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**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR IMMIGRATION REVIEW
IMMIGRATION COURT
1855 Gateway Blvd., Suite 850
Concord, CA 94520**

In the Matter of)
)
Crystel Lima)
)
In Removal Proceedings)
)
_____)

File No. A. 245-647-045

Immigration Judge: Nava, Marlem

Next Hearing Date: June 26, 2029 at 8:30 AM

RESPONDENT'S COUNTRY CONDITIONS - ECUADOR

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Exhibit 1

**EXCERPTS FROM ECUADOR'S
COUNTRY CONDITIONS REPORTS**

CC 1

**2024 COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS
PRACTICES: ECUADOR – U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

On January 9, President Daniel Noboa decreed a state of emergency to stem escalating violence from local and transnational organized crime groups. The president directed police and military forces to conduct enhanced security operations against these groups to address security threats.

Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: arbitrary or unlawful killings; torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; arbitrary arrest or detention; and serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom.

Kidnappings and extortion by criminal groups increased. Imprisoned members of criminal gangs staged disturbances leading to prison breaks. The government investigated and prosecuted instances of violence and threats of violence likely perpetrated by nongovernment actors against journalists and public officials.

Several NGOs reported the existence of arbitrary arrests by the police and military during the government's declarations of a state of emergency. In a report covering the period from January 8 to April 8, the Regional Human Rights Advisory Foundation noted at least five arbitrary arrests, three by the military and two by police. NGOs noted the number of arbitrary detentions was likely much higher during the year.

2023 COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES: ECUADOR – U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

As of October 31, police reported more than 6,550 homicides, an increase of almost 70 percent compared with 2022. Police attributed a large part of the country's rising homicide rate to increased drug trafficking and conflicts among gangs fighting over drug trafficking routes.

Drug gang violence dramatically increased in the coastal provinces of Guayas, Santa Elena, and Los Rios. Authorities registered a surge in kidnappings, robberies, and killings, including a beheading. Media reported a mass killing at the fishing port in Esmeraldas, when 30 hooded men arrived aboard boats and began shooting at residents and fishermen, killing nine and wounding four.

Migrants and refugees, especially women, children, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) individuals, sometimes experienced gender-based violence and human trafficking, according to UN agencies and local NGOs. Authorities reported an increase in forced labor, sex trafficking, and the forced recruitment of migrants and refugees into criminal activity, such as drug trafficking and robbery, on the northern and southern borders, particularly by domestic criminal groups and transnational criminal organizations that also operated in Colombia. Forced recruitment increasingly took place in schools and targeted young persons, especially young men and adolescents. **Continued migrant and refugee arrivals at irregular crossings, due to visa requirements for Venezuelan nationals; increasing xenophobia; and a lack of local and municipal government coordination or capacity to address the protection of particularly vulnerable groups complicated the government's ability to address and prevent abuses against migrants and refugees. Migrants reported a lack of trust, significant corruption, and xenophobia in public institutions, including within police and the Attorney General's Office, that made it difficult to report abuse, especially gender-based violence and human trafficking.**

On September 6, several human rights organizations reported that male inmates entered the women's pavilion in a prison in

Quevedo to rape, attack, and torture female inmates in complicity with the prison's authorities.

CC 3

WORLD REPORT 2026: ECUADOR – HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

After declining in 2024, homicides increased sharply in 2025, by about 40 percent by September according to the Ministry of Interior, bringing Ecuador close to its highest homicide rate ever.

Between January and July 2025, the Attorney General's Office recorded 9,522 extortion complaints. Kidnapping reports declined slightly compared to 2024 but remained at high levels.

Organized crime groups have fragmented, giving rise to new groups. According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data monitor, **the number of identifiable gangs increased 54 percent between 2023 and 2024.**

The Ombudsperson's Office estimates that 316,000 were displaced internally between 2022 and 2024. Many migrants and asylum seekers in Ecuador struggle to obtain regular status and integrate.

Since the deployment of soldiers to prisons, monitors have reported instances of corruption, incommunicado detention, physical abuse, and obstruction of medical care. Media outlets and human rights groups reported that tuberculosis killed dozens of detainees during 2025. More than 500 detainees have been killed in violent confrontations inside prisons since 2021. As of November, prison massacres in Machala and Esmeraldas left around 60 dead and others injured.

CC 4

WORLD REPORT 2025: ECUADOR – HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

In a context of fragile democratic institutions, Ecuador has seen a sharp increase in violence by organized crime, which took homicide rates to unprecedented levels. Following President Daniel Noboa’s announcement that the country is in an “internal armed conflict,” security forces engaged in serious human rights violations.

Homicides rose 429 percent from the first half of 2019 to 2024, when 3,036 were recorded. As of September, police reportedly received over 2,000 reports of kidnappings and over 10,700 reports of extortion. One in three Ecuadorians has been a victim of crime, the highest number in the region.

Ecuador’s militarization of its streets and prisons since January has led to serious human rights violations by security forces, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and ill-treatment.

Sexual violence remains endemic in Ecuador’s schools and finding justice is elusive for many survivors. Between January 2014 and August 2024, authorities registered over 6,700 cases of sexual violence against students committed by teachers, school staff, other students or bus drivers. **The surge in violence and organized crime severely impacted children’s rights, with homicides of adolescents rising 17 percent compared to the first semester of 2023.**

CC 5

THE STATE OF THE WORLD’S HUMAN RIGHTS: ECUADOR 2024 – AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

In January, President Daniel Noboa declared an “internal armed conflict” and state of emergency in response to actions by organized crime groups. Authorities maintained states of emergency throughout the year, deploying the military to patrol the streets. In April, voters in a national referendum approved further powers for the military in public security tasks.

Conditions in prisons remained extremely poor. **There were reports of possible extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances. Human rights defenders continued to face security risks and the government failed to protect them. Arbitrary arrests were prevalent.**

The Public Prosecutor’s Office noted a spike in reports of possible extrajudicial executions, with 27 reported in the first half of 2024, an increase on previous years. Human rights organizations and residents in coastal regions reported several arbitrary detentions by security forces during their operations, some of which could constitute enforced disappearances, according to the Public Prosecutor’s Office. In December, the Public Prosecutor’s Office pressed charges against 16 members of the military for the alleged enforced disappearance of four children in Guayaquil, who were later found dead.

