



Peru's Incoming President: Ollanta Humala

On 5th June 2011 left-of-centre candidate Ollanta Humala narrowly defeated Keiko Fujimori, daughter of imprisoned former President Alberto Fujimori (1990 – 2000), to become Peru's next president. See below for information on Humala's background, campaign pledges and the challenges facing his administration:

Background

- Humala is a former captain in the Peruvian Army and fought against the Shining Path insurgent group during Peru's internal armed conflict (1980 – 2000). At the end of the government of former President Alberto Fujimori, who is currently serving 25 years in prison for human rights and corruption offences, he led an unsuccessful military uprising against the discredited regime.
- In 2006 he ran for president on a leftist / nationalist ticket which proved popular in the poorest and most indigenous areas of Peru. He won the first round vote but narrowly lost out to Alan García in the second, chiefly due to the concerns of more affluent voters over his economic policy and purported links to Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez.
- The same year, he faced investigation following accusations that he had committed human rights abuses while serving as a military commander in the early 1990s. In 2009 the investigation was closed by President of the Supreme Court César San Martín and no charges were filed.

2011 Election

- In the 2011 campaign Humala headed an alliance of nationalist, socialist and other left-leaning parties, and advocated reforms which were notably less radical than in 2006. He distanced himself from Chávez and instead sought to portray himself as a Peruvian version of former Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula's advisors provided assistance to Humala's team during the campaign).
- He came from rank outsider in early March to win the first round in April with over 31% of the vote, benefitting from a split in the centrist vote between three candidates. Following the vote Humala tacked further towards the centre, dropping some pledges – such as rewriting Fujimori's 1993 constitution – which had proved unpopular with those who voted for the more centrist candidates in the first round.
- His second round opponent, Keiko Fujimori, surrounded herself by her father's former advisors, some of whom faced allegations of involvement in corruption, money-laundering and human rights abuses. For many undecided voters, concerns over Fujimori and her electoral team seem to have surmounted any lingering doubts they had over Humala.
- Humala won 51.5% of the vote in the second round. Though the Peruvian stock market suffered its largest ever daily fall the day after his election it all but recovered shortly afterwards. Latest opinion polls give the president-elect a 70% approval rating, indicating that many Fujimori voters have now reconciled themselves to the prospect of a Humala government.

Upcoming Challenges

- The new administration inherits a prosperous economy but also a number of serious challenges. The most pressing of these is the need to overcome high levels of social conflict in the Andean and jungle regions associated with extractive projects. Such investments have been a key element of Peru's economic model in recent years, but local communities have frequently expressed frustration that they have seen little of the benefits from them. As a consequence, and despite high rates of economic growth nationally, around one third of Peru's population still live in poverty, according to Peru's National Statistics Institute (INEI).
- In an effort to help growth 'trickle down' to the poor and to prevent future unrest Humala has committed to a windfall tax on mining profits and to legislation which will ensure local communities are properly consulted on extractive projects. However, given his *Gana Perú* party did not gain a majority in Congress (winning only 47 of 130 seats) and is in itself a somewhat fractious alliance, it may prove difficult for him to pass these and other progressive reforms pledged during the campaign.