

*Peruvian judge maintains  
criminal trial against Pedro  
Castillo*

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**In Peru, the Preliminary Investigations Supreme Court decided to declare a petition made by former President Pedro Castillo as "unfounded" -- which means that he will continue to be subject to legal proceedings for "rebellion."??**

Lima, February 2 (RHC)-- In Peru, the Preliminary Investigations Supreme Court decided to declare a petition made by former President Pedro Castillo as "unfounded" -- which means that he will continue to be subject to legal proceedings for "rebellion."

Previously, during a hearing before Judge Juan Carlos Checkley on January 17th, Castillo argued that his right to defense had been violated since his dismissal and detention occurred without the prior political trial having been carried out.

"My right to defense and evidence was violated by Congress... Why do I have to flee the country? Why would I have to leave the country? Where is the evidence that I want to leave? I have not killed, robbed or raped anyone," he said at the hearing.

"If I have to render accounts, I will always do it here. I have never even had the slightest idea of leaving the country because I assumed the most important and most sacred mandate granted by the people."

On December 7 last year, Congress removed Castillo after he attempted to establish an emergency government, convene a constituent assembly and dissolve Congress. Currently, he is being held in the Barbadillo prison near Lima.

Since then, thousands of Peruvians began to take to the streets to demand the resignation of President Dina Boluarte, the closure of Congress, the call for early general elections and the establishment of a constituent assembly, as well as the release of Castillo.

So far, human rights defenders have recorded 65 people dead as a result of the repression unleashed by the Boluarte regime, which has the support of business and political elites.

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