CC 6

ECUADOR: FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2025 COUNTRY REPORT – FREEDOM HOUSE

Ecuador experienced a sharp deterioration in political rights and civil liberties in 2024 amid a severe security crisis driven by organized crime. President Noboa’s government responded to escalating violence with a declaration of “internal armed conflict” and imposition of states of emergency, which included deploying the military for internal security.

The country’s justice system has been deeply compromised by organized crime infiltration. Multiple judges and prosecutors have been assassinated, and the judiciary faces persistent threats from criminal organizations. **Impunity remains a systemic problem, with few cases of violence against women, journalists, and human rights defenders resulting in convictions.**

CC 7

2025 COUNTRY CONDITIONS: ECUADOR – U.S. COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS (USCRI)

In January 2024, cartel members, armed with explosives, took television broadcasters hostage in front of a live audience. Prisoners from the major cartels posted videos of themselves

holding knives to the necks of the guards. Gang leaders staged a jailbreak.

At 44.5 homicides per 100,000 people, Ecuador’s homicide rate is now beyond that of Mexico, El Salvador, and Honduras, and the highest in South America. Children and youth are particularly targeted, experiencing a 640% increase in child homicides since 2019. Increasing numbers of people are being displaced: after Venezuelans, Ecuadorians are now the second most intercepted population in the Darien Gap, the infamously dangerous border crossing from Colombia to Panama.

Ecuador, given its history of stability, is home to one of South America’s largest refugee populations, hosting nearly 500,000 people in need of international protection. **Now grappling with its own armed conflict, the Ecuadorian government is strained to provide essential services and protection to refugees and asylum seekers. Shelters hosting both Colombians and Venezuelans are above capacity, with little relief in sight: only 3.3% of the migrant and refugee response plan is funded.**

Since the declaration of “internal armed conflict” was announced, human rights advocates have raised concerns about its impact on civilians. There has been at least one reported incident of an extra-judicial killing, and numerous instances of arbitrary detention, with prisoners reporting being subject to cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment by authorities.

CC 8

UNHCR ECUADOR: ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2024 – UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Ecuador continues to witness the forced displacement of people seeking safety. Ecuador remains the main country of asylum for Colombians, recognizing the largest number of refugees globally.

UNHCR ensured a comprehensive case management framework for survivors of gender-based violence, including refugees, asylum-seekers, migrants, and host community members. According to UNHCR data, 1,064 cases of gender-based violence

were managed nationally. 8,445 individuals benefited from specialized services, including social work, psychological support, legal counseling, and shelter in safe houses.

Heightened security risks, including recruitment by criminal groups and invisible borders, combined with limited resources, restricted individual freedom of movement and access to UNHCR and partner offices.

CC 9

UNHCR MULTI-YEAR STRATEGY 2023–2025: ECUADOR – UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

In 2023 and 2024, the country witnessed the entry of a daily average of 1,000 refugees and migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as well as Colombian asylum seekers, many of whom travel in mixed movements and are exposed to sexual abuse, trafficking, and limited access to food, health care and shelter.

Deteriorating conditions across the region continues to place Ecuador as one of the main a major transit country for people from Africa, Asia, Haiti, Cuba, among others, mainly heading north. In view of the worsening situation in Ecuador, these complex mixed movements are joined by thousands of Ecuadorians, with over 350,000 nationals having left the country since 2022, according to Government figures. While in the past decade the departure of Ecuadorians was mostly due to economic reasons, violence is increasingly prompting nationals to seek protection abroad (Ecuadorians being the third nationality to have crossed the Darien) or having fled utilizing other routes or forcibly displaced internally from highly insecure areas. It is also reported that some 12,000 to 15,000 Ecuadorians had been returned in the last year mainly from the United States of America.

According to the Attorney General’ s office, crime rates increased by 45.7% between 2021 and 2022. According to Police data, 2022 was the most violent year with 25,32 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants. Security analyses reveal that organized criminal groups linked to transnational drug cartels are the main cause of increasing violence and are

dedicated to mainly illegal mining, smuggling of goods and people, drugs and arms trafficking, money laundry, and trafficking of people. Their influence has resulted in, among others, increased GBV, higher risks for children and adolescents, and a wider spread of extortion and threats, including to displaced people and Ecuadorians.

Refugees and migrants continue to face serious challenges and practical barriers to fully access rights, including food, employment, shelter/housing, and documentation. Furthermore, significant barriers persist regarding their socio-economic inclusion, including restrictions on entering formal labour markets, exacerbated by the lack of documentation

CC 10

ECUADOR: COUNTRY GENDER SCORECARD - WORLD BANK GROUP

Ecuador has made some progress towards gender equality in the past decade, but gaps between women and men remain in several monetary and non-monetary measures of well-being.

Violence against women remains a significant issue. Six out of ten Ecuadorian women reported that they have been subjected to some form of violence in their lifetime (psychological, physical, sexual, or economic violence). Physical violence is exacerbated for Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and rural women, while sexual violence is considerably higher for women in the urban areas compared to their counterparts in rural settings (37% vs. 23%).

CC 11

COUNTRY FACT SHEET: ECUADOR - UN WOMEN DATA HUB

Globally, some progress on women's rights has been achieved. [...]

However, work still needs to be done in Ecuador to achieve gender equality. In 2018, 8.1% of women aged 15-49 years reported that they had been subject to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months. Also, women and girls aged 15+ spend 19.2% of their time on unpaid care and domestic work, compared to 4.8% spent by men.

As of Dec-20, only 45.1% of indicators needed to monitor the SDGs from a gender perspective were available, with gaps in key areas, in particular: key labour market indicators, such as the gender pay gap. In addition, many areas – such as gender and poverty, physical and sexual harassment, women’s access to assets (including land), and gender and the environment – lack comparable methodologies for regular monitoring. Closing these gender data gaps is essential for achieving gender-related SDG commitments in Ecuador.

