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Peru: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission -- first steps towards a country free from injustice -- Facts and Figures

I. The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Comisión de Verdad y Reconciliación - CVR)

- The CVR obtained almost 17,000 statements during 16 months of field work. It was able to reconstruct and corroborate events in 70% of cases, more than 11,500 cases of human rights violations thus being documented.
- More than 4,600 burial sites were identified throughout the country, with more than 2,200 of these being verified.
- In addition, the CVR held public hearings at which more than 400 statements were gathered from survivors and victims' relatives relating to more than 300 cases of serious human rights violations and abuses.

II. The conclusions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

1. The scale of the internal armed conflict

- 23,969 cases of deaths or «disappearances» during the conflict.
- Approximately half a million forced displacements by state agents and the armed opposition groups.

2. Responsibilities for human rights violations and abuses

The armed opposition groups

- Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) was responsible for almost 54% of deaths and disappearances. 12,500 fatalities: 11,000 civilians murdered and 1,500 disappeared.
- 23% of the torture cases reported to the CVR were attributed to Sendero Luminoso.
- The MRTA was responsible for 1.8% of all human rights abuses committed during the armed conflict and 1.5% of the fatalities reported.
- Of the more than 500 cases of sexual violence reported against women and girls, the armed opposition groups were responsible for 11%.
- The CVR heard eight cases of murders of transvestites and homosexuals by members of the MRTA in Tarapoto, San Martín department, in 1989, and similar crimes in Ucayali department between May and July 1990, along with complaints of telephone threats against leaders of the Lima Homosexual Movement (Movimiento Homosexual de Lima) in 1992.

State Agents

- State agents, Self-Defence Committees and paramilitary groups were responsible for more than 37% of deaths and «disappearances» -- 29% perpetrated by the Armed Forces and 7% by the Police Forces.
- 61% of the people who died at the hands of state agents were victims of forced disappearance -- 4,500 cases of forced disappearances at the hands of state agents in at least 18 of the country's departments. In 65% of these cases, the whereabouts of the victim remains unknown.

- State agents were responsible for more than 7,300 extrajudicial executions. In more than 4,400 of these cases, the whereabouts of the victim is known.
- The total number of «disappearances» at the hands of state agents came to more than 7,000.
- There were more than 6,400 cases of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment at the hands of state agents in 22 of the country's departments.
- The thousands of «disappearances» and extrajudicial executions were also probably subjected to torture.
- 75% of the cases of torture analysed were perpetrated by state agents, more than half by the Armed Forces and 36% by the Police Forces, or by people acting with their authorization or approval.
- 83% of the cases of sexual violence against women and girls were attributed to state agents, in particular the Armed Forces.

The police and judicial authorities

- 34,000 pre-trial detentions between 1983 and 2000, almost half the detainees had to be released through lack of evidence prior to appearing before a judge.
- 1,400 people detained under 1992 "anti-terrorist" legislation were identified as having been unjustly convicted of crimes of «terrorism» and acquitted by the courts or released by means of presidential pardon or the right to clemency (derecho de gracia) between 1996 and 2000.

3. The victims: some of the most vulnerable people in Peruvian society

Social exclusion and racial discrimination

- 85% of all cases heard by the CVR took place in the country's poorest departments (Ayacucho, San Martín, Junín, Huanuco, Huancavelina and Apurímac).
- These last four departments account for 9% of the income of all Peruvian families.
- 79% of the victims were of rural origin and 56% were peasant farmers. 75% spoke Quechua or other native languages.
- 68% of those murdered or «disappeared» had completed an education level below that of secondary school.
- Approximately 70% of the internally displaced were people who spoke native languages, belonging to peasant farmer and indigenous communities.
- Most of the victims of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment were indigenous peasant farmers between the ages of 20 and 39, Quechua speakers with a primary school level of education.

Gender discrimination

- Although gender discrimination was a contributory factor in the violence that was exercised against hundreds of women during the conflict, the CVR estimates that more than 75% of the conflict's victims were men aged 15 years or above, with a wife or partner. Most of them belonged to the population group with the largest number of dependent children and on whom the burden of economic and political responsibility in their respective communities fell.
- 60% of women's deaths took place in situations of indiscriminate violence such as massacres or "community destruction".
- Only in 11 out of the more than 500 cases of sexual violence reported was the victim a man.
- Most women victims of human rights violations and abuse during the internal armed conflict were Quechua speakers from the country's southern mountains, young, peasant women with low levels of education.
- More than 200,000 poor women from indigenous communities or rural areas in the Andes and Peruvian Amazon were apparently sterilized without due consent between 1996 and 2000.

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