



Annual Report April 2003-April 2004

*Supporting the most
vulnerable in Peru*

C/o CIIR, Unit 3, Canonbury Yard
190a New North Road
London N1 7BJ
Tel/fax: 020 7354 9825
Tel: 020 7288 8655
After hours fax: 020 7359 0017
Email: perusupport@gn.apc.org
Website: www.perusupportgroup.co.uk

*The PSG aims to
promote the rights and
interests of the people of
Peru and in particular
its poorest sectors*

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Report from the Executive Committee

This was an important year for the Peru Support Group (PSG), as 2003/2004 saw us celebrate both our 20th anniversary and the 100th edition of the Peru Update. Perhaps the fact that the PSG has needed to exist for the last 20 years is nothing to celebrate. But as the executive committee, we felt proud that the PSG has been providing news and information for 100 editions as well as campaigning and lobbying for change for two decades. This is thanks to continued support from members, volunteers and our core funders. We hope to continue this work as long as there is a demand and a need for it.

In Peru, a year that began with concerns over the low popularity ratings of President Alejandro Toledo ended in the same way, with commentators continuing to speculate on whether he will see his presidency through to 2006. Toledo has weathered crisis after crisis during this year, and he is seemingly incapable of giving direction or impetus to his policies.

The unpopularity of government austerity measures led to a number of strikes in May 2003, with transport workers, teachers and other public sector workers to the fore. In response, Toledo decreed a state of emergency in parts of the country, and brought in the army to restore order on the streets. This calmed the situation down without really resolving the underlying problems. Unemployment is high, the minimum wage is inadequate, and poverty levels continues to rise.

There were three cabinet overhauls during the year as Toledo aimed at breathing life back into his administration. The June cabinet included the first ever female prime minister, Beatriz Merino. This did not last for long, however, since in December she was linked in the Peruvian press to several scandals, and was replaced by Carlos Ferrero, who became the fourth premier in less than three years.

In August, the Peru Support Group welcomed the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The report estimates that some 69,000 Peruvians had lost their lives during the political violence that shook the country from 1980 to 2000, more than double the figure previously assumed. The vast majority of the victims were non-Spanish speaking peasants in the department of Ayacucho and other Andean highland regions. Unlike other Latin American countries affected by internal conflict in the 1970s and 1980s, more than half of the deaths and disappearances in Peru were the responsibility of insurgent groups Shining Path and MRTA. The Commission called for reparations and trials in cases where there was enough evidence to prosecute named individuals. The report created a furore in Peru. Some accused it of political bias, others of supporting the armed insurgent groups. President Toledo himself eventually made an official statement more than three months later, accepting the conclusions of the report and apologising on behalf of the Peruvian state to the relatives of the victims.

In July, the government finally called for former President Fujimori's extradition from Japan, where he has been living since his ouster in November 2000. The authorities accuse him of responsibility for the deaths of 15 people in 1991 and a further nine in 1992. His former intelligence chief Vladimiro Montesinos meanwhile has been appearing on trial for some of the sixty charges that have been brought against him. Already sentenced to 13 years in prison, he has yet to face the most serious accusations.

The Peruvian economy continued to grow this year, though little trickle down effect was felt. GDP growth for 2003 has been estimated at 4%, slightly down from the previous year, but still remarkable for the region. Growth is largely due to mining exports.

Advocacy

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)

The PSG has met with the new Ambassador to Peru, Richard Ralph, on a number of occasions. Two members of the executive committee and the co-ordinator gave the Ambassador designate a briefing on the work of the PSG, and on our key issues of concern in Peru in April before he took up the post. At this briefing we were able to discuss ways that we can work together with the British Embassy in Peru and the British Council. The PSG also took part in a breakfast briefing for Ralph, which was attended by representatives of diverse industries, societies and NGOs with an interest in Peru.

Since then the Co-ordinator has met with the Ambassador as well as FCO press and public affairs officer to look at ways that we can work together, particularly with regard to the parliamentary delegation being organised by the PSG for June 2004.

In October 2003, the Foreign Office and the UK embassy in Peru showed their support for the work of the PSG by co-ordinating with us to arrange a visit to the UK for **Francisco Soberon**, the executive secretary of the Peruvian human rights umbrella organisation *Co-ordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos*. This visit was timed so that Mr. Soberon could take part in the PSG's annual conference "**Human Rights in Peru 20 Years On**" as well as the PSG 20th anniversary celebrations.

On a number of occasions the PSG co-ordinated and facilitated meetings between visiting Peruvians, such as **Gloria Cano** (human rights lawyer from the Peruvian human rights NGO, APRODEH) and **Luis Sirumbal** (CEDAL) and representatives of the FCO. Such meetings have proved to be a useful exchange of information and have allowed Peruvian organisations to forge direct links with the UK government.