CC 12

SHINING A LIGHT ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN ECUADOR - UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

“Sixty-five per cent of women in Ecuador have suffered some form of violence during their life.” When I arrived in Ecuador in 2020 to take up the position as UN Resident Coordinator, this was one of the first statistics that I memorized, simply because it struck me as almost unbelievable. **Sixty-five per cent, means 2 out of 3 women, probably the fourth highest figure of gender-based violence in the region.**

I learned from national authorities that a woman is killed every 26 hours in the country, often at the hands of a family member or an intimate partner. From women’s organizations, I understood the challenges in implementing the 2019 Organic Law for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women, including the lack of inter-institutional coordination, data, training and resources. And in emotional sessions with survivors of violence and families of victims of femicide, I learned how stereotypes and cultural practices fuel the problem, making all women vulnerable, regardless of social class, ethnicity or age. It was clear the violence deeply impacted women and their families. But the issue also

undermined society as a whole and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ecuador.

The dramatic increase in drug-related violence and insecurity that has plagued Ecuador over the past few years is exacerbating the challenge we face in tackling gender-based violence. Unfortunately, women and girls are, once again, deeply affected. In addition to increases in femicides, a study by UN Women shows that women and girls are increasingly at risk of other forms of violence and coercion, including forced recruitment into criminal gangs, human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

CC 13

UN EXPERTS GRAVELY CONCERNED ABOUT ELIMINATION OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN IN ECUADOR - OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Ecuador's decision to eliminate the Ministry of Women and Human Rights and merge it with the Ministry of Government represents a grave setback in the country's international commitments to gender equality and human rights, UN experts* said today.

The experts warned that the closure of the Ministry had led to the dismantling of structures, services, and specialised technical teams.

“This leaves women, girls, survivors, and families of femicide victims in a state of greater vulnerability and lacking institutional protection,” they said in a letter to the Ecuadorian State in August 2025.

The concern is heightened by alarming levels of violence against women and girls in the country, the experts noted. According to official data, 65 out of every 100 women have suffered some form of violence, a figure that rises to 71.8% among Afro-descendant women and 64% among Indigenous women. In 2022, 332 femicides were recorded, and it is estimated that a woman is killed every 26 hours, in most cases by her partner or a close family member.

Exhibit 2

Ecuador 2024 Human Rights Report

Executive Summary

On January 9, President Daniel Noboa decreed a state of emergency to stem escalating violence from local and transnational organized crime groups. The president directed police and military forces to conduct enhanced security operations against these groups to address security threats.

Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: arbitrary or unlawful killings; torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; arbitrary arrest or detention; and serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom.

The government took credible steps to identify and punish officials who committed human rights abuses.

Kidnappings and extortion by criminal groups increased. Imprisoned members of criminal gangs staged disturbances leading to prison breaks. The government investigated and prosecuted instances of violence and threats of violence likely perpetrated by nongovernment actors against journalists and public officials.

Section 1. Life

a. Extrajudicial Killings

There were a few reports the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings during the year. President Noboa's January 9 decree of a state of emergency characterized 22 transnational criminal groups as "terrorists" and authorized security operations targeting these groups, during which 15 individuals were killed.

President Noboa issued 11 executive decrees declaring and renewing states of exception throughout the year to curb rising crime and support the government's efforts to counter organized crime groups, as well as electric power outages caused by drought conditions. The decrees enabled armed forces support to police operations. The Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional two executive decrees and limited the scope of two others.

In February, gang members killed Diana Carnero, a councilwoman in Naranjal, Guayas Province. Media reported seven deaths among local officials in at least 10 incidents involving the killing or attempted killing of political leaders and elected officials.

b. Coercion in Population Control

There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the

part of government authorities.

Section 2. Liberty

a. Freedom of the Press

The constitution provided for freedom of expression, including for members of the press and other media, but laws restricted this right. The law prohibited persons from using “discrediting expressions,” treated as a misdemeanor with a 15- to 30-day detention. The government did not invoke this law to restrict freedom of expression during the year.

Physical Attacks, Imprisonment, and Pressure

Local government authorities and criminal groups committed acts of violence and harassment against journalists. The Observatory for Rights and Justice of Ecuador reported that journalists claimed they were subject to government surveillance and interception of communications.

On January 30, the mayor of Loja criticized journalists, asserting media “exuded verbal violence”; the mayor also characterized journalists as “extortionists.”

Censorship by Governments, Military, Intelligence, or Police

Forces, Criminal Groups, or Armed Extremist or Rebel Groups

The media nongovernmental organization (NGO) Fundamedios reported several censorship cases between January and August. The NGO noted the government did not adequately investigate or prosecute these cases.

Some media outlets reported officials removed them from official chat rooms and restricted their access to public information.

On June 10, the national television interview program *Los Irreverentes* was discontinued. The network cited commercial justifications for the discontinuation of the program.

Unknown persons not presumed connected with government authorities conducted attacks against journalists during the year. Reporters Without Borders reported the rise of criminal gangs and drug cartel-related violence impacted aggression, threats, attacks, and killings.

Between January and August, Fundamedios registered 22 aggressions perpetrated by alleged criminal and terrorist organizations against media. These aggressions suggested a pattern of intimidation, threats, and direct attacks against journalists and media outlets.

On January 30, members of a criminal gang in Guayaquil attacked the shared facility of the state-owned networks TC Televisión and Gamavisión during a live broadcast. Armed men invaded the studio and beat and then kidnapped

several media workers.

Efforts to Preserve the Independence of the Media

On March 20, President Nohoa signed the Chapultepec and Salta Declarations, committing the government to promote freedom of expression.

On August 23, the government issued a decree that defined risk prevention and protection measures for journalists. The decree included new risk prevention measures, such as mapping risks facing journalists, the development of protection protocols, and the creation of support networks. New protection measures included monitoring threats and attacks and security training for journalists.

b. Worker Rights

Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

The law, with exceptions, provided certain workers the right to form and join trade unions of their choice, to bargain collectively, and to strike. The law required a minimum of 30 workers for the creation of an association or labor union, regardless of the total number of employees in the workplace. To form a work committee, the law required the participation of 50 percent of a company's employees. Only labor unions that represented 50 percent of a company's employees could sign a collective bargaining agreement.

The law prohibited the dismissal of union members from the moment a union notified the labor inspector of its definitive board members. Employers were not required to reinstate workers fired for union activity but were required to pay such workers compensation and a fine of one year's annual salary for everyone wrongfully dismissed. Individual workers still employed could take complaints against employers to the Labor Inspection Office. Individuals no longer employed could take their complaints to courts charged with protecting labor rights. Unions with at least 50 percent of a company's total workers could take labor complaints to a tripartite arbitration board established to hear their complaints. The law obligated that mediation begin within 48 hours of issuing a complaint. All private employers with unionized employees were legally required to negotiate collectively when the union so requested.

