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Peru

In the face of repression and crisis, organizing solidarity

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“Listen Peru, Paris is with you! Dina Assassin. The people reject you”, “Peru I love you, that’s why I’m demonstrating”. These slogans resounded in the streets of Paris, between Châtelet and the Place de la République. They were raised by dozens of Peruvians, Latin Americans and French people on Sunday 29 January to express their solidarity with the Peruvian people and their struggle against the government of President Dina Boluarte.

At the end of the demonstration, at the Place de la République, addressing the international community, the Peruvian spokesperson for the Memory against Impunity Coordination, which organized this Parisian demonstration in solidarity, said: “It has been 52 days since Dina Boluarte took office as President of Peru. At least 57 people have been recorded dead (56 of whom are civilians), hundreds injured and thousands arbitrarily detained. We wish to denounce once again our rejection of the violation of human rights that we have been experiencing for 7 weeks in Peru” [...] Similarly, on Friday 27 January, at the Maison de l’Amérique Latine in Paris, Tica Luiza Obregòn, former vice-president of the Lawyers of Peru, launched a live appeal for solidarity from all democratic organizations in the world, during the meeting organised by France Amérique Latine and the association Peruvians United for a Constituent Assembly. The National Coordination Committee for Human Rights (CNDDHH - Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos), a recognized Peruvian organization, had described the government’s repressive response to the protest demonstrations as “crimes against humanity” on Thursday 26 January.

The situation is worsening in Peru

The capital Lima has just recorded the first death in a demonstration on Friday 27 January. Since the *toma de Lima* (taking of Lima - the march to Lima by citizens from the southern Andean provinces and from all over Peru [\[1\]](#)) on 19 January, since the occupation of the National University of San Marcos on Saturday 21 January by armed police and tanks knocking down the gates of this venerable university - the oldest in Latin America - and the 200 humiliated student prisoners, new waves of citizens gathered in Lima (at the call of a national student coordination) for a new march on 24 January to make heard what for weeks more and more popular masses have been demanding from the revolt of the provinces of the Southern Andes, Puno, Apurimac, Cuzco, Arequipa, Ayacucho: “Resignation of Dina Boluarte! Immediate closure of the Congress! Elections now! For a Constituent Assembly!”

As the spokeswoman for the Coordination Memory against Impunity said in Paris on Sunday:

Those who are protesting have demands that have been historically rejected, absence of the state, the lowest poverty indices, the lack of support for agriculture, the disastrous consequences of exacerbated extractivism, among others....

Peru continues to fail to understand itself as a nation-state “of all bloods” (in the words of the great Peruvian writer José Maria Arguedas). Faced with the negation of the other, the thousands of citizens who have arrived in Lima demand to be listened to and denounce this omnipresent racism and the imposition of “order” by force. There is no sincere dialogue about who we are (i.e. the multiple identities that exist in Peru) and what we want as a country in a democratic way. The only path that has been opened is that of repression and the murder of our compatriots. This authoritarian attitude of the hegemonic political class in the Parliament is verified by the refusal and prohibition to use the path of a citizen referendum to know if we agree or not with a new Constitution, accusing those who demand the debate for a Constituent Assembly of being “violent”.

Out with Dina Boluarte and close the Congress! This is the popular clamour that seeks to recover our institutions sequestered by organised mafias and corruption, such as that of the "white collar" and the Fujimori family. It is the unanimous cry of those who mourn our fallen brothers and sisters. It synthesises the rejection of the current political class (...).

For the past 10 days, demonstrations have not stopped in Lima and throughout the country, carrying these demands.

The response of the regime

According to some analysts, bringing forward the general elections could lift the lid of the pressure cooker a bit. Right-wing sectors (fujimorists) believe that it would be in their electoral interest to favour elections in the last quarter of 2023. However, the ultra-discredited Congress has just opposed this, although it is due to review this position at the end of January. Faced with the first protests in December 2022, it had brought forward the planned 2026 elections to April 2024, but the necessary 2nd confirmation vote has not yet been held.

Repression is the only response of Dina Boluarte's government. It is stepping up the militarization of the country (sending a contingent of 500 armed men to the southern provinces), launching militarized operations to clear the roads, announcing a high bonus for the "heroic" national police authorized in Lima to try to break up any demonstrations with tear gas grenades, shotguns and batons. Dina Boluarte herself, present at the meeting of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), denounced (without naming them) the states that criticized her government (albeit very timidly and in a purely verbal manner) and supported the "violent" ones (Bolivia, Mexico, Colombia, Chile). This certainly shakes up his government a bit. In just over a month, 8 ministers have already resigned, 4 of whom explicitly disagree with the police violence used. These shocks lead him to reinforce his alliance with the military and police apparatus, thus leading to the militarization of the country and transforming it more and more into a civil-military government.

The right and the extreme right, the hegemonic press, are rallying around Dina Boluarte. Giving in to the demands of the demonstrators by forcing her to resign would be a destabilizing factor for their regime. They also need to gain time to adopt counter-reforms that will allow them to control the electoral processes and the institutions that organize them, while relying on the governmental repression against the protesting sectors.

International solidarity

The attacks against the Peruvian people, the deaths, the wounds, the beatings, the humiliation, the slander are wounds for all of us, those who aspire to a just society, free from exploitation and oppression. This is why we must take up the struggle in solidarity with the Peruvian people, as the Paris demonstration on Sunday 29 January and the meeting on 27 January have begun to do.

2 February 2023

Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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[1] Echoing the words of Antonia Cuchachi Salazar, vice-president of CUNARC (national coordination of the assemblies of "ronderos" - peasant militias of Peru), live from Lima, during the public meeting on Friday 27 January at the Maison de l'Amérique latine in Paris, organised by France Amérique latine.