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## **Peru: Summary Of Political Violence & Related Events, August 13-25**

*by Barbara Khol*

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Aug. 13: A common grave containing the bodies of 50 children between the ages of 10 and 14 was discovered near a Peruvian mining settlement, located 50 km. from Puerto Maldonado in the jungle region of Madre de Dios. According to daily newspaper Onda, the children had been tortured, and one of them had been shot in the head. The newspaper said the children worked as slaves sifting gold in area rivers. To date, at least 71 clandestine cemeteries have been discovered in the Madre de Dios region. According to Sen. Enrique Bernales, president of the congressional committee on pacification and the UN Human Rights Commission, in the first 10 days of August, 200 people lost their lives in Peru due to political violence. Of the total, 30 were police officers or soldiers. At least 11 members of the Peruvian Navy (Marina de Guerra) were killed and another four wounded during an ambush of a military convoy in Ucayali department, about 800 km. northeast of Lima. The area has reportedly seen activity by drug traffickers and rebels pertaining to the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA). According to military sources, the ambush came in response to capture of a lightweight plane last week by police in the area. The plane was reportedly carrying 527 kg. of coca paste. Communiques released by the armed forces claimed that over the previous three days, 12 Sendero Luminoso rebels and one soldier were killed in fighting in the northern jungles; nine soldiers and one rebel died in an ambush against a military convoy in Junin department between the towns of Angasmarca and Cachicadan; and, 11 police were killed and seven wounded during a Sendero attack on the police station in Laramate, Ayacucho. According to military sources, seven of the rebels involved in the attack against the police station were killed in subsequent fighting. Sendero Luminoso rebels killed at least 50 miners and their spouses attending a party in Cochocollpa, about 30 km. from Huancavelica, capital of the Andean department of the same name. Aug. 14: Ten fire department units were required to put out a massive fire which enveloped the Ministry of Education headquarters, located in downtown Lima. The fire, apparently caused by hand grenades launched from a passing vehicle, caused extensive material damage. No casualties were reported, since the incident took place prior to working hours. In the town of San Pedro de Cajas, Junin department, Sendero Luminoso rebels assassinated three candidates for the municipal elections scheduled for Aug. 18. The attack came just four days after rebels had killed four mayors. Municipal officials killed by Sendero Luminoso over the past seven years total 140. In over 100 localities where elections are to be held, no candidates have come forward. Aug. 17: According to police statistics, the political violence death toll for the first two weeks of August totaled a record 251. On Aug. 16 alone, 84 people were killed: 67 rebels, four civilian engineers and 13 members of campesino self-defense groups ("rondas campesinas"). A document published in a local newspaper reported that the MRTA has split. An estimated 200 rebels have formed another group, called the Popular Guerrilla Forces (Fuerzas Guerrilleras Populares-FGP). In Ayacucho, a bomb explosion caused the deaths of two people, and serious injuries to another 20. The explosion took place during a 48-hour "armed strike," motivated by an attempt to sabotage municipal elections. Witnesses said the bomb, hidden inside a large loaf of bread, was thrown by a 14-year-old boy into a crowded marketplace. Two Sendero Luminoso prisoners were killed and

another five wounded in the Canto Grande prison in Lima. The prisoners reportedly attempted to prevent police from erasing rebel graffiti on prison walls. The incident came just days after a similar incident in Canto Grande left five police officers and 20 rebels wounded. A police investigations squad captain and a civilian who accompanied him were shot to death by rebels on a main street in Chiclayo, located in Lambayeque department. Aug. 18: Elections for mayor and other municipal officials were held in 376 of the nation's 1,759 districts. Local election authorities in Ayacucho told reporters that 25 of 81 voting precincts did not open for lack of candidates. In the city of Ayacucho, at least four people were reported killed and another 36 wounded during bomb explosions in two public markets. The bombings were apparently part of Sendero Luminoso's "armed strike." Aug. 20: According to military sources, army patrols killed nine rebels in several clashes over the past few days in Huanuco department. Four army soldiers were seriously wounded when a mine planted by rebels exploded under their truck near the city of Huancavelica, located in southern Peru. Aug. 21: Spanish news service EFE reported that four Cuban engineers working as advisers at the Cartavio sugar cooperative in La Libertad department have decided to return to their home country, result of death threats by Sendero Luminoso. The threats were scrawled on cooperative walls, and appeared in leaflets distributed in the area. Aug. 23: In heavy fighting near the town of Pumahuasi, about 370 km. northeast of Lima, army troops killed 10 Sendero Luminoso rebels. Aug. 25: In Ancash department, Sendero Luminoso rebels reportedly assassinated an Italian priest. The priest, who had lived in Peru for the past 10 years, is the third foreign priest killed during August in Ancash. A decree issued by President Alberto Fujimori suspended the state of emergency imposed almost four years ago in San Martin and Huanuco departments, located in the Peruvian Amazon region. The Alto Huallaga valley, described as the world's largest coca leaf cultivation area, is located in San Martin. According to police, rebels used dynamite charges to destroy the 600-meter-long Tullumayo bridge, located 25 km. from Tingo Maria. As a result, access to dozens of towns in Ucayali, Huanuco and San Martin departments was cut off. Vehicle crossings at Tullumayo averaged 1,000 per day. (Basic data from Deutsche Press Agentur, 08/15/91; EFE, 08/13/91, 08/14/91, 08/21/91, 08/25/91; AFP, 08/14/91, 08/17/91, 08/18/91, 08/20/91, 08/25/91; AP, 08/25/91)

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