

IACHR GRANTS PUBLIC HEARING ON THE SITUATION OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE IN PERU

Lima and Washington DC - On Friday, March 1, 2024, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) will hold a public hearing to address the situation of the Attorney General's Office in Peru and its impact on human rights. At this hearing, the IACHR will receive relevant information on threats, pressures and undue influences on the AG's Office, which could hinder its independent functioning and compromise respect for democratic principles.

The AG's Office, constitutionally recognized as an autonomous institution, has the power to investigate and criminally prosecute the most serious illegal acts. Its efficient operation, and respect for its autonomy by the other public authorities, is essential for it to pursue crimes objectively, ensuring that the persons affected find justice and that, in turn, the due process of the persons under investigation is respected.

Manipulation and undue influence over the AG's office can lead to its use for anti-democratic purposes, such as generating impunity for powerful actors, threatening and persecuting journalists, defenders and independent justice operators, or tying up, pressuring and even deactivating other state institutions that exercise oversight functions. Several examples in the region show that prosecutors' offices have been used by the political power to weaken democracy, even acting to alter the results of electoral processes. Independent prosecutors' offices are key to protecting the rule of law in democracies and ensuring that no one is above the law.

The request for this hearing was made in early December 2023 by the Instituto de Defensa Legal-IDL (Peru), the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL), the Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF) and the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA). The request was filed during the administration of the then Attorney General Patricia Benavides, who is currently suspended from her post. This position is currently held on an interim basis by Supreme Prosecutor Juan Carlos Villena.

During the hearing, the requesting organizations will present information about this institution, as well as background information that reveals external influences and pressures on it in order to prevent it from being able to function independently. In addition, they will provide updated information on threats, risks, pressures, and effects on the independence of prosecutors -many of whom are investigating cases of great public interest, such as grand corruption or serious human rights violations - and the impunity that may be generated in such cases.

The hearing will take place on Friday, March 1, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. Washington DC, in the presence of representatives of the IACHR and a delegation of the Peruvian State. It will be broadcast live on the IACHR's social networks.

Contacts:

Instituto de Defensa Legal (IDL): Patricia Wiese, pwiese@dil.org

Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL): Nadia Ferrari, nferrari@cejil.org

Due Process Foundation (DPLF): Karen Arita, karita@dplf.org

Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA): Milli Legrain, mlegrain@wola.org