

Peruvians rally to protest Castillo's ouster as U.S. supports new president

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Lima, December 9 (RHC)-- Police in Peru have fired teargas to disperse a protest march in the capital Lima in support of ousted President Pedro Castillo, with the U.S. backing the South American country's new head of state. The violence broke out after more than one thousand demonstrators took to the streets in Lima to protest Castillo's ouster and arrest following his plan to dissolve the opposition-dominated Congress.

Demanding Castillo's release, the demonstrators chanted: "Pedro Castillo, Peru is with you!" and "If there is no liberation, there will be a revolution!"

Castillo was arrested on Wednesday evening and placed in provisional detention on Thursday, with media reports saying prosecutors carried out a dawn raid on the presidency and some ministerial offices in search of evidence against him. The 53-year-old leftist figure faced on Wednesday his third impeachment attempt since he unexpectedly won power from Peru's traditional political elite in an election last year.

Many residents of Lima's outskirts voted for the now-ousted president, a rural teacher who grew up in poverty and campaigned across part of Peru on horseback, promising to fight corruption.

"I felt very sad and disappointed at the same time, I even wanted to cry," Ricardina Condori, who lives in a shanty town on the outskirts of Lima, was quoted as saying about Peru's political situation.

Dina Boluarte, a 60-year-old lawyer who had been vice president, was sworn in as Peru's first female president just hours after Castillo's impeachment vote, taking the oath of office in front of Congress to serve out the rest of the former president's term, until July 2026. Boluarte must now form her first ministerial cabinet, which will be an early indication of whether she is likely to survive in office.

Joe Biden's administration on Thursday praised Peru for ensuring what it termed "democratic stability" and pledged to work with the new president after her predecessor's ouster.

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