

PERU CRISIS

LEGITIMATE DEMANDS, REPRESSION, MISRULE, VANDALISM AND DEATH

The democratic election of Pedro Castillo Terrones as President of Peru, with the support of the votes from "deep Peru", was a hard blow for the Right. They unleashed a systematic and sustained attack using all their means, the media, and their parliamentary majority in Congress, even before he took office.

A lack of experience, a lack of knowledge on how to govern and excessive trust led him to surround himself with dubious and corrupt characters, which resulted in further attacks on his government.

However, his election had already lit the fuse of discontent among the historically ignored and segregated population from "deep Peru".

Deepening crisis. At the end of 2022, the right-wing majority in Congress was able to garner enough votes to suspend the President from office. As a result, the President attempted a coup on 7 December using odd political manoeuvres. The circumstances that led him to take such a decision are unclear. There are many different versions, on which we cannot speculate. However, the truth is that the President ended up ousted, arrested and remanded in custody.

With many procedural flaws, the Congress of the Republic declared Dina Boluarte the new President, with support from the mainly pro-Fujimori, right-wing benches, the approval of the media and large transnational companies. The US ambassador was the first to visit her in the palace to congratulate her on her appointment.

In the Southern Macroregion, made up of Arequipa, Apurímac, Cusco, Puno, Huancavelica, Ayacucho and Madre de Dios, and in various places in other regions, a series of public protests began with the following demands:

1. Dina Boluarte's resignation from the presidency, due to her perceived betrayal of the principles for which she was elected on the presidential ticket. She is considered to be a usurper of the presidential sash;
2. Closure of the Congress of the Republic and the holding of new general elections to elect a new president;

3. Reinstatement of Pedro Castillo. Some segments are in favour of this demand because a democratically elected president has been removed from office;
4. A new constitution. A section of the population is calling for a new constitution, or at least a referendum on whether or not a new constitution is what the people want.

Their slogan is clear: there will be no dialogue until their demands are met.

The desire for structural changes in Peruvian society and the chance to demonstrate to the world that poor and neglected people can protest have led to organised marches in the protesters' home towns. They have been violently repressed and fired upon by the armed forces and police, leaving many dead, injured and arrested in Ayacucho, Puno, Arequipa and Huancavelica. This has further angered snubbed segments of the population and thousands have marched to Lima, the city considered to be at the root of their suffering and underdevelopment.

After Fujimori's government, Dina Boluarte's government is the bloodiest in Peru's history. Some key actions that define this mandate:

- a) This government has seen more deaths of citizens than days in office.
- b) It has closed squares and main avenues in Lima for the purpose of preventing the demonstrations, and tear gas is being used constantly against the protesters.
- c) Excessive force and mistreatment of university students and ordinary people accommodated on the campus of the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, using undeserved actions that would be inconceivable in a real democracy.

Misrule: The government, for the sake of keeping the right-wing in power, is failing to take into account the demands made by the majority of the people. The President, and Minister Otárola, claim that the protesters are small, violent groups, financed by nefarious interests, and that financing or arms have come from Bolivia. This is generating more outrage among the population, and as a result, protesters are becoming more radicalised. In several locations, roads have been blocked and we are witnessing mass movements of people from the interior regions of the country to the capital. All of these acts are affecting the general population, in terms of the availability of basic necessities.

Vandalism: Vandalism has been no stranger to peaceful and legitimate demonstrations. Some are taking advantage of the protests to seize businesses illegally and violently, and to attack the integrity of public and private property.

Death: Our greatest sorrow is the loss of life of our compatriots, with over 50 deaths recorded. This is the result of excessive force and unlawful acts committed by misguided members of the armed forces and police, as well as by some protesters and infiltrators acting for purposes that run counter to those of the population at large.

The Attorney General's Office is noticeably absent.

In light of these events, the undersigned Emmaus groups make the following statement:

- We strongly condemn all acts of violence perpetrated by members of the state bodies, as forbidden under the constitution itself and under international human rights charters.
- Furthermore, we strongly condemn acts of vandalism, theft and looting by some minority groups of civilian protesters, who are misusing the correct forms of protest, as well as by infiltrators. These actions are causing chaos within the just and legitimate demonstrations.
- We also condemn the verbal aggression and the indiscriminate use of the term "terruqueo" [disparaging and racist term linking protesters to left-wing terrorists], expressions of racism against the people, particularly Indigenous peoples, by politicians, the media and opinion leaders who stir up hatred among Peruvians.
- We hope for a prompt response from the government to the protesters' demands.

Yes to peace, yes to the building of a more inclusive and fairer Peru by all and for all, respecting our differences, with transparency, solidarity and a better distribution of our wealth.

Traperos de Emaús Trujillo

Traperos de Emaús Solidaridad y Apoyo Lima

Traperos de Emaús Lambayeque.