

History of Peru

The **history of Peru** spans several millenia, Peruvian territory was home to the Norte Chico civilization, one of the oldest in the world, and to the Inca Empire, the largest state in Pre-Columbian America. It was conquered by the Spanish Empire in the 16th-century, who established a Viceroyalty with jurisdiction over most of its South American domains. Independence was declared on 1821 but consolidated only after the Battle of Ayacucho, three years later.

Some of the oldest civilizations appeared circa 6000 BC in the coastal provinces of Chilca and Paracas, and in the highland province of Callejón de Huaylas. Over the following three thousand years, inhabitants switched from nomadic lifestyles to cultivating land, as evidence from sites such as Kotosh and Huaca Prieta demonstrates. Cultivation of plants such as corn and cotton (*Gossypium Barbadense*) began, as well as the domestication of animals such as the wild ancestors of the llama, the alpaca, and the guinea pig. Inhabitants practiced domestic crafts such as spinning and knitting of cotton and wool, basketry, and pottery.

The first cultures with which we are more familiar were those of the Norte Chico civilization, from c. 3000 BCE, and the Chavin culture, which emerged c. 900 BCE. Though the Chavin were among the first since the builders of Norte Chico to construct monumental temples, they do not seem to have developed a significant middle class.

The Paracas culture emerged on the southern coast in around 300 BCE. They are known for their use of vicuña fibers instead of just cotton to produce fine textiles—innovations that did not reach the northern coast of Peru until centuries later. Coastal cultures such as the Moche and Nazca flourished from about 100 BCE to about 700 CE: The Moche produced impressive metalwork, as well as some of the finest pottery seen in the ancient world, while the Nazca are known for their textiles and the enigmatic Nazca lines.

These coastal cultures eventually began to decline as a result of recurring *el Niño* floods and droughts. In consequence, the Huari and Tiwanaku, who dwelled inland in the Andes became the predominant cultures of the region encompassing much modern-day Peru and Bolivia. They were succeeded by powerful city-states, such as Chancay, Sipan, and Cajamarca, and two empires: Chimor and Chachapoyas.

These cultures developed relatively advanced techniques of cultivation, gold and silver craft, pottery, metallurgy, and knitting. Around 700 BCE, they appear to have developed systems of social organization that were the precursors of the Inca civilization.

Not all Andean cultures were willing to offer their loyalty to the Incas as the Incas expanded their empire, and many were openly hostile. The people of the Chachapoyas culture were an example of this, but they were eventually conquered and integrated into the Inca Empire.

The Incas created the most vast empire of pre-Columbian America. The Tahuantinsuyo—which is derived from Quechua for "The Four United Regions"—reached its greatest extension at the beginning of the sixteenth century. It dominated a territory that included from north to south Ecuador, part of Colombia, the

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northern half of Chile, and the north-east part of Argentina; and from west to east, from Bolivia to the Amazonian forests.

The empire originated from a tribe based in [[CusæHico (Department of Peru)|Cuzco]], which became the capital. Pachacuti was the first ruler to considerably expand the boundaries of the Cuzco state. His offspring later ruled an empire by both violent and peaceful conquest.

In Cuzco, the royal city was created to resemble a Cougar; the head, the main royal structure, formed what is now known as Sacsayhuaman. The Empire's administrative, political, and military center was located in Cuzco. The empire was divided into four quarters: Chinchasuyo, Antisuyo, Contisuyo, and Collasuyo.

Quechua was the official language, imposed on the citizens. It was the language of a tribe neighboring the original tribe of the empire. Conquered populations—tribes, kingdoms, states, and cities—were allowed to practice their own religions and lifestyles, but had to recognize Inca cultural practices as superior to their own. Inti, the sun god, was to be worshipped as one of the most important gods of the empire. His representation on earth was the Inca ("Emperor").

