

Protests resume against US-backed Boluarte regime in Peru

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21 July 2023

At least 20,000 people from across Peru participated in a long-planned “third takeover” of the capital Lima on Wednesday July 19, joined by at least 95 smaller demonstrations and roadblocks across much of the country. Thousands have continued demonstrating in the following days and protests have been convoked for the Independence Day holiday on July 28 and 29.

Demonstrators demand the resignation of the fascistic regime under Dina Boluarte, her prosecution, the shutdown of Congress, new elections, and the freeing of Pedro Castillo, who was jailed for trumped up charges of rebellion after being overthrown in a US-backed parliamentary coup last December. Since then, the police and military have brutally cracked down on demonstrators, including with live ammunition, killing at least 70 and wounding hundreds more.

On Wednesday, the protests were attacked by anti-riot police in Lima and the town of Huancavelica, where the prefecture was lit on fire and students occupied a university. At least seven protesters and journalists were injured.

After months of localized and sporadic roadblocks and local strikes, the July 19 protests were the largest nationwide since March. The date was chosen in reference to the July 19, 1977, general strike that paralyzed Lima and several cities and led to the resignation of the US-backed military dictatorship under Gen. Francisco Morales Bermúdez.

As demonstrated by the dominant but limited contingents of indigenous peasant groups and students, the organizers in the United National Coordinator of Struggle (CNUL) and the official political opposition refuse to call for strikes and mobilize the working class in the city of 10 million.

Amid sharp increases of the already widespread poverty and inequality, and as polls show that more than 80 percent of Peruvians reject Boluarte and Congress and want new elections, the far-right is able to remain in power thanks to the treacherous role being played by the leadership of the demonstrations and the pseudo-left.

The CNUL is controlled by the General Confederation of Peruvian Workers (CGTP) bureaucracy, led by the Stalinist Peruvian Communist Party, its protest front the National People’s Assembly, and the National Central of Peasant Rondas, which consists of autonomous indigenous patrols in

charge of local security.

For months, these organizations have worked through countless local assemblies and meetings to rein in the initially leaderless and spontaneous protests against the coup, which were dominated by agricultural and rural workers and peasants. However, the CNUL is still following the same tactics of isolated marches and roadblocks that have been swiftly and brutally dispersed by the police and military, now being trained and accompanied on the ground by US troops with the principal aim of minimizing the effects on mining and commercial interests.

The Stalinist and indigenous leaderships have a long record of channeling opposition against various governments and the far-right behind support for one or another faction of the capitalist ruling elite that proceeds, as in the case of the Pedro Castillo administration, to attack and repress workers.

The leaders of the “takeover of Lima” ultimately represent layers of the provincial and indigenous bourgeoisie and urban upper-middle class that are offering to help contain and divert the unrest into a dead end in exchange for economic and political concessions. This is reflected in their call for a Constituent Assembly, which today would channel social opposition behind an attempt to breathe new life into Peru’s fatally discredited bourgeois political institutions, while further integrating the indigenous and middle class elites into the capitalist state bureaucracy.

An editorial by José Carlos Requena in the right-wing daily *El Comercio* stressed the limited character of the “takeover of Lima” and praised the “left,” but warned that “the relief from... social convulsion could be fleeting.” Requena pointed to conditions of economic stagnation, popular opposition to Boluarte and the regime’s overconfidence, with Prime Minister Alberto Otárola boasting that people could go about their normal day during the “takeover” and even attend football games with no need for concern.

The regime has continued to describe demonstrators as terrorists and classified all protests as threats, while also making appeals to the union leadership and pseudo-left, which have not gone unanswered.

On May 1, Isabel “Chabelita” Cortez a former trade unionist and current legislator for the pseudo-left coalition Juntos por el

Perú agreed to receive an award from Boluarte, which was widely seen as a gesture of support for the regime. A few days later, the coalition of trade unions of the state-owned company Petroperú published a statement expressing “our full-fledged support for the management and position of minister Oscar Vera Gargurevich,” referring to Boluarte’s minister of energy and mines.