Ministerial resolutions allowed for the use of certain types of short-term or outsourcing labor contracts, with specific provisions for the flower, palm, fishing, livestock, and construction sectors.

The right for workers to organize at a sectoral level was recognized by the courts but was not always protected.

The law provided for the right of private-sector employees to strike and conduct solidarity strikes or boycotts on behalf of employees in other industries, after mandatory steps had been taken. The law established that before most strikes were declared, collective labor disputes had to be

referred to courts of conciliation and arbitration.

The law required a 10- to 20-day cooling-off period from the time a strike was declared before it could take effect. During this time, workers and employers had to agree on how many workers were needed to ensure a minimum level of service; at least 20 percent of the workforce had to continue to work to provide essential services. The law provided the employer could contract substitute personnel only when striking workers refused to send the number of workers required to provide the minimum necessary services. The law did not provide for time-limited, seasonal, hourly, or part-time contracts.

The law prohibited formation of unions and restricted the right to collective bargaining and striking of public-sector workers in a long list of “strategic sectors” that went beyond International Labor Organization standard for essential services. Workers in these sectors attempting to strike could face charges with penalties of two to five years’ imprisonment. The government effectively enforced the law on “strategic sectors.”

All unions in the public sector fell under the Confederation of Public Servants. The law specified that only the private sector could engage in collective bargaining.

The government did not effectively enforce all applicable laws. Penalties were commensurate with those for other laws involving denial of civil rights,

such as discrimination, but they were rarely applied against violators.

Employers did not always respect freedom of association and collective bargaining. Unions reported the Ministry of Labor delayed unions' requests to update their boards of directors, which led to delayed registration. Labor unions and associations reported difficulties and delays in registering unions in the ministry due to excessive and ever-changing requirements – sometimes not stated in the regulations – and ministry staff shortages.

There were a few cases in which employers fired leaders of new unions while the unions were awaiting ministry registration. Even if a court supported a union's registration efforts, dismissed leaders were entitled only to compensation, not reinstatement, which undermined the union's ability to form. In addition, dismissed union leaders could not turn to the Ministry of Labor but were required to go through the courts.

Forced or Compulsory Labor

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Acceptable Work Conditions

Wage and Hour Laws

The law provided for a minimum monthly wage, which was above the poverty income level. The law limited the standard work period to 40 hours

a week, eight hours a day, with two consecutive days of rest per week. The labor code stipulated workers should be paid at 150 percent for each hour of overtime while working on the weekend; between midnight to 6 a.m., workers should be paid at 200 percent of the hourly salary in overtime. Overtime was limited to no more than four hours per day and a total of 12 hours per week. Mandatory overtime was prohibited. The law mandated penalties for employers who did not register workers with the Social Security Administration.

The law allowed employers and employees to enter force majeure agreements, addressing unforeseen events beyond an employer's control that could temporarily suspend work and allowing employers to adjust working hours without incurring overtime pay to recover lost time. Employers were required to compensate employees for the interruption, while adhering to regulations regarding maximum working hours and minimum wage stipulated in wage laws.

The dismissal of an employee was permitted only if the business ceased operations permanently. The law permitted employers to reduce working hours and salaries by up to 50 and 45 percent, respectively, by signing "emergency contracts" with their employees to prevent job losses. In 2021, the Constitutional Court declared the force majeure provision unconstitutional, arguing it was "incompatible with the right to legal certainty recognized in the constitution." In June 2022, the National

Assembly approved a partial repeal of the law, which the president vetoed in July 2022, preventing the legislature from addressing it for a one-year period. Labor unions filed a lawsuit with the Constitutional Court the same month challenging other provisions in the law. The law remained in effect.

Labor leaders and NGOs reported that there were no specific sectors with a concentration of alleged violations of wage, hour, or overtime laws.

Occupational Safety and Health

The law provided for the health and safety of workers and outlined occupational safety and health (OSH) standards, which were appropriate for the country's main industries. Authorities could conduct labor inspections of formal workplaces either by appointment, after a worker complaint, or through unannounced visits. If a worker requested an inspection and a Ministry of Labor inspector confirmed a workplace hazard, the inspector then could close the workplace. Labor inspections generally occurred because of complaints, not as a preventive measure. In some cases, violations were remedied, but other cases were subjected to legal challenges that delayed changes for months.

Workers in the formal sector could generally remove themselves from situations that endangered health or safety without jeopardy to their employment, and authorities effectively protected employees in this situation. Labor representatives from the agricultural sector said they

registered cases in which employers forced workers to return to plantations shortly after fumigations took place, risking illness or bodily harm.

Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement

The Ministry of Labor was responsible for enforcement of wage, hour, and OSH laws. The government did not effectively enforce the laws. Inspectors had the authority to make unannounced inspections. The ministry issued fines for wage, and hour, and OSH violations. Penalties were commensurate with those for similar crimes, such as fraud or negligence, but were rarely applied to violators. The ministry had an insufficient number of inspectors to ensure compliance.

The law singled out the health and safety of miners, but the government faced challenges to enforce safety rules in informal (artisanal), often illegal, small-scale mines (frequently linked to local community leaders and criminal groups), which made up most mining enterprises. Illegal mining rose precipitously during the year following the increase in the price of gold in legal and illicit markets, with criminal organizations behind much of the expansion in territory and extraction. Mining activity was present in 17 of the 24 provinces. Migrants and refugees were particularly vulnerable to hazardous and exploitative working conditions. According to media and labor associations, local organizations reported complaints of Venezuelans being paid below the minimum wage, particularly in the informal sector. Gig workers reported conditions that did not follow wage, hour, and safety laws.

The informal sector employed 53.5 percent of the working population as of June. The government did not enforce applicable labor laws in this sector. Wage, hour, and OSH regulations and standards did not apply to workers in the informal sector.

c. Disappearance and Abduction

Disappearance

The government disputed an NGO's reporting of an alleged enforced disappearance in the Cotopaxi prison and vouched that the individual was in custody and "in good health." The government did not comment on two other alleged enforced disappearances by the same NGO.

Prolonged Detention without Charges

Several NGOs reported the existence of arbitrary arrests by the police and military during the government's declarations of a state of emergency.

