

Peruvian Police Clash with Gold Miners



Lima, March 27 (RHC) – Gold miners have clashed with security forces in the Peruvian capital, Lima over government restrictions on illegal mining activities.

Police used teargas and rubber bullets to break up crowds of angry demonstrators, who threw rocks at the security forces.

Reports say as many as 20,000 miners took to the streets in Lima and other regions in protest against the government crackdown on operations carried out by unlicensed miners in the country.

Miners demand that Lima repeal laws that give some 70,000 small-scale miners until April 19 to meet legal standards or face possible imprisonment.

Nearly two dozen protesters have already been detained during similar clashes recently.

The administration of President Ollanta Humala says the illegal mining is destroying the Amazon rain forest and affecting the health of locals.

The miners say they are being treated as criminals and that the move by the government would hurt thousands of families.

They say the new regulation would make about 400 artisanal operations illegal, even though the miners work in authorized areas.

Peru is the world's sixth largest producer of gold, with much of that production coming from illegal operations.

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