

Peruvian President Pedro Castillo swears in new prime minister

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Former head of Congress Mirtha Vasquez

Lima, October 7 (RHC)-- Peru's President Pedro Castillo has sworn in Mirtha Vasquez, a left-wing former head of Congress, as his new prime minister, hours after her predecessor resigned after only two months in the job.

The move keeps Pedro Castillo on the left of the political spectrum, but it is likely to mean a more moderate cabinet. Castillo kept centre-left Economy Minister Pedro Francke in the role, and named a new minister for energy and mines, Eduardo Gonzalez Toro.

Castillo announced the resignation of his previous prime minister, Guido Bellido, on Wednesday, citing “instability” in the country. Under Peruvian law, the prime minister’s resignation automatically triggers that of the entire cabinet.

Castillo had appointed Bellido after his presidential victory in July, and Congress approved the new administration in August. Bellido was little-known before taking the role, but his brash style rattled the opposition-led Congress while investors worried about the implications of a leftist administration on business.

Vasquez, the new prime minister, was head of Congress between 2020 and 2021. She is a lawyer and defended Maxima Acuna, a peasant farmer, in a prominent case against Newmont Mining Corp’s Yanacocha gold mine that drew headlines around the world.

After his resignation was announced, Bellido posted a photo from the movie Gladiator on Twitter with the caption: “We return to the arena where we belong.”

Both Castillo and Bellido are from the socialist Free Peru Party, but Bellido had adopted more hard-left stances and had faced opposition for suggesting Peru’s natural gas sector should be nationalized.

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