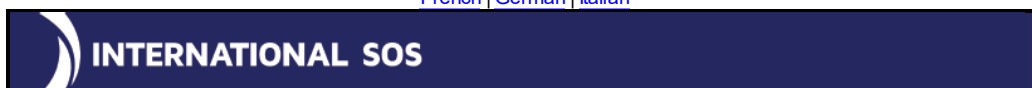


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Peru: Continue to defer travel, monitor developments following appointment of new interim president

OVERVIEW

Level: **Advisory**
 Location: **Peru**
 Category: Political unrest, Protest/Rally
 Active: 20 Nov 2020 - 30 Nov 2020

Last Updated: 20 Nov 2020 04:03 (GMT)

The table below shows the number of impacted and potentially impacted travellers and buildings at the date/time the alert was issued. The traveller counts include individuals within the impact radius of the alert and may not reflect the total number of people in each area listed.

Please log into [TravelTracker](#) for the latest information or [click here](#) for an up-to-date list of affected travellers in the impacted area.

EXPOSURE IN IMPACTED AREA ONLY

Location	There Now	There in next 24 hours	There in next 1-7 days	There while the alert is active
Peru (Medium Risk)	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	0	0

Members should defer all travel to Peru until **23 November** and monitor developments amid ongoing political instability. Gatherings over the resignation of former interim president Manuel Merino and the appointment of his replacement, Francisco Sagasti, are likely in the coming days. Protests can also be expected over the deaths of two people and disappearances of 41 others during recent related unrest. Anti-government demonstrations may degenerate into violence and be forcibly dispersed by the police, posing incidental risks to bystanders. In-country members should avoid all protests as a precaution.

MORE DETAIL

Congress on 9 November voted to remove former president Martin Vizcarra (in office 2018-20), who was widely popular in Peru, over corruption allegations. Merino, the congressional speaker, thereafter assumed the presidency, but many criticised the impeachment proceedings as a power grab by the former president's political rivals.

Since 12 November, massive nationwide protests have occurred across the country, prompting a harsh response from the security forces, including tear gas and rubber bullets. International human rights organisations have alleged that excessive force has been used against protesters. The authorities have responded by announcing investigations into the deaths of two protesters allegedly killed during protests on 14 November. Thus far, more than 100 protesters have been injured in related unrest. Furthermore, there have been reports of at least 35 attacks against journalists allegedly perpetrated by the police.

On 16 November, Congress appointed Sagasti as the new interim president. This did not quell protests against police violence, which occurred amid a heavy security presence near the Congress building and Plaza Bolívar in the capital Lima. These remained mostly peaceful. Related solidarity demonstrations have occurred internationally, including in Madrid (Spain).

Merino's departure is expected to somewhat assuage protesters and reduce the potential for widespread unrest. However, further demonstrations and associated disturbances remain possible.

Details of known demonstrations are listed below (all times local). Additional events may occur spontaneously.

Lima: Demonstration at [Plaza Dos de Mayo](#) at **11.00 on 24 November**.

ASSESSMENT

The election of Sagasti as interim president until the April 2021 general elections has de-escalated rising tensions in the country and will likely reduce political unrest. His vocal opposition to removing Vizcarra and reputation as an academic and intellectual differentiate him from colleagues within Congress. Additionally, multiple segments of society commended him for his first action as interim president, which was apologising to the families of victims of unrest. His willingness to address the concerns of protesters and other segments of the society has reduced unrest. Still, it remains unclear if he will have sufficient political capital to meet the expectations of protesters regarding any political reforms. Moreover, issues concerning Congress, the economic and public health crisis resulting from COVID-19, and the influence of illicit businesses within the government and society will continue to pose a risk to political stability.

Most importantly, perceived grievances pertaining to impunity, bribery, police violence, and concerns from protest groups may be difficult to resolve within the current constitutional framework. Corruption and bribery charges and allegations against more than half of the members of Congress have recently surfaced. Many critics believe

Vizcarra's reform initiatives may have led to his removal from office, including banning candidates with criminal records and regulating party finances to stop money-laundering. These were opposed by influential members of Congress and other societal stakeholders.

Ironically, Congress removed Vizcarra on corruption charges. This event alone demonstrates the power of Congress and the privileges of legal immunity afforded to that body. It also follows a pattern of Peruvian presidents being removed from office and subsequently investigated or sent to prison for alleged corruption. In the last 20 years, six presidents have faced similar charges and been removed from office by Congress, including those who were popular among the general public.

Recent events have also prompted widespread calls for police reform. Therefore, while Sagasti may continue to gain popularity among voters, protests over these grievances are likely to continue ahead of the April elections. Furthermore, Peruvians will continue to call for additional government assistance to those affected by job losses from the pandemic, as Peru is one of the most affected countries in the region.

It is important for organisations to monitor related developments over the coming weeks, which have the potential to trigger further unrest in urban centres. These include any action by Congress to remove Sagasti from office, any further information over corruption in the legislature, and actual or perceived instances of police violence. Lima will remain the focal point for any related demonstrations, though gatherings are also possible in Arequipa (Arequipa region), Chiclayo (Lambayeque region), Cusco (Cusco region) and Trujillo (La Libertad region).

WHAT WE ADVISED YOUR TRAVELLERS

Inbound travellers

Defer all travel until **at least 23 November** due to political instability in the country and the risk of related unrest.

In-country members

Liaise with local contacts to remain apprised of developments, as well as any planned or ongoing protests in your area. Avoid all such events as a precaution.

If travelling near a protest, reconfirm the status of routes before setting out and allow additional time for journeys. Do not attempt to cross any roadblocks erected by demonstrators as this may provoke a hostile response.

Leave an area at the first sign of unrest or if protesters and the police are gathering. When safe to do so, move to a secure location, such as your accommodation or local office, and remain there until the situation stabilises.

Anticipate heightened security around demonstrations and follow all official directives.

Monitor our alerts on Peru for developments.

ASSISTANCE



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