

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION KEY DOCUMENTS

PERU

30 OCTOBER 2008

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Preface

This Country of Origin Information Key Documents (COI Key Documents) on Peru has been produced by COI Service, UK Border Agency (UKBA), for use by officials involved in the asylum/human rights determination process. It provides general background information about the issues most commonly raised in asylum/human rights claims made in the United Kingdom. The COI Key Documents includes information available up to 23 October 2008. It was issued on 30 October 2008.

- ii The COI Key Documents is an indexed list of key reports, papers and articles produced by a wide range of recognised external information sources. It does not contain any UKBA opinion or policy.
- For UK Border Agency users, the COI Key Documents provides direct electronic access to each source referred to in the document, via a link on the source numbers in the index and list of sources. For the benefit of external users, the relevant web link has also been included, together with the date that the link was accessed.
- iv As noted above, the documents identified concentrate mainly on human rights issues. By way of introduction, brief background information on [country] is also provided. Please note, this background material is not intended to provide a summary of the material contained in the documents listed.
- v This COI Key Documents and the documents listed are publicly disclosable.
- vi Any comments regarding this COI Key Documents or suggestions for additional source material are very welcome and should be submitted to COI Service as below.

Country of Origin Information Service UK Border Agency
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ADVISORY PANEL ON COUNTRY INFORMATION

The independent Advisory Panel on Country Information (APCI) was established in 2003 to make recommendations to the Home Secretary about the content of the UKBA's country of origin information material. The APCI reviewed a number of UKBA's reports and published its findings on its website at www.apci.org.uk Since October 2008, the work of the APCI has been taken forward by the Chief Inspector of UKBA.

Peru 30 October 2008

1. Background information on Peru

Full Country Name: The Republic of Peru **Area**: 1.28 million sq km (496,225 sq miles)

Population: 28.7 million (2008 est.)

Capital City: Lima

People: Indigenous (45%), mixed background ('mestizo') (37%), White (15%), African,

Japanese, Chinese, and other (3%)

Language(s): "Spanish is the principal language. Quechua, Aymara and other indigenous languages also have official status." (US Department of State (USSD)

Background Note, October 2008) [16d]

Religion(s): Roman Catholic (85%); Evangelical (11%) others (4%) (USSD International Religious Freedom Report 2008, Peru, 19 September 2008) [16b]

Currency: Nuevo sol

Major political parties: Unión por el Perú (UPP), Partido Aprista Peruano (APRA), Unidad Nacional (UN), Alianza Frente de Centro, Alianza para el Futuro, Restauración Nacional, Peru Posible

Government: Constitutional system of Presidential democracy. The 1993 constitution, approved by referendum, provides for an executive for five years. The principal executive body is the Council of Ministers, headed by the Prime Minister, appointed by the President. A unicameral 120-member Congress is elected at the same time as the President and also sits for five years. It is the main legislative branch of government with the President holding a veto. An 18 member Supreme Court based in Lima heads the judicial branch.

Head of State: President Alan Garcia Perez (APRA) since 28 July 2006. (Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Country Profile, 24 June 2008) [8]

Prime Minister: Yehude Simon (British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News, 11

October 2008) [2c]

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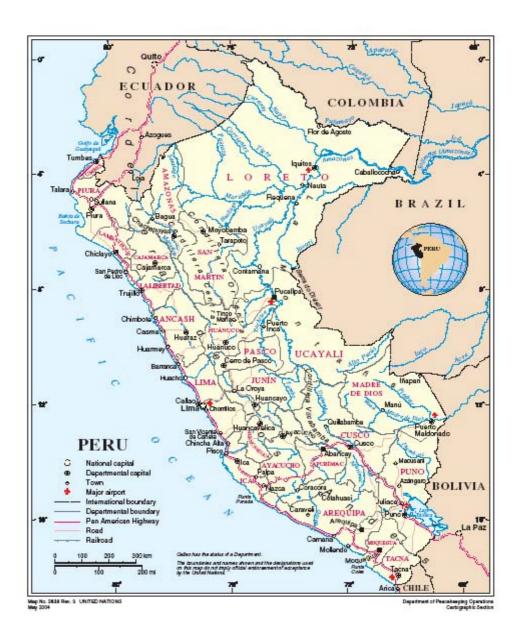
GEOGRAPHY

