

Peruvian Government Removes Roadblocks, Arrests 13 Protesters



Lima, May 26 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Peruvian police removed roadblocks that had been in place for weeks and arrested at least 13 protesters two days after President Ollanta Humala signed a decree imposing a 60-day martial law for Islay province, in Arequipa department, where some 3,000 policemen and 1,000 military officers were deployed to deal with demonstrations that had turned violent.

The martial law was decreed on Friday by the Peruvian government after new protests against the \$1.5 billion Tia Maria gold mining project erupted again and clashes left one person dead and one injured. The protests have affected President Ollanta Humala's popularity, driving it down to 21 percent. At least five people have died during the two months of protests.

The 13 protesters had been arrested for violating the imposed martial law, which suspended Constitutional rights, allowing authorities to enter and search homes without warrants.

The Peruvian government announced it would send four ministers to Islay to explain and respond to doubts surrounding the Tia Maria project, which protesters say it will seriously damage the environment. The project has also raised concerns in the community due to the health hazards and the history of the company administering the project, Southern Copper Corporation (SSC) of Peru. The mining corporation has been responsible for the pollution of several areas in the Tacna department, in the south of the country.

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