Shortly after the coup, the CGTP leadership met with Boluarte and recognized her legitimacy, before taking a step back and calling for her resignation to better control the unrest.

The counter-revolutionary efforts by these “social organizations” have emboldened the ruling class and imperialism, which seek to establish a fascist and authoritarian regime following a prolonged crisis of bourgeois rule that has seen six presidents in under five years.

Boluarte has dropped her promises of early elections and vows to stay in power until 2026, while Congress has concentrated in its hands powers to impeach electoral and judicial authorities. Signaling the character of the economic policies being planned, 71 percent of businesspeople approve of Boluarte, according to a recent IPSOS poll.

Even the most basic democratic rights are being discarded. In a case related to roadblocks to the third largest copper mine in the country, Las Bambas, the Supreme Court ruled in May that all roadblocks and social protests are violent and a crime.

Earlier this month, there were widespread expression of outrage after the Ministry of Culture held a meeting with the neo-Nazi group La Resistencia, including its leader Juan Muñico Gonzales (Jota Maelo).

After Minister Leslie Urteaga acknowledged that she approved the invitation (first claiming that it was part of an effort to have “dialogue with everyone” to further a “Peru without Racism” campaign), the government stressed that she would not be fired. The leader of the far-right Fuerza Popular party led by Keiko Fujimori and other right wing legislators defended the meeting. Diana Álvarez, a top official in the ministry resigned in protest, indicating that the meeting had nothing to do with an anti-racism campaign.

La Resistencia employs the Nazi salute and antisemitic rhetoric and operates as shock troops for the *Fujimorista* wing of the political establishment, carrying out threats and violent attacks against political opponents, journalists, judges and other officials. This included harassing Avelino Guillén for leading the prosecution against dictator Alberto Fujimori, Keiko’s father, over massacres carried out by his death squads.

The Biden administration played a key role in the coup that installed Boluarte and is providing the regime with its full political and material support. US ambassador Lisa Kenna, a CIA veteran, used social media and behind-the-scenes “signals” to the military command to disobey Castillo’s orders as he sought to dissolve Congress and prevent his impeachment on the day of the coup.

Last month, clearly in anticipation of the renewed protests,

the Peruvian Congress approved the deployment of more than 1,200 US troops in Peru with military equipment until the end of the year. US forces were quickly deployed across the country and have led several joint military exercises, including a 16-day “Bilateral Jungle Operations Exchange” with US Marines and the Resolute Sentinel exercises with US Air Force personnel.

In February, Boluarte approved a \$64.6 million disbursement to buy weapons for repressive operations. According to contracts reported by *La República*, the military bought hundreds of lethal and “non-lethal” weapons along with ammunition earlier this month from US and Israeli firms. The largest contract was for \$7.9 million in anti-riot gear from a shell company called Sourcing Group Corp. based in Miami and owned by the Peruvian Sergio Pérez Pomar. This no-bid contract states that the armament is aimed at “enforcing domestic order in relation to diverse social conflicts.”

While claiming to defend “liberty and democracy” worldwide, US imperialism hopes to use the fascist Boluarte regime to pull Peru away from its main economic partner, China, and crush any opposition from below to profit interests.

To defend their basic social and democratic rights, Peruvian workers must organize independently of the union bureaucracy and the indigenous leaderships and make use of their own power over all the main levers of the economy, in the mines, agro-industry, manufacturing plants, transportation, ports, schools and other key sectors. The working class needs to take over the leadership of the struggle against Boluarte, but this can only be done under its own banners and rank-and-file organizations.

The most powerful ally of Peruvian workers and the only one that can help them in their fundamental struggle against US imperialism is the working class in the US and other advanced countries, across Latin America and internationally.

The renewal of protests against Boluarte under the control of the same rotten political edifice controlled by the Stalinists and pseudo-left highlights the urgency for the building of a new leadership in the working class under its own internationalist, socialist and revolutionary program, a section of the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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