



COI QUERY

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Title	Information on criminality, especially on extortion in Lima and Callao, including on types and prevalence
Reference period	January 2024 to 10 July 2025
Topic(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Information on criminality, especially on extortion in Lima and Callao, including on types and prevalenceMain criminal groups involvedProfiles of those targeted for extortionAbility of criminal groups to trace victims of extortion across the countryState of emergency declared in March 2025State response
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COI QUERY RESPONSE – Peru

Information on criminality, especially on extortion in Lima and Callao, including on types and prevalence

This COI query response provides information on the latest developments related to the aforementioned topics during the reference period. For more comprehensive details, please refer to the [EUAA COI Report Peru Country Focus, September 2023](#).

1. Information on criminality, especially on extortion in Lima and Callao, including on types and prevalence

Sources indicate that Peru has been experiencing an increase in organised crime,¹ which represents ‘a major concern for Peruvians’.² Human Rights Watch reported that in 2024, Peru recorded its highest number of homicides in at least seven years, with many cases seemingly linked to organised crime groups. Criminal complaints for extortion peaked in 2023 and remained high in 2024.³ Citing government statistics, media outlets reported 2 057 murders across the country in 2024, compared with 674 in 2017,⁴ and 1 431 in 2023.⁵

Human Rights Watch added that ‘criminal groups have steadily expanded their presence across the country, exerting influence over key sectors of the economy, including gold mining and transportation’.⁶ Freedom House further described that ‘while Peru’s murder rate is lower than many of its regional peers, violent criminal organizations operate in the narcotics and illegal mining industries, and street crime is rampant’.⁷ Further, there has been ‘an increase in contract killings, extortion, and related crimes’.⁸

Sources reported that cases of extortion have been increasing in several regions of Peru.⁹ Since 2017, extortion cases have rising from a few hundred annually to more than 2 000 each month in 2025, according to national police data.¹⁰ Some areas of the country experienced even more dramatic increases, such as the capital, Lima, where reports of extortion rose by

¹ HRW, Congress in Cahoots: How Peru’s Legislature Is Allowing Organized Crime to Thrive, 8 July 2025, [url](#), p. 1; Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Peru, 2025, [url](#)

² HRW, World Report 2025 - Peru, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

³ HRW, Congress in Cahoots: How Peru’s Legislature Is Allowing Organized Crime to Thrive, 8 July 2025, [url](#), p. 1

⁴ AP News, Troops on the streets of Lima as Peru’s government calls state of emergency to tackle crime wave, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵ InfoBae, Perú enfrenta su año más violento: más de 1.800 homicidios registrados hasta noviembre de 2024, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

⁶ HRW, Congress in Cahoots: How Peru’s Legislature Is Allowing Organized Crime to Thrive, 8 July 2025, [url](#), p. 1

⁷ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Peru, 2025, [url](#)

⁸ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Peru, 2025, [url](#)

⁹ La Republica, Perú enfrenta un repunte por extorsiones en ocho regiones, 14 June 2025, [url](#); PUCP, Ola de extorsiones: "La ciudadanía ya no denuncia pues ha perdido la confianza en las instituciones", 26 September 2024, [url](#); Insight Crime, More Victims Seek Police Help With Rising Extortion in Peru, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰ New York Times (The), Gangs Terrorize Peru in an Epidemic of Extortion, 17 July 2025, [url](#)



nearly 900 % between 2019 and 2025.¹¹ In 2024, 22 800 extortion complaints were filed by citizens which represents an increase four times higher than the number recorded in 2017, according to Peru's attorney general's office, as cited by AP news.¹² In 2024, reports of extortion increased by 14 % compared to 2023, with over 16,000 cases recorded, the majority of which were in Lima.¹³

