# As Super El Niño threatens 10 million Peruvians, Senate grants Fujimori emergency powers

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Torrential rains brought by the Super El Niño began battering northern Peru and the Andean jungle this week, a first taste of what meteorologists warn will be months of flooding, landslides and drought.

"More than 10 million Peruvians at risk!" the daily *Expreso* declared on its October 28 front page, warning that the rains will intensify in November and bring *huaicos* (avalanches of mud and rock), flooding, food shortages "and another round of price increases that will hit Peruvians' pocketbooks." Ocean readings support this warning. On October 28, the Navy's hydrographic service reported sea surface temperatures 10.5°C above normal at Paita and 10.2°C above normal at Talara. The Multisectoral Commission for the National Study of the El Niño Phenomenon (ENFEN) forecasts a coastal El Niño of "extraordinary" magnitude through January 2027, with the rivers of the northern coast running above normal from November.

On October 28, the El Salto station in Tumbes, on the border with Ecuador, recorded 102 millimeters of rain in 24 hours, a historic record according to the National Meteorology and Hydrology Service (SENAMHI). Between October 1 and 26, Tumbes received 70 to 80 times its normal rainfall for the period. In Kimbiri, in the jungle valleys of the Apurímac, Ene and Mantaro rivers (VRAEM), a flash flood destroyed at least 30 homes on October 27, and two members of the Machiguenga community of Pomoreni were reported missing.

On October 21, the Senate granted President Keiko Fujimori decree powers in a single package covering "citizen security and the El Niño phenomenon." A week later, making clear the character of the measure, Fujimori flew to El Salvador for a four-day official visit with her foreign, interior, justice and health ministers, and on October 29 toured the Terrorism Confinement Center (CECOT), the mega-prison of President Nayib Bukele.

The Peruvian ruling class is preparing for El Niño as a threat to public order, not as a humanitarian emergency to be met with the resources of society. Its decree powers combine disaster relief with an expanded role for the military and new legal categories that can be turned against protest. The cost of the catastrophe will fall on workers and the poor, and the state is preparing to meet their resistance with repression.

**The warning from Guayaquil**

What struck Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city, on October 26 shows what lies ahead. Up to 130 millimeters of rain fell in the south of the city, and the municipal agency Segura EP recorded severe flooding at 89 points. In the northwestern working-class district of Flor de Bastión, an 18-year-old was swept away by an overflowing canal. María del Pilar Cornejo, an oceanographer at the Polytechnic School of the Littoral (ESPOL), called the city's drainage "obsolete," "designed for the statistics of the past."

Peru's northern cities are no better prepared. *La República* reported that a thunderstorm flooded streets and homes in Tumbes from the night of October 26, while in the Piura highlands the rains activated dry ravines that poured into working-class settlements. In Kimbiri, residents formed human chains to pull their neighbors out of the water. América TV reported that aid was "insufficient" and that some of those left homeless had received no food by the following morning.

The National Superintendency of Sanitation Services (Sunass) warns that some 3 million people in the north could lose drinking water or sanitation; 101 of the 135 installations it assessed are at high risk.

El Niño also brings drought to the south. ENFEN forecasts normal or below-normal rainfall in the southern highlands and warns of possible water rationing, with the country's reservoirs at 58 percent of capacity. In Arequipa, Yanet Montoya, general manager of the water utility SEDAPAR, has warned of a scenario of up to 15 days without water. In Lima, specialists quoted by Infobae say the La Atarjea plant could supply the capital for only 12 to 14 hours if mud forced it to stop drawing from the Rímac River, as happened in March 2017, when *huaicos* left much of the city without water for days.

**A worsening dengue epidemic**

Heat and humidity are already spreading disease. By October, Peru had recorded 76,784 cases of dengue, more than double the

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32,372 for all of 2025, and 81 deaths. Public health specialist Omar Neyra told Infobae that there are “no recent antecedents” for the current number of leptospirosis cases, with Lima recording high mortality.

Pointing to the combination of epidemics, flooding, avalanches and the collapse of the healthcare system, Neyra added: “The COVID-19 pandemic caused 250,000 deaths in Peru. This is going to be worse than the COVID-19 pandemic; it will be unprecedented.”

Neyra pointed out that of the 8 billion soles (about $2.4 billion) in supplementary funds approved to confront El Niño and other priorities, barely 300 million soles (about $90 million) would go to healthcare.

Neyra also recalled the El Niño of 1876–78, whose droughts were followed by famines that killed tens of millions in India, China and Brazil. As the historian Mike Davis documented in *Late Victorian Holocausts*, British India kept exporting grain to Europe while millions starved. The climate determined where the blow fell. Social relations determined how many died.

**Decree powers and the Bukele model**

Law 32743, published in an extraordinary edition of the official gazette *El Peruano* on October 22, delegates legislative powers to the executive on 27 issues. Alongside measures on emergency aid, housing and water, it authorizes the “exceptional and temporary participation of the Armed Forces” in prison security and changes to Legislative Decree 1095 on the military’s use of force “to specify its exceptional intervention in support of the National Police.” It also allows changes to the organized crime law to classify “organizations that employ techniques similar to terrorism.” The Senate added a provision classifying criminal organizations as “hostile groups.”

These categories have a history. Legislative Decree 1095 was the legal framework under which the armed forces backed the police against the mass protests of December 2022 and early 2023 under the government of Dina Boluarte, when security forces killed 49 demonstrators, most of them in the impoverished south. Fujimori now holds broader versions of the same instruments employed by her father after his 1992 self-coup.

The visit to CECOT shows where the government intends to take these powers. The fascistic Bukele, who calls himself the “world’s coolest dictator,” has held tens of thousands of people under a permanent state of exception since 2022. In March 2025, his mega-prison received more than 200 Venezuelan migrants deported by the Trump administration without trial. In July, the WSWS reported Fujimori’s pledge to build mega-prisons on the CECOT model. Senate President Miguel Torres called the trip “a wise move.” Her health minister, Luis Dyer, was scheduled to tour a hospital in San Salvador while dengue cases at home passed 76,000.

The Peruvian ruling class is watching Bolivia. Since the government of Rodrigo Paz raised the price of diesel by 83 percent with Decree 5716 in September, the Bolivian Workers Center (COB) has declared a state of emergency and teachers have struck. A state of exception allowing the military to clear roads, imposed in June after blockades that left 17 dead, has been extended to December 17. Flooding in the north and drought in the southern Andes will push food prices higher on top of fuel costs, in the very regions of Puno and Cusco that were the center of the 2022–23 uprising and are closely tied to Bolivia.

**A social catastrophe**

None of this destruction is simply natural. After 1983, 1998 and 2017, each government promised reconstruction. Each time the next El Niño found the poorest neighborhoods still built along riverbeds and dry ravines, without drainage. Global warming, driven by capitalist production, is intensifying these events. The resources to protect the population exist. In April, Peru signed for F-16 fighter jets under a package authorized at up to $3.42 billion, more than the entire supplementary fund, and the Fujimori government is negotiating a second batch.

The Fujimori government is preparing to meet the hunger, disease and displacement El Niño will produce with soldiers and prisons, threatening a return to the era of Pinochet, Banzer and Videla. Only the working class can mobilize the vast majority of the population living in poverty or informal employment against this government and the capitalist state it defends. That requires a political break with the CGTP union bureaucracy and the Stalinist and pseudo-left parties that present themselves as socialist while keeping workers subordinated to that state.

The fundamental task is to build a revolutionary party to prepare the socialist revolution, uniting workers in Peru with their class brothers and sisters in Ecuador, Bolivia and internationally: a Peruvian section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, the world Trotskyist movement.

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