



Migration Profile

PERU

A. Executive Summary

Peru is located in the western part of the South American continent. Its biodiversity is reflected in its varied landscapes: valleys, plateaus, deserts, jungle, and coastlands. In this sense, we can distinguish four main geographical zones: the sea, the coast, the highlands, and the jungle.

Despite having experienced a decline in recent years, the Peruvian economy continues to be one of Latin America's best-performing economies.ⁱ Mining is one of the most important economic sectors, constituting 50% of the country's foreign exchange earnings.ⁱⁱ Most of the economic activity concentrates in the western part of the country, where the capital city of Lima is located. There is wide climate diversity, from tropical dry climate (in the eastern coastal region) and tropical humid climate (in the Amazonian area) to icy high-mountain weather (in the Andes).

The country has been characterised by its high emigration flows, composed especially of young Peruvians who migrate to other countries in search of better living conditions, due to political and economic instability.ⁱⁱⁱ However, in recent years the country has experienced an increase in its immigrant population, mostly due to the high acceptance of refugees and asylum seekers from Venezuela. For refugees or asylum seekers from Cuba and Haiti, Peru is mainly a transit state (to Brazil, Chile, or Ecuador), rather than a destination. Internal migration is mainly rural-urban and economically motivated. In the Amazonian region (particularly Loreto, Ucayali, and Madre de Dios), there are fewer public services, and deforestation, illegal mining, pollution, and climate change are forcing Indigenous communities to migrate to other areas.^{iv}

In 2020, the GDP of Peru was 202.01 billion USD,^v undergoing a significant fall in its annual growth rate of 11.15%.^{vi} Foreign Direct Investment decreased from 3.89% of the GDP in 2019,^{vii} to 1.4751% in 2020.^{viii} Finally, the inflation rate in 2021 was 4.3%, which was a notable increase from 2% in 2020.^{ix}

B. Country Profile

I. Basic Information

Peru is a medium-size state at the western part of South America. It has a total surface area of 1,285,215.9 km²,^x with a population of approximately 32,625,948 inhabitants.^{xi} It is divided into 24 departments and two provinces with special status: Callao and Lima.

There are approximately 55 Indigenous communities in Peru: 51 from the Amazon and 4 from the Andes.^{xiii} Together, they comprise between 12 and 18% of the total population.^{xiii} The official language is Spanish but there are also about 50 Indigenous languages, of which the main ones are the Quichua and Aymara.^{xiv} The main religion in Peru is Roman Catholic (70%), followed by Evangelism (17%), while 7.8% do not profess any religion and 3.8% are atheist.^{xv}

The main social problems include insecurity, inequality, lack of education infrastructures, and the high rate of informality and unemployment in the labour market. This scenario worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting mainly the informal market, increasing food insecurity, and hindering access to public services.^{xvi}

II. International and Internal Migration

Due to its geographic location, Peru is mainly characterised as a transit destination to Brazil, Chile, or Mexico.^{xvii} However, in recent years it has witnessed an increase in immigration mainly from Venezuela and Haiti.^{xviii}

Internal migration is mainly characterised by young people moving to Lima, Callao, Arequipa, or La Libertad, to find job opportunities and better living conditions.^{xix} Most of them work in the retail sector, manufacturing, transportation, and communications.^{xx} They mainly emigrate from areas in the Andean region (Ayacucho and Apurímac) with high poverty rates, rural population, illiteracy, violence, and insecurity.^{xxi} Likewise, there are internal displacements due to climate change and illegal mining. There are also other activities that push mainly Indigenous communities in the Amazonian department out of their homelands.^{xxii}

The number of international immigrants in 2019 was 782,169, composing 2.43% of the total population.^{xxiii} The male immigrant population (54.24%) is larger than the female (45.75%). There was a notable increase in 2019, bringing the total number of immigrants up considerably from 437,400 in 2017.^{xxiv} The principal age group of immigrants is 25-29 years old, totalling 17.7% of the total number of foreign immigrants, followed by 30-34 year olds at 16.2%, and the 35-39 age group at 12.8%.^{xxv}