MPs & peers in Westminster

As always, we have kept our contacts in Parliament informed of the current situation in Peru both through the Peru Update, and special briefings and supplementary publications. We held an event in the Houses of Parliament to publicise the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), prior to the release of the final report. This event was sponsored by Des Turner MP and chaired by our president, Lord Avebury. We were able to make contacts with new MPs with an interest in Peru and Latin America, as well as building on existing links. The event was also a space for government and NGO representatives and academics to get together to look at ways that we can work on the issue of the TRC in Peru.

Lord Avebury was also able to chair our annual conference in October and another of our sponsors, Simon Hughes MP, joined us to celebrate our 20th anniversary.

Through our planning work for a parliamentary delegation in 2004/2005 we have built on existing relationships and forged new ones with individual MPs and peers. In addition, the PSG met with the president of the newly formed **UK-Peru Cross Party Parliamentary Group, Michael Connarty, MP for Falkirk East**. We were able to brief Michael on our main concerns prior to a visit he was making to Peru, and agreed to give a talk to the cross-party group in the future.

Scottish Parliament

The PSG maintained its links with members of the Scottish Parliament. The Co-ordinator met with our sponsor **Linda Fabiani MSP** in January to exchange information and to plan future events in the Scottish Parliament.

Interagency group

This year the PSG formed an Interagency Group among British based NGOs to work on how best

to follow up on the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This group met twice in 2003/2004, and planned a number of initiatives such as the publication on the TRC and the upcoming parliamentary delegation.

Conference, meetings and events

The PSG continued to organise and facilitate meetings and conferences with the aim of raising awareness amongst the British public on issues concerning civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights including the following:

Parliamentary public meeting, 12 June 2003 – “The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Human Rights in Peru”

This event was hosted by Des Turner MP and chaired by Lord Avebury. The speaker – **Diana Avila Paulette** Executive Director of the Peru-based the *Project Counselling Service* spoke about the importance of the Truth Commission in Peru. She outlined the work of the Commission, highlighting its key achievements, and its limitations. The talk was an excellent and detailed introduction into the work of the Commission. It summarised the key issues of concern, and looked at ways in which NGOs and parliamentarians in the UK can support the work of the Commission and the implementation of its recommendations.

The audience was made up of parliamentarians with an interest in development, Latin America and human rights; interested PSG members; representatives of other major NGOs with an interest in Peru; and journalists, including those from the BBC World Service.

Public meeting in Liverpool, 21 June 2003 – “Courage and Pain: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Peru” organised with CAFOD.

This event was held at the Institute of Latin American Studies in Liverpool. The speaker **Betty Evans**, director of the Peruvian education NGO, *EDUCA*, talked about the importance of the TRC as a process in Peru and the impact of the Commission on Peruvian society. She looked at the importance of integrating the final results into the educational system, so that lessons are learnt and the truth is not forgotten. Holding the talk in Liverpool allowed the PSG to build up its membership in the north west, as well as involving the existing membership in that area in our work.

Public meeting in London, 8 September 2003 – “The findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Peru”

This event was held the week after the release of the final report of the TRC in Peru. **Gloria Cano**, from the *Peruvian Pro-Human Rights Association (APRODEH)* and **Rosalía Stork**, a Lawyer for the *Human Rights Commission “Alto Huallaga”*, and representative of the regional offices of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Huanuco spoke about the findings and recommendations, as well as the legal follow-up on specific cases.

PSG Annual Conference 2003, 18 October 2003 – “Human Rights in Peru 20 Years On”

This year the annual conference focused on human rights over the last 20 years, in recognition of the 20th anniversary of the PSG, and the culmination of the TRC. The keynote speakers were **Carlos Iván Degregori**, TRC member and **Francisco Soberon**, Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Human Rights. We also held workshops on women’s rights (**Robin Kirk** from *Human Rights Watch*); rural issues (**Ricardo Vega**, *National Co-ordinating Body for Agrarian Organisations*); the political panorama (**John Crabtree**, PSG) and the economic outlook (**Neil Pyper**, PSG).

Worldfair, 5-6 December 2003

The PSG took part in the annual Worldfair, a two-day event held at the Conway Hall, sponsored by Oxfam GB, War on Want and the World Development Movement. Some 3,000 people came to buy fairly traded crafts and learn more about the different NGOs present at the fair.

Publications and projects

Special publication: "The Findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Peru"

This special A5 50-page booklet was published in February. It describes the work of the Commission and presents both its main findings and its recommendations for action. It seeks to use this information to help build international solidarity for Peru. The publication was sent out to all PSG contacts and is available free to members. We also have an electronic version so that it can be distributed as widely and cost-efficiently as possible.

