Country Reports on Terrorism 2016 - Peru

Publisher	United States Department of State
Publication Date	19 July 2017
Cite as	United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2016 - Peru*, 19 July 2017, available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/5981e41f13.html [accessed 20 March 2018]
Disclaimer	This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it necessarily endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher and do not necessarily reflect those of UNHCR, the United Nations or its Member States.

Overview: The Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso or SL) constituted a continuing threat in 2016 to Peru's internal security in a localized zone. SL's membership consisted of a single active faction, whose area of activity and influence was confined to the special military emergency zone known as the Apurimac, Ene, and Mantaro River Valley (VRAEM) – a remote and rugged region slightly larger than Switzerland which accounts for more than one-half of the cocaine produced in Peru. Within the VRAEM, SL has retreated to its stronghold north of the Mantaro River. Estimates of SL's strength vary, but most experts and the Peruvian military assess SL to number 250 to 300 members of which 60 to 150 are hardcore fighters.

To sustain itself, SL is involved in all logistical aspects of drug trafficking in its area of influence: it collects "revolutionary taxes" from those involved in the drug trade, and for a price, provides security and transports narcotics for drug trafficking organizations. SL continued to use Maoist ideology to justify its illegal activities and opposition to the Peruvian state. It staged its most significant attack this year during the first round of Peru's 2016 elections, an ambush that resulted in 10 deaths. Beyond this high profile attack, SL conducted a limited number of operations in 2016. We received reports indicating a slight uptick in threats against political figures in Peru's remote provinces and SL propaganda outside of the VRAEM.

In October, President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski assigned primary authority in the VRAEM Emergency Zone to the Ministry of Defense, instructing the military to counter narco-terrorism and work with the Ministry of Interior on counternarcotics operations.

SL founder Abimael Guzman and key accomplices remain in prison serving life sentences for numerous crimes committed in the 1980s and 1990s. Two top SL leaders – Osman Morote and Margot Liendo – completed their 25-year sentences in June 2013, but were still in jail at the end of 2016. Morote was the second in command of SL, and Liendo led the SL faction that operated in the provinces north of Lima before their arrest in June 1988. These individuals remain in prison pending trials for other crimes committed in the 1980s. Many SL leaders were convicted of crimes long before Congress approved new legislation allowing for life sentences. Guzman and other captured SL figures from 1980s and 1990s are no longer associated with the active SL group in the VRAEM emergency zone.

2016 Terrorist Incidents: Attacks included:

- On April 9, SL ambushed a military patrol near the municipality of Matichacra, located in the Junín region's Santo Domingo de Acobamba district. The attack resulted in the death of eight soldiers and two civilian drivers; five soldiers suffered injuries. The ambush occurred as the patrol was traveling to provide security at polling places for the April 10 general elections.

- On April 9, SL attacked a naval patrol on the Apurímac River in Ayacucho region's Huanta province, injuring two Peruvian Marines.

- On August 1, media reported that alleged narco-terrorists attacked a military base in the Mazamari district of the Junín region, injuring one soldier. A handful of similar sniper attacks against military patrols occurred throughout 2016.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Over the past three decades, Peru has promulgated a variety of laws specifically designed to counter terrorism. These measures have broad political and public support. On February 16, the president signed legislative decree 1180, which authorizes compensation to citizens who provide information that leads to the capture of members of criminal or terrorist organizations.

Peruvian police and military counterterrorism units continued to capture SL fighters, recover weapons, and prevent terrorist incidents during the year.

The most significant Peruvian government actions against SL this year were the following:

- On May 19, police officers prevented SL fighters from destroying electricity towers in the Huanta province of Ayacucho region. After forcing the SL fighters to retreat, police deactivated the explosives left near the towers.

- On May 20, a military-police patrol in the district of Llochegua in the Ayacucho region killed Alejandro Auqui in a clash with an SL column. The military reported that Auqui, who served as an SL commander, had taken part in 13 Shining Path attacks, including shooting down helicopters in 2010 and 2012. The military captured weapons, ammunition, and communications equipment during the operation.

- The Counter-Terrorism Directorate of the National Police reported the arrest of 23 alleged terrorists in a multi-region operation launched ahead of the June 5 run-off presidential election. Antonia Paucarcaja, a.k.a. Comrade Esther, was among those arrested. Experts considered her an important SL logistics coordinator.

On border security, immigration authorities collected limited biometrics information from visitors. Citizens of neighboring countries were allowed to travel to Peru by land using only national identification cards. There was no visa requirement for citizens of most countries from Western, Central, and Eastern Europe, as well as Mexico. Peruvian immigration authorities used a database called "Movimiento Migratorio" at 18 points of entry to track entries and exits of travelers. This database also connects to the Peruvian National Police's database to flag outstanding arrest warrants. The Government of Peru collaborated with U.S. Customs and Border Protection on the use of traveler information to enhance security by determining and mitigating traveler risk prior to arrival and departure. In July, the Government of Peru started to issue biometric passports with upgraded security measures to Peruvian citizens.

In October 2014, Peruvian police arrested Muhammad Ghaleb Hamdar, a Lebanese citizen suspected of links to Hizballah. According to reports, there was residue and traces of explosives in Hamdar's apartment. In April 2016, a judge extended Hamdar's period of pre-trial detention another 15 months. In October, the First Criminal Superior Public Attorney requested a 30-year prison sentence for Hamdar on charges of terrorism and document forgery. Hamdar remained in pretrial detention at the end of 2016.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Peru is a member of the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. The Financial Intelligence Unit of Peru is also a member of the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units. The President of Peru's Financial Intelligence Unit was appointed Chair of the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units for the period 2015-2017. Under Decree Law 25475, Peru criminalizes any form of collaboration with terrorists, including economic collaboration.

In 2016, the Government of Peru made progress in implementing its national plan to counter money laundering and the financing of terrorism. In May, Peru approved Law 30437 which gives the FIU the authority to immediately seize assets belonging to organizations and individuals included on the UN Security Council ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions list. The Government of Peru issued a decree on November 26, resolving one of the main liabilities in Peru's anti-money laundering legal framework. The law improves the FIU's access to bank and tax information, establishes greater control over reporting entities, and enables money-laundering cases to be tried absent proof of a predicate crime. The new administration moved the previously independent Peruvian seized assets agency back into the Ministry of Justice in 2016, reducing this organization's agility and efficiency.

SL's ability to sustain itself and finance its terrorist and other criminal actions depends on profits from drug trafficking activities. SL narcotics proceeds enter the VRAEM as bulk, physical dollars from neighboring countries via the same aircraft used to transport cocaine out of the region (commonly known as the "air bridge"). To address this issue, the PNP's 15-person specialized unit that focuses on investigating SL financing continued its work in 2016.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2017 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Government of Peru stressed the importance of heavily investing in the VRAEM as a means of ending the relationship between VRAEM residents and SL. Since 2007, the Peruvian government has provided the equivalent of approximately $6 billion to districts and regions in the VRAEM to pave roads, provide basic health and education services, and establish a greater state presence. The Government of Peru's new VRAEM strategy remained under development at the close of 2016.

International and Regional Cooperation: Peru participates in counterterrorism activities in international and regional organizations, including the United Nations, Organization of American States and its Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism, and the Union of South American Nations.

- Peru

Topics

- Terrorism