

# Country Focus Report

Peru

August 2025

## Introduction to the Enabling Environment

What we understand by an Enabling Environment is the combination of laws, rules and social attitudes that support and promote the work of civil society. Within such an environment, civil society can engage in political and public life without fear of reprisals, openly express its views, and actively participate in shaping its context. This includes a supportive legal and regulatory framework for civil society, ensuring access to information and resources that are sustainable and flexible to pursue their unhindered goals, in safe physical and digital spaces. In an enabling environment, the state demonstrates openness and responsiveness in governance, promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making. Positive values, norms, attitudes, and practices towards civil society from state and non-state actors further underscore the supportive environment.

To capture the state of the Enabling Environment, we use the following six principles:

Six key enabling principles:

1. Respect and protection of fundamental freedoms
2. Supportive legal and regulatory framework
3. Accessible and sustainable resources
4. Open and responsive State
5. Supportive public culture and discourses on civil society
6. Access to a secure digital environment

In these Country Focus Reports, each enabling principle is assessed with a quantitative score and complemented by an analysis and recommendations written by our NMs. Rather than offering a singular index to rank countries, the report aims to measure the enabling environment for civil society across the 6 principles, discerning dimensions of strength and those requiring attention.

The findings presented in this report are grounded in the insights and diverse perspectives of civil society actors who came together in a dedicated panel with representatives from civil society to discuss and evaluate the state of the Enabling Environment. Their collective input enriches the report with a grounded, participatory assessment. This primary input is further supported by secondary sources of information, which provide additional context and strengthen the analysis.

## A) Introduction

Civil society actors in Peru operate in a volatile environment characterised by [political instability](#) and [low](#) public approval of the president. The upcoming national [elections](#) scheduled for April 2026 have further heightened political tensions, compounded by some [regulatory changes](#), public insecurity, and shifting public attitudes and perceptions. High-profile [corruption](#) scandals have also weakened state legitimacy and [policy continuity](#). For civil society actors, this means unpredictable engagement with government counterparts, frequent changes in regulatory priorities, and limited opportunities to influence long-term reform agendas.

There is growing political hostility towards the work of civil society. For example, the media faces harassment and attack by security forces, which has resulted in the country falling from 125th to 130th place on the [World Press Freedom Index](#). Even though the [Political Constitution](#) recognizes freedoms of association, expression and assembly, Peru's democratic performance is "partially free" on the [Freedom House Index](#).

Peru maintains [upper middle-income](#) status and benefits from significant natural resource wealth. However, the extractive industries have also created socio-environmental tensions, with the spillover of violence affecting civil society actors as well. The upper middle-income status also comes with specific implications, such as reduced international cooperation funding, which has constrained the financial sustainability of smaller rights-based civil society organisations (CSOs). Furthermore, inequality linked to discrimination persists particularly in rural, female and indigenous communities, with the [BTI Index 2024](#) scoring Peru at 5 out of 10 on equal opportunities.

Despite these challenges, Peru's civil society remains resilient. Organizations continue to play a critical role in defending fundamental freedoms, promoting transparency, and addressing socio-environmental conflicts. Strengthening CSO capacity, sustainability, and public legitimacy is essential to ensure they can operate effectively and safeguard democratic participation.

## B) Assessment of the Enabling Environment

### Principle 1: Respect and protection of fundamental freedoms

**Score: 2.6<sup>1</sup> (Repressed)**

The CIVICUS Monitor recently downgraded civic space in Peru to [repressed](#), reflecting a troubling decline in civic freedoms following years of escalating violence, harassment and attacks against civil society actors.

#### 1.1 Freedom of association

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<sup>1</sup> This is a rebased score derived from the CIVICUS Monitor rating published in December 2024. The country is rated as Repressed in the Monitor, with a score of 40/100, which has been converted to fit our 1–5 scale.

In Peru, freedom of association is a fundamental right recognized under Article 2, paragraph 13 of the [Political Constitution](#). This right allows individuals to form associations, foundations, and other non-profit organizations without the need for prior authorization, subject to the law. The Constitution also stipulates that these organizations cannot be dissolved through administrative means, but only by judicial decision.

However, [Law No. 32301](#), which was enacted in April 2025, amends the Law creating the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI). In its current form, it places restrictions on [freedom of association](#). For instance, the law establishes that an organization could be dissolved by administrative resolution which affects the existence of organization itself. Both national and international [organizations](#) have expressed grave concerns over the law, [warning](#) of its unconstitutionality and its negative impact on [civic space](#), including on the promotion of freedom of association, expression and assembly in the country.

In addition, the targeting of environmental activists by criminals, without protection from government, further restricts civic space. In recent years, illegal mining, logging, and drug trafficking have expanded across the Amazon. Indigenous leaders and community organizers who speak out against these activities [face intimidation, criminalization, and targeted killings](#). In 2024, at least five [environmental defenders](#) were killed as a result of these activities. In July 2025, a [report](#) by Asociación ProPuru and the Organización Regional de AIDSESEP-Ucayali (ORAU), drawing on Ministry of Justice data, found that between 2019 and 2024 more than 650 defenders and their families were exposed to risk, with over half of the cases occurring in Amazonian regions such as Loreto, Ucayali, San Martín, Amazonas, and Madre de Dios. These figures, unfortunately, reveal the ineffectiveness of the [Intersectoral Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders](#), a protection mechanism established in [2021](#) as a result of a [resolution](#) to protect human rights defenders adopted by Peru in 2019.