Photographic exhibition "Testimonies of Courage and Pain"

This exhibition produced last year is an English version of a photographic exhibition that was originally commissioned by the Project Counselling Service (an international NGO consortium based in Lima working on conflict and human rights issues and with displaced people) called "Testimonies of Courage and Pain". The exhibition includes photographs and testimonies of women affected by political violence in Peru. It highlights the need for truth and reconciliation and the role that women can play in this.

The exhibition has been on display at three universities, the Institutes of Latin American Studies in Liverpool and London and in the Development Studies Department at the University of East Anglia. The exhibition has also been used as a visual resource at a number of the PSG events (see above) as well as at presentations made by the group on human rights in schools.

Photographic exhibition, "Peru on \$1 a Day: a Rough Guide to Living"

This 2001 PSG photographic exhibition addresses themes such as poverty, education, women's rights, health, environmental pollution and debt repayment. It illustrates the social, economic, environmental and political hardships faced by the majority of Peruvians. The exhibition has been in use over the year, both as a visual aid and an exhibition in its own right. It has been used for events organised by our members as well as in primary and secondary schools in different parts of the country.

Information and educational resources

The Peru Update

The PSG newsletter continues to be produced on a bi-monthly basis with a print run of 500 copies. We use the Update as a way of keeping members and contacts of the organisation informed on issues of concern. The articles and news items in the Update are chosen to reflect our priorities. This year articles have focused on poverty, mining, democracy, reproductive rights, coca eradication, the TRC, decentralisation as well as up to the minute news coverage. The Update provides an important forum for raising topics of interest and concern from a variety of contributors, and also allows members of the PSG and the general public to participate in the work of the PSG by taking part in letter-writing campaigns, workshops or cultural events.

The Update was redesigned in a clearer and more attractive layout to celebrate the 100th edition which was published in September 2003. Selected articles from the Update are available on the PSG website.

Website (<http://www.perusupportgroup.co.uk> - soon to be changed to www.perusupportgroup.org.uk)

We have worked on the development of the website throughout the year, updating the key issues section of the site as well as links page. During the State of Emergency and the kidnapping in Ayacucho we were able to provide daily updates on the situation in English and Spanish and provide links to other information services. This was well received by our membership and other



contacts. It has also prompted people to get in touch with the PSG and to join up. We hope further to develop the website so that more people will visit it regularly, and use it as a first point of contact for information about Peru.

As the 2003/2004 year came to an end, we were in the middle of redesigning the whole website which was originally built in 1999. The new design will make the website easier to use and with the relaunch we hope to make it a site that people will use for reference.

We have built up the email mailing list to which we send information about events and latest news. This is a free service for members and contacts. We hope to increase the number of people on this mailing list, and eventually be able to contact the majority of our members via email.

Information

We receive a large number of enquiries and requests for information. We regularly receive bulletins from a variety of Peruvian organisations, which provide an invaluable source of up-to-date and reliable information, particularly on the subject of political, social and economic rights.

We are able to use this information in all our activities. We also respond to a high volume of enquires from various sectors of society, either by providing information or building links between individuals and groups in Peru and the UK.

Library and resources

We continue to subscribe to several key Peruvian magazines/journals (*Ideele*, *Que Hacer*) and have aided many people in their research and provided an effective resource library on contemporary Peru. We also receive publications and books from a wide range of Peruvian NGOs and other institutions. Human rights organisations, development organisations, the media, along with students - mainly from the Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS) and Goldsmiths College - use the PSG resources extensively.

Work with schools

The Co-ordinator gave three workshops on human rights in Peru to 14-year old students at a school in West Sussex, as part of special human rights day in December 2003.

We have lent out resources such as teaching packs, photographic exhibitions, and videos to primary and secondary schools to raise awareness of Peru in the UK.

Other activities

Andean Festival in Oxford

The PSG helped to organise and took part in the Andean Food Art Festival in the Botanical Gardens in Oxford. This was an excellent opportunity to promote Andean products, such as quinoa and kiwicha in the UK, and to reach a different type of audience. The PSG organised story telling for children, information sheets on Andean Cereals and how they are used traditionally. A local chef cooked recipes based on quinoa, and the PSG photographic exhibition "Peru on \$1 a day" was on display.

Co-ordinator visit to Peru

The co-ordinator travelled to Peru in November 2003, supported by Christian Aid. She was able to visit a number of Christian Aid projects, as well as building strong links with the Christian Aid supporters group that she was accompanying.

While in Peru, the co-ordinator was able to strengthen contacts with Peruvian solidarity groups, to build on and establish new links with Peruvian experts from NGO, academic and government sectors. She was also able to do some important groundwork for the PSG parliamentary delegation scheduled for 2004.