In a report covering the period from January 8 to April 8, the Regional Human Rights Advisory Foundation noted at least five arbitrary arrests, three by the military and two by police. NGOs noted the number of arbitrary detentions was likely much higher during the year.

d. Violations in Religious Freedom

See the Department of State's annual *International Religious Freedom*

Report at <https://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/>.

e. Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Section 3. Security of the Person

a. Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The law prohibited torture and similar forms of intimidation and punishment.

A released prisoner detained during the state of emergency said that, on one occasion, military officers put prisoners face down and stepped on their toes, backs, heads, and necks with their boots and then randomly selected prisoners to submerge the detainees' heads into a water tank while applying electric shocks to demand information regarding weapons or drugs deposits.

b. Protection of Children

Child Labor

See the Department of Labor's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* at

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/findings/>.

Child Marriage

The legal marriage age was 18. There were reports of early and forced marriage in rural and poor areas.

According to a 2023 study by the Gender Roundtable of International Cooperation, Plan International, UN Population Fund, and UNICEF, an estimated 30,000 girls and adolescents were in early unions in the country.

c. Protection to Refugees

The government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees, returning refugees, or asylum seekers, as well as other persons of concern.

Provision of First Asylum

The law provided for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government had a system for providing protection to refugees.

Resettlement

As part of the regularization initiative, the government sought to achieve better integration of migrants and refugees in their host communities;

nevertheless, discrimination as well as limited access to formal employment, education, and housing affected migrants' and refugees' ability to integrate.

d. Acts of Antisemitism and Antisemitic Incitement

There was a small Jewish community, including an estimated 450 individuals in Quito, 50 individuals in Guayaquil, and an unspecified number of individuals elsewhere in the country. There were no reports of antisemitic incidents.

Exhibit 3

Ecuador 2023 Human Rights Report

Executive Summary

There were no significant changes in the human rights situation in Ecuador during the year.

Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment by the government; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; serious problems with the independence of the judiciary; serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media, including violence against journalists and the existence of criminal libel laws; serious government corruption; and extensive gender-based violence, including domestic or intimate partner violence, sexual violence, workplace violence, and femicide.

The government took credible steps to identify and punish officials who may have committed human rights abuses.

Violence, including killings, by criminal groups increased. Members of criminal gangs in prisons committed acts of torture and killed their rivals during prison disturbances. There were incidents of violence and threats of violence against politicians, journalists, prosecutors, and judges likely perpetrated by nongovernment actors. Members of society engaged in crimes involving violence or threats of violence targeting lesbian, gay,

bisexual, transgender, queer, or intersex persons. The government investigated and prosecuted such actions.

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person

a. Arbitrary Deprivation of Life and Other Unlawful or Politically Motivated Killings

There were no reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings, including extrajudicial killings, during the year.

Regarding the deaths of protesters during the June 2022 demonstrations, a local human rights organization reported the attorney general's investigation had yielded few results and progressed slowly. Although the Attorney General's Office summoned more than 80 police officers to testify, fewer than 20 came forward. Civil society and social organizations claimed authorities failed to call individuals to testify who were with one of the persons killed, Byron Guatatuca Vargas, when he died.

As of October 31, police reported more than 6,550 homicides, an increase of almost 70 percent compared with 2022. Police attributed a large part of the country's rising homicide rate to increased drug trafficking and conflicts among gangs fighting over drug trafficking routes. On March 3, President Guillermo Lasso declared a state of emergency in the coastal province of Esmeraldas. Media reported a mass killing on April 11 at the fishing port in

Esmeraldas, when 30 hooded men arrived aboard boats and began shooting at residents and fishermen, killing nine and wounding four. The minister of interior attributed the killings to a dispute between local drug gangs for control of the port.

Drug gang violence dramatically increased in the coastal provinces of Guayas, Santa Elena, and Los Rios. In March and April, authorities registered a surge in kidnappings, robberies, and killings, including a beheading. On April 1, President Lasso announced urgent security measures to confront crime, including declaring a state of emergency and curfew in the three provinces.

Media reported 14 attempts to kill candidates and elected officials, resulting in the deaths of four political candidates, five elected officials, and one political party leader as of October. On August 9, gunmen shot and killed presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio at a Quito campaign event. The attack occurred 11 days before the first round of snap presidential and legislative elections. Police shot the suspected killer seconds after the event, and he died from his injuries shortly afterwards. Police arrested 13 additional suspects in the killing, and on August 10, a judge ordered pretrial detention for all 13 suspects. Six suspects were found killed in the Litoral prison in Guayaquil on October 6. Another suspect was found dead in the El Inca prison in Quito on October 7. A pretrial hearing date for the remaining six suspects was scheduled for December 19.

On February 26, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador reported two unidentified gunmen killed the confederation's director for international relations and environmental activist, Eduardo Mendua, outside his home in the Amazonian province of Sucumbios. Mendua's death occurred amid confrontations between Indigenous communities and the state-owned oil company Petro Ecuador. According to the Attorney General's Office, three suspects were in custody.

In December 2022, the Guayas Provincial Court sentenced a member of Los Águilas gang to 30 months in prison for his involvement in the August 2022 attack in the Cristo del Consuelo neighborhood in Guayaquil that killed five persons, injured 17 others, and destroyed seven houses.

b. Disappearance

There were no reports of disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities.

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and Other Related Abuses

While the law prohibited torture and similar forms of intimidation and punishment, there were credible reports police officers and prison guards abused suspects and prisoners.

On August 1, the Attorney General's Office initiated criminal proceedings

against five active-duty police officers for the alleged rape of a citizen detained in a Community Watch Unit in Guayaquil on July 30. According to the complaint, two of the accused officers allegedly raped the individual with an object, while the others allegedly sprayed him with pepper spray and hit him in his back and face.

Authorities also were investigating two alleged cases of rape by four active-duty military officers in Cuenca. The sexual assaults allegedly occurred on different dates and against two different women: a second lieutenant and an enlisted soldier. According to the allegations, the first case allegedly occurred in December 2022 inside a military compound, while the second case allegedly occurred in March in a hostel.

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Prison conditions were harsh and life threatening due to gross overcrowding, food shortages, inadequate sanitary conditions, lack of medical care, and gang violence.

Abusive Physical Conditions: Prisons continued to be overcrowded.

