

Peruvian far-right stages scandal over elections as nominally “left” candidate climbs to second place

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Peru’s nominally “left” presidential candidate Roberto Sánchez Palomino is poised to advance to the second round after securing second place in the national vote on April 12.

According to the ONPE (National Office of Electoral Processes), which had counted only 95.97 percent of the ballots two weeks after the elections, Keiko Fujimori received 2,753,825 votes (17.06 percent), Roberto Sánchez of Together for Peru 1,943,155 votes (12.04 percent) and the far-right Rafael López Aliaga of Popular Renewal 1,918,981 votes (11.89 percent).

With a difference of 24,174 votes, what until last week was considered a virtual tie now makes it highly unlikely for López Aliaga to overtake Sánchez.

The media, controlled by a handful of aristocratic families, diligently went to work to cast doubt on the results, publishing large front-page headlines: “Fraud,” “ONPE’s incompetence in counting votes,” and “New election.”

Television news programs were not far behind, giving voice to the concerns about “a new Castillo in the presidency”—referring to the left nationalist President Pedro Castillo ousted in a parliamentary coup in December 2022.

The dominant sections of the bourgeoisie and their corrupt politicians feared any expression of left opposition to the dominant far-right parties, even in a tame fashion like the Sánchez candidacy. They are unwilling to accept even the smallest obstacle to their anti-worker policies and profiteering through the state.

The elections come after twelve months of a growing wave of class struggle. There were more than a dozen 24-hour public transportation strikes in Lima and Callao, supported by the entire citizenry and betrayed by union leaders who collaborated with the police. In addition, 60,000 EsSalud workers held a militant two-week strike in July 2025. University students, Gen Z youth, and other sectors have begun taking to the streets of Lima and other cities, clashing with the police, most recently to protest hikes in transit fares.

The null vote, the spoiled vote, and absenteeism won

The explosive levels of opposition to the entire political establishment were mainly expressed in abstention and spoiled ballots. Of the 27.3 million Peruvians eligible to vote, 8.4 million or 30.8 percent cast null votes, blank votes, or did not vote. That is three out of every 10 voters, more than the top two candidates combined, either cast a protest ballot or stayed home out of opposition to the entire bankrupt bourgeois democratic

system in Peru and its disregard for widespread poverty, informal employment, corruption, citizen insecurity, extortions, and other widely felt issues.

The distribution of the vote by department—the geographical-political division of Peru—remains largely similar in the first round result for Keiko Fujimori and Roberto Sánchez as it was in 2021 in the contest between Keiko Fujimori and Pedro Castillo.

Pedro Castillo and Sánchez both won in the departments of the highlands (the Andes) where the Quechua, Aymara and other native ethnic groups lived, conquered and assimilated by the Inca Empire—the Tahuantinsuyo.

Fujimori is shown to have won in the coastal-Andean department of La Libertad and in the central highlands of Junín. Compared to Castillo in 2021, Sánchez lost in Arequipa to Jorge Nieto of the Good Government Party—who was Minister of Defense during the administration of former President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski—and the city of Tacna to Ricardo Belmont.

Everything indicates that Sánchez will win in Arequipa and Tacna in the second round on June 7. Fujimori didn’t even reach 5 percent in these departments. She was met with insults and threats during her visit to Arequipa as a candidate.

A closer analysis of the vote, particularly in Metropolitan Lima, which accounts for a third of the vote nationwide, gives Keiko Fujimori a higher chance of reaching the presidency in her record fourth attempt as a presidential candidate.

In the first round, Sánchez received 12 percent of the vote in Lima, down 7 percent from Castillo’s 19 percent in 2021. Keiko, on the other hand, gained 4 percentage points, rising from 13 percent to 17 percent. In Metropolitan Lima, the far-right candidate and Keiko’s long-time ally in Congress, López Aliaga, won with 21 percent. This gives her a potentially decisive advantage, despite the strong anti-Keiko sentiment—inherited from the hatred directed at her father, dictator Alberto Fujimori, whom she defends.

The resignation of Piero Corvetto: president of the ONPE since 2000

Several ballot boxes destined for different districts failed to arrive on time, compelling the ONPE to resume the election the following day. There are also rumors that the ballot boxes were being transported on motorcycles or that some were found abandoned by the side of a road.

What took place was negligence and a significant logistical error but it has been exploited by López Aliaga, now in third place, to claim that there

was systematic fraud, for which there is no apparent evidence.

At a rally in Campo de Marte, he slandered ONPE chief Piero Corvetto and other top officials. Meanwhile, on social media, Keiko Fujimori called for Corvetto to step aside.

In the end, Corvetto relented and resigned “due to logistical problems encountered during the elections,” as reported by CNN. The following day, “the presidency of the JNJ [National Board of Justice] reported that an extraordinary plenary session unanimously accepted the resignation.”