## 1.2 Freedom of assembly

Freedom of peaceful assembly, guaranteed under Article 2, paragraph 12 of Peruvian Political Constitution, is also facing increasing restrictions. Protesters have not only suffered injuries and arrests during clashes with [police forces](#), but the right to associate has also been severely undermined by broader patterns of excessive state response. In July 2024, thousands of people across the country [took to the streets](#) to demand justice for the 50 civilians killed and 716 injured as a result of clashes with state security forces amid the 2022 and 2023 protests. Also, in October 2024, [public transport workers](#) in Lima and Callao were met with excessive police force during a strike to demand urgent measures against the escalation of violence by criminal organizations. [November 2024 protests](#) during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum event in Lima spread to [different cities of the country](#), and were also met with excessive police force.

Moreover, although [certain legal actions](#) by state actors against protesters have not led to formal charges or convictions, they nonetheless create a [climate of intimidation](#). Such measures are intended to restrict the right to protest and contribute to criminalization of social movements, serving as a deterrent that discourages individuals from engaging in collective action. This is reflected, for example, in a court case concluded in April 2025 which, after many years, resulted in [acquittal of defenders](#) and their [sentences](#) from criminal and civil charges

stemming from their participation in social demonstrations. The excessive use of [law enforcement](#) was also replicated in university student demonstrations and incidents of police clashes with members of the LGBTQ+ community such as during a peaceful [demonstration](#) for equality and non-discrimination in front of Congress in March 2025. In summary, the criminalization of social protest has shown restrictions on the exercise of freedom of assembly, particularly in contexts where opposition to the State is more visible.

### 1.3 Freedom of expression

Although freedom of expression is guaranteed under Article 2, paragraph 4 of the [Political Constitution of Peru](#), there has been significant deterioration since the beginning of the current administration in 2022. The 2025 classification of press freedom by [Reporters without Borders](#) notes a decline in all areas such as political, social and safety context for journalists. Although press freedom is guaranteed by law, journalists are frequently targeted and harassed by security forces. Investigative journalism survives primarily through digital platforms, and the use of social media for live coverage is increasing, but these are met with harassment and misinformation. Similarly, reports by the [National Association of Journalists \(ANP\)](#) and the [Peruvian Press Council](#) document specific systematic harassment [against journalists](#) and media outlets.

In addition, under the recently enacted [Law No. 32301](#) amendment to the Law creating the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI), there are serious concerns about the imposition of [prior censorship](#) on independent and non-profit media. As civil associations, media houses are now required to report and request authorization from the requisite government agency on how they will allocate foreign funds for their investigations. This has been widely [denounced](#) by national and international media and journalists as undermining press freedom, creating bureaucratic barriers to investigative reporting, and enabling state interference in editorial independence. In addition, Congress approved an amendment to [Law 30364](#) that requires the media to [allocate](#) 10% of their programming to an "educational segment" on violence against women. This measure has drawn strong criticism from media associations. The National Society of Radio and Television (SNRTV) expressed its [concern](#) about the possible political instrumentalization of this law, particularly in the context of the upcoming elections in 2026. They warn that the imposition violates the media's right to freely define their content and that a fixed programming percentage opens the door to political pressure and editorial restrictions. In addition, the proposed laws threaten press freedom by [increasing criminal penalties](#) and [permanent cancellation](#) of media outlets.

All in all, there is a disabling environment for press freedom in the country, as also reflected by the published report from the [Inter-American Press Association](#) in March 2025 which warns that press freedom continues to "deteriorate" in Peru.

## Principle 2: Supportive legal and regulatory framework

Score: 2.3

### 2.1 Registration

In Peru, the legal framework regulating civil society is composed of the [Civil Code](#), the [General Law of Corporations](#), the [Registry of Legal Entities of the National Superintendence of Public Registries \(SUNARP\)](#) and [Legislative Decree 943](#) of the National Superintendence of Tax Action (SUNAT). In principle, any person or group can form a civil society organization and there are no explicit legal restrictions on the registration of non-profit associations. However, in practice, they face a number of administrative hurdles that may discourage their legal formation, especially in the case of small, community-based, low-income, or rural organizations. Indigenous organizations face additional challenges, as procedures must be carried out in urban centers and, in some cases, even in the country's capital, Lima. This situation forces their representatives to travel for several days, and incur transportation and accommodation costs, which represents an extraordinary financial burden.

This is exacerbated in the case of grassroots organizations of African descent, indigenous or sexual dissidence, whose legitimacy is not always recognized due to the line of work they handle. In addition to the previously mentioned obstacles, they face prejudice and institutional discrimination. Their identities and struggles continue to be stigmatized or rendered invisible by the state, which hinders their legal recognition. Moreover, their community-based organizational structures often do not align with the formal models required by law, and their areas of work—such as territorial rights, cultural identity, and sexual and gender rights—are not readily accepted by authorities. As a result, their efforts are often perceived as “uncomfortable” or “radical,” creating additional barriers to formal recognition and legitimacy.

