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Peru: More deaths as a result of police response to demonstration

Amnesty International is deeply concerned over reports that five people have died as a result of a police operation which was deployed to control a demonstration by thousands of miners in the south western region of Arequipa which began on Sunday 4 April.

The miners, who work in the unregulated 'informal' mining industry, were protesting against legislative measures that they claim will restrict their activities. The protest consisted of blocking a section of the 'Pan American highway' in the district of Chala which is in the province of Caravelí, Arequipa department.

A local prosecutor reported that following the police intervention five men were killed and one woman apparently died of a heart attack whilst on a bus that was being held up as a result of the blockade.

Amnesty International recognises the right and responsibility of the Peruvian state to uphold the rule of law and protect its citizens. However, multiple deaths as a result of the use of firearms by police in law enforcement operations appear to have become an all too frequent occurrence in Peru. Dozens of people have been killed by police firearms during police operations over the last year as a result of the government's failure to ensure that security forces are adequately trained and equipped, which in turn puts police officials at risk.

There are clear international Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and Amnesty International urges the Peruvian state to abide by these Principles when carrying out police operations and when equipping and training its law enforcement officials. Not to do so will inevitably result in more deaths as a result of police interventions.

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