Between, January and February 2025, Peruvian police recorded 3 921 extortion cases, a 7 % increase from the same period in 2024, amid a wave of high-profile incidents that have pushed the issue 'to the top of the political agenda'.¹⁴ Extortion affects all regions of Peru, with the highest rates reported in the coastal departments of Lima, La Libertad, Piura, and Lambayeque.¹⁵ Local news outlet, La Republica, noted that extortion was no longer focused only on Metropolitan Lima, Callao and La Libertad, but has also spread to Ancash, Lima Provinces, Cusco, Ica, Puno, Lambayeque, Piura and Tumbes.¹⁶

La Republica, citing information from the Peruvian national police, stated that there were several common forms of extortion, with the most common being 'drop-by-drop'.¹⁷ According to the source, 'drop-by-drop' is an informal loan that starts as a crime of usury. It targets people in urgent need with seemingly easy access to loans, but it's intentionally structured to lead to default and, ultimately, extortion.¹⁸ This practice, usually carried out by criminal mafias, uses violence and intimidation against those who were unable to pay, affecting not only the victims but also their family and friends.¹⁹ Citing an external source, Insight Crime stated that around 500 000 people in Peru owed 'drop-by-drop' loans.²⁰

Human Rights Watch described that, in some cases, criminal groups 'use hitmen to kill those who refuse to pay'.²¹ Furthermore, the same source added that 'criminal groups typically use a phone number to message or call people, threatening to attack or kidnap the person or a loved one, and asking for a recurrent fee,' and in some cases, 'they send photos to the victim to intimidate them'.²² The rising cases of extortion have 'triggered a wave of protests and strikes',²³ including from public transit workers.²⁴

¹¹ Insight Crime, More Victims Seek Police Help With Rising Extortion in Peru, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

¹² AP News, Troops on the streets of Lima as Peru's government calls state of emergency to tackle crime wave, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

¹³ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Peru, 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴ Insight Crime, More Victims Seek Police Help With Rising Extortion in Peru, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵ HRW, Congress in Cahoots: How Peru's Legislature Is Allowing Organized Crime to Thrive, 8 July 2025, [url](#), p. 21

¹⁶ La Republica, Perú enfrenta un repunte por extorsiones en ocho regiones, 14 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷ La Republica, Este es el delito que se disparó en más del 800% en Perú en tan solo 5 años, 26 September 2024, [url](#)

¹⁸ La Republica, Este es el delito que se disparó en más del 800% en Perú en tan solo 5 años, 26 September 2024, [url](#)

¹⁹ La Republica, Este es el delito que se disparó en más del 800% en Perú en tan solo 5 años, 26 September 2024, [url](#)

²⁰ Insight Crime, Financial Vulnerability Fuels Predatory Crime in Peru, 28 March 2024, [url](#)

²¹ HRW, Congress in Cahoots: How Peru's Legislature Is Allowing Organized Crime to Thrive, 8 July 2025, [url](#), p. 21

²² HRW, Congress in Cahoots: How Peru's Legislature Is Allowing Organized Crime to Thrive, 8 July 2025, [url](#), p. 21

²³ Financial Times (The), Death threats by WhatsApp: extortion drains Peruvians' cash, 12 January 2025, [url](#)

²⁴ Bloomberg, Crippling Bus Strike Shines Light on Peru's Extortion Gangs, 26 September 2024, [url](#); Financial Times (The), Death threats by WhatsApp: extortion drains Peruvians' cash, 12 January 2025, [url](#)



2. Main criminal groups involved

Some of the main criminal groups active in Peru are the following:

- Tren de Aragua; a criminal organisation originating in Venezuela, which has engaged in criminal activity throughout Peru and has been officially designated a 'terrorist organization' by the Peruvian Congress.²⁵ It has mainly been involved in human trafficking, sexual exploitation,²⁶ drug trafficking, loan sharking, contract killings,²⁷ as well as cases of extortion.²⁸
- Los Tiguerones; a criminal organisation originating from Ecuador, which has expanded its operations in Northern Peru and mainly involved in illicit cocaine trafficking.²⁹
- Los Injertos del Cono Norte; a criminal organisation led by Erick Moreno Hernández, or 'El Monstruo', one of Peru's 'most wanted criminal', have been responsible for kidnappings, contract killings, and extortion across Lima.³⁰
- Los Bravos del cash; a criminal organisation made up of Venezuelan and Peruvian citizens, were involved in extortion and kidnappings throughout Lima, specifically using the 'drop-by-drop' method.³¹
- Los Pulpos gang; originating in Trujillo, Peru, a criminal organisation involved in extortion, kidnapping, and contract killings, and have used violence and intimidation to control territory both domestically and in parts of Chile, where they also targeted Peruvian migrants.³²