The Tahuantinsuyo was organized in dominions with a stratified society, in which the ruler was the Inca. It was also supported by an economy based on the collective property of the land. In fact, the Inca Empire was conceived like an ambitious and audacious civilizing project, based on a mythical thought, in which the harmony of the relationships between the human being, nature, and gods was truly essential.

Many interesting customs were observed, for example the extravagant feast of Inti Raymi which gave thanks to the God Sun, and the young women who comprised the Virgins of the Sun, sacrificial virgins devoted to the Inti. The empire, being quite large, also had an impressive transportation system of roads to all points of the empire called the Inca Trail, and chasquis, message carriers who relayed information from anywhere in the empire to Cuzco.



Machu Picchu (Quechua: Old Peak; sometimes called the "Lost City of the Incas") is a well-preserved pre-Columbian Inca ruin located on a high mountain ridge above the Urubamba Valley, about 70 km (44 mi) northwest of Cuzco. Elevation measurements vary depending on whether the data refers to the ruin or the extremity of the mountain; Machu Picchu tourist information reports the elevation as 2,350 m (7,711 ft)[1]. Forgotten for centuries by the outside world, although not by locals, it was brought back to international attention by Yale archaeologist Hiram Bingham, who rediscovered it in 1911 and wrote a best-selling work about it. Peru is pursuing legal efforts to retrieve thousands of artifacts that Bingham removed from the site.

Although Machu Picchu is by far the most well-known internationally, Peru boasts many other sites where the modern visitor can see extensive and well-preserved ruins, remnants of Inca-period and even older constructions. Much of the Inca architecture and stonework found

at these sites continues to confound archaeologists. For example, at Sacsayhuaman, in Cuzco, the zig-zag-shaped walls are comprised of massive boulders fitted very precisely to one another's irregular, angular shapes. No mortar holds them together, but nonetheless they have remained absolutely solid through the centuries, surviving earthquakes that flattened many of Cuzco's colonial constructions. Damage to the walls visible today was mainly inflicted during battles between the Spanish and the Inca, as well as later, in the colonial era. As Cuzco grew, Sacsayhuaman's walls were partially dismantled, the site becoming a convenient source of construction materials for the city's newer inhabitants. Today we not only do not know how these stones were shaped and smoothed, lifted on top of one another (they really are *very* massive) or fitted together by the Incas; we also don't know how they got the stones to the site in the first place. The stone used is not native to the area, and most likely came from mountains many miles away.

When the Spanish landed in 1531, Peru's territory was the nucleus of the highly developed Inca civilization. Centered at Cuzco, the Inca Empire extended over a vast region, stretching from northern Ecuador to central Chile. Francisco Pizarro and his brothers were attracted by the news of a rich and fabulous kingdom. In 1532, they arrived in the country, which they called Peru. (The forms *Biru*, *Pirú*, and *Berú* are also seen in early records.) According to Raul Porras Barrenechea, Peru is not a Quechuan nor Caribbean word, but Indo-Hispanic or hybrid.

At that moment, the Inca Empire was preoccupied by a five-year civil war between two princes, Huáscar and Atahualpa. Taking advantage of this, Pizarro carried out a *coup d'état*. On November 16, 1532, while the natives were in a celebration in Cajamarca, the Spanish in a surprise move captured the Inca Atahualpa during the Battle of Cajamarca, causing a great consternation among the natives and conditioning the future course of the fight. When Huascar was killed, the Spanish tried and convicted Atahualpa of the murder, executing him by strangulation.

For a period, Pizarro maintained the ostensible authority of the Inca, recognizing Tupac Huallpa as the Inca after Atahualpa's death. But the conqueror's abuses made this façade too obvious. Spanish domination consolidated itself as successive indigenous rebellions were bloodily repressed. By March 23, 1534, Pizarro and the Spanish had refounded the Inca city of Cuzco as a new Spanish colonial settlement.

