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Violence Erupts in Peru Ahead of Presidential Runoff

by LADB Staff

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May 30: Police reported that Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) rebels assassinated two leaders of presidential candidate Mario Vargas Llosa's Democratic Front (FREDEMO) coalition in separate attacks. Felix Vega Riquelme, a former governor of Piura, was shot to death in the coastal city. Hours later, in Cerro de Pasco, Prospero Delson Huaman was shot and killed. Before the formation of FREDEMO, both men were leaders of the center-right Popular Action (AP) party of former president Fernando Belaunde. Police reported that on the evening of May 28, about 50 residents of Andean villages Lircaycacca and Chinabamba, armed with sticks, stones and machetes battled over a disputed plot of land, leaving seven people dead. The two villages are located southeast of Huancavelica. Earlier clashes between the villages, each of which has 200 to 300 residents, resulted in injuries but no deaths, police said.

May 31: The government declared a 30-day state of emergency in the capital and nearby port of Callao. The decree places the two cities under military control and allows authorities to restrict freedom of movement, detain people without filing charges and search residences without warrants. A state of emergency remains in effect for eight departments and one province in the country's central and southern highlands and northern jungle region. In the southern highlands, police said guerrillas killed eight people in three towns near the city of Huancavelica.

A column of 15 rebels entered the town of Pueblo Libre on the evening of May 30 and abducted three former village officials from their homes. The officials were later shot to death in a field near the town. At the same time, another guerrilla band shot to death the town manager and two other officials in the village of Tanshiri. Next, rebels fatally stabbed two peasants near the town of Condorsurco and stole 20 head of cattle.

June 1: On Friday evening in Lima, dynamite bombs exploded at the APRA headquarters, one FREDEMO office, and in four offices of Cambio 90, presidential candidate Alberto Fujimori's independent political movement. At the APRA office, eight persons were injured, and substantial material damage was reported. Luis Alva Castro, APRA general secretary and the party's presidential candidate in the April election, dismissed the idea that the Sendero Luminoso or the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) were responsible for the bombing. He asserted that "rightist forces" were more likely the perpetrators. The APRA leader said the party had previously decided to support Fujimori's candidacy. Police reported that a dynamite bomb was deactivated in a Cambio 90 office in the El Agustino district.

According to police, Sendero Luminoso was responsible for placing the bomb. Police said that in downtown Lima rebels armed with a grenade launcher tried to blow up an armored police vehicle but missed their target and instead blew up a furniture store, said police. The attack was followed by a gunfight between rebels and police. Two bystanders were killed, and four people injured.

The manager of a Lima stove manufacturing company was shot to death as he was walking near the factory, police said. Sendero Luminoso guerrillas reportedly have infiltrated the company's union, which has been on strike since May 3. On Friday night in Huancayo, Junin, 315 km. east of Lima, former mayor of the Chilca district and member of the Popular Action (AP) party, was assassinated. As a result of the explosions in Lima, 2,000 police were mobilized, and in less than two hours arrested some 800 suspects. The Interior Ministry reported that 20 rebels were detained in three locations in San Martin department, 750 km. northeast of Lima.

June 2: On Saturday night, four members of a peasant civil defense group (rondas campesinas) were assassinated and three others wounded by presumed Senderistas near the village of Chullcapampa, Huamanguilla, Ayacucho department. The rebels also set fire to nearly 100 peasant homes.

June 3: The military political command headquartered in Huancayo, Junin department, decreed a state of emergency effective June 4 and 5. The decree was described as a preventive measure to cope with a wave of terrorist attacks by Sendero Luminoso. The rebels launched several attacks in the previous week, causing about 20 casualties including dead and wounded, and considerable material damage. Sendero Luminoso rebels distributed flyers in Huancayo announcing an "armed strike" for June 9 and 10. Citizens were warned to stay away from the polls on Sunday. In Lima, police reported that at least 2,000 terrorist suspects were detained during the previous 48 hours in surprise round-ups in areas of the city labeled "red" by the authorities.

June 4: The Ayacucho military political command decreed the suspension of private and public sector activities from June 8 through June 11. Meanwhile, Sendero Luminoso rebels distributed flyers announcing an "armed strike" to begin June 7 and ending on Sunday evening. Police reported that an important Sendero Luminoso headquarters was dismantled in the Surco district of the capital city. Police arrested 40 persons, according to AFP, and seized weapons and documents. An unidentified police official quoted by AFP said that the action had put most of the rebel group's propaganda apparatus out of commission.

Later, President Alan Garcia said the police action was the most effective strike against Sendero Luminoso in the past 10 years. Of the detained persons, 35 were described as top leaders of the rebel organization, including attorney Martha Huatay, and Sybila Arredondo, widow of Peruvian writer Jose Maria Arguedas. Garcia said the rebel command post, located in a private home in the luxury Monterrico neighborhood, had links to a network of 24 rebel cells in Lima. The president said the home appeared to be the rebels' general archive. In a bomb explosion close to the Military Industries (INDUMIL) plant in Callao, five persons were injured.

June 5: An estimated 80,000 police and 150,000 soldiers were placed on alert to discourage violence prior to the Sunday runoff election. Police said a car-bomb exploded late Tuesday night 100 yards from the presidential palace. The bomb, believed to have been placed by Senderistas, seriously wounded one person and damaged several nearby businesses. June 6: The political military command in Huancavelica decreed a state of emergency to discourage rebel violence. (Basic data from Notimex, 06/02/90, 06/06/90; AP, 05/30/90, 06/01/90, 06/02/90; UPI, 06/05/90; AFP, 06/02-04/90, 06/06/90)

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