



Freedom in the World 2017 - Peru

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Freedom Status: Free

Aggregate Score: 72/100 (0 = Least Free, 100 = Most Free)

Freedom Rating: 2.5/7 (1 = Most Free, 7 = Least Free)

Political Rights: 2/7 (1 = Most Free, 7 = Least Free)

Civil Liberties: 3/7 (1 = Most Free, 7 = Least Free)

Quick Facts

Population: 31,500,000

Capital: Lima

GDP/capita: \$6,027

Press Freedom Status: Partly Free

OVERVIEW

Despite a history of authoritarian rule, Peru has established democratic political institutions and undergone multiple peaceful transfers of power in recent years. Corruption continues to be a serious concern. Indigenous groups suffer from inadequate political representation and exclusion from decisions on land use and other issues, though the government has taken some steps to address those problems in recent years. Protests and activism related to land use have often led to violence and the use of lethal force by police. While the media are active and largely privately owned, their independence is hampered by the threat of physical attacks and defamation charges, as well as ownership concentration.

Key Developments in 2016:

- Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, a center-right former prime minister, narrowly won the presidency in a June runoff against Keiko Fujimori, the daughter of former authoritarian president Alberto Fujimori.
- Fujimori's Popular Force party won an absolute majority in the April congressional elections, taking 73 out of 130 seats.
- A series of corruption scandals led to the resignations of Popular Force secretary general Joaquín Ramírez in May and three advisers to Kuczynski in October.

Executive Summary:

Peru's 2016 general elections were considered free and fair. The presidential race was hotly contested, with Keiko Fujimori leading a field of 10 candidates in the first round in April, then losing to Kuczynski in the June runoff by just 0.2 percentage points. However, Fujimori's Popular Force party took 73 out of 130 seats in the April congressional elections, followed by the left-leaning Broad Front with 20, Kuczynski's Peruvians for Change party with 18, and three smaller parties with the remainder. President Kuczynski assumed office in July.

International election observers expressed concerns about insufficient controls on campaign finances, including a lack of limits on spending by political parties. While the National Board of Elections (JNE) was applauded for its efforts to improve transparency, inadequate enforcement mechanisms led to the perception that abuse of campaign finance laws was widespread. Observers criticized the enactment of a 2015 reform to the Political Parties Law after elections had already been called, which caused confusion about which laws were in effect. However, the reform proved to be a useful tool for protecting electoral integrity, as the JNE effectively applied it in disqualifying two candidates, one of them for vote buying.

The conviction of journalists on charges of defamation reinforced concerns about outdated legal restrictions on freedom of expression in Peru. Among other cases during the year, Fernando Valenica was charged with libeling the former president, Alan García, and Rafael León was charged with defamation for publishing a piece in 2014 that was critical of a fellow journalist. They received fines and suspended jail sentences in April and May, respectively, though both sentences were later overturned on appeal. Separately, newspaper editor Ronald Daniel Ormeño was temporarily jailed in September for failing to pay damages in a libel case dating to 2013. Physical attacks and threats against journalists remained common; at least one journalist, radio host Hernán Choquepata Ordoñez, was murdered during the year, though the motive for the November killing was unclear.

Local disputes and protests – often related to extractive industries, land rights, and resource allocation among marginalized populations – regularly result in deaths and injuries. In September 2016, more than 50 indigenous residents of the Amazon province of Bagua were finally acquitted of murder and other charges stemming from deadly clashes between police and land-rights protesters in 2009. No state officials were prosecuted for their role in the incident.

Explanatory Note:

This country report has been abridged for *Freedom in the World 2017*. For background information on political rights and civil liberties in Peru, see [Freedom in the World 2016](#).

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