According to the government's National Service of Comprehensive Attention to Adults Deprived of Liberty and Adolescent Offenders, the overcrowding rate was 13 percent above designed capacity as of July 21, compared with 8 percent in 2022. The overcrowding rate varied by prison, with some prisons such as the Guayaquil Regional Prison (and the Litoral prison in particular)

significantly overcrowded and others such as the Riobamba Prison operating under capacity.

Access to and quality of food, potable and hot water, heating, sanitation, and medical care were inadequate.

Multiple institutions, government officials, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) reported criminal gangs controlled most prisons. An NGO reported health workers were reluctant to enter the prisons because they feared being attacked. The NGO said gangs monopolized the food supply and distributed meals at their discretion.

Prison officials and human rights organizations agreed most violent deaths in prisons were the result of rivalries among criminal gangs with links to drug cartels. Fighting between drug trafficking gangs in prisons led to 54 violent deaths through August 21. On July 22, a three-day clash between gangs in a Guayas prison left 31 dead, according to the Attorney General's Office.

On September 6, several human rights organizations reported that male inmates entered the women's pavilion in a prison in Quevedo to rape, attack, and torture female inmates in complicity with the prison's authorities. Authorities' responses were pending as of the end of November.

Administration: Authorities sometimes conducted investigations of credible allegations of mistreatment in prisons.

Independent Monitoring: Civil society representatives continued to report restrictions to monitoring by independent NGO observers.

d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

The law prohibited arbitrary arrest and detention and provided for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention in court, but there were reports provincial and local authorities did not always observe these provisions. According to NGOs, illegal detentions continued to occur.

Arrest Procedures and Treatment of Detainees

The law required authorities to issue specific written arrest orders prior to detention, and a judge was required to charge a suspect with a specific criminal offense within 24 hours of arrest. NGOs stated judges frequently did not determine a specific criminal offense, particularly for arrests of protesters. Authorities generally observed the time limit for charging a suspect, although in some provinces initial detention was often considerably longer.

Detainees had a constitutional right to an attorney. Those without financial means to pay for an attorney had the right to request a court-appointed attorney from the Public Defender's Office. Although court-appointed defenders were available, the number of cases and limited time to prepare

for the defense continued to present a disadvantage to defendants using a public defender during trials.

The law entitled detainees to prompt visits by lawyers and family members, but NGOs continued to report delays depending on the circumstances and the willingness of local courts and prison guards to enforce the law.

Pretrial Detention: Corruption and general judicial inefficiency caused trial delays. The length of pretrial detention did not usually exceed the maximum sentence for the alleged crime. A human rights organization reported the misuse of pretrial detention was common throughout the country and led to overcrowding, violence, and insufficient health services in prisons.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

While the constitution provided for an independent judiciary, corruption impaired the judicial process. Legal experts, bar associations, and NGOs reported on the susceptibility of the judiciary to take bribes for favorable decisions and faster resolution of cases. Violence and outside pressure, especially from criminal groups, further compromised judicial independence and impartiality.

Civil society organizations expressed concern regarding judicial independence and pointed to events that, in their judgment, reflected attempts to influence the judiciary or constituted power struggles among

judicial officials that compromised the administration of justice. In February, the National Court of Justice appointed Wilman Teran as head of the Judicial Council. Teran then made a series of decisions that civil society groups characterized as “dubious.” At midnight on February 17, the Judicial Council removed all its provincial directors and designated Teran’s alleged close contacts as directors to form a new majority on the council. Civil society groups claimed this new majority approved questionable resolutions to hire, fire, and reassign judges nationwide. For example, on August 19, in a late-night virtual vote, the council, despite not having a majority present, moved to fire one of its members, Judge Walter Macias. President Lasso, Attorney General Diana Salazar, and the entire National Court of Justice called for the resignation of Teran and other council members. On September 14, a Pichincha judge annulled the council’s decision to remove Macias and ordered his immediate reinstatement as a National Court of Justice judge. Once reinstated, on September 28, Macias called to trial two council members for influence peddling. Both members were subsequently removed from the council.

Media reported criminal groups killed Guayas Province prosecutor Leonardo Palacios on June 1 in Duran. According to the Attorney General’s Office, Palacios had been investigating a homicide. Separately, on June 1, six armed, hooded individuals threatened to kill Attorney General Salazar through a video sent to her personal cell phone.

On July 14, police reported an armed attack on the local offices of the Attorney General's Office in Santo Domingo. One official was injured in the attack. On July 27, the Attorney General's Office announced prosecutors and judicial officials in the coastal provinces of Guayas, Manabi, Esmeraldas, Santo Domingo, and Los Rios would telework for security reasons.

In March, a judge sentenced three individuals to 34 years in prison as coauthors of the May 2022 murder of prosecutor Luz Marina Delgado and her assistant. As of September, the Attorney General's Office continued to investigate the August 2022 killings of prosecutor Federico Estrella and judge Nelson Patricio Yáñez.

According to the Judiciary Council, there was a \$265 million deficit for the administration of justice, including shortfalls in funds necessary to pay salaries of judiciary officials, update infrastructure and technology, and buy office supplies. The council also noted a deficit of 692 judges and 500 prosecutors nationwide, which, according to an NGO, led to high workloads for public servants and delays and potential violations of due process.

Trial Procedures

The law provided for the right to a fair and public trial, and the judiciary generally enforced this right. While defendants had the right to free assistance from an interpreter, some defendants complained the lack of an interpreter at court hearings made preparation of a defense problematic for

non-Spanish speakers, and that the quality of interpreters was poor and caused problems when working with public defenders.

Judges reportedly rendered decisions more quickly or more slowly due to media and political pressure or fear in some cases. There were reported delays of up to one year in scheduling some trials. Prisoners reported lengthy delays in setting dates for preliminary hearings after their cases reached a higher court.

Political Prisoners and Detainees

There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees.

f. Transnational Repression

Not applicable.

g. Property Seizure and Restitution

Not applicable.

h. Arbitrary or Unlawful Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The law prohibited such actions, and there were no reports the government failed to respect these prohibitions.

Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties

a. Freedom of Expression, Including for Members of the Press and Other Media

The constitution provided for freedom of expression, including for members of the press and other media, but laws restricted this right. Civil society organizations reported criminal groups perpetrated widespread violence and harassment against journalists, causing them to self-censor their reporting.