For a detailed list of the main criminal groups involved, see section 3.5.1. Criminal Groups of the [EUAA COI Report Peru Country Focus, September 2023](#).

Peruvian police report that most homicides are carried out by hitmen (sicarios) hired by organised crime groups, with the highest rates being in Lima, Madre de Dios, Tumbes, La Libertad, Callao, and Ica.³³ Further, 'the number of killings by hired hit men has also jumped significantly in recent years'.³⁴ The 2023 Global Organized Crime Index, a project by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC), stated that 'the presence of

²⁵ CNN News, El Congreso de Perú declara organización terrorista al Tren de Aragua, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

²⁶ InfoBae, Los rezagos del Tren de Aragua seguirían activos en Perú: el rastro de violencia que confirmaría su presencia, 16 April 2025, [url](#)

²⁷ Ojo Publico, Tren de Aragua: expansión y evolución de una megafranquicia del crimen en América Latina, 8 November 2023, [url](#)

²⁸ Insight Crime, Financial Vulnerability Fuels Predatory Crime in Peru, 28 March 2024, [url](#); Ojo Publico, Tren de Aragua: expansión y evolución de una megafranquicia del crimen en América Latina, 8 November 2023, [url](#)

²⁹ InfoBae, 'Los Tiguerones', la banda criminal ecuatoriana que controla narcotráfico, sicariato y tráfico de armas en el norte de Perú, 22 December 2024, [url](#)

³⁰ Insight Crime, An Extortion 'Monster' Is Now Peru's Most Wanted Criminal, 19 June 2025, [url](#); Gob.Pe, Mininter incrementó a S/ 500 000 la recompensa por peligroso secuestrador y extorsionador Erick Moreno, alias "El Monstruo", 18 September 2024, [url](#)

³¹ InfoBae, 'Los bravos del cash', la banda criminal que secuestraba a víctimas por no pagar préstamos 'gota a gota', 20 June 2024, [url](#)

³² Insight Crime, Peru Extortion Scheme Shows How Private Schools Make Easy Targets, 24 June 2024, [url](#)

³³ HRW, Congress in Cahoots: How Peru's Legislature Is Allowing Organized Crime to Thrive, 8 July 2025, [url](#), p. 20

³⁴ New York Times (The), Gangs Terrorize Peru in an Epidemic of Extortion, 17 July 2025, [url](#)



criminal networks is a major problem in Peru', especially in Lima and the Constitutional Province of Callao.³⁵ These networks are involved in micro-level drug distribution, robberies, extortion, human trafficking, and environmental crimes. They maintain control over their criminal operations by employing paramilitary groups and work in coordination with international criminal organizations - especially those from Serbia, Colombia, and Mexico - to process and transport cocaine to Lima and border areas.³⁶ The source affirmed that criminal groups 'control territories and infiltrate state structures' across Peru.³⁷

3. Profiles of those targeted for extortion

A September 2024 report by the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP) revealed that the most affected groups by extortion were public transport workers and small entrepreneurs.³⁸ The 2025 annual report by Freedom House noted that there were 'incidents where bus drivers who refused to pay fees to criminal gangs were murdered'.³⁹ A February 2025 article by La Republica affirmed that, criminal gangs frequently targeted individuals in public transport with extortion, by demanding payments from transport drivers in exchange for protection from violence or retaliation. The report also confirmed that these criminals maintained detailed records of the daily routes of the transport vehicles.⁴⁰