In 2019, the main sending countries were Venezuela (602,595 people, totalling 77.04%), the United States (26,369), China (20,390), Bolivia, and Argentina as well as Chile, Brazil, and Haiti to a lesser extent.^{xxvi} The country has recently witnessed an increase in Venezuelan and Haitians migrants and refugees entering mainly from the north (Tumbes and Piura regions) or from the east (mainly Madre de Dios, crossing to Cuzco).^{xxvii} Most of these flows are irregular, which perpetuates

violence, theft, smuggling, and human trafficking. Upon arrival in Peru, international immigrants principally reside in Lima (home to approximately 76.5% of the immigrant population in Peru), which offers better job opportunities as well as legal, health, and economic integration services.^{xxviii} Other departments such as Callao, La Libertad, Arequipa, Ica, and Pira also host a significant number of immigrants.^{xxix} Regarding the educational level, 59.4% of the immigrant population in Peru have higher education, while 32.2% have secondary education, and only 1.5% have basic or no education.^{xxx}

Migrants suffer many problems at the border and during their displacement due to violence, human trafficking, and smuggling practices that are perpetuated by “coyotes.” They are charged with excessive amounts of money and exposed to risky situations. In addition, at their arrival in Peru they need to confront significant administrative and economic obstacles. Bureaucracy, together with discrimination, and the rigidity of the labour market (high informality rates, underemployment, and reservation of posts for Peruvian workers) are the main barriers to the legal and economic integration of migrants in Peru.^{xxxi} The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the informal market, diminishing labour opportunities for migrants and worsening their conditions to a state of extreme vulnerability.

Health services lack necessary equipment, despite recognizing the equal health rights for the immigrant population. Peru lacks a proper housing programme for migrants.^{xxxii} Furthermore, foreign education certificates are not automatically recognised, so minors may be left without the proper education services.^{xxxiii}

III. Emigration and Skilled Migration

In 2019, approximately 1,512,920 people emigrated from Peru.^{xxxiv} The principal destination countries were the United States (525,527 emigrants), Chile (205,609), Argentina (198,744), Spain (193,786), and Italy (117,189).^{xxxv}

Likewise, it is important to note that emigration was mostly female (58.05% of Peruvian emigrants were women in 2019). Moreover, most emigrants in 2019 at the time to leave the country were aged between 25 and 34 years old.^{xxxvi} Regarding the occupations declared when leaving the country, 605,513 were students, 362,625 office workers, 325,793 service workers, 300,075 housewives (an occupation in which women are employed to a greater extent), 256,571 professionals and academics, and 148,457 technicians and mid-level professionals. These six categories account for approximately 70.6% of all emigrants.^{xxxvii} The areas sending the highest number of emigrants are Lima and Callao (56% of the total emigrants in 2018).^{xxxviii}

The main push factors for Peruvian emigration are economic and demographic. There is a notable increase in the working-age population that is unable to enter the labour market. Furthermore, many Peruvians are forced to leave the country because of social factors such as violence, internal displacement, family networks, social expectations, education, and civil insecurity.^{xxxix}

IV. Forced Migrants (Internally displaced persons, asylum seekers and refugees, and climate displaced people)

In the Amazonian area (especially Madre de Dios), Indigenous communities and their lands are threatened by illegal mining, deforestation, and harassment.^{xi} These harsh living conditions force them to move to urban areas where they face many difficulties in integrating. Furthermore, according to the IDMC, between 2008 and 2021 there were 674,339 internal displacements in Peru due to natural disasters, mostly floods.^{xli} The temperature and atmospheric changes profoundly affect the climate, causing extreme rains.^{xlii}

