PSG webinar sheds light on background to and prospects for the elections

On 6 May, the Peru Support Group organized a webinar on the elections. This featured participation by Marisa Glave, the former Nuevo Perú congresswoman (2016-20); David Sulmont, professor of political sociology from the Catholic University; and Dan Collyns, the Lima correspondent for The Guardian and the BBC. The session was moderated by John Crabtree from the Latin American Centre at the University of Oxford.

The webinar was divided into four sections. The first dealt with the background to the surprising results from the first round on 11 April. Marisa Glave spoke of the climate of voter disenchantment in Peru and the reasons for it, stressing how this is a long-running characteristic of Peru and how Peru compares with other Latin American countries in terms of support for democracy. David Sulmont then spoke about how Castillo's first-round victory reflected growing social and regional inequalities. Dan Collyns then complemented these two by looking at the way in which the Covid pandemic and the government's handling of it has impacted on the political scene.

The second part looked at what both Castillo and Fujimori need to do to ensure themselves of victory in the second round. Glave highlighted the moves on the part of Castillo to build alliances with other groups on the left, while Sulmont analysed the formation of alliances on the right behind Fujimori. The third part looked at the longer-term implications of the eventual outcome of the second round, with Collyns reflecting on the implications for democracy in the case of either candidate winning, Sulmont talking about both candidates and their policies for human rights, and Glave speaking about the implications for extractive industries.

The final session sought to place Peru in the wider context of the Andean countries, given elections and the rising tide of protest across the region. Collyns spoke about the comparisons between Peru and Bolivia under Evo Morales.

The webinar was extremely well attended with an audience of over 100. Many people were disappointed about not to be able to take part because of the limited capacity of Zoom. A recording of the webinar is available here.