February 1, 2023

Dear Members of Congress,

We, the **37 undersigned national and international faith-based organizations**, many with members working in Peru, write to express our deep concern regarding the disproportionate and exaggerated response police unleashed upon protesters in Peru in recent weeks. The result has been tragic, leading to over 55 deaths and more than 1200 injured.

We ask that you call upon the Biden Administration to temporarily halt security assistance from the United States to Peru as a strong message of support for the basic human rights of Peruvian citizens.

Many in our Peruvian faith communities have witnessed the extraordinary violence by police and security forces sent by President Dina Boluarte to restore order following the impeachment and arrest of former president Pedro Castillo. **Valéry Nodem, Associate for International Hunger Concerns, Presbyterian Mission Agency, said**, "the disproportionate amount of violence being used by the national police and armed forces of Peru and the government's strategy to label as "terrorists" those who speak out in order repress the protests, not only further fuels the protests and sympathy for the protesters but also harkens back to the darker days of internal armed conflict from which the nation has never fully healed." It is imperative that the State take the first steps towards dialogue by softening its stance towards the protesters and holding itself accountable for the multiple deaths.

On January 9, Peruvian National Police in the city of Juliaca, in the southern Puno region, shot at protesters, killing 19 people, including teenagers and a doctor attending the wounded. Security forces shot some in the chest, back and head in what has been described by witnesses as a massacre.

On January 21, armed police raided San Marcos University in Lima where protesters from southern Peru had come to join a demonstration at the capital, resulting in more than 200 violent and arbitrary detentions. In response, the office of the **UN high commissioner for human rights** called on the Peruvian authorities to "ensure the legality and proportionality of the [police] intervention and guarantees of due process."

We also echo the concerns of the **Peruvian Catholic Bishops Conference:** "We regret that these events have occurred due to the distortion of the right to protest…and we also regret the excessive use of force."

U.S. Catholic missionary Maryknoll Sister Patricia Ryan, president of DHUMA, a human right organization in the Puno region, said: "What happened in the city of Juliaca in the Puno region can only be described as one of the worst massacres that have occurred in the country in recent years. It is not up to the National Police of Peru or the Peruvian Armed Forces to resolve the conflicts that have been taking place. It is the duty of the central government and the Congress of the Republic to find a realistic, nonviolent political solution within a reasonable time that will restore tranquility and peace to the country."

While the vast majority of violent deaths have been caused by armed police and security forces against protesters, we also condemn the deaths of other civilians due to protesters' road blockades and the death of one police official. We condemn all acts of violence and promote **the words of Pope Francis on this crisis:** "Violence extinguishes hope for a just solution to the problems. I encourage all sides involved to take up the path of dialogue among brothers in the same nation, in the full respect of human rights and of the rule of law."

We urgently call on Congress to take a stand for human rights in Peru by asking President Biden to immediately suspend U.S. security assistance to Peru until the violent repression ends and human rights violations are addressed.

Sincerely,

Signatories listed on the following page

Bridges Faith Initiative
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Dominican Sisters of Houston
Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa Peace and Justice Office
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Associates
Friends Committee on National Legislation
ICA Cristo Rey Academy
Institute Leadership Team, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Interfaith Welcome Coalition, San Antonio
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Medical Mission Sisters
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity/Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth
Passionist Solidarity Network
Pax Christi USA
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Religious Sisters of Mercy
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of Charity of New York
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sisters of St. Francis of Clinton, Iowa
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Albany
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Los Angeles
Sisters, Home Visitors of Mary
SNJM, USON, Province Leadership Team
The Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
The Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office of the Sisters of St. Agnes
The United Methodist Church -- General Board of Church and Society
United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries
U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph

Endorsed by

Pax Christi Internacional
Pax Christi Internacional para América Latina y el Caribe

TO RESPOND, CONTACT LISA SULLIVAN, MARYKNOLL OFFICE FOR GLOBAL CONCERNS, AT LSULLIVAN@MARYKNOLLOGC.ORG