According to sources, schools were also targeted for extortion from organised criminals groups,⁴¹ where criminals have threatened students, families,⁴² parents and teachers if they did not pay money.⁴³ An October 2024 article by the news source, Radio France Internationale (RFI), reported that extortion in Peru targeted not only wealthy individuals and large companies but also 'small traders in poorer districts', including 'shops, motorcycle taxi drivers and schools'.⁴⁴

Freedom House further reported a surge in extortion and illegal fee collection.⁴⁵ Additionally, the same reported noted that 'roughly 3 000 convenience stores in Lima reportedly closed because their owners were targeted by extortion'.⁴⁶

³⁵ GI-TOC, Global Organized Crime Index, Peru – 2023, 26 September 2023, [url](#), pp. 4-5

³⁶ GI-TOC, Global Organized Crime Index, Peru – 2023, 26 September 2023, [url](#), pp. 4-5

³⁷ GI-TOC, Global Organized Crime Index, Peru – 2023, 26 September 2023, [url](#), pp. 4-5

³⁸ PUCP, Ola de extorsiones: "La ciudadanía ya no denuncia pues ha perdido la confianza en las instituciones", 26 September 2024, [url](#)

³⁹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Peru, 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁰ La Republica, "Hasta S/2.800 diarios": revelan monto de extorsiones a transportistas en libro de mano derecha del 'Monstruo', 3 February 2025, [url](#)

⁴¹ NPR News, More than a thousand schools in Peru have faced threats from criminal gangs, 25 June 2025, [url](#); NPR News, In Peru, criminal gangs are targeting schools in poor neighborhoods for extortion, 7 July 2025, [url](#);

⁴² NPR News, In Peru, criminal gangs are targeting schools in poor neighborhoods for extortion, 7 July 2025, [url](#); Insight Crime, Peru Extortion Scheme Shows How Private Schools Make Easy Targets, 24 June 2024, [url](#); France 24, Peruvian schoolkids living in fear of extortion gangs, 4 April 2025, [url](#)

⁴³ France 24, Peruvian schoolkids living in fear of extortion gangs, 4 April 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁴ RFI, Pay or 'blood flows': Peru battles extortion epidemic, 23 October 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁵ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Peru, 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁶ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Peru, 2025, [url](#)



An April 2025 article by Insight Crime, quoting Nicolás Zevallos Trigoso, director of Peruvian non-governmental organisation the Institute of Criminology and Studies on Violence (Instituto de Criminología y Estudios sobre la Violencia), stated ‘we are in a phase where extortion is much closer to small and micro-entrepreneurs, families, homes, and for quite small amounts [of money]’.⁴⁷

A February 2025 article by InfoBae, noted that trafficked women and those involved in the sex trade were also victims of extortion, being forced to pay or face retaliation, threats and violence.⁴⁸

4. Ability of criminal groups to trace victims of extortion across the country

Information on the ability of criminal groups to trace victims of extortion across the country could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints.

5. State of emergency declared in March 2025

The president of Peru, Dina Boluarte, declared states of emergency on two separate occasions, in September 2024 and March 2025, giving police and military full control over the security situation as part of efforts to target organized crime.⁴⁹