Freedom of Expression: There were significant restrictions on media freedom. Journalists and NGOs said certain politicians and political parties continued to use the “press as enemy” trope and accuse media of being “corrupt” and “liars.” The media watchdog NGO Fundamedios said the government had not made substantial progress on freedom of expression rights, noting both the lack of progress on investigating and prosecuting high-profile past abuses and continuing abuses.

Several journalists and news outlets objected to President Lasso’s speech criticizing the press following a government corruption investigation – spurred by investigative reporting – that allegedly connected him to criminal groups. During a February 14 national broadcast, the president referred to journalists as “mercenaries of news entertainment” and “media terrorists,”

suggesting the journalists were seeking “likes” [on social media] to “continue collecting their pay.”

The law prohibited persons from using “discrediting expressions,” treated as a misdemeanor with a 15- to 30-day detention. There were no reports the government invoked this law to restrict freedom of expression.

Violence and Harassment: Local government authorities and criminal groups committed acts of violence and harassment against journalists. Fundamedios reported 39 acts of violence or harassment against journalists perpetrated by state actors between January and July. Civil society organizations maintained the state did not adequately investigate or prosecute the crimes and demonstrated little effort to halt the aggressions.

Censorship or Content Restrictions for Members of the Press and Other Media, Including Online Media: Fundamedios reported four censorship cases between January and July, three of which were initiated by the state and one by a news outlet. The NGO noted the government did not adequately investigate or prosecute these cases.

According to Fundamedios, the government canceled the bidding process for the allocation of FM radio and broadcast television frequencies, announced in 2020. Civil society organizations had criticized the Agency for the Regulation and Control of Telecommunications-administered bidding process as lacking transparency and allowing two bidders to accumulate a

disproportionate number of frequencies.

Libel/Slander Laws: Libel and slander were criminal offenses under the law, with penalties of up to three years in prison, plus fines. The law assigned responsibility to media owners as well as journalists, who were held liable for opinion pieces or statements by reporters or others, including readers, using their media platforms. Monitoring organizations reported the national government did not prosecute journalists for libel during the year, but they reported three cases in which politicians initiated legal proceedings against journalists.

Civil society organizations reported a judge sentenced *Guayaquil News* journalist and director Guillermo Lizarzaburu and businessman Juan Pablo Paz to two years in prison following a complaint filed by former legislator Pablo Muentes. Muentes accused Lizarzaburu and Paz of using anonymous social media accounts to slander Muentes.

El Universo newspaper cartoonist Xavier Bonilla (whose nom de plume was “Bonil”) faced a libel suit after he published a cartoon allegedly accusing Alembert Vera, president of the Citizen Participation and Social Control Council and previously a lawyer for former President Rafael Correa, of embezzlement and involvement in organized crime. According to Fundamedios, Vera’s father, Gutemberg Vera, filed the libel case against Bonil.

Nongovernmental Impact: Unknown persons not presumed connected with government authorities conducted attacks against journalists during the year. Civil society organizations reported criminal groups perpetrated widespread violence and harassment against journalists. According to Fundamedios, as of July 31, five journalists fled the country following serious death threats from criminal groups. Karol Noroña, a journalist from digital news outlet *GK* who reported on organized crime and prison violence, fled the country on March 24 after receiving death threats. Journalists and civil society organizations reported journalists covering corruption, prison violence, and violence linked to the drug trade often self-censored their reporting due to fear of reprisals from criminal groups.

On March 20, television stations and journalists simultaneously received envelopes containing explosive devices. Unknown individuals sent three envelopes to the newsrooms of the television stations Ecuavisa, Teleamazonas, and TC Television, while the other two were sent to radio station EXA FM and journalist Carlos Vera. Most journalists were unharmed except for Ecuavisa journalist Lenin Artieda, who suffered minor injuries when he inserted into his computer a memory stick that contained an explosive device. The Attorney General's Office opened an investigation into the attacks.

On April 24, the Attorney General's Office reported that a judge sentenced two individuals each to 34 years and six months in prison for the murder of

journalist Gerardo Delgado in August 2022. In February 2022, a Guayas court convicted and sentenced to prison six other individuals for the crime. As of August 25, five of the individuals were appealing the court's decision.

Actions to Expand Freedom of Expression, Including for Members of the Press and Other Media: On August 23, the government issued a decree that defined risk prevention and protection measures for journalists. The decree included new risk prevention measures, such as mapping risks facing journalists, the development of protection protocols, and the creation of support networks. New protection measures included monitoring threats and attacks and security training for journalists.

Internet Freedom

The government did not restrict or disrupt access to the internet or censor online content.

A government regulation required that internet service providers comply with all information requests from the superintendent of telecommunications, allowing access to client Internet Protocol addresses and information without a judicial order. The law held media outlets responsible for online comments from readers if the outlet had no established mechanisms for commenters to register their personal data (including national identification number) or no system to delete offensive comments. The law also prohibited media from using information obtained

from social media unless they verified the author of the information.

As of August 25, the government had not issued regulations for the application of a 2021 law regarding personal data protection and had not appointed a data protection superintendent. Media watchdog groups such as Fundamedios previously had largely praised the law for establishing high standards for data and privacy protection while protecting freedom of expression.

b. Freedoms of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The law provided for the freedoms of peaceful assembly and association, and the government generally respected these rights, although authorities declared four states of exception throughout the year due to rising crime and natural disasters. The related executive decrees included restrictions on freedom of assembly, association, and the inviolability of home and correspondence. Three decrees enabled the government to deploy the armed forces to support police operations.

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

The law provided for freedom of peaceful assembly, and the government generally respected this right. Public rallies required prior government permits, which authorities usually granted.

Human rights organization reported that after a Global Marijuana March in

Guayaquil on May 5, police officers harassed demonstrators and removed them from the street, citing lack of permits. According to a human rights activist, police officers attempted to confiscate a speaker and other equipment from a demonstrator and assaulted other participants with batons and pepper spray.

c. Freedom of Religion

See the Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report* at <https://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/>.

d. Freedom of Movement and the Right to Leave the Country

The law provided for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected these rights.

e. Protection of Refugees

The government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees, returning refugees, or asylum seekers, as well as other persons of concern.

Access to Asylum: The law provided for the granting of asylum or refugee

status, and the government had established a system for providing protection to refugees.

