

SALSA Demands an End to the Repression of Indigenous Peoples in Peru

February 26, 2023

The Society for the Anthropology of the Lowlands of South America, an international academic organization composed of scholars, students and professionals, rejects the repressive policy adopted in Peru in response to the political crisis that began in December of last year and calls for a peaceful and democratic resolution. The excessive and indiscriminate use of violence in the repression of political protest affects especially racial minorities, members of peasant and union organizations, Indigenous groups (Andean and Amazonian), and student federations. The three main demands of the citizen protest are: (1) the resignation of President Dina Boluarte, (2) early elections in 2023, and (3) a referendum on the formation of a constituent assembly. These are supported by an overwhelming majority of Peruvians, according to recent opinion polls.

The regions of Peru that have suffered the most intense human rights violations are those with a predominance of Indigenous populations and territories. Among the victims of the massacres are minors and medical personnel who were assisting the wounded. The repression has also resulted in arbitrary arrests and the harassment of Indigenous delegations and peasant federations that have traveled to Lima to join the protests in the capital. We are following with particular concern the violent eviction of the delegations that were at the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Peru's main public university, which is an important center for research on the Amazon as well as one of the few universities accessible to young Amazonian students. We are particularly concerned by the reports and testimonies of cruel treatment of students and members of the delegations detained at the hands of the Peruvian National Police. Finally, we want to draw attention to the numerous reports of mistreatment and harassment of independent journalists who report on arbitrary arrests and other abusive acts committed by the police. Far from assuming any political responsibility, the Peruvian government has justified its actions by associating legitimate protests with "terrorism", international conspiracies, drug trafficking and illegal mining. This stigmatization of citizens who legitimately protest as terrorists does not contribute to a peaceful solution to the crisis and, on the contrary, deepens the crisis.

The Peruvian government's response to the crisis not only sows doubts about the possibility of a neutral investigation of the crimes that have occurred, it also prevents a peaceful resolution of the conflict that would allow for dialogue with the demands of the various citizen sectors, especially: Indigenous Peoples, peasant communities, students and popular classes. Widespread racism, classism, and other types of discrimination in the current polarized scenario make it impossible for Indigenous Peoples, peasant communities, and other racialized sectors to fully exercise their political rights. SALSA reiterates its call for an immediate cessation of the excessive use of repressive violence in Peru. Likewise, we reaffirm our commitment to a political solution to the crisis, which must include the active participation of Indigenous Peoples and peasant communities

in such a way that their proposals are taken seriously and with unrestricted respect for human rights. We also support those actions of justice that seek the punishment of those responsible materially and politically, as well as actions aimed at repairing the damage caused to the numerous victims of this conflict, the vast majority of whom are members of racialized and historically marginalized sectors of the citizenship of Peru.

Helpful Links:

- <https://aidesep.org.pe/noticias/movilizacion-nacional-indigena-en-la-amazonia-hasta-lograr-el-adelanto-de-elecciones-generales/>
- <https://vigilanteamazonico.pe/2022/12/12/pueblos-indigenas-de-la-amazonia-se-movilizan-contra-gobierno-de-dina-boluarte/>
- https://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/per%C3%BA-crisis_ind%C3%ADgenas-amaz%C3%B3nicos-de-ecuador-condenan-la--brutal--represi%C3%B3n-en-per%C3%BA/48143170

- <https://ojo-publico.com/4202/cidh-denuncia-terruqueo-y-estigmatizacion-parte-autoridades>
- <https://derechoshumanos.pe/2023/01/alto-a-las-masacres/>
- <https://twitter.com/cnddhh/status/1613204312535990273>
- <https://twitter.com/CIDH/status/1616890127808188418?s=20&t=gTiCMWE0XTbqPzjKgX44cg>
- <https://twitter.com/OACNUDHPeru/status/1616848899242692612?s=20&t=gTiCMWE0XTbqPzjKgX44cg>
- <https://lasaweb.org/uploads/statement-2023-jan-peru-en.pdf>
- https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2023/01/22/a-lima-violente-descente-de-police-dans-un-campus-accueillant-des-manifestants_6158870_3210.html
- <https://www.nytimes.com/es/2023/01/27/espanol/peru-protestas-policia-boluarte.html>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/18/world/americas/peru-protests.html>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/17/world/americas/peru-protests-democracy.html>
- <https://peru.un.org/es/216759-declaracion-atribuible-al-portavoz-del-secretario-general-sobre-peru>
- <https://www.dw.com/es/protestas-en-per%C3%BA-ya-dejan-60-muertos-tras-deceso-de-hombre-en-puno/a-64476550>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/13/peru-protests-political-unrest-deaths>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/jan/12/the-guardian-view-on-perus-political-violence-stop-the-killings>