The JNJ’s decision was made despite the fact that the organic law establishes that the position is non-renounceable during electoral processes. In other words, the JNJ’s decision is illegal, placing the institution above the law.

When the call for new national elections failed, López Aliaga called for repeating the election in Metropolitan Lima. The National Board of Justice (JNJ) denied the request for a new election in Metropolitan Lima, with López Aliaga left to continue his Trump-style claims of fraud and appeals for “insurrection” among his far-right followers.

The bourgeoisie, driven by vengeance, escalated the defamation of Corvetto, organizing a raid on his home, with front-page photos of heavily armed police officers.

Infobae reports that the raid was due to “alleged crimes that [include] collusion and omission of duties.”

This nefarious operation demonstrates the ruthless vehemence of the dominant political blocs, which are now shifting the conflict from vote totals to a scandal about the supposedly compromised election office. This allows for any unfavorable result to be potentially overcome through calls to annul, delay or reopen parts of the process now or in the second round.

Fujimori, Sánchez and López Aliaga: all corrupt representatives of the bourgeoisie

As the most prominent representative for the dominant sections of the national bourgeoisie and foreign capital, Keiko Fujimori is the heir to her father's 1993 Constitution, which was aimed against the interests of the working class, small farmers and small businesses.

Her entire family is neck-deep in corruption, but all the top candidates are as well. The most well-known case against her is “The Cocktail Parties.” She allegedly invited businesspeople, bankers, and other millionaires who paid US\$500 to attend fundraising meetings to finance her 2011 and 2016 campaigns.

“The Public Prosecutor’s Office is seeking a sentence of 30 years and 10 months of effective imprisonment for Fujimori Higuchi,” reports *RPP*. The alleged illegal contributions are estimated to exceed US\$17 million.

Roberto Sánchez Palomino is the presidential candidate for Together for Peru—a nominally center-left, bourgeois party—with a background that includes positions in various branches of government. He served as Minister of Foreign Trade and Tourism between 2021 and 2022 during Pedro Castillo’s administration.

His political platform has a populist slant disguised as progressive: promoting education, health, science, and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises. Sánchez's proposals would place his administration in a head-on clash with the Fujimori-era Constitution, based on unfettered dominance of free markets and foreign investment.

Therefore, he speaks of reforming the 1993 Constitution, which would be blocked by the new bicameral Congress dominated by right-wing parties. He also calls for the replacement of Julio Velarde as president of the Central Reserve Bank of Peru.

Velarde has long claimed Peru’s macroeconomic statistics are the best in South America. Likewise, Congress will prevent Velarde’s removal,

fearing a sudden devaluation of the national currency—the nuevo sol—that would lead to the collapse of the national economy. Whatever the outcome, the poor would bear the brunt of the crisis.

Sánchez has a murky political past. As a member of the Humanist Party, he supported its integration into the government of Alan García. During García's second term, the June 2009 “Baguazo Massacre” took place. At that time, Humanist Party leader Yehude Simon was serving as President of the Council of Ministers with Roberto Sánchez as part of his government.

The National Police's attempt to evict Amazonian indigenous communities resulted in the deaths of 33 people (police officers and civilians). Sánchez helped cover up this massive crime, with García combining the deployment of special forces with racist insults against the protesters, who sought to block oil companies from exploiting the Amazon region.

Under the party label Together for Peru, Sánchez would then join several coalitions with Stalinist and pseudo-left forces, including with Veronika Mendoza’s New Peru for the 2021 elections, before joining the Castillo administration as a minister. Prosecutors have launched several investigations over corruption under his term, including over the misappropriation of funds for personal use and for influence peddling.

Independently of who assumes the presidency on July 28, the ruling class will continue its offensive against the social and democratic rights of workers.

Not only will the newly created bicameral Congress retain the power to remove presidents and name key officials, the campaign and debates saw all the top candidates maintain a “tough on crime” focus, synonymous with building up the state repressive apparatus.

Their proposals included:

- (1) the reinstatement of the death penalty
- (2) death for extortionists
- (3) death for corrupt members of Congress,
- (4) the construction of several prisons at altitudes above 4,000 meters above sea level, an extreme climate,
- (5) the reorganization of the police force with increased funding, modern weaponry, and intelligence equipment,
- (6) a reduction in the number of ministries, which would mean mass layoffs.

The opposition of Sánchez to Fujimorismo is not based on a defense of workers’ rights and social programs. Instead, his populist rhetoric serves as a cover for the sorting out of the conflicting interests of different sections of the ruling class, which compete over the distribution of profits and ties to foreign capital as the Trump administration goes on an aggressive offensive against the influence of China, Peru’s main trading partner.



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