The [process](#) of legally establishing an association involves several steps, including formalization through a public deed before a notary and its [subsequent registration](#) with the National Superintendence of Public Registries (SUNARP). Organizations also need to register with the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI) should they intend to receive foreign funding. These procedures entail significant costs and, in many cases, require specialized legal advice, which is usually expensive and represents a barrier for citizen initiatives. In addition, the registration procedure can be particularly cumbersome: documents can be rejected for minor details, such as drafting or punctuation errors, and there are no clear mechanisms for appealing a refusal of registration. Even organizations with experience and technical capacity face difficulties, highlighting the extent to which the current system excludes citizens with less specialized knowledge. While digital tools could help simplify these processes, their use remains limited or inadequate to overcome existing structural barriers.

### 2.2 | Operational Environment

[Law No. 32301](#) which amends the APCI Law, has significantly transformed the environment in which CSOs operate in Peru. The law requires CSOs that receive international cooperation to obtain "prior authorization " from the APCI to implement their projects and plans, allowing the state to control and condition their work according to criteria aligned with official policies. This mechanism introduces risks of arbitrary control, limits organizational autonomy and

imposes explicit restrictions on advocacy, strategic litigation, and human rights defense, especially when these actions are directed against the state. [Article 21.c.2](#) expressly prohibits the use of cooperation funds for these purposes, weakening civil society's role in holding the government to account. The rule does not yet have a regulation, but the political context suggests that its application could be discretionary. This situation has particularly affected indigenous organizations, who have been *de facto* excluded from formal cooperation circuits, and it has sent a chilling effect on the sector, especially when environmental and indigenous organizations litigate against the state.

Several national and [international](#) organizations have warned about the [negative impact](#) of this law on [civic space](#) and [fundamental rights](#).

In addition, many CSOs - especially in Andean and Amazonian regions - report obstacles to operating normally, such as restrictions on opening bank accounts, barriers to hiring staff or lack of physical space, which is evidence of a structural weakness of the operating environment beyond the legal framework. The requirement of "prior authorization" not only introduces new administrative burdens but also represents a form of political control that conditions the actions of civil society, weakening its independence and capacity to respond promptly to social problems in emergency situations.

### **2.3 | Protection from Interference**

[Law No. 32301](#) provides that the APCI can suspend or deregister a CSO if it is found to have committed serious misconduct, or impose fines that could lead to the demise of any organization. It defines as a very serious infraction the use of international cooperation funds to [support judicial actions](#), administrative, civil or international against the state, punishable by disproportionate fines (up to US\$720,000) or cancellation of registration by APCI. This especially affects CSOs that provide [legal assistance](#) to vulnerable communities, limiting their access to justice.

The Peruvian legal framework offers some formal protections such as article 2, paragraph 13 of the Political Constitution which establishes that they cannot be dissolved by administrative resolution as well as submitting an administrative appeal against any APCI decision. However, this does not effectively prevent the arbitrary dissolution of CSOs particularly given the amendment to the APCI law. This situation creates an inhibiting environment in which the threat of selective scrutiny, unjustified sanctions and criminalization for political reasons encourages self-censorship. Although Peru has an Ombudsman's Office aimed at safeguarding rights, in recent years this office has shown institutional weakness, and, like the justice system, there are risks of limited independence, which deepens the sense of legal insecurity for CSOs. International mechanisms, such as the Inter-American Human Rights System, are perceived as useful tools, but they are distant, costly and can take a long time to access.



## Principle 3: Accessible and sustainable resources

Score: 2.3

### 3.1 Accessibility of Resources

Accessibility of resources has been affected due to amendment to the APCI law. The new regulatory framework establishes explicit restrictions on the financing of activities considered to be "political activism" or contrary to the state's agenda, which directly affects projects linked to human rights, gender, the environment, or the defense of rights in the face of abuses. In some cases, it has even been pointed out that accessing funds for this type of action could be considered illegal, which increases the risks and reduces CSOs' possibilities for advocacy. Although mechanisms such as tax exemptions and authorized donations exist, the process is bureaucratic and lacks technical accompaniment, which reinforces the exclusion of smaller organizations or those with less operational experience.

The law also increases government regulation that limits CSOs from accessing resources, primarily affecting small organizations, community-based or work with marginalized populations. These organizations face significant barriers in complying with the technical and financial standards required by state entities and donors, such as the elaboration of projects in complex formats, updated registers, prior audits or legal capacity for contracting, and the possibility of acting quickly in urgent situations or to make visible affectations of citizens' rights.

Domestic donors, both private and public, give priority to projects related to generating economic impact and corporate social responsibility. At the international level, [foreign aid](#) remains a key source of funding for CSOs in Peru. However, [cuts in](#) foreign aid by some governments such as the United States of America have affected the flow of resources, especially in sensitive sectors. At the same time, international cooperation funds have been [redirected](#) to world regions with more visible crises, reducing the availability for Latin America. Despite these restrictions, organizations with a longer record or institutional presence continue to access resources, albeit in a highly competitive environment.

### 3.2 | Effectiveness of Resources

The effectiveness of resources allocated to CSOs in Peru is closely linked to the interaction between donors and their financing policies, as well as to the regulatory and state oversight framework applicable to international cooperation.

