# Peru protest joins drivers, university students and relatives of state repression victims

**Cesar Uco**
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Thousands of National University of San Marcos (UNMSM) students, joined by other student groups, relatives of those killed in a 2023 wave of state repression and a contingent of public transport workers from Lima and Callao marched through Lima on January 28 toward the National Congress.

The “March of Sacrifice” was born in the southern Andean regions, such as Ayacucho, Andahuaylas, Juliaca, Cusco, Pichanaqui and Huancabamba. It was organized by the relatives of those murdered between January and March 2023, when newly installed President Dina Boluarte gave shoot-to-kill orders to suppress nationwide protests against the parliamentary coup that ousted her predecessor, Pedro Castillo. At least 50 died under a rain of police bullets. Boluarte herself was removed from office by Congress on October 10, 2025 for “permanent moral incapacity,” following a string of corruption allegations and polls showing her to be the most unpopular president in the country’s history.

The protesters left Juliaca—the city most representative of the brutal repression of Andean natives, Quechua and Aymara speakers—on January 23. They made the journey to Lima walking long stretches on foot and by bus. Juliaca is a transit hub for trucks carrying goods coming from Cusco, Puno and Apurímac, as well as all Bolivian commerce headed to the Pacific for export.

During the trip, they were stopped by police in the coastal city of Cañete, 155 km south of the capital. After several hours, the police yielded and allowed the buses to continue.

The relatives who had lost their children to police bullets led the January 28 march, carrying posters bearing images of the victims and slogans denouncing impunity for their killers. Also marching were young people wounded by the police in those fateful first three months of 2023.

Behind them came Gen-Z collectives that organized through social media and set out from UNMSM. They carried banners denouncing Peru’s recently installed President Jerí and the capitalist political parties

Behind them marched the transport workers. They made reference to the recent murders of drivers in Carabayllo and Comas, two working?class districts located in the northern part of Lima.

According to government figures, there were more than 56 murders of drivers and fare collectors in 2025; the unions put the figure at 180. The union leaders, drawn largely from small transport company operators, have collaborated with police in quelling previous protests. Their demands center on strengthening the repressive apparatus with more militarized policing and more prisons.

Clashes broke out when the police banned the march from advancing along Abancay Avenue. This time the police backed down and the march continued along that avenue until it reached Congress.

In three of the last four presidential changes, the police opened fire with intent to kill. The latest killing was of youth protester and rapper Eduardo Ruiz Sanz (aka Trvko) at the hands of an undercover police officer during a demonstration on October 15, 2025. That day Gen-Z took to the streets to protest the rise of José Jerí to the presidency.

Jerí was a corrupt congressman and has taken all his tricks with him to the Government Palace. Every day the newspapers publish more filth associated with Jerí. He staged a clandestine meeting with two Chinese businessmen in a Chinese restaurant, where the president tried to conceal his presence by wearing a hood. The meetings were not on his official schedule.

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The scandal is known as “Chifagate.” In Peru, Chinese restaurants are known as chifas. More information has been coming out that Jerí awarded plum government jobs to young women after they made late night visits to his residence.

According to RPP and Wayka, Jerí’s approval rating fell 10 percent between late November 2025 and today, early February 2026, with 56 percent disapproval. Facing presidential elections in April 2026, the congressional party caucuses are debating what would be less harmful: turning a blind eye to Jerí’s behavior, or to removing him from office.

Jerí is Peru’s eighth president in less than a decade, with four of his predecessors currently in jail.

Clara, who was among the people waiting for the marchers to reach Plaza San Martín, told the *World Socialist Web Site:* “I have come to the march to accompany the comrades who have been demanding justice for more than three years. [Former president] Dina Boluarte is a psychopath. She attacked more than 80 Peruvians among those killed, wounded and disappeared. Many [of those who took part in the protests from January to March 2023] are in prison without lawyers to defend them.”

“Jerí is just another servant of the dictatorship. It is more of the same. They simply got rid of Boluarte because her government could not go on any longer.”

She expressed disdain for the candidates for the presidency and the legislature: “Many of the politicians who aspire to the presidency and the legislature [in 2026 two chambers of representatives will be created: senators and deputies] come to the marches to win votes.”

She also voiced support for the slogan raised by some of the marchers calling for workers to build “neighborhood defense committees!” “This would be an option,” she said. “Because the police are also full of criminals. They work with the criminals. One in a million is honest.”

There is a growing radicalization of workers and youth in Peru amid the abject subordination of the unions and so-called “left” to the bourgeois state. The burning necessity is that of a new revolutionary leadership in the working class dedicated to uniting its struggles with those of workers throughout the Americas and around the world. This means building a Peruvian section of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

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