

## **International organizations condemn new Peruvian law that limits and censors the activities of civil society organizations**

Washington D.C., March 14, 2025.- The undersigned organizations strongly condemn the law passed on March 12th by the Peruvian Congress that imposes a system of control, censorship and persecution against civil society organizations, thus inhibiting the exercise of rights such as freedom of association, expression, access to justice and the right to petition international protection bodies.

This law modifies the legal framework of the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI, by its Spanish initials), a state agency under the government, and grants it broad powers to control and sanction non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that receive funding from international aid. Under the guise of strengthening the transparency and supervision of resources received from international aid, the law turns the APCI into a body of prior control over the activities of NGOs. From now on, organizations will have to obtain the ‘prior approval’ of the APCI to execute their plans, programs, projects and activities, which subjects their work to State authorization and restricts their autonomy and independence. If an NGO uses resources without this approval, it will incur a ‘serious infraction’, which could paralyze its work and limit its funding.

The law also classifies as a ‘very serious offence’ the alleged ‘improper use’ of aid funds when these are used to provide counsel, assistance or financing for administrative, judicial or other actions, at national or international level, against the Peruvian State. In other words, any organization that legally supports communities or individuals affected by human rights violations committed by the state could be sanctioned. For example, if an NGO provides counsel to people who are owed an adequate pension by the state or represents victims of gender-based violence, it would be punished under these new regulations.

Furthermore, the APCI will be able to impose disproportionate economic sanctions, with fines of up to 500 Tax Units (approximately US\$720,000), as well as suspend or cancel the registration of organizations that do not comply with these provisions. The law also gives the government the power to report to any state entity those NGOs that, in its opinion, carry out activities that ‘contravene the Constitution and current legislation’, without clearly defining the criteria for application. This ambiguity opens the door to discretionary interpretations and arbitrary persecution of organizations critical of the government.

These regulations seriously threaten the work of civil society, allowing any action considered uncomfortable for the authorities to be punished. This is a mechanism of state censorship and control that limits the right of NGOs to operate independently and without undue interference, in a context where many of these organizations play a fundamental role in the defense of human rights, the fight against corruption and the defense of the environment.

Various international bodies, such as the [Inter-American Commission on Human Rights \(IACHR\)](#), [agencies of the United Nations](#) and [several governments](#) that are cooperation partners with Peru, have already expressed their rejection of this law, warning that the law violates international human rights standards and could be used to restrict civic space and persecute critical voices in the country. It is important to emphasize that this law is part of a broader context of criminalization of the activities of human rights defenders in Peru, against which the State has not taken effective measures to guarantee their protection. A clear example of this is the lack of a legal framework in Peru to ensure the protection of human rights defenders. Additionally, this law, which seeks to limit the work of human rights defenders, is part of a regional trend of similar legislation being passed in countries such as Venezuela, Nicaragua and Paraguay, among others.

We, the undersigned organizations, express our firm rejection of this law and warn of its serious implications for democracy and the rule of law in Peru. We urge the Executive Branch to file comments on this law and prevent its promulgation, and we call on the international community to continue to react to this threat against civil society and fundamental rights in the country.

Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL)

Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF)

Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)