Regarding domestic financing, contributions from the private sector are generally aligned with interests inherent to corporate social responsibility. Resources such as public calls for funding provided by the State are directed towards sectoral actions in which public investment and short-term projects are prioritized. In both cases, there is a prevailing trend to favor initiatives that contribute to economic growth, incorporating, from that perspective, working with women, youth, farmers' organizations, producers, cultural groups, among other relevant actors.

On the other hand, international cooperation institutions, such as development agencies and similar entities, establish reasonable criteria that are aligned with global development priorities, among which the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the commitments



adopted at international summits and intergovernmental meetings. Nevertheless, this orientation has been weakened as a result of the [shift](#) in approach adopted by the United States and the reduction of operations of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Access to international cooperation funds entails high standards and stringent requirements, with awards generally made through competitive processes that demand clear demonstration of both quantitative and qualitative development impacts. Accountability procedures are equally rigorous, requiring detailed technical and financial reporting to verify proper resource use. In practice, donors tend to work with organizations that already meet strict eligibility criteria, often favoring those with proven experience in fund management. This dynamic positions larger, well-established CSOs as primary recipients, who may subcontract components to smaller grassroots organizations to ensure broader territorial coverage. While this arrangement can facilitate implementation, it can also reinforce hierarchical structures in which smaller organizations depend on intermediaries and have limited direct influence over funding priorities or project design.

Eligibility is not restricted to CSOs— as public agencies, private sector actors, public law corporations, and academic institutions may also apply— and the competitive nature of these calls further disadvantages smaller, less-resourced organizations. Donors often introduce mitigation measures such as deadline extensions, flexible reporting schedules, or coordination meetings, but these tend to focus on ensuring compliance rather than fostering genuine co-creation. Opportunities for CSOs to provide feedback that shapes donor strategies or adapts project frameworks to local realities are limited, resulting in relationships that are often more contractual than collaborative. Strengthening two-way engagement could rebalance these dynamics, promoting greater local ownership, responsiveness to context, and the sustainability of funded initiatives.

### **3.3 | Sustainability of Resources**

The financial sustainability of CSOs in Peru faces multiple structural and situational challenges. Firstly, funding is not guaranteed in the [long term](#). Many organizations depend on single or sporadic sources, which makes strategic planning, staff retention and the continuity of programmes after the end of projects difficult. The new state control introduced by Law 32301 adds a layer of uncertainty. [Article 4.u](#) establishes the obligation to obtain prior approval for all foreign-funded projects, plans, programs, or activities. This requirement may delay implementation, reduce financial autonomy, and widen the gap between large and small CSOs, the latter often lacking sufficient technical and administrative capacity. Its implementation also introduces the risk of sanctions and potential withdraws of resources from sensitive areas such as human rights or strategic litigation, which are largely funded through international cooperation. Furthermore, the imposition of complex bureaucratic and fiscal requirements, combined with the absence of public policies that recognize and strengthen the associative sector as a legitimate development actor, limits CSOs' effective access to local exemptions and subsidies, including tax incentives as well as access to competitive funds.

Domestic funding is limited and directed towards specific economic growth areas such as labor reintegration and entrepreneurship financing. In this sense, existing funding is

insufficient for the activities of organizations that emphasize social development or support for vulnerable population groups. This means that they must cover their counterparts with their own resources, adapt their initiatives to donor demand, or rely on volunteering (which is volatile) to meet their institutional objectives. This forces them to rethink their sustainability models and to strengthen collaborative links between civil society actors.

In addition, Peru's classification as a [middle-income country](#) has led to the redirection of some international funds to lower-income countries. At the local level, although there are IGV tax exemptions for donations, the procedures are complex and lack support in rural areas.

## Principle 4: Open and responsive state

Score: 2.4

### 4.1 Transparency

Peru has a robust legal framework that guarantees access to public information and promotes transparency, with [Law No. 27806](#) and its regulation updated in May 2024 being the main regulatory instruments. It has also participated in the [Open Government Partnership](#) since 2012, reaffirming its commitment to transparency, accountability, public integrity and citizen participation. Government platforms such as the [Infobras system](#), the [Investment Tracking System \(SSI\)](#) and the [Standard Transparency Portals \(PTE\)](#), aimed at facilitating access to data of public interest, are also available.

However, in practice, compliance with the legal framework is deficient and uneven. State bodies often fail to comply or partially comply with the law, especially when it comes to sensitive information. Faced with [citizen requests](#), some institutions choose to delay the process without any justifiable grounds, or even litigate, rather than provide the information. There are also marked differences between entities and regions: some institutions provide precise responses, while others offer vague, outdated data or only respond to constant insistence. According to a [report](#) published by the National Authority for Transparency and Access to Public Information (ANTAIP), the lowest levels of compliance correspond to provincial municipalities (33%) and district municipalities (49%), where 11 district municipalities were identified as achieving a 0% compliance level, either because they had not updated their information or because they did not have portals implemented despite their obligation to do so.

