

Peru's president-elect Keiko Fujimori calls for mega-prisons modeled on Bukele's CECOT

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Far-right Popular Renewal (Renovación Popular) party leader and former presidential candidate Rafael López Aliaga has confirmed that president-elect Keiko Fujimori intends to apply El Salvador's prison model in Peru through the construction of five mega-prisons. "She told me: 'Rafael, I'm going to use the Bukele method. In El Salvador it took eight months. I'll do it in seven,'" López Aliaga recounted to *RPP* on July 17.

López Aliaga pledged to use the new bicameral Congress—installed July 28—to prevent lawmakers from obstructing prison construction, well aware that the previous unicameral Congress was a cesspool of corruption with an approval rating below 10 percent.

The prison plan has won establishment-wide approval spanning the entire spectrum of bourgeois parties: from the neo-fascist Popular Renewal and Fujimorista Popular Force (Fuerza Popular) to figures like Alfonso López Chau of Now Nation (Ahora Nación), a career bureaucrat who once passed himself off as a student radical.

"We're on the same wavelength, we want to bring well-being to the people," López Aliaga declared with breathtaking cynicism.

Notably absent is Roberto Sánchez of Juntos Por el Perú, who demands the release of former president Pedro Castillo, imprisoned by the December 7, 2022, parliamentary coup—launched one day after US Ambassador Lisa Kenna met with then-Defense Minister Gustavo Bobbio.

The right-wing parties have celebrated Fujimori's ascent as extending the Trump-Monroe Doctrine policy of asserting near-absolute US domination over South America. The aim: expel Chinese influence, deliver vast lithium and rare mineral reserves to US imperialism, and secure Pacific coast territory for attacks against Washington's strategic rival. This project is already

underway: Ecuador plans to host two US bases; Washington will invest \$1.5 billion to modernize the Callao naval base, 60 kilometers from the Chinese-owned Chancay mega-port; and Javier Milei has agreed to finance an Integrated Naval Base in Ushuaia.

Fujimori's anti-crime credentials are nonexistent. Since 2016 she has run Peru from a corrupt Congress, forming pro-business alliances and toppling several presidents. She was at the center of an illegal fundraising operation channeling Odebrecht money through elite gatherings known as "the cocktail parties." She was jailed twice during investigations and has promoted laws shielding extortion mafias and their accomplices in Congress, the police, and prosecutors' offices.

The real question is what definition of "criminality" Fujimori will deploy to fill her prisons. She will not touch the corrupt networks tied to her own political machine. The target will be the militarization of working-class neighborhoods, not for the purpose of suppressing the extortionist mafias that have killed over 70 public transportation drivers in Lima and Callao this year, but rather to drown in blood any social opposition to the austerity and repression her government is preparing. Three out of four residents of Greater Lima—population 10.13 million—live in neighborhoods under mafia control.

What does the Bukele model mean?

Keiko Fujimori's pledge to impose El Salvador's prison model in Peru requires a clear-eyed understanding of what that model entails.

The CECOT (Terrorism Confinement Center), the

world's largest prison with a 40,000-inmate capacity, operates as a concentration camp. Prisoners are held in windowless cells under constant artificial light, deprived of sleep, water and basic necessities. Testimonies document systematic beatings, humiliations and sexual assaults. Hunger strikes are violently suppressed; some detainees resorted to "blood strikes" and were ignored. The government has threatened inmates with starvation.

Fully 1.9 percent of El Salvador's population is imprisoned—equivalent to 650,000 Peruvians. The NGO Socorro Jurídico Humanitario documented 517 prisoner deaths during the state of exception: nine out of ten them were never convicted of any crime. One third died from violence or torture. Internal intelligence documents reveal that 36 percent of detainees had no prior criminal record.

The CECOT is directly intertwined with Washington's immigration policy. The Trump administration deported hundreds of migrants to the CECOT without due process.

The regime rests on the annihilation of due process: mass hearings of up to 500 defendants, warrantless arrests including of children as young as 12, 45-year sentences, and suspension of press freedoms. Far from combating the causes of violence—extreme inequality and decades of imperialist intervention—the CECOT is the centerpiece of an authoritarian regime applauded by Washington, ultimately directed against the Salvadoran working class.

In building CECOT-style mega-prisons, Fujimori aims to set an example for other South American right-wing presidents in repressing the oppressed masses.

In Chile, far-right President José Antonio Kast has launched a witch hunt against "illegal" immigrants. In Argentina, Milei has ordered the persecution of immigrant workers—unprecedented in a nation of immigrants. Peru hosts nearly one and a half million Venezuelans, most of whom do not wish to return, not only because of two successive earthquakes above magnitude 7.5, but because their impoverished homeland is being run as a dictatorship by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and his *chavista* collaborators.

For years, the Peruvian press has stoked xenophobia against Venezuelans, plastering them on front pages whenever a crime is committed. The reality is that the vast majority are hardworking people who found a welcoming country, married and raised families. The Peruvian CECOT, in the hands of a president who is herself a criminal, will be an instrument for carrying out a witch hunt and pitting the working class against one another along national lines. There is no chance she will jail her cronies who accompanied her through a decade of

congressional corruption.

Since the 1993 Fujimorista Constitution, job security in Peru has been destroyed and trade unions decimated. Today, seventeen family clans hold a combined fortune of \$35 billion—equal to the earnings of 9.5 million informal workers in Micro and Small Enterprises, which constitute 48 percent of the workforce.

Social inequality will not be the only factor driving repression. Central Bank president Julio Velarde warns that inflation has surged past the 3 percent ceiling to 4.1 percent, while the "Super Niño" threatens to devastate agriculture. The billionaire clans and the close to 300 families with fortunes exceeding \$50 million will not suffer. Workers, peasants, small business owners and students have taken to the streets in recent years, expressing their distrust of every party—all of which belong to the bourgeoisie.

President Keiko Fujimori will use the Peruvian CECOT to imprison, torture and murder any opposition to her plans to satisfy national and foreign capital. The working class cannot place the slightest confidence in any faction of the Peruvian bourgeoisie. From Fujimori's Fuerza Popular to the pseudo-left pretenders, all are united in subservience to US imperialism and the billionaire clans. The mega-prisons are not an aberration of Peruvian democracy—they are its logical culmination. The same ruling class that destroyed job security, starved public services and handed the country's resources to foreign capital will now construct concentration camps to crush the inevitable resistance of the exploited masses.

The struggle against fascist prisons and imperialist war can only be waged under the banner of world socialist revolution. This requires the building of sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International in Peru and across Latin America.



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