Establishing a stable colonial government was delayed for some time by native revolts and bands of the *Conquistadores* (led by Pizarro and Diego de Almagro) fighting among themselves. A long civil war developed, from which the Pizarros emerged victorious at the Battle of Las Salinas. In 1541, Pizarro was assassinated by a faction led by Diego de Almagro (*El Mozo*), and the stability of the original colonial regime was shaken up in the ensuing civil war.

Despite this, the Spaniards did not neglect the colonizing process. Its most significant milestone was the foundation of Lima in January 1535, from which the political and administrative institutions were organized. The new rulers instituted an *encomienda* system, by which the Spanish extracted tribute from the local population, part of which was forwarded to Seville in return for converting the natives to Christianity. Title to the land itself remained with the king of Spain. As governor of Peru, Pizarro used the *encomienda* system to grant virtually unlimited authority over groups of native Peruvians to his soldier companions, thus forming the colonial land-tenure structure. The indigenous inhabitants of Peru were now expected to raise Old World cattle, poultry, and crops for their landlords. Resistance was punished severely, giving rise to the "Black Legend".

The necessity of consolidating Spanish royal authority over these territories, led to the creation of a Real Audiencia (Royal Audience). The following year, in 1542, the Viceroyalty of Peru (in Spanish, *Virreinato del Perú*) was established, with authority over most of Spanish-ruled South America. (Colombia, Ecuador, Panamá and Venezuela were split off as the Viceroyalty of New Granada (in Spanish, *Virreinato de Nueva Granada*) in 1717; and Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay were set up as the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata in 1776.)

In response to the internal strife plaguing the country after Pizarro's death, Spain finally sent Blasco Núñez Vela to be Peru's first viceroy in 1544. He was later killed by Pizarro's brother, Gonzalo Pizarro, but a new viceroy, Pedro de la Gasca, eventually managed to restore order, and captured and executed Gonzalo Pizarro.

A census taken by the last Quipucamayoc indicated that there were 12 million inhabitants of Inca Peru; 45 years later, under viceroy Toledo, the census figures amounted to only 1,100,000 Indians. While the attrition was not an organized attempt at genocide, the results were similar. Inca cities were given Spanish Christian names and rebuilt as Spanish towns centered around a plaza with a church or cathedral facing an official residence. A few Inca cities like Cuzco retained native masonry for the foundations of their walls. Other Inca sites, like Huanuco Viejo, were abandoned for cities at lower altitudes more hospitable to the Spanish.

In 1542, the Spanish Crown created the Viceroyalty of Peru, which was reorganized after the arrival of Viceroy Francisco de Toledo in 1572. He put an end to the indigenous State of Vilcabamba, executed Tupac Amaru I. He also sought economic development through commercial monopoly and mineral extraction, mainly from the silver mines of Potosí. He reused the Inca *mita*, a forced labor program, to mobilize native communities for mining work. This organization transformed Peru into the principal source of Spanish wealth and power in South America.

The town of Lima, founded by Pizarro on January 18, 1535 as the "Ciudad de Reyes" (City of Kings), became the seat of the new viceroyalty. It grew into a powerful city, with jurisdiction over most of Spanish South America. Precious metals passed through Lima on its way to the Isthmus of Panama and from there to Seville, Spain. On the local level, Spanish *encomenderos* depended on local chieftains (*curacas*) to control even the most remote settlements, in a rigorous hierarchy. By the 18th century, Lima had become a distinguished and aristocratic colonial capital, seat of a university and the chief Spanish stronghold in the Americas.

Nevertheless, throughout this period, the Inca were not entirely suppressed. In the eighteenth century alone, there were fourteen large uprisings, the most important of which were that of Juan Santos Atahualpa in 1742, and Sierra Uprising of Tupac Amaru in 1780.

The creation of the Viceroyalties of New Granada and Rio de la Plata (at the expense of its territory), the duty exemptions that moved the commercial center from Lima to Caracas and Buenos Aires, and the decrease of the mining and textile production determined the progressive decay of the Viceroyalty of Peru.