On 18 March 2025, the president of Peru, Dina Boluarte, declared a 30-day state of emergency in Lima, granting police and military full control amidst a wave of violence spurred by the death of a popular singer in a criminal attack.⁵⁰ Paul Flores, popular singer of the Peruvian band Armonía 10, was shot and killed by attackers who tried to extort money from him and his bandmates after a concert.⁵¹ According to Insight Crime, the suspect in this killing was Erick Moreno Hernández, alias ‘El Monstruo’, one of ‘South-America’s most wanted criminal’ and accused of leading Los Injertos del Cono Norte, a criminal network responsible active across Lima.⁵² The latest state of emergency was called to ‘help police address a surge of violence’,⁵³ and comes following weeks of intensifying violence attributed to criminal organizations frequently targeting businesses, particularly transport firms.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ Insight Crime, More Victims Seek Police Help With Rising Extortion in Peru, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁸ InfoBae, La violencia del Tren de Aragua en Perú: informe revela historias de mujeres atrapadas por la extorsión y la explotación sexual, 13 February 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁹ Conversation (The), Peru is losing its battle against organised crime, 7 April 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Peru declares state of emergency as violent crimewave engulfs Lima, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁰ Al Jazeera, Peru declares state of emergency as violent crimewave engulfs Lima, 18 March 2025, [url](#); Conversation (The), Peru is losing its battle against organised crime, 7 April 2025, [url](#); AP News, Troops on the streets of Lima as Peru’s government calls state of emergency to tackle crime wave, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵¹ Al Jazeera, Peru declares state of emergency as violent crimewave engulfs Lima, 18 March 2025, [url](#); Conversation (The), Peru is losing its battle against organised crime, 7 April 2025, [url](#); CBS News, Popular singer shot dead by hitmen in Peru, prompting state of emergency in capital over extortion killings, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵² Insight Crime, An Extortion ‘Monster’ Is Now Peru’s Most Wanted Criminal, 19 June 2025, [url](#)

⁵³ AP News, Peru declares an emergency and deploys the army as violence surges in the capital, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁴ Al Jazeera, Peru declares state of emergency as violent crimewave engulfs Lima, 18 March 2025, [url](#)



Previously, in September 2024, Boluarte’s government declared a 60-day state of emergency in the capital,⁵⁵ to address the threat of criminal gangs.⁵⁶

According to a March 2025 article by Al Jazeera, ‘Peruvian authorities have repeatedly declared emergencies when criminal activity or social unrest spikes in recent years’.⁵⁷ The same source further described that ‘under the state of emergency, authorities will restrict rights including the freedom of assembly and movement, while the police and military will be able to detain people without a judicial order’.⁵⁸ The July 2025 report by Human Rights Watch further affirmed that the administration of President Boluarte used state of emergencies as its ‘main tool against crime in Peru’.⁵⁹ However, the same source noted that homicides, which were the ‘key reason to suspend constitutional rights’, have ‘continued to rise in the main areas under states of emergency’.⁶⁰ More specifically, ‘homicides in Lima and Callao increased by 2.6 % in April 2025 compared to the same month in 2024’.⁶¹ Human Rights Watch, quoting a colonel from the Peruvian National Police in Trujillo, stated that ‘the state of emergency has changed little or nothing. Declaring it and then not taking concrete action to provide the police with resources or training makes no sense’.⁶²

6. State response

In July 2024, Peru’s Congress passed a bill to ‘narrow the definition of “organized crime”, making it harder for prosecutors to investigate related offenses, including corruption and extortion, and rendering investigative searches largely ineffective’.⁶³ President Boluarte allowed the bill to become law in August, but in October, Congress brought back extortion and other crimes into the definition ‘but kept the exclusion of many corruption offenses and failed to address all changes that undermined investigative searches’.⁶⁴ In a separate July 2025 report, Human Rights Watch described that ‘congress has sharply limited prosecutors’ ability to obtain evidence and investigative leads from defendants willing to cooperate (via a mechanism known as “efficient collaboration”), a significant blow to efforts to dismantle criminal groups and detect connections to corrupt officials’ and has further put ‘obstacles in the way of investigative searches’.⁶⁵

According to La República, one of the strategies of the National Penitentiary Institute of Peru (INPE), the government agency tasked with detaining convicted individuals and criminal suspects, has attempted to curb extortion originating from prisons through surprise searches and frequent inmate transfers. Despite these efforts, the problem persists, and authorities are

⁵⁵ AP News, Peru declares an emergency and deploys the army as violence surges in the capital, 18 March 2025, [url](#); Conversation (The), Peru is losing its battle against organised crime, 7 April 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁶ Conversation (The), Peru is losing its battle against organised crime, 7 April 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁷ Al Jazeera, Peru declares state of emergency as violent crimewave engulfs Lima, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁸ Al Jazeera, Peru declares state of emergency as violent crimewave engulfs Lima, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁹ HRW, Congress in Cahoots: How Peru’s Legislature Is Allowing Organized Crime to Thrive, 8 July 2025, [url](#), p. 39