In rural or hard-to-reach areas, low connectivity, outdated platforms, inadequately processed data and lack of technical capacity limit the use of digital platforms and exclude many communities from fully exercising their right to information. In addition, compliance monitoring is weak: by 2024, only 53% of entities' portals were [compliant](#) with their obligation to publish essential information. It has been suggested that this role should be assumed by external bodies such as the [National Authority for Transparency and Access to Public Information \(ANTAIP\)](#) and the Transparency Court to improve the guarantee of active government transparency.

Additionally, Law No. 32301, which regulates the use of international cooperation funds, establishes that resources cannot be used for actions that question the state, which could

restrict the right of civil society organizations to litigate about lack of response or non-compliance in access to information.

## 4.2 Participation

Although the Peruvian legal framework recognizes various [mechanisms for citizen participation](#), it is in subnational governments where there is greater activity. Their practical application is limited, exclusive and has little influence on public decisions. Instruments such as participatory budgeting, Regional Coordination Councils, Multisectoral Committees, Youth Participatory Councils, roundtables, and consultative councils are established but often have limited impact on decision-making processes. Civil society participation is sporadic and varies significantly, with greater involvement among urban and institutionalized actors and lower participation from rural, indigenous and other groups.

Consultative processes are sometimes constrained by tight timelines and limited opportunities for in-depth deliberation. In addition, certain groups, such as human rights defenders, environmentalists, feminists or LGBTBIQ+ groups, face difficulties fully engaging in these spaces. Participation mechanisms tend to be non-binding, and their influence on public policy decisions can be minimal. Moreover, critical voices or actors not aligned with prevailing institutional narratives may encounter obstacles to participation. Existing practices sometimes prioritize institutional visibility over citizen responsiveness. Issues such as late notice of meetings, lack of clear agendas, and the absence of accessible summaries also hinder informed and effective participation.

## 4.3 Accountability

Peru has a [regulatory framework](#) for accountability, supported by constitutional norms and decentralizing laws. However, implementation is weak, fragmented, and lacks an institutional culture that effectively supports it. Many reports are not public, are released late or use technical formats that are difficult to understand. Efforts by some public institutions to improve participation and transparency in certain processes remain exceptional.

Although participatory processes exist, a culture of accountability toward civil society organizations is not yet fully established. They are not accompanied by systematic feedback mechanisms to report on results or how citizen input was incorporated or discarded. Although authorities do conduct accountability exercises, these are not directly connected to the participatory processes or mechanisms outlined in the legal framework. An example is the case of the participatory budgeting process, where the authorities are formally required to report on it. However, even though this mechanism has limitations, in general, the accountability of this process takes place a year later, which reduces its effectiveness.

In sum, accountability in Peru is more about formal compliance than a genuine exercise in transparency and dialogue with citizens. There are no effective mechanisms to demand explanations on how input by citizens and civil society actors has been used in decision-making, which weakens public trust and limits citizen control over governance processes. No avenues exist to appeal decisions or track the impact of their feedback. There is a need for more legible, inclusive and binding processes.

## Principle 5: Supportive public culture and discourses on civil society

### Score: 2

#### 5.1 Public Discourse and Constructive Dialogue on Civil Society

In Peru, the discourse and political environment towards civil society organizations has become increasingly [hostile and restrictive](#). The Executive, and [Congress](#), have established a discourse which [portrays](#) CSOs as a threat to democracy, national unity and the stability of the country. These narratives are shared by actors with different political beliefs, many of them linked to conservative groups investigated [for corruption and organized crime](#). The approval of Law 32301, which is also referred to as the "[Anti-NGO Law](#)", exemplifies this trend. Its enactment was accompanied by symbolic events with the participation of congresspeople openly hostile to CSOs. Also, mainstream media have replicated or amplified this narrative, contributing to a negative public perception. CSOs are accused of responding to foreign interests or of defending "divisive" causes, such as [human rights](#), diversity or equality. The alternative media, which is more receptive to the critical role of CSOs, does not yet have the mass appeal necessary to counter this delegitimization.

The spaces for dialogue promoted by local governments or public institutions are limited, not very inclusive and have no real effect on decision-making. In contexts of socio-environmental conflict, CSOs are viewed with suspicion, even though CSOs have a long history of contributing with proposals to improve public management across multiple issues and sectors. In a climate marked by polarization and misinformation, the role of CSOs is reduced, weakening democratic debate and the effective exercise of citizen participation.

#### 5.2 Perception of Civil Society and Civic Engagement

Citizen participation, understood in terms of participatory democracy, is scarce. It is limited to electoral voting. Participation in decision-making processes is weak or non-existent. This is attributed to a mistrust of the political system, the lack of binding participatory spaces, poor training in civic education, and fear of repression. These factors lead citizens to withdraw from governance processes. In addition, there is a lack of adequate channels for individuals and groups to promote their proposals.

Nonetheless, there are also significant examples of citizen engagement. Community participation occurs in indigenous or rural territories, exemplified by assemblies and peasant patrols, although these are not fully recognized within formal state mechanisms. For example, [the Conga mining project](#), promoted by the Yanacocha company since 2010, was rejected by communities in Cajamarca due to its potential environmental impact on lagoons located at the headwaters of five river basins. Protests between 2011 and 2012 left five people dead in clashes with law enforcement. The project was suspended, and in 2024, the judiciary [ruled in favor](#) of the community's lawsuit to protect the environment.