The economic crisis favored the indigenous rebellion from 1780 to 1781. This rebellion was headed by Túpac Amaru II. At this time, the Napoleonic invasion of the Iberian Peninsula and the degradation of the Royal power took place. The Creole rebellion of Huánuco arose in 1812 and the rebellion of Cuzco arose between 1814 and 1816. These rebellions defended the liberal principles sanctioned by the Constitution of Cadiz of 1812.

These events created a favorable climate so that emancipating ideas developed between the Spanish Criollo people, or Creoles. However, supported by the power of the Creole oligarchy, the Viceroyalty of Peru became the last redoubt of the Spanish dominion in South America.

Peru's movement toward independence was launched by an uprising of Spanish landowners and their forces, led by José de San Martín of Argentina and Simón Bolívar of Venezuela. San Martín, who had displaced the royalists of Chile after the magnificent battle of the Andes, and who had disembarked in Paracas in 1819, proclaimed the independence of Peru in Lima on July 28, 1821, with the words "... *From this moment on, Peru is free and independent, for the general will of the towns and for the justice of its cause that God defends. Long live the homeland! Long live freedom! Long live our independence!*".

Emancipation was completed on December 1824, when General Antonio José de Sucre defeated Spanish troops at the Battle of Ayacucho. Spain made futile attempts to regain its former colonies, such as at the Battle of Callao, but in 1879 finally recognized Peruvian independence.

After independence, Peru and its neighbors engaged in intermittent territorial disputes.

In 1879, Peru entered the War of the Pacific which lasted until 1884. Bolivia invoked its alliance with Peru against Chile. The Peruvian Government tried to mediate the dispute by sending a diplomatic team to negotiate with the Chilean government, but the committee concluded that war was inevitable. Chile declared war on April 5, 1879. Almost five years of war ended with the loss of the department of Tarapacá and the provinces of Tacna and Arica, in the Atacama region.

Originally Chile committed to a referendum for the cities of Arica and Tacna to be held years later, in order to self-determine their national affiliation. However, Chile refused to apply the Treaty, and both countries

could not determine the statutory framework. In an arbitrage that both countries admitted, the USA decided Arica to Chile and Tacna to Peru. The territorial loss and the extensive looting of Peruvian cities by Chilean troops left scars on the country's relations with Chile that have not yet fully healed.

Following the Ecuadorian-Peruvian War of 1941, the Rio Protocol sought to formalize the boundary between those two countries. Ongoing boundary disagreements led to a brief war in early 1981 and the Cenepa War in early 1995, but in 1998 the governments of both countries signed a historic peace treaty that clearly demarcated the international boundary between them. In late 1999, the governments of Peru and Chile likewise similarly implemented the last outstanding article of their 1929 border agreement.

After the War of the Pacific, an extraordinary effort of rebuilding began. The government started to initiate a number of social and economic reforms in order to recover from the damage of the war. Political stability was achieved only in the early 1900s.

In 1894, Nicolás de Piérola, after allying his party with the Civil Party of Peru to organize guerillas with fighters to occupy Lima, ousted Andrés Avelino Cáceres and once again became president of Peru in 1895. After a brief period in which the military once again controlled the country, civilian rule was permanently established with Pierola's election in 1895. His second term was successfully completed in 1899 and was marked with the reconstruction of a devastated Peru by initiating fiscal, military, religious, and civil reforms. Until the 1920s, this period was called the "Aristocratic Republic", since most of the presidents that ruled the country were mostly from the social elite.

During Augusto B. Leguía's periods in government (1908–1912 and 1919–1930, the latter known as the "Oncenio" (the "Eleventh")), the entrance of American capitals became general and the bourgeoisie was favored. This politics along with the increase of the foreign capital dependency, contributed to generate opposition focuses between the landowner oligarchy as much as the most progressive sectors of the Peruvian society.