Membership

The PSG has a committed and enthusiastic membership. A number of members help out with events, attend public meetings, and volunteer with translation and interpreting work. Members and contacts have been able to use our resources to organise their own events. We continue to receive a number of substantial donations from members. The membership and others who have been involved in the PSG over the last 20 years had an opportunity to get together and celebrate at a reception to celebrate the anniversary in October 2003.

Relationship with other UK NGOs

The PSG has continued to maintain and build on relationships with other UK NGOs working in or on Peru, as well as those working on issues linked to our work. This includes our core funders, and many other large and small organisations within the UK. We have encouraged groups to work together and have been able to put groups working on similar issues in contact with each other.

The PSG has also been building on its close relationship with CIIR. Mutually beneficial actions have included the PSG providing briefings for CIIR development workers going to Peru and providing an article for CIIR News on the issue of Tambogrande.

European Groups and NGOs

The PSG has built on its relationship with other groups and key individuals working on Peru within the EU, including the Berlin Peru Group and the Amnesty Co-ordinator for Peru in Brussels who attended the annual conference in October 2003.

The PSG continues to work closely with Christian Solidarity Worldwide. There are plans for a joint event in Brussels as the CSW programme officer for Peru is based in Belgium.

The PSG recently signed a joint letter to President Toledo from a number of European organisations on the issue of Tambogrande.

The Executive Committee

This has been crucial to the work of the PSG. The committee members have continued to contribute their time, advice and expertise generously. Committee meetings take place once a month, with additional strategy meetings taking place every six months. Many members of the committee travel to Peru on a regular basis, facilitating communication with the various organisations with which we work.

Volunteers

They have continued to donate invaluable time and effort. Mostly they have been involved in desktop publishing, research activities, office administration, editing, mailings, and helping on stalls at events.

PSG End of Year figures 2003/2004

These end of year figures are produced on a cash basis and cover all payments and deposits made between 6 April 2003 and 5 April 2004. Please take the endnotes into account.

Payments	Budget	Actual
Rent & Insurance ¹	5,000.00	2,332.93
Salary & National Insurance	20,696.00	20,841.64
Volunteers ²	400.00	98.00
Equipment & Stationary	500.00	466.43
Travel	400.00	310.37
Phone & Fax, Email & Website ³	1,300.00	963.63
Postage	600.00	610.61
Printing & Copying ⁴	500.00	47.00
Resources	300.00	340.21
Update ⁵	1,100.00	796.23
Events ⁶	500.00	711.65
Production of Materials	200.00	44.81
Visitor expenses	200.00	65.66
Other	200.00	113.11
Special initiative on TRC 03-05 ⁷	0.00	2,155.50
TOTAL PAYMENTS	<u>31,946.00</u>	<u>29,897.78</u>
Receipts		
Grants	25,000.00	25,000.00
Subscriptions	2,750.00	2,877.75
Donations	1,000.00	535.67
Events	100.00	191.00
Publication sales	100.00	13.00
Crafts	500.00	213.55
Interest	250.00	179.97
Special Grants	2,350.00	2,800.00
Other income	50.00	0.00
Photocopying	50.00	0.00
Special initiative on TRC 03-05 ⁸	0.00	7,000.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	<u>31,850.00</u>	<u>38,810.94</u>
GRAND TOTAL	<u>-96.00</u>	<u>8,913.16</u>

Balance Sheet

	Petty Cash	Current account	Deposit account	Liabilities ⁹	Total
06-Apr-03	30.52	1,798.83	10,977.77	0	12,807.12
05-Apr-04	26.52	3,476.09	20,779.54	-2,561.87	21,720.28
Difference	-4	1,677.26	9,801.77	-2,561.87	8913.16

¹ The budget for rent included £1,000 for the cost of moving premises, the PSG has not had to move offices in this financial year. The actual rent also appears lower than the budget because we received overdue payments towards the rent for the previous FY.

² The PSG received less voluntary support than expected this year

³ Costs are lower for this category as payment for our webserver of £150 was not made within the FY, we also changed to a cheaper internet package.

⁴ The printing and copying costs are lower than we budgeted as we did not print new letter headed paper, nor new leaflets in 2003/2004, due to the possibility that we would be moving offices.

⁵ This year the PSG printed just 5 editions of the Update one of which was longer than usual.

⁶ Extra money was spent on events this year for the 20th anniversary reception and annual conference.

⁷ This was not budgeted for as it was an initiative that arose during 2003/2004.

⁸ The majority of the expenditure for this category will fall in the coming financial year.

⁹ Cheques issued by PSG but not cashed by recipient.