In this context, civic education – while included in the educational curriculum – remains

insufficient and disjointed, limiting the development of critical and active citizenship. Strengthening civic education represents a key opportunity to foster democratic participation. It not only teaches foundational knowledge such as voting procedures, citizens' rights and responsibilities, and how government institutions operate, but also incorporates experiential learning approaches—such as simulations, community projects, and participatory budgeting exercises—that help individuals actively practice civic engagement. This combination could bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world participation, encouraging citizens to exercise their rights more effectively.

According to a perception survey of NGOs and civil society conducted in 2025 by the [Institute of Peruvian Studies](#), 42% of respondents have a lot or some trust in NGOs, and 45% strongly agree that everyone has the right to create or participate in organizations, even if they criticize the government. Furthermore, 41% of respondents believe that the changes approved by the current Congress to the law that oversees NGOs that receive international funding are intended to create obstacles and reduce resources for social projects. This ambivalence underscores the importance of safeguarding the enabling environment for civil society to ensure continued public engagement and the protection of democratic participation.

### 5.3 Civic Equality and Inclusion

Civic inclusion and equality are nuanced topics. Despite legal advances that recognize [equal rights](#), Peru continues to face structural barriers to civic participation, especially for historically marginalized populations, such as indigenous communities and the [LGTBIQ+ community](#). Discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and geographic origin persists, limiting the access of these communities to decision-making spaces. In addition, public policies do consider, but don't necessarily guarantee, the implementation of equal opportunities, international assessments such as the [BTI Index 2024](#) gave Peru a score of 5 out of 10 in Equal Opportunities. [Indigenous communities](#), for example, continue to be victims of violence and discrimination, as evidenced [in the Ministry of Culture's reports](#) on ethnic-racial discrimination, and in the unresolved cases of violence against the LGTBIQ+ population .

Structural factors such as poverty, racism, gender discrimination, and language barriers, significantly limit the civic participation of marginalized populations. Women, particularly in regions such as [Huancavelica and Apurímac](#), face substantial gaps in economic autonomy and social development, which reduce their ability to engage in civic activities. The lack of authentic representation and public policies that respect the cultural and linguistic diversity of these communities further perpetuates their exclusion from political and decision-making processes. These structural barriers are compounded by the disproportionate [criminalisation](#) of protests by marginalized groups. For example, the misuse of the state of emergency to block or handle protests in areas near the so-called “mining corridor” used to transport minerals to ports, has negatively affected local communities, violating their rights. One illustration of this is the trial of [community members](#) in Apurímac for opposing the operations of a mining company. Together, these structural inequalities and state-imposed obstacles hinder effective civic engagement, weaken social movements, and limit marginalized communities' ability to influence the policies affecting their lives.

## Principle 6: Access to a secure digital environment

Score: 2.7

### 6.1 Digital Rights and Freedoms

In Peru, the digital legal framework has included changes that seek to regulate illicit conduct, but that pose certain risks to citizens' online rights:

- [Bill 4485-2022-CR](#), which proposes amending Article 132 of the Penal Code to increase penalties for the crime of defamation when committed online.
- [The recent approval of Law 32314](#) modifies the Criminal Code and the Cybercrime Law, establishes the use of Artificial Intelligence in The Commission Of Crimes as an aggravating factor. This new crime attracts punishment for the use of artificial intelligence in crimes without detailed analysis, and reflects a punitive approach that could restrict freedom of expression.

The ability of the state to block websites and applications without judicial control represents another serious challenge. The Supreme Court in April 2025 recently [upheld](#) the power of the Ministry of Transport and Communications (MTC) to block applications without prior procedure, reinforcing the trend towards digital authoritarianism. In addition, the power of the “National Institute for the Defense of Competition and the Protection of Intellectual Property ([Indecopi](#))” to block websites without supervision also aggravates this risk. Moreover, there is cyber-patrolling by the National Police without transparency and accountability, which poses a threaten citizens' enjoyment of privacy and digital freedom.

### 6.2 Digital Security and Privacy

The digital landscape in Peru faces serious challenges related to security and privacy, as evidenced by data breaches and misuse of [personal information](#). The country's digital identity system, centralized under the “National Registry of Identification and Civil Status ([RENIEC](#))”, has been vulnerable to leaks, putting the privacy of millions of citizens at risk. For instance, in March 2025, a [massive leak](#) of personal data, including names, addresses, photos, and signatures, affecting more than 15 million Peruvians was reported. In an official statement, the agency ruled out a hacking incident and indicated that the breach originated from a user within the Ministry of the Interior (Mininter). Furthermore, in July 2018, Hiperderecho published a report highlighting how easily RENIEC [sells access to personal data](#) of Peruvians. Data of civil society actors may also be exposed to this risk due to the centralized nature of the system. Although there is no specific registry of those who are part of civil society, it is possible to identify them, and their personal information could be used to discredit them.

Although [Law 29733](#) on the “National Authority for the Protection of Personal Data (ANPDP)”, provides a legal framework for safeguarding personal information, the institution in charge - National Authority for the Protection of Personal Data (ANPDP) under the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights - lack adequate resources and enforcement capacity, limiting their effectiveness. [Data leaks](#) from executive branch servers and the misuse of personal information highlight the fragility of the system. In addition, the government has implemented surveillance systems such as [facial recognition](#) and unauthorized processing of biometric data



without an adequate control framework. This could compromise the digital security of civil society staff, who can become easy targets for state repression.