In 1929, Peru and Chile signed a final peace treaty, the Treaty of Lima by which Tacna returned to Peru and Peru yielded permanently the rich provinces of Arica and Tarapaca, but kept certain rights to the port activities in Arica and decisions of what Chile can do on those territories.

After the world-wide crisis of 1929, numerous brief governments followed one another. The APRA party had the opportunity to cause system reforms by means of political actions, but it was not successful. This is a nationalistic movement, populist and anti-imperialist headed by Victor Raul Haya de la Torre in 1924. The communist party was created four years later and it was led by Jose C. Mariategui.

Repression was brutal in the early 1930s and tens of thousands of APRA followers (APRISTAS) were executed or imprisoned. This period was also characterized by a sudden population growth and an increase in urbanization. During World War II, Peru was the first South American nation to align with the United States and its allies against Germany and Japan.

In the mid-20th century, Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre (founder of the APRA), together with José Carlos Mariátegui (leader of the Peruvian Communist Party), were two major forces on Peruvian politics. Ideologically opposed, they both managed to create the first political parties that tackled the social and economic problems of the country. Although Mariátegui died at a young age, Haya de la Torre was twice elected president, but prevented by the military from taking office.

President Bustamante y Rivero hoped to create a more democratic government by limiting the power of the military and the oligarchy. Elected with the cooperation of the APRA, conflict soon arose between the President and Haya de la Torre. Without the support of the APRA party, Bustamante y Rivero found his presidency severely limited. The President disbanded his *Aprista* cabinet and replaced it with a mostly military one. In 1948, Minister Manuel A. Odría and other right-wing elements of the Cabinet urged Bustamante y Rivero to ban the APRA, but when the President refused, Odría resigned his post.

In a military coup on October 29, Gen. Manuel A. Odría became the new President. Odría's presidency was known as the *Ochenio*. He came down hard on APRA, momentarily pleasing the oligarchy and all others on the right, but followed a populist course that won him great favor with the poor and lower classes. A thriving economy allowed him to indulge in expensive but crowd-pleasing social policies. At the same time, however, civil rights were severely restricted and corruption was rampant throughout his régime.

It was feared that his dictatorship would run indefinitely, so it came as a surprise when Odría allowed new elections. During this time, Fernando Belaúnde Terry started his political career, and led the slate submitted by the *National Front of Democratic Youth*. After the National Election Board refused to accept his candidacy, he led a massive protest, and the striking image of Belaúnde walking with the flag was featured by newsmagazine *Caretas* the following day, in an article entitled "Así Nacen Los Líderes" ("Thus Are Leaders Born"). Belaúnde's 1956 candidacy was ultimately unsuccessful, as the dictatorship-favored right-wing candidacy of Manuel Prado Ugarteche took first place.

Belaúnde ran for president once again in the National Elections of 1962, this time with his own party, Acción Popular. The results were very tight; he ended in second place, following Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre (APRA), by less than 14000 votes. Since none of the candidates manage to get the Constitutionally-established minimum of one third of the vote required to win outright, selection of the President would fall to Congress; the long-held antagonistic relationship between the military and APRA prompted Haya de la Torre to make a deal with former dictator Odría, who had come in third, which would result in Odría taking the Presidency in a coalition government.

However, widespread allegations of fraud prompted the Peruvian military to depose Prado and install a military junta, led by Ricardo Pérez Godoy. Godoy ran a short transitional government and held new elections in 1963, which were won by Belaúnde by a more comfortable but still narrow five percent margin.

Throughout Latin America in the 1960s, communist movements inspired by the Cuban Revolution sought to win power through guerrilla warfare. The Revolutionary Left Movement (Peru), or MIR, launched an insurrection that had been crushed by 1965, but Peru's internal strife would only accelerate until its climax in the 1990s.

The military has been prominent in Peruvian history. Coups have repeatedly interrupted civilian constitutional government. The most recent period of military rule (1968-1980) began when General Juan Velasco Alvarado overthrew elected President Fernando Belaúnde Terry of the Popular Action Party (AP). As part of what has been called the "first phase" of the military government's nationalist program, Velasco undertook an extensive agrarian reform program and nationalized the fish meal industry, some petroleum companies, and several banks and mining firms.