⁶⁰ HRW, Congress in Cahoots: How Peru’s Legislature Is Allowing Organized Crime to Thrive, 8 July 2025, [url](#), p. 39

⁶¹ HRW, Congress in Cahoots: How Peru’s Legislature Is Allowing Organized Crime to Thrive, 8 July 2025, [url](#), p. 40

⁶² HRW, Congress in Cahoots: How Peru’s Legislature Is Allowing Organized Crime to Thrive, 8 July 2025, [url](#), p. 40

⁶³ HRW, World Report 2025 - Peru, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁴ HRW, World Report 2025 - Peru, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁵ HRW, Congress in Cahoots: How Peru’s Legislature Is Allowing Organized Crime to Thrive, 8 July 2025, [url](#), p. 1



now seeking new strategies to address it.⁶⁶ The same source added that, as of June 2025, there are currently 1 285 prisoners in Peruvian prisons for extortion.⁶⁷

Insight Crime noted that ‘underreporting of extortion is a widespread problem across Latin America and the Caribbean because victims often feel the police are unable or unwilling to help, or fear they may suffer reprisals for reporting the crime’.⁶⁸ Further, the same source described that ‘those dynamics may have been responsible for the decrease in extortion reports in 19 of Peru’s 26 departments and provinces in 2024 compared with 2023, when all but one department saw an increase’.⁶⁹ Human Rights Watch added that figures on extortion in Peru ‘almost certainly understate the scale of the problem, because many cases go unreported due to distrust in the police or the belief that there will be no effective response from state institutions’.⁷⁰

The 2023 Global Organized Crime Index on Peru, a project by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC), stated that ‘crime organizations are deeply embedded in the state, and most official investigations into crime groups find some level of complicity from law enforcement agencies, politicians and even judges’.⁷¹ The same source described that ‘Peruvian police officers have been accused of providing security during the transportation of illicit goods’.⁷²

⁶⁶ La Republica, Perú enfrenta un repunte por extorsiones en ocho regiones, 14 June 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷ La Republica, Perú enfrenta un repunte por extorsiones en ocho regiones, 14 June 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁸ Insight Crime, More Victims Seek Police Help With Rising Extortion in Peru, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁹ Insight Crime, More Victims Seek Police Help With Rising Extortion in Peru, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁰ HRW, Congress in Cahoots: How Peru’s Legislature Is Allowing Organized Crime to Thrive, 8 July 2025, [url](#), p. 20

⁷¹ GI-TOC, Global Organized Crime Index, Peru – 2023, 26 September 2023, [url](#), pp. 4-5

⁷² GI-TOC, Global Organized Crime Index, Peru – 2023, 26 September 2023, [url](#), pp. 4-5

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France 24, Peruvian schoolkids living in fear of extortion gangs, 4 April 2025, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20250404-peruvian-schoolkids-living-in-fear-of-extortion-gangs>, accessed 9 July 2025

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Peru, 2025, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/peru/freedom-world/2025>, accessed 3 July 2025

GI-TOC (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime), Global Organized Crime Index, Peru – 2023, 26 September 2023, https://ocindex.net/assets/downloads/2023/english/ocindex_profile_peru_2023.pdf, accessed 3 July 2025



Gob.Pe, Mininter incrementó a S/ 500 000 la recompensa por peligroso secuestrador y extorsionador Erick Moreno, alias “El Monstruo” (The Ministry of Internship has increased the reward for the dangerous kidnapper and extortionist Erick Moreno, alias "El Monstruo," to S/. 500,000.), 18 September 2024, <https://www.gob.pe/institucion/mininter/noticias/1024379-mininter-incremento-a-s-500-000-la-recompensa-por-peligroso-secuestrador-y-extorsionador-erick-moreno-alias-el-monstruo>, accessed 9 July 2025

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