The proliferation of online [disinformation](#), fueled by bots and [fake accounts](#), also poses a risk to freedom of expression, affecting civic participation and creating a hostile environment for civil society. There have also been [media](#) reports of the government acquisition of [software](#) with the potential to neutralize or suppress critical voices on social media, including so-called "troll" accounts that publish content contrary to official narratives.

Although Peru has made progress in cybersecurity with the creation of the "Secretariat of Government and Digital Transformation (SGTD)", results remain limited. The country ranks in the middle (55-85 of 100) of the [Global Cybersecurity Index 2024](#), indicating that Peru has an insufficient legal framework to effectively guarantee data protection.

### 6.3 Digital Accessibility

Internet access in Peru has improved over the years, especially in rural areas, and the use of social media has increased significantly – though this has also increased the risks of misinformation and affected the quality of public debate. For its part, the government has made progress in digital transformation with the [National Digital Transformation Policy 2030](#), but results are limited, with only [42% of public entities](#) implementing a digital management model. Finally, initiatives such as [E Monitor](#) address political disinformation on networks, but stricter regulations on private platforms limit the free flow of information.

Despite considerable progress in the expansion of internet access in Peru, deep digital divides persist, affecting rural and indigenous populations, people with disabilities and the poor. Although 79.9% of the population had [access to the internet](#) in 2024, only 58.4% of households have a connection and in rural areas this access is still less than 40%. [Digitalization](#) has grown, but in an unequal manner, which limits the equal participation of civil society in the digital environment.

On the other hand, access to the internet does not necessarily translate into effective use, as basic digital skills remain limited. According to the [2024 Quarterly results from National Household Survey](#) (ENAHU), 91% of the population over the age of six uses the internet primarily for communication and entertainment, while only 10.5% use it to interact with public institutions or officials. Just 23.2% use it for training or educational purposes perform simple tasks such as copying or moving files, which restricts the meaningful use of digital tools. The gap is exacerbated in remote regions, where there is poor infrastructure, lack of electricity or signal, and restricted access to training. This situation affects both citizens and CSOs, who see their capacity for advocacy, participation and monitoring reduced. Despite regulatory efforts such as the [Digital Government Law \(2018\)](#) and the recent National Digital Transformation Policy (2023), implementation is still weak. Programmes such as ["PAIS"](#) or ["JUNTOS"](#), along with some civil society initiatives have sought to reduce these inequalities, but they are isolated and depend on local will. Likewise, persons with disabilities face serious accessibility barriers, despite [existing legislation](#) that mandates [inclusive standards](#) for public digital platforms. Inclusive and sustained digital literacy remains an unfulfilled promise. The digital divide not only limits access to information and services but also affects key processes such as citizen participation or future e-voting, exacerbating existing structural inequalities.



## C) Recommendations

### 1. To the government of Peru

- Repeal Law No. 32301 and reform the regulations of the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI), in order to eliminate the disproportionate restrictions, prior conformity requirements, and excessive sanctions. The law currently limits the autonomy of civil society organizations, violates constitutional and international standards on freedom of association, weakens state accountability, and hinders access to international remedies. This change could guaranteeing a legal environment that allows CSOs and actors to operate freely, independently and without fear of reprisals.
- Authorities at the highest level should publicly recognize the fundamental role of CSOs in the defense of rights, citizen oversight and the promotion of development, fostering a civic culture based on respect, inclusion, and participation. We urge state representatives to refrain from statements stigmatizing the work and contribution of civil society.
- Strengthen procedural guarantees against the criminalization of protest by implementing institutional protocols aligned with the standards of the Inter-American Human Rights System. Establish clear regulations on the use of force, in accordance with international human rights standards, to ensure that police actions are guided by protocols that prohibit the use of deterrent weapons that pose a threat to the lives and integrity of protesters. Likewise, accountability mechanisms should be reinforced in cases where state repression is identified, ensuring prompt, impartial investigations and the prosecution of those responsible. Promote effective and sustained dialogue between organized civil society and the state, particularly in contexts of social conflict, to prevent violence and uphold human rights. Respect for freedom of expression and of the press must be guaranteed. Authorities should establish a table of dialogue with media representative associations to review laws or measures that result in self-censorship or content control over journalistic publications. It is also important that authorities refrain from making official statements that discredit or stigmatize the work of the media, especially in the case of journalists reporting on matters of public interest.
- The government must establish a clear, specific, and human rights-based legal framework to regulate the use of surveillance technologies, including facial recognition. This framework should guarantee the protection of personal data, respect for privacy, and transparency and accountability in the implementation and operation of such systems, ensuring their legitimate use.
- Sustain the progressive implementation of public policies that guarantee safe and meaningful access to the internet, especially in rural and indigenous areas. Likewise, the institutional framework and the regulatory framework must be strengthened and strengthened to guarantee the protection of personal data and the safe participation of citizens in the digital space.

