

Pronouncement of President Alejandro Toledo on the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

[21 November 2003]

Peruvians:

Upon receiving the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, I stated that after an analysis of its conclusions, the government would make a statement to the country outlining the actions we propose to take to face the consequences of violence and terror.

Today, upon doing this, I want to pay tribute to the work of the Commission, whose Report has been debated, supported and criticized.

As its President pointed out, all truth is perfectible.

But as Head of State of a country that has been punished by violence, I cannot avoid a responsibility that is mine despite the fact that we were not in government.

I apologize, in the name of the State, to those who have suffered.

For the dead

For the disappeared

To the thousands of displaced people

To the disabled

To those who were tortured

To those left without documents

In general to all the victims of the violence and terror.

I should like to share some reflections on the nature of the violence.

The first is to ask all Peruvians to accept with courage that we have lived through a period of extreme violence that affected us all, especially the most humble.

We must face that crude reality.

Accepting the reality of the violence unleashed on the weakest, is the first step toward reconciliation.

This acknowledgement cannot come without accepting the cutting reality of the social exclusion of millions of compatriots.

Seventy-nine per cent of the victims of terrorism lived in rural areas and 75% spoke Quechua or other native languages as their mother tongue.

Social exclusion, the lack of State presence and abandonment, were the breeding ground for the demented and terrorist ideology that bloodied the poorest Peruvians and which resulted in a blood bath that lasted 20 years.

There is no doubt that Shining Path is the main actor responsible for the violence.

The country had to defend itself, availing itself of the participation of the Armed Forces and Police, and applying legislation and constitutional norms to the State of Emergency.

In a conflict of this nature, some members of the Forces of Order incurred in painful excesses.

It will be up to the Prosecutor's Office [Ministerio Publico] and the judicial branch to do justice in these cases, harboring neither impunity nor abuse.

We are respectful of the independence of powers.

In this reflection I cannot fail to point out that in 1992 the Government broke the democratic rules under the guise of the need to combat terrorism.

With this pretext, paramilitary groups were organized that acted in aid of the dark power, committing serious violations of human rights.

In second place, I should like to lay out the general outline of a State policy for Reconciliation, which we propose to Peruvians, today, in democracy.

The first thread of this policy should be that truth and justice are the most effective medium for achieving reconciliation.

Peru will not renounce the truth.

The second thread is reconciliation, understood as Peruvians coming together once again with their ideals of peace, justice, wellbeing, democracy and development.

The third thread is the denial of impunity, that is to say punishment for those who turn out to be responsible for the violation of human rights, in accordance with the law and respecting due process.

Without justice there will be no reconciliation.

The fourth thread is the identification of victims. In this endeavor, we shall not waver, supporting the actions of the Office of the Public Prosecutor.

The fifth thread of this policy is peace and development in the areas affected by the violence, as well as the collective reparations to which the State must dedicate itself from this moment.

Finally, I would like to announce to the country the implementation of a Peace and Development Plan in the amount of 2,845 soles [about \$836 million US] in areas most affected by the violence, to be implemented between this year and 2006 in a first stage, which we hope will be continued by successor governments.

The Plan has the following objectives:

One. To improve food, recovery [*saneamiento*], health, education and citizen safety of the population.

Two. Rehabilitate and increase road networks, telecommunications and electrical infrastructure.

Three. Raise production and productivity, especially agricultural and ranching and agricultural industry.

Four. Promote private investment.

Five. Strengthen the presence of the State and of civil society in these areas.

In order to carry out this Plan, the State will draw on public financing and international cooperation.

In this period the public investment will reach 2,845 million soles, of which 2,550 already have financing assured. The remainder is being sought through sources of international cooperation.

These resources will be invested by the central government, regional governments and local governments, and will benefit the regions of Ayacucho, Apurimac, Huancavelica and the provinces of Satipo and La Convencion, with whose authorities this Plan has been drafted.

I have just signed the Supreme Decree that will make this Peace and Development Plan official, as the most outstanding element of collective reparations.

Among the first actions under this Plan, the following projects will be implemented:

- Reconstruction of the National University San Cristobal de Humanga and strengthening of its academic staff. Ayacucho will have a great university.
- Program for construction, rehabilitation and equipping of classrooms.
- Construction and expansion of health clinics.
- Electrical Transmission Line Huamanga-San Francisco and the secondary networks for supplying electrical power to the main population centers of the Valley of the Apurimac River and the Ene.
- Handing over of 33,000 property deeds to communities of campesinos and rural producers.
- Construction, improvement, maintenance and rehabilitation of 3,800 kilometers of highways, including those of San Francisco-Huamanga,
- Instalation of TV and Rural Telephone antennas.
- Creation of a Reserve for Vicunas and other South American Camel species in Huancavelica.

In a second stage, within a very short time, another Peace and Development Plan will be developed for the regions of Huanuco, Pasco and San Martin.

I should point out, nevertheless, that the government does not confuse the Peace and Development Plan with the obligation of the State to carry out actions to attend to the people and populations that were victims of the violence.

Attending to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission we have decided to carry out a set of actions to give attention to those most affected and their direct family members.

The beneficiaries [of these actions] will be civilian, military and police victims.

- In the educational realm, the actions will have the purpose of improving the possibilities of those who saw their education frustrated because of the violence.
- In these cases, the Minister of Education will implement actions for the elimination of payments and exam rights.
- In some areas, following coordination with the National Assembly of [University] Rectors, orphans whose condition as such is duly proven, will have direct and free access to university study.

- Reparations in this area will include the government's concern to provide orphans with access to study grants.
- In the health sphere, we have decided that orphans and widows should be covered by Comprehensive Health Insurance [Seguro Integral de Salud]. In the same way, a National Mental Health Program will be initiated.
- In the area of housing, the government will promote the assignment of houses at low cost or at no cost, depending on the cases.

We have adopted other decisions in addition to those I have already announced:

First, establishing December 10 as the Day of National Reconciliation, calling on authorities around the country and civil society to carry out acts of symbolic reparation, in recognition of civilian, military and police victims.

Second, the government will install a mechanism to follow up on its actions in the field of Peace, Reparation and Reconciliation that will be in the hands of a High-Level Multi-Sectorial Commission, in which representatives of regional and local governments will have a place.

Third, I will personally lead a crusade in search of resources from abroad for the following actions:

- Strengthening the work of the prosecutors in charge of cases related to the consequences of violence and terror.
- The creation of a National Victims Registry, of civilians as well as military and police.

Fourth, the Ministry of Education will promote the inclusion in curricula and school texts the most outstanding elements of the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The Truth Commission has completed a transcendental mission. The results of its work will be appreciated in the future.

Let us continue to seek truth with justice, truth without impunity, truth with acknowledgment, truth without abuse, truth with reconciliation.

MAY VIOLENCE NEVER AGAIN BRUTALIZE PERUVIANS.

Good night.