The FCO's Country Profile, updated 24 June 2008, noted that:

"Peru is located in Western South America bordering the Pacific Ocean between Chile and Ecuador. Bolivia (a 900km border), Brazil (1,560km) and Chile (160km) are located to the south and east and Ecuador (1,420km) and Colombia (1,496km) to the north. The whole of the western coast is desert with little rain. From this coastal shelf, the Andes rise steeply to a high Sierra, which is studded with groups of mountains and deep canyons. East of these mountains lies the vast jungle of the Amazon basin. The capital, Lima, to the west is the sprawling hub of the country." [8]

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MAP



(United Nations Cartographic Section, Map of Peru) [14a]

RECENT HISTORY

The FCO Country Profile, updated 24 June 2008, recorded that:

"Historically, the military have played an important role in Peru. Coups have been a feature of Peru's history and intermittently disturbed civilian constitutional government. The most recent period of military rule (1968-80) began when General Juan Velasco Alvarado overthrew elected President Fernando Belaunde and embarked on an ambitious program of radical reforms. General Franciso Morales Bermundez replaced him in 1975 and presided over the return to civilian government in accordance with a new constitution created in 1979. In elections held in May 1980, Belaunde was reelected by a large majority.

"In the early 1980s, El Niño weather phenomenon-related problems, a continued economic crisis and hyperinflation caused Belaunde's popularity to slide. More seriously, cultivation of illegal coca in the eastern Andes and the emergence of the left-wing terrorist organisations, Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) and Movimento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru (MRTA) seriously destabilised the country. In 1985, Alan Garcia, backed by his APRA party, won the presidential race witnessing the first democratic succession for 40 years...In the 1990 elections, voters turned to college lecturer, Alberto Fujimori, who surprised many in coming from obscurity to the Presidency...Faced with opposition in Congress, Fujimori staged an 'auto-coup' in April 1992, revising the constitution, calling new congressional elections and pushing through free-market economic reforms. Fujimori's government also took a hard line approach against domestic terrorism. During his Presidency, Shining Path's leader, Abimael Guzman, was captured and imprisoned.

"Fujimori's decision to seek a constitutionally questionable third term and his subsequent tainted victory in June 2000 bought political and economic turmoil. A major corruption scandal linked to his Security Chief Vladimiro Montesinos broke in September 2000, weeks after his inauguration, which forced Fujimori to announce new elections in which he would not participate. Under mounting pressure, he fled to Japan, from where he resigned. Congress did not accept his resignation, but ruled him morally incapable of holding office for 10 years. A transitional administration under interim President Valentin Paniagua took office and oversaw free and fair elections in April and June 2001. Montesinos was apprehended in June 2001 in Venezuela and brought back to Peru to face trial. In 2002 he was sentenced to imprisonment for abuse of authority and illegally taking control of Peru's intelligence service. He has since been sentenced for a number of other crimes and remains on trial facing further criminal charges."

The FCO Country Profile also noted that:

"Despite the 10-year ban on Fujimori holding office, he announced his intention to contest the 2006 election. In November 2005, he travelled from Japan to Chile where he was detained by the Chilean authorities. In September 2007, Fujimori was extradited to Peru to face human rights and corruption charges. In December 2007 the trial began and, having pleaded guilty, Fujimori was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment for the first charge of breaking and entering. Fujimori will appeal this sentence. The trial for the other charges continues.