- Ensure the independence of the National Transparency Authority from political influence, and guarantee that its mandate is binding on all branches of government — including Congress, the Judiciary, and other constitutionally autonomous bodies — as this is a requirement for the state as a whole. Furthermore, we propose not only to strengthen the technical independence of the Secretariat of Public Integrity, but also to establish a comprehensive Public Integrity System that integrates key components such as transparency, sanctions, internal control, and risk management. Finally, citizen oversight must play a more active and meaningful role in public policy decision-making.
- Rethink and improve the mechanisms of active and passive transparency. Regarding passive transparency, we recommend strengthening the autonomy and independence of the Transparency Tribunal, granting it binding authority and the power to sanction public entities that fail to comply with requests for access to public information. Regarding active transparency, public entities must strictly comply with the Transparency and Access to Public Information Law by publishing their information on the relevant government portals. This will help ensure accountability and strengthen public trust in institutions. Furthermore, we recommend establishing oversight and sanction mechanisms to ensure that this obligation is not avoided and that the information is accessible, clear, and up to date.
- Urgently strengthen the Protection Mechanism for environmental and human rights defenders. This includes allocating sufficient resources, ensuring interinstitutional coordination, and adopting a preventive and differentiated approach that considers the specific risks faced by defenders, particularly in rural, indigenous, and environmental contexts. Additionally, the State should guarantee the participation of civil society and affected communities in the design, monitoring, and evaluation of protection measures.

## **2. To Donors and the International Community**

- Maintain and, where possible, increase flexible, multi-year funding to Peruvian CSOs, prioritizing those working with marginalized or historically excluded communities, in order to sustain long-term advocacy, monitoring, and capacity-building efforts.
- Support initiatives aimed at strengthening CSOs' institutional resilience, including strategic planning, digital security, financial sustainability, and impact measurement, to enhance their performance and reduce dependency on single funding sources.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange and peer-learning between Peruvian CSOs and counterparts in other countries, particularly on best practices for operating in restrictive environments, building coalitions, and engaging in evidence-based advocacy.
- Continue diplomatic engagement, bilaterally and through multilateral fora, as well as public statements in defense of civic space and fundamental freedoms in Peru, using international and regional human rights mechanisms to address violations and encourage the government to commit to the legal and policy reforms outlined above.

- Invest in strengthening independent journalism to ensure informational diversity, promote accountability from public authorities, and protect freedom of expression. This support should focus on securing the financial sustainability of independent media outlets, particularly those operating in highly vulnerable or high-risk contexts.

### 3. To Civil Society Organizations

- Strengthen internal governance, transparency, and accountability mechanisms to reinforce public trust and demonstrate the sector's commitment to ethical standards and integrity.
- Develop coordinated advocacy strategies and joint platforms to present unified positions on civic space issues, amplify their influence, and reduce fragmentation within the sector.
- Invest in data-driven approaches for monitoring government commitments, policy implementation, and civic space conditions, ensuring that evidence is communicated effectively to both the public and policymakers.
- Diversify funding sources through economic activities of own initiative aimed at the sustainability of the organization, local philanthropy, and innovative methods, reducing vulnerability to sudden changes in international donor priorities.
- Enhance outreach and public engagement through culturally relevant communication strategies, community-based partnerships, and the use of accessible technologies to involve diverse constituencies in decision-making processes.

## Research process

Each principle encompasses various dimensions which are assessed and aggregated to provide quantitative scores per principle. These scores reflect the degree to which the environment within the country enables or disables the work of civil society. Scores are on a five-category scale defined as: fully disabling, disabling, partially enabling, enabling, and fully enabling. To complement the scores, this report provides a narrative analysis of the enabling or disabling environment for civil society, identifying strengths and weaknesses as well as offering recommendations. The process of drafting the analysis is led by Network Members, the consortium provides quality control and editorial oversight before publication.

For Principle 1 - which evaluates respect for and protection of freedom of association and peaceful assembly - the score integrates data from the [CIVICUS Monitor](#). However, for Principles 2–6, the availability of yearly updated external quantitative indicators for the 86 countries part of the EUSEE programme are either limited or non-existent. To address this, Network Members once a year convene a panel of representatives of civil society and experts. This panel uses a set of guiding questions to assess the status of each principle and its

dimensions within the country. This report has the collaboration of Patricia Pinto-Descosur, Dilmar Villena -Hiperderecho, Andrea Meier -Proética, Jimena Sanchez - Asociación Educativa Hispanoamericana, Raquel Gago, Consejo Interreligioso del Perú Religiones por la Paz, Lía Zevallos- Ashanti, José Elice- Proética.

The discussions are supported by secondary sources, such as [V-Dem](#), the [Bertelsmann Stiftung Governance Index](#), the [RTI Rating from the Centre for Law and Democracy](#), and other trusted resources. These sources provide benchmarks for measuring similar dimensions and are complemented by primary data collection and other secondary sources of information available for the country. Guided by these deliberations, the panel assigns scores for each dimension, which the Network Members submit to the Consortium, accompanied by detailed justifications that reflect the country's specific context. To determine a single score per principle, the scores assigned to each dimension are aggregated using a weighted average, reflecting the relative importance of each dimension within the principle. This approach balances diverse perspectives while maintaining a structured and objective evaluation framework.

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