



## Bringing historical justice to families in Peru

In January, we shared some of the ways that the Paz y Esperanza teams in Latin America have been trying to achieve justice, hope and peace. We touched on Peru and this month we would like to share more about the work that the team are doing there, helping families with the process of achieving justice after the human rights abuses carried out during the period of armed conflict which the country lived through between 1980 and 2000.

PyE Peru is part of a national Christian human rights movement involved in a number of cases of political violence involving hundreds of victims. In 2022, there were positive steps forward in several cases and in 2023, the team are using funds from PyE UK to continue long judicial processes and pay for lawyers. This help is key to achieving reconciliation and to ensure that these types of situations are not repeated in the future. This year it is 20 years since the publication of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, which focused on the years of conflict, the terrorist groups, the role of the armed forces and the innocent victims of the conflict. Most of the investigation work only started after the publication of this report. It is still ongoing.

In 2022, the team worked on four human rights cases. Two of these, **Huanta-Callqui** and **Putis**, are now going through the courts. The other two, **Totos** and **Ccarpaccasa-Sillalccasa-Sankaypata** (3 settlements in the district of Totos), have yet to reach the courts but PyE are working to make sure they do so. In all these cases the team want to clear the names of the victims who were accused by the state of being terrorists. In reality they were just peasant farmers who happened to live in rural areas of conflict, were Quechuan, didn't speak Spanish and didn't have the means to defend themselves.



### **Huanta-Callqui**

One of the ongoing cases took place in Callqui in Ayacucho region. This involved the killing of six indigenous people by an army patrol at a church in 1984. The court case began in March 2022 and is likely to last three years because there are 150 witnesses. The legal team supported by PyE has asked for the compensation amount for the families of the six victims to be increased. It has also asked that a monument be erected with a plaque outlining the details of the murders and stating that the victims were innocent people and not terrorists, as stated by the military.



### **Putis**

In December 1984, 123 indigenous people were killed by soldiers in Putis, also in Ayacucho region. The military ordered the men of the community to dig a pit, gathered the local population around it and shot them. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission identified two mass graves in Putis. This case continued in 2022. One development involved the court ordering a psychiatric assessment of a man who witnessed the massacre when he was just seven years old. It also asked for 24 witnesses, who are primarily family members of the victims, to give their testimonies in court. Click on the 'Find Out More' button below to view the short Putis video.



### Totos

The Totos case includes a number of abuses perpetrated by the military from the Totos military base in Cangallo in Ayacucho region. These abuses all took place in 1983 and included nine victims who were murdered or sexually abused or tortured. Those who were murdered were buried in clandestine graves. It is hoped that once all the paperwork requested by the court is in order that the case will be heard in the courts this year.

#### Prayer for 2023

In 2023, the team want to make progress in the two cases which are not yet going through the courts. For the Totos case, they need to check the details of family members to make sure they can participate in the trial. For the Putis case, they need to link DNA evidence from the 28 victims identified with family members to make sure that they receive the compensation they deserve.

Please pray that the teams can keep pursuing their quest for justice in 2023 and that they can overcome any obstacles, including lack of funding. The team are looking to take some of their cases to international courts and require extra funding for this.

The Truth and Reconciliation Report of 2003 involved interviewing nearly 17,000 people. It made a number of recommendations to achieve a fairer and less corrupt society. Please pray that the lessons of the past are learnt and the recommendations are implemented.

Please also pray for the ongoing political and social unrest in the country. At least 58 people have died during protests as demonstrators clashed with security forces. Protesters are calling for President Boluarte's resignation and the dissolution of the Congress, with some citizens also demanding a new Constitution and the reinstatement of previous President Castillo.

**Do join us to provide the legal support these communities need, with a regular or one-off donation at: <https://www.justgiving.com/pazyesperanza>**

You may well have heard of the double climatic issues that have recently affected the north of Peru and the south of Ecuador. On Saturday 11th March, Cyclone Yaku with heavy rains caused rivers to overflow, extensive flooding with loss of life and destruction throughout the border region, creating a state of emergency. A week later on the 18th, a 6.8 strength earthquake centred just off Ecuador's Pacific coast hit the area, brought down buildings and caused at least 15 deaths in Ecuador alone.