General Francisco Morales Bermúdez replaced Velasco in 1975, citing Velasco's economic mismanagement and deteriorating health. Morales Bermúdez moved the revolution into a more conservative "second phase," tempering the radical measures of the first phase and beginning the task of restoring the country's economy. A Constitutional Assembly was created in 1979, which was led by Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre. Morales Bermúdez presided over the return to civilian government in accordance with a new constitution drawn up in 1979.

During the 1980s, cultivation of illicit coca was established in large areas on the eastern Andean slope. Rural insurgent movements, like the Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*, SL) and the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) increased during this time and derived significant financial support from alliances with the narcotraffickers, leading to the Internal conflict in Peru.

In the May 1980 elections, President Fernando Belaúnde Terry was returned to office by a strong plurality. One of his first actions as President was the return of several newspapers to their respective owners. In this way, freedom of speech once again played an important part in Peruvian politics. Gradually, he also

attempted to undo some of the most radical effects of the *Agrarian Reform* initiated by Velasco, and reversed the independent stance that the Military Government of Velasco had with the United States.

Belaúnde's second term was also marked with the unconditional support for Argentinian forces during the Falklands War with the United Kingdom in 1982. Belaúnde declared that "Peru was ready to support Argentina with all the resources it needed." This included a number of fighter planes and possibly personnel from the Peruvian Air Force, as well as ships, and medical teams. Belaúnde's government proposed a peace settlement between the two countries, but it was rejected by both sides, as both claimed undiluted sovereignty of the territory. In response to Chile's support of the UK, Belaúnde called for Latin American unity.

The nagging economic problems left over from the previous military government persisted, worsened by an occurrence of the "El Niño" weather phenomenon in 1982–83, which caused widespread flooding in some parts of the country, severe droughts in others, and decimated the schools of ocean fish that are one of the country's major resources. After a promising beginning, Belaúnde's popularity eroded under the stress of inflation, economic hardship, and terrorism.

In 1985, the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) won the presidential election, bringing Alan García to office. The transfer of the presidency from Belaúnde to García on July 28, 1985, was Peru's first exchange of power from one democratically elected leader to another in 40 years.

With a parliamentary majority for the first time in APRA's history, Alan García started his administration with hopes for a better future. However, economic mismanagement led to hyperinflation from 1988 to 1990. García's term in office was marked by bouts of hyperinflation, which reached 7,649% in 1990 and had a cumulative total of 2,200,200% between July 1985 and July 1990, thereby profoundly destabilizing the Peruvian economy.

Owing to such chronic inflation, the Peruvian currency, the sol, was replaced by the *Inti* in mid-1985, which itself was replaced the nuevo sol ("new sol") in July 1991, at which time the new sol had a cumulative value of one billion old soles. During his administration, the per capita annual income of Peruvians fell to \$720 (below the level of 1960) and Peru's Gross Domestic Product dropped 20%. By the end of his term, national reserves were a negative \$900 million.

The economic turbulence of the time acerbated social tensions in Peru and partly contributed to the rise of the violent rebel movement Shining Path. The García administration unsuccessfully sought a military solution to the growing terrorism, committing human rights violations which are still under investigation.

Concerned about the economy, the increasing terrorist threat from Sendero Luminoso, and allegations of official corruption, voters chose a relatively unknown mathematician-turned-politician, Alberto Fujimori, as president in 1990. The first round of the election was won by well-known writer Vargas Llosa, a conservative candidate, but Fujimori defeated him in the second round. Fujimori implemented drastic measures that caused inflation to drop from 7,650% in 1990 to 139% in 1991. Faced with opposition to his reform efforts, Fujimori dissolved Congress in the *auto-golpe* of April 5, 1992. He then revised the constitution; called new congressional elections; and implemented substantial economic reform, including privatization of numerous state-owned companies, creation of an investment-friendly climate, and sound management of the economy.

