

Bolivian troops, students clash; 1 dead

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SUCRE, Bolivia --

Soldiers clashed with students protesting Bolivia's constitutional assembly on Saturday, leaving one student dead in a second day of unrest against the pending legal overhaul.

University student Gonzalo Duran was shot dead during disturbances in the southern city of Sucre, said Marcelo Carvajal, head of emergency medicine at the city's Santa Barbara hospital. Another student was hospitalized with serious gunshot wounds, he told The Associated Press.

Sucre city council head Fidel Herrera told Bolivia's Unitel television network that two students had been killed.

Interior Minister Alfredo Rada said it was unclear who had fired the shots. He said police and soldiers did not use "deadly weapons."

Thousands of students and residents took to the streets of Sucre Friday and Saturday, marching to a local military academy where government allies are meeting to draft revisions to the nation's constitution. Most opposition delegates to the assembly refused to attend the sessions after they were moved to the military academy.

Protesters want the assembly to relocate Bolivia's capital from La Paz to Sucre, a proposal the government has rejected for months.

Sucre is the site of Bolivia's 1825 founding and its first capital. The home to the nation's highest courts, the picturesque colonial city now wants the executive and legislative branches that it lost to La Paz in a brief 1899 civil war to return - and bring with them much-needed economic development.

The constitutional overhaul, which President Evo Morales vows will grant the country's indigenous majority greater say in government, is one of his main political projects.

But the assembly has haggled for more than a year over Bolivia's future without agreeing on a single article of the new constitution, despite a fast-approaching Dec. 14 deadline for a draft.

Violent anti-government protests suspended the assembly in September, as students clashed with police, burning tires and trying to seize the historic theater where the assembly then met.

Government allies this month resumed meeting at a military academy outside Sucre, surrounded by troops.

But clashes forced the assembly to suspend meetings again Saturday night, after approving a preliminary version of the new constitution. Assembly president Silvia Lazarte said no date has been set for sessions to resume.

