Peruvian police repress protesters in Machu Picchu

Peruvians block the train line to Machu Picchu, Jan. 25, 2024. | Photo: X/ @CuscoEnPortada

Lima, January 27 (RHC)-- Area residents and tourism operators in Machu Picchu initiated an indefinite strike protesting against the digital sale of tickets to the Inca citadel, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Peruvian police used tear gas to disperse a group of protesters who had blocked the railway connecting Machu Picchu to the town of Ollantaytambo. The citizens were protesting against a bidding process that grants a private company substantial profits for merely selling tickets through electronic means. Mayor of Machu Picchu, Elvis La Torre Uñaccori, joined the strike.

Police fired point-blank at the protesters, causing injuries including cranial contusions. The citizens requested the presence of the Ombudsman, but their request went unanswered.

The text reads: "Tonight, the police attacked demonstrators who were protesting on the train lines to Machu Picchu. There are several injured, including a person wounded by a tear gas grenade in the head."

Legislator Silvana Robles demanded the immediate cessation of police repression against the population, stating they have "every right" to demand the nullification of the "irregular contract" between the Culture Ministry and the company Joinnus.

Despite adverse weather conditions, protesters arrived with banners against Culture Minister Leslie Urteaga, who denied that the awarding of the bid to Joinnus was tainted by corruption. In addition to demanding the dismissal of Urteaga, the inhabitants of Machu Picchu insist on nullifying the contract that allows Joinnus to profit from ticket sales.

Thanks to the terms of the current contract, Joinnus will charge 3.9 percent for each ticket sold, resulting in an average annual profit of $3 million. Meanwhile, Machu Picchu only receives an annual maintenance allocation of less than $800,000, warned the residents.

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