabinet of ministers; our country, our state cannot go on like this.” But, he said, “for now” he recognizes Arce as commander in chief.

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