"Alejandro Toledo (Peru Posible) beat a resurgent Alan Garcia (APRA) in the national elections in June 2001 to become Peru's first indigenous President. Toledo led a post

transitional government that pursued democratic reform and modernisation of the state. His administration was committed to orthodox economic policies and the country achieved strong and sustained economic growth throughout his period in office. Nevertheless, Toledo's administration was tainted by a number of scandals and struggled with low levels of popularity (under 10%) for much of its term in office.

"Presidential and parliamentary elections took place between April and June 2006. Alan Garcia (APRA) beat the nationalist candidate Ollanta Humala in the second round and assumed the Presidency on 28 July 2006. His government has undertaken to continue the sound economic management of the previous administration. It is also committed to tackling the problems of poverty and social exclusion highlighted during the election campaign. Regional and municipal elections took place in November 2006, with local, independent candidates taking the majority of seats." [8]

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RECENT EVENTS AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Reuters AlertNet reported in an article dated 10 October 2008 that:

"Suspected members of the Shining Path guerrilla group killed 12 Peruvian soldiers and wounded 14 others in an ambush near the mountain town of Tayacaja in southern Peru, the military said on Friday. It was the deadliest attack by suspected rebels since President Alan Garcia took office in July 2006 and came just before Garcia was forced to reshuffle his entire cabinet over a corruption scandal...Garcia's approval rating has fallen to 19 percent, an all-time low, and since August [2008] he has been sending soldiers to the country's coca-rich regions in an effort to destroy what is left of the organization, which security officials say includes around 300 guerrillas." [21a]

The same source reported in an article dated 14 October 2008 that "Suspected members of the Shining Path guerrilla group attacked a Peruvian army unit on Tuesday, killing two soldiers and wounding five in the second bloody clash in less than a week, the military said." [21b]

On 15 October 2008 BBC News reported that:

"Peruvian President Alan Garcia has sworn in a new, leftist-led government days after the previous cabinet resigned over corruption allegations. The biggest change is the choice of Yehude Simon, a leftist regional governor from outside the ruling party, as prime minister. Most of the other 16 posts have gone to members of the previous cabinet. Analysts say the choice of Mr Simon is an attempt by President Garcia to boost his own popularity after the scandal. The governor of Lambayeque province replaces outgoing Jorge del Castillo, who stepped down along with the rest of the cabinet after audio tapes leaked to the media implicated members of the governing Apra party in bribe-taking for rigging multi-million dollar oil contracts. Mr del Castillo, whose name was mentioned in two of the tapes, denied any wrongdoing but his position had become untenable after protests from the opposition and general public. President Garcia ordered an investigation into the allegations and insisted the government must be purged of corruption." [2d]

Additional details on the composition of the new cabinet were announced by the Government–owned news agency Andina (agencia peruana de noticias) on 15 October 2008. (Head of State chairs first new Cabinet's Council of Ministers) [27a]

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ECONOMY

GDP: US\$107.5bn (2007) (USSD Background Note, October 2008) [16d]

GDP per head: US\$3931 (2007) (MEF figure) Annual Growth: 8.9% (2007) (MEF figure)

Inflation: 3.9% (2007) (MEF) (FCO Country Profile, updated 24 June 2008) [8]

Unemployment: "6.9% in metropolitan Lima; widespread underemployment (2007 est.)" (Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook, updated 9 October 2008) [4] **Major Industries**: Mining, hydrocarbons, fishing, textiles, food processing, agriculture, financial services and tourism.

Major trading partners: United States, Latin American countries, European Union (FCO Country Profile, updated 24 June 2008) [8]

The CIA World Factbook, updated 9 October 2008, noted that:

"Peru's economy reflects its varied geography - an arid coastal region, the Andes further inland, and tropical lands bordering Colombia and Brazil. Abundant mineral resources are found in the mountainous areas, and Peru's coastal waters provide excellent fishing grounds. However, overdependence on minerals and metals subjects the economy to fluctuations in world prices, and a lack of infrastructure deters trade and investment. After several years of inconsistent economic performance, the Peruvian economy grew by more than 4% per year during the period 2002-06, with a stable exchange rate and low inflation. Growth jumped to 7.5% in 2007, driven by higher world prices for minerals and metals. Risk premiums on Peruvian bonds on secondary markets reached historically low levels in late 2004, reflecting investor optimism regarding the government's prudent fiscal policies and openness to trade and investment. Despite the strong macroeconomic performance, underemployment and poverty have stayed persistently high. Growth prospects depend on exports of minerals, textiles, and agricultural products, and by expectations for the Camisea natural gas megaproject and for other promising energy projects. Upon taking office, President GARCIA announced Sierra Exportadora, a program aimed at promoting economic growth in Peru's southern and central highlands." [4]

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HUMAN RIGHTS

The US State Department Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2007, Peru, (released on 11 March 2008) recorded in its introduction section that:

"The government generally respected the human rights of its citizens. The following human rights problems were reported: abuse of detainees and inmates by police and prison security forces; harsh prison conditions, lengthy pretrial detention and inordinate delays of trials; attacks on the media by local authorities; governmental corruption; violence and discrimination against women; violence against children, including sexual abuse; trafficking in persons; discrimination against indigenous people and minorities; failure to apply or enforce labor laws; and child labor in the informal sector.

"The terrorist organization Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) linked to narcotics trafficking was responsible for killings and other human rights abuses." [16a]

The FCO, in its Country Profile, updated on 24 June 2008, stated that:

"Human rights problems featured prominently in Peru during the violent conflict between Shining Path, the government and the armed forces in the 1980s and 1990s. It is estimated that around 60,000 people died as a result of this conflict. In 2001 interim President Valentin Paniagua established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate abuses by both terrorist organisations and the security forces. The Commission's mandate was to analyse, investigate and ascribe responsibility for abuses and to promote reconciliation and peace. The Commission's final report was published in August 2003. Although many of its recommendations are still to be implemented, some progress has been made. A reparation plan was approved by the Peruvian Congress in July 2005 and in October 2006 a committee was established to implement this plan. The first reparation payments to communities affected were made in June 2007." [8]

The FCO stated further that:

"Peru is firmly committed to meeting international standards in the observance of human rights. The country returned to the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in January 2001. However, some human rights concerns remain. Most criticism is linked to the judicial system, particularly the slow administration of justice. Conditions in Peruvian prisons are also harsh, aggravated by overcrowding, lack of sanitation and poor health care. Poverty and extreme poverty, particularly in the rural areas of the country, remain a widespread problem. However, progress is being made in addressing this issue...Concerns have also been raised at recent attempts to introduce the death penalty for the murder and rape of young children and legislation on NGOs." [8]

Human Rights Watch, in its World Report 2008, Peru, released 31 January 2008 noted that:

"Justice for past abuses continues to be a leading human rights concern in Peru. While authorities have made some progress in holding accountable those responsible for abuses committed during its 20-year armed conflict (1980-2000), most perpetrators continue to evade justice. Investigations of massacres and 'disappearances' by government forces have been held up in part by lack of military cooperation.

"Journalists who publicize abuses by local government officials are vulnerable to intimidation in some parts of the country.

"Torture and ill-treatment of criminal suspects continues to be a problem in Peru. The Human Rights Commission (Comisión de Derechos Humanos, COMISEDH)—an NGO that represents torture victims in court proceedings—recorded 78 complaints of torture between January 2005 and October 2007. In recent years, Peruvian courts have made some progress in holding accountable police who abuse detainees.

"In September 2006, Peru ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment." [10a]

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2. Index to key source documents

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	[7]	Ethnologue, Languages of the World, Languages of Peru, 15th edition (Author: Raymond G. Gordon Jr.), 2005 http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=PE
	[8]	Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), Country Profiles: Peru, 24 June 2008 http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/country-profiles/south-america/peru
	[16d]	United States Department of State, Background Note: Peru, October 2008 http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35762.htm
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