According to the UNHCR, in 2021 more than 1.32 million Venezuelans arrived in Peru, of which 532,000 have sought asylum,^{xliii} making Peru one of the main destinations for people seeking protection globally.^{xliv} The main destination departments are Arequipa, Cuzco, Lima, Tacna, and Tumbes.^{xlv} The population arriving in Peru in search of protection is relatively young (18-29 years old) and in search of job opportunities.^{xlvi} Regarding their level of education, 34.8% have Regular Basic Education (EBR), while 65.2% have some level of higher education, either complete or incomplete.^{xlvii}

Roughly 92.6% Venezuelans indicate Peru as their final destination. The rest go to Chile (5.3%), Argentina (1.2%), and Bolivia (0.6%). The main routes taken by Venezuelan people to Peru are through several cities in Colombia and Ecuador.^{xlviii} Furthermore, Peru is one of the principal transit countries for Haitian refugees and asylum seekers trying to reach Brazil or Chile.^{xlix} When they enter Peru, one of the main destination regions is Madre de Dios, at the border to Brazil.^l Many of them are forced to pay “coyotes” excessive amounts of money to pass the border or continue their travel.^{li}

The main problems faced by Venezuelans at the refugee shelters are difficulties with transport, lack of food or hydration, complications with travel documentation, insecurity and theft, health problems, lack of information, lack of economic resources, lack of lodging, episodes of detention or arrest, and climate-related problems.^{lii} Likewise, the documentation restrictions at the border generate the appearance of irregular routes that increase the vulnerability of the Venezuelan population. In the cities, Venezuelans usually reside in precarious districts, where infrastructure conditions are very limited. They suffer from discrimination and lack of integration.^{liii}

Refugees and migrants are excluded from the Peruvian social protection system and therefore cannot benefit from the economic voucher granted by the government to support them in the face of health emergencies.^{liv} Furthermore, refugees in Peru face limited access to livelihood and employment opportunities, exacerbated by high rates of unemployment in the country and the economic crisis after the pandemic, which has increased their vulnerability and thus their likelihood of experiencing poverty and even extreme poverty.^{lv} Their lack of documentation and irregular situation limits their access to public services and to the formal market. This vulnerable situation increases their risk of abuse, smuggling, and being trafficked, in addition to the malnutrition and dehydration problems that they suffer.^{lvi}

V. Victims of Human Trafficking

In 2021, Peru was rated in Tier 2 of the US Trafficking in Persons Report, since it does not meet all the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking, although it is demonstrating increased efforts to meet them.^{lvii} The victims are both domestic and foreign, employed in the sex industry or in forced labour such as mining, agriculture, narcotic trafficking, domestic servitude, and even terrorist activities. In 2020, the specialised prosecutors reported 470 victims (411 female) and the anti-trafficking police units reported 640 victims (385 adults, all of them women, as well as 255 children, of whom 118 were girls and 137 boys). Peruvian migrants are especially vulnerable since traffickers (whether individually or in crime organizations) use false documentation and driving services at the border to recruit the victims.^{lviii} Social media platforms are increasingly being used by traffickers through false employment offers or deceptive romantic relationships. Even though most of the victims are Peruvian, there is also a considerable number coming from Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia, and Haiti.^{lix}

Peru is mainly a transit state to Brazilian human trafficking. Nevertheless, there are spots such as Cuzco, Lima, and the Peruvian Amazon where tourists from the US and Europe purchase sex from child trafficking victims. In the Loreto department, criminal organisations facilitate transportation for tourists by boat to remote locations for sex exploitation in venues along the Amazon River. Remote areas for mining and logging, and the valley of the Apurimac, Ene, and Mantano Rivers, employ sex and labour trafficking thanks to the limited permanent government presence.^{lx}

