

Open letter from Members of Parliament from Europe:

Protecting human rights in Peru – resolving the political crisis peacefully

We, Members of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament from Germany, France, the UK, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Portugal, Denmark, Norway, Ireland, Switzerland and Latvia, are greatly concerned about the human rights situation in Peru, in the light of reports of violent repression, arbitrary killings and arrests, as well as torture and disappearances of protesters.

On 7 December 2022, the Peruvian Congress voted to impeach President Pedro Castillo after he announced his intention to dissolve Congress. Since his arrest on that day, Pedro Castillo has been in pre-trial detention on suspicion of rebellion and conspiracy. In response to this, there have been wide-scale nationwide protests against the “transitional government” under Dina Boluarte. The demonstrators are calling for fresh elections and a constituent assembly.

Since the beginning of the protests, Peruvian and international human rights organisations have reported excessive violence against the protesters and systematic human rights violations on the part of the Peruvian security forces. According to the Peruvian Ombudsman’s Office, in the first three months, 66 people have died in connection with the protests and thousands have been injured. Of these victims, 46 people died in the first 50 days alone as a result of direct use of force by the police and military, according to the Peruvian National Coordinator for Human Rights (*Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos*, CNDDHH). The human rights organisation Amnesty International has documented repeated instances of unlawful use of lethal weapons against civilians, in particular against members of the indigenous population and rural farmworkers, and in a number of cases alleged wilful killing with gunshots to the chest, upper body or head.

We call on the “transitional government” under Dina Boluarte to put a stop to all cases of violence against civilians, to guarantee the right to peaceful and social protest, to halt the criminalisation and stigmatisation of protesters, and to facilitate the independent investigation and prosecution of human rights violations with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

We join UN experts, including the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association and the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, in calling for a peaceful and democratic solution to the political crisis, one that takes into account the demands of the protesters.

We are urgently calling for the principles and procedures of the rule of law to be upheld and for human rights to be guaranteed in the trial of deposed President Pedro Castillo. This includes the right to a fair and public trial by an independent and impartial court, as well as effective counsel on the part of and access to his lawyers. We are concerned for the health and life of Pedro Castillo and call for him to be released from prison on humanitarian and health grounds.

List of signatories:

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