

Under our constitution, the president of the republic is like the Sun, immovable at the center of the universe, radiating life. This supreme authority should be permanent, because in systems without hierarchies, a fixed point around which magistrates and citizens and men and events revolve is more necessary than in other systems. Give me a fixed point, said an ancient, and I will move the earth. For Bolivia, this point is a president for life. In him, all order originates, even though he lacks the power to act. He has been beheaded so that no one will fear his intentions, and his hands have been tied so that he can harm no one. ...

The most perfect guarantees have been written into this draft: Civil liberty is the only true freedom; the others are nominal or of little importance insofar as they affect the citizens. The security of the individual has been guaranteed, this being the purpose of society and the source of all other guarantees. As for property rights, these will depend on the civil code that in your wisdom you will compose with all dispatch for the happiness of your fellow citizens. I have left intact the law of all laws — equality. Without this, all guarantees, all rights perish. To ensure equality, we must make every sacrifice, beginning with infamous slavery, which I have laid at her feet, covered with shame.

Legislators! Slavery is the violation of every law. The law that would seek to preserve it would be a sacrilege. What possible justification can there be for its perpetuation? From whatever perspective you consider this crime, I cannot persuade myself that any Bolivian could be depraved enough to want to legitimize this most abominable violation of human dignity. One man owned by another! A man regarded as property! One of God's images hitched to the yoke like a beast!....

-Simon Bolivar, "Address to the Bolivian Constituent Congress" (1826) excerpt