In 2020, Peruvian police carried out 65 anti-trafficking operations resulting in 214 detentions in the first three quarters of the year. During the COVID pandemic, the government enacted policies to enforce trafficking mitigation and public health measures, however the State lacks efficient legislation to prosecute traffickers and apply exploitation laws to all cases. In 2020 specialised prosecutors participated in 214 anti-trafficking operations and there were 29 convictions. The State made strong efforts to issue national identity documents to all the Peruvian citizens. Moreover, despite the increase of special units there is still insufficient training, equipment, and coordination. The situation worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic as shelters were closed to non-residents and there were high rates of sickness and death among the officers.^{lxi}

In 2021, the State decreased the budget allocated on anti-trafficking efforts from 4 million soles to 2.35 million soles (\$649,350). These inadequate resources – together with impunity, police complicity, and corruption – were some of the main concerns in combating human trafficking. The State opened some investigations and developed an operation that resulted in the detention of two anti-trafficking police officers and two other government officials for providing protection to alleged traffickers and allowing them to operate with impunity. Lack of effective victim identification and protection led to misrepresentation and to criminalization of victims for unlawful acts that traffickers compelled them to commit.^{lxii}

VI. National Legal Framework

Peru's National Migratory Policy (PNM) approved by the Legislative Decree N° 1350^{lxiii} guarantees fundamental rights and services to migrants on health, education, and work, promoting equality and integration. However, the Foreign Hiring Law (Legislative Decree N° 689 of 1991) established that "employers, whatever their activity or nationality, will give preference to the hiring of national workers."^{lxiv} The State has a special legislative and institutional framework for the reintegration of Peruvian migrants, enshrined in its Law N° 30525.^{lxv}

At the same time, Law N° 27891 regulates the entrance, recognition, and legal status of refugees.^{lxvi} Moreover, the Law N° 27840 is fully devoted to the regulation of asylum. Regarding human trafficking, Law N° 28950 aims to prevent, control, and diminish this practice in Peru,^{lxvii} alongside the Supreme Decree N° 017-2017-IN, the National Plan against Human Trafficking 2017-2021^{lxviii}.

At the regional level, the 2011 Lima Declaration (Pacific Alliance) promotes regional cooperation on migration and facilitates the movement of working migrants.^{lxix} Peru is an associated state of MERCOSUR and it has agreements on legal residence for migrants whose state of origin is party to the Organisation. Peru also has bilateral agreements with Ecuador,^{lxx} Bolivia,^{lxxi} Argentina,^{lxxii} and Uruguay.^{lxxiii}

The international conventions ratified by Peru are the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees (acceded to in 1964 and its Protocol in 1983) and the Conventions on the Status of Stateless People and the Reduction of Statelessness in 1954 and 1961 respectively (acceded to in 2014). The country is also party to the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Working Migrants and Family of 1990 (as of 2005).

In 1982, Peru ratified the 1971 International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination.^{lxxiv} It has also signed the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime^{lxxv} and the Palermo Protocol to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in persons.^{lxxvi}

VII. Main Actors

The State

As established in the National Migration Law, in Peru the State actors in charge of the migratory activity are the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.^{lxxvii} In 2011, the "Intersectional Worktable for Migration Management," chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was created with the objective of coordinating and supervising policies and actions related to international migration management. It publishes annual and biannual reports, conducts social security agreements, validation of degrees, and economic integration, among other things.

Furthermore, the National Migration Superintendence, a technical body of the Ministry of Interior, executes the internal migration policy and coordinates immigration control with State actors that manage border posts to ensure their proper functioning.^{lxxviii} The Immigration Services Management coordinates the entry, stay, and exit of foreigners. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

is the agency responsible for the determination of refugee status. Moreover, the government's Permanent Multisectoral Commission against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants - jointly led by the Ministry of Interior, 13 government agencies, and two NGOs - coordinates the implementation of the national action plan against human trafficking.