Fujimori's administration was dogged by several insurgent groups, most notably Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), which carried on a terrorist campaign in the countryside throughout the 1980s and 1990s. He cracked down on the insurgents and was successful in largely quelling them by the late 1990s, but the fight was marred by atrocities committed by the both Peruvian security forces and the insurgents: the Barrios Altos massacre and La Cantuta massacre by Government paramilitary groups, and the bombings of Tarata and Frecuencia Latina by Shining Path. Those examples subsequently came to be seen as symbols of the human rights violations committed during the last years of violence. With the capture of Abimael

Guzmán (known as *President Gonzalo*) in September 1992, Shining Path receive a severe blow which practically destroyed the organization.

In December 1996, a group of insurgents belonging to the MRTA took over the Japanese embassy in Lima, taking 72 people hostage. Military commandos stormed the embassy compound in May 1997, which resulted in the death of all 15 hostage takers, one hostage, and 2 commandos. It later emerged, however, that at least eight of the rebels may have been killed after surrendering, following the orders of Fujimori's security chief Vladimiro Montesinos.

Fujimori's constitutionally questionable decision to seek a third term and subsequent tainted victory in June 2000 brought political and economic turmoil. A bribery scandal that broke just weeks after he took office in July forced Fujimori to call new elections in which he would not run. The scandal involved Vladimiro Montesinos, who was shown in a video broadcast on TV bribing a politician to change sides. Montesinos subsequently emerged as the center a vast web of illegal activities, including embezzlement, graft, drug trafficking, as well as human rights violations committed during the war against Sendero Luminoso.

In November 2000, Fujimori resigned from office and self-exiled to Japan, avoiding prosecution for human rights violations and corruption charges by the new Peruvian authorities. His main intelligence chief, Vladimiro Montesinos, fled Peru shortly afterwards. Authorities in Venezuela arrested him in Caracas in June 2001 and turned him over to Peruvian authorities; he is now imprisoned and charged with acts of corruption and human rights violations committed during Fujimori's administration.

A caretaker government presided over by Valentín Paniagua took on the responsibility of conducting the new presidential and congressional elections. The elections were held in April 2001; observers considered them to be free and fair. Alejandro Toledo (who led the opposition against Fujimori) defeated former President Alan García.

The new elected government, took office July 28, 2001. The Toledo Administration has manage to restore some degree of democracy to Peru following the authoritarianism and corruption that plagued both the Fujimori and García governments. Innocents wrongfully tried by military courts during the war against terrorism (1980-2000) are now allowed to receive new trials in civilian courts. Trials of those accused of corruption and collusion in the corrupt dealings of the Fujimori years are underway.

On August 28, 2003, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR), which had been charged with studying the roots of the violence of the 1980–2000 period, presented its formal report to the President. The Government of Peru is now weighing its response to the CVR's recommendations that human rights violators be tried and that the government take measures to, in some fashion, indemnify parts of the population that suffered during those years, chiefly rural Peruvians of ethnically Indian descent.

President Toledo has been forced to made a number of cabinet changes, mostly in response to personal scandals. Toledo's governing coalition has a plurality in Congress and must negotiate on an ad hoc basis with other parties to form majorities on legislative proposals. Toledo's popularity in the polls has suffered throughout the past year, due in part to family scandals and in part to dissatisfaction amongst workers with their share of benefits from Peru's macroeconomic success. After strikes by teachers and agricultural producers led to nationwide road blockages in May 2003, Toledo declared a state of emergency that suspended some civil liberties and gave the military power to enforce order in 12 regions. The state of emergency has since been reduced to only the few areas where Shining Path was operating.

On July 28, 2006 former president Alan García became the current President of Peru. He won the 2006 elections after winning in a runoff against Ollanta Humala.

****Based on information obtained at :http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Peru**