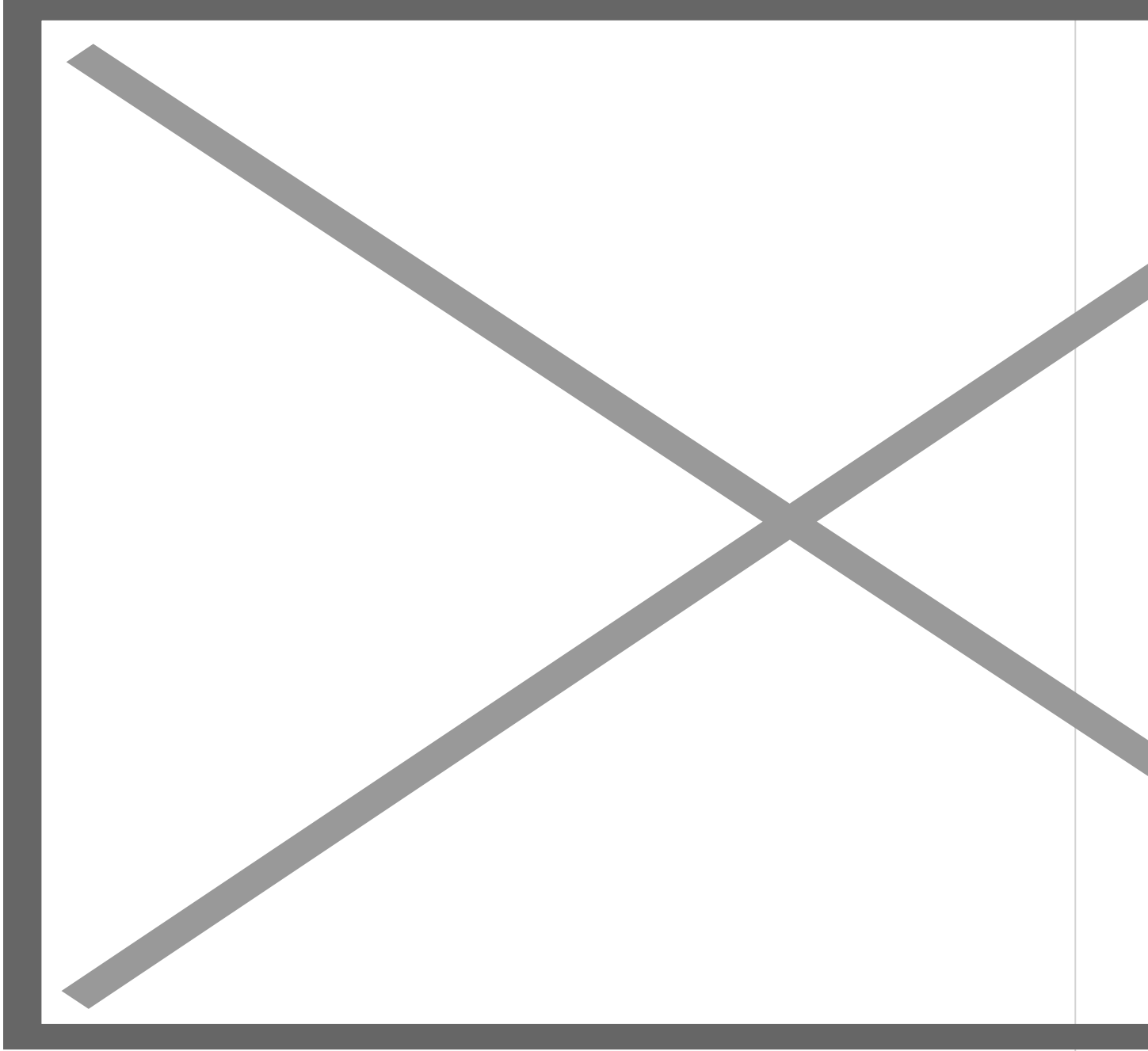


Peruvians demanding early elections and freedom for former President Pedro Castillo clash with police

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Lima, December 10 (RHC)-- Peruvians are taking to the streets to demand early elections and freedom for former President Pedro Castillo. In Lima, the capital, several hundred protesters trying to reach the Congress building clashed with police, who used batons and tear gas to push them back.

"The only thing left is the people," said Juana Ponce, one of the protesters. "We have no authorities. We have nothing. It is a national shame. All these corrupt congressmen have sold out. They have betrayed

our president, Pedro Castillo.”

Local television showed footage of hundreds of farmers blocking a stretch of Peru’s main coastal highway to demand early elections.

Analysts predict a tough road for Dina Boluarte, a 60-year-old lawyer and political neophyte who was sworn in this week. Peru’s first female president is trying to cement her hold on power, saying she expects to complete the term of her ousted predecessor and quench years of political turmoil that have blighted the Andean nation.

Yet as Dina Boluarte appeared in a military ceremony on national television on Friday in her first official event as head of state, some politicians were already calling for early elections in an indication of continued rancour. Boluarte, who was elevated from vice president to replace Pedro Castillo on Wednesday, said she should be allowed to hold the office for the remaining three and a half years of his term.

After being sworn in, Boluarte called for a truce with legislators who dismissed Castillo for “permanent moral incapacity” -- a clause of the constitution that experts say is so vague it allows the removal of a president for almost any reason. “I know that there are voices that are calling for early elections. That is democracy,” Boluarte said, adding, however, that there is a need for stability in a deeply polarised country that has had six presidents in the past six years.

A poll by the Institute of Peruvian Studies conducted in November suggested most Peruvians would want a ballot before 2026. Of those surveyed, 86 percent said they preferred early presidential and congressional elections if Castillo were removed.

Former President Ollanta Humala, who governed from 2011 to 2016, noted that the new leader was not involved in politics or government before becoming vice president last year and has no base in Congress. “She does not have the tools to govern,” Humala told N television. He predicted that any truce with Congress “will last a month or perhaps more, but then the great problems of the country come upon her.”

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/internacionales/307552-peruvians-demanding-early-elections-and-freedom-for-former-president-pedro-castillo-clash-with-police>



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