International Organisations

The two main organisations working on the field of migration in Peru are the International Organisation on Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UNHCR works hand-in-hand with the government of Peru to assist the needs of the most vulnerable refugee and migrant families in Lima, Arequipa, Cuzco, Tumbes, and Tacna.^{lxxxix} It provides humanitarian assistance such as temporary shelter, health, education, and labour services to those in need. Together with the IOM, they lead the response for Venezuelans in Peru through the campaign #TuCausaEsMiCausa, to promote solidarity and inclusion.^{lxxx} The UNHCR and the organisation called Encuentros-SJS cooperated to respond to the crisis migratory situation in Venezuela and to aid refugees and migrants in Peru.^{lxxxi}

Since 2017, the IOM provides technical assistance to the institutions involved in developing the National Migration Policy.^{lxxxii} Together with the World Bank, the IOM covers the basic needs of the vulnerable Venezuelan population through the delivery of monetary transfers, mainly in the regions of Tumbes, Piura, La Libertad, Metropolitan Lima, and Callao.^{lxxxiii}

Peru is the founder of the South American Conference on Migration (CSM), an observer of the Regional Conference on Migration (Puebla Process), and party to the MERCOSUR Specialised Migratory Forum (FEM), the Ibero-American Forum on Migration and Development, as well as various multilateral instances of dialogue and migratory cooperation.

Peru is also a member of the Andean Community (CAN) which facilitates labour migration in the region. It belongs to the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), promoting regional integration. Finally, Peru is party to the Pacific Alliance, a mechanism that seeks to build better collaboration to move towards the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people between Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru.

NGOs and Other Organisations

There are multiple organisations working in the migratory field in Peru. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) aims to ensure life-saving multi-sectoral services targeting mainly migrant and refugee women. Interventions focus on Labayeque, Piura, and Lima.^{lxxxiv}

Many NGOs are part of the Working Group for Refugees and Migrants (GTRM) in Peru, such as Acción contra el Hambre, which supports local populations and refugees in their most basic needs by providing nutrition, health care, hygiene, and food security, teaching the populations to be self-sufficient. It also provides health care and mental health care services.

The Catholic Church

Catholic organisations play a key role in assisting migrants and refugees in Peru, providing shelter, legal, health care, economic services, and protection.

The Pastoral Section for Human Mobility is a body of the Peruvian Episcopal Conference that is at the service of migrants and their families. The Pastoral Section is devoted to welcoming the arriving population and providing personalised attention at the primary level for counselling and psychological accompaniment for migrants. In addition, they provide advice and spiritual accompaniment for migrants and refugees who need it.^{lxxxv}

The Scalabrini Congregation currently operates a network of Migrant Houses and Reception Centres in several areas of Peru.^{lxxxvi} Through this network, it provides refugee and internally displaced migrants with services and advocacy programmes, to facilitate their integration into the host communities and their reintegration when they return to their origin countries. The reception centres provide food, shelter, hygiene, telephone and internet access, legal assistance, socio-cultural integration programmes, psychological assistance, spiritual assistance, vocational training, and job placement programmes.^{lxxxvii}

Caritas focuses on welcoming, protecting, and integrating refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in Peru.^{lxxxviii} Its intention is to improve the conditions of arrival by providing information and guidance. *Caritas* opened a shelter for Venezuelan migrants in 2019^{lxxxix}. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Catholic Church in Peru launched the EuroPana solidarity initiative, a programme of international care, assistance, and protection. *Caritas* operates this initiative in collaboration with ECHO (EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid).^{xc}

Encuentros-SJS (Servicio Jesuita de Migrantes and Servicio Jesuita de la Solidaridad) works with the migrant and refugee population in cooperation with the CAREMI.^{xc1} Through this space, they seek to protect people who find themselves in vulnerable situations due to displacement outside their country. They provide this population with legal, psychosocial, and livelihood services that promote their well-being.^{xcii}

Other religious organisations such as Capellania de Migrantes Venezolanos, Casa Don Bosco, and the Religiosas Adoratrices also operate in the Peruvian migration field.^{xciii}

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