

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public statement

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Peru: Concerns over recent violence in Tacna

Amnesty International is concerned about the recent clashes between protestors and police in various regions in Peru and particularly, the ongoing clashes in the Southern region of Tacna, on the border with Chile where a state of emergency was announced earlier this week as a result of the violence.

Reports of the conflict in Tacna received so far have indicated that two have been killed in the conflict and over 60 wounded, including police officers. According to the Tacna representative of the office of the National Ombudswoman, 16 civilians are currently in hospital and between 15 and 20 wounded police officers have been transferred to Lima. According to the National Ombudswoman there are also 89 individuals under arrest including minors, although her local representative reported to Amnesty International that this number is constantly changing as new people are arrested and others are released.

Amnesty International recognises the difficulties faced by authorities in dealing with protests which include acts of violence. The organization also recognizes the duty of the police force to maintain law and order.

However, the duty of the police is also to protect the population and to use force only when strictly necessary and only to the extent required for the performance of their duty as outlined in the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials. The Code of Conduct also states that Law enforcement officials shall at all times fulfil the duty imposed upon them by law, by serving the community and by protecting all persons against illegal acts, consistent with the high degree of responsibility required by their profession.

Amnesty International also recognises that although protestors are entitled to exercise their freedom of expression and association, this must be done without resorting to violence and calls upon the local authorities to pronounce themselves against the use of violence by protestors.

Amnesty International urges the authorities to respond to the current protests with a proportionate use of force and to investigate all reported cases of excessive use of force by the police, as well as violent acts committed by protestors.

Background

The conflict began eight days ago following the approval by Congress of a bill that would cut the revenues from the 'canon minero' (mining tax) allocated to Tacna and would redistribute some of this revenue to the neighbouring region of Moquegua. Protests have also taken place in Moquegua in the previous weeks, protestors demanding a greater share of the mining tax revenues. The mining tax is designed to redistribute some of the wealth acquired by the large mining projects based in Peru, many of which are in the Southern regions. Poverty remains high in many regions of Peru with much of the mining wealth seen as being concentrated in Lima.

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