Abuse of Refugees and Asylum Seekers: Migrants and refugees, especially women, children, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) individuals, sometimes experienced gender-based violence and human trafficking, according to UN agencies and local NGOs. Authorities reported an increase in forced labor, sex trafficking, and the forced recruitment of migrants and refugees into criminal activity, such as drug trafficking and robbery, on the northern and southern borders, particularly by domestic criminal groups and transnational criminal organizations that also operated in Colombia. Forced recruitment increasingly took place in schools and targeted young persons, especially young men and adolescents. Continued migrant and refugee arrivals at irregular crossings, due to visa requirements for Venezuelan nationals; increasing xenophobia; and a lack of local and municipal government coordination or capacity to address the protection of particularly vulnerable groups complicated the government's ability to address and prevent abuses against migrants and refugees. Migrants reported a lack of trust, significant corruption, and xenophobia in public institutions, including within police and the Attorney General's Office, that made it difficult to report abuse, especially gender-based violence and human trafficking.

Migrants faced abuses such as overtime work without due pay, especially in

the growing digital platform sector. According to a union, 80 percent of digital platform workers were migrants.

Freedom of Movement: With the end of the special protocol in August for registering and regularizing unaccompanied minor migrants, they risked being institutionalized.

Access to Basic Services: The law provided for protection and access to health care, education, and other services to all individuals irrespective of their migration status. Nonetheless, some Venezuelan migrant and refugee children remained out of the school system, according to official government statistics. According to NGOs, barriers to the enrollment and retention of refugee and migrant children in school included a lack of information regarding the right to access to education, hidden costs of schooling such as uniforms, lack of classroom space, and in some instances xenophobic attitudes towards Venezuelans, including discrimination and arbitrary documentation requirements for school enrollment.

According to UN agencies and NGOs, refugees encountered discrimination in accessing employment and housing. Recognized refugees received national identification cards intended to facilitate access to education, employment, banking, and other public services; however, refugees and migrants reported that at times employers did not recognize government-issued documents that established their right to work, and international organizations reported that registration documents were often not

sufficient to access bank accounts in practice. Further, international organizations and NGO partners reported the public health system had “totally collapsed.” A strained public health system complicated access to health care for migrants and refugees with serious and chronic illnesses, as well as gender-based violence survivors, LGBTQI+ migrants, and sex workers seeking access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Durable Solutions: The government accepted refugees for resettlement and offered naturalization to refugees but recognized very small numbers of Venezuelan refugees. Colombian nationals constituted 96 percent of all recognized refugees. Discrimination and limited access to formal employment and housing affected refugees’ ability to integrate into the local community.

Temporary Protection: Registration for an estimated 350,000 Venezuelans who entered the country irregularly opened on February 16. Previously, in September 2022, the Ministry of Interior opened the registration process to an estimated 120,000 Venezuelan migrants who had entered the country regularly, as well as all unaccompanied minors, regardless of nationality or migration status. Registration for an estimated 90,000 non-Venezuelans who entered the country regularly opened in November 2022. Registration produced a certificate that acted as a temporary residence permit and protected the holder from deportation on migration-related grounds or from incurring migration-related fines while the regularization process was

underway. On August 31, registration closed for all groups, after more than 200,000 migrants had completed registration. Through April 2024, registered individuals could request a temporary residency visa from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As part of the larger regularization initiative, the Ministry of Social and Economic Inclusion implemented a special procedure to register and regularize 776 unaccompanied minors.

Section 3. Freedom to Participate in the Political

Process

The law provided citizens the ability to choose their government in free and fair periodic elections held by secret ballot and based on universal and equal suffrage.

Elections and Political Participation

Abuses or Irregularities in Recent Elections: National elections were widely reported to be fair and free of abuses and irregularities.

Participation of Women and Members of Marginalized or Vulnerable

Groups: Social media harassment of women politicians and candidates continued. The NGO Participación Ciudadana (Citizen Participation) found 331 derogatory tweets against 38 women in politics and government in a study conducted between January 3 and February 2, which coincided with the official electoral campaign period leading up to the February 5 local and

provincial elections. According to the study, derogatory tweets contained discriminatory messaging dealing with the perceived roles of women in society.

Section 4. Corruption in Government

The law provided criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implemented the law effectively. There were numerous reports of government corruption throughout the year.

Corruption: The government launched or continued multiple investigations, judicial proceedings, and legislative audits of officials accused of corruption related to state contracts and commercial endeavors that reached the highest levels of government. In December 2022, President Lasso inaugurated the country's first specialized court for corruption and organized crime. The court began hearing cases early in the year and won its first convictions in July and August.

On May 25, judge Banny Molina, who granted a habeas corpus that many considered legally dubious to former Vice President Jorge Glas (convicted on corruption charges in August 2022), was charged with unlawful usurpation of power and sentenced to one year in prison. In November 2022, a judge from Santo Domingo Province approved an early release for time served for Glas. Emerson Curipallo, a judge from Guayas Province, restored Glas's political rights on June 8, despite the law stipulating that Glas's political

rights could be restored only upon completion of his prison sentence. The Electoral Dispute Tribunal fined Curipallo \$31,500, removed his political rights, and dismissed him from office on August 24 for interfering in the electoral process.

On February 22, the Attorney General's Office announced it had filed bribery-related charges against former President Lenin Moreno and 37 others related to the construction of the controversial Chinese government-backed Coca Codo Sinclair dam and hydroelectric plant. Investigations began in 2019, after journalists exposed an offshore Panamanian company with links to Moreno and dam builder Sinohydro's Ecuadorian lobbyist. The preliminary hearing took place on March 3, and the Attorney General's Office included three new suspects in the case. The Solicitor General's Office charged 18 of the 37 persons originally accused by the Attorney General's Office in June. The case continued as of November 15.

For additional information about corruption in the country, please see the Department of State's *Investment Climate Statement* for Ecuador and the Department of State's *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, which includes information on financial crimes.

Section 5. Governmental Posture Towards International and Nongovernmental Monitoring and

Investigation of Alleged Abuses of Human Rights

A number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction to monitor or investigate human rights conditions or cases and publish their findings. Government officials were often cooperative and responsive to the views of these groups.

A human rights organization reported cases in which the government denied or was reluctant to provide updated information to local human rights NGOs who were conducting investigations.

Retribution Against Human Rights Defenders: A human rights organization reported continuous harassment and threats to community-based human rights defenders and their families. As a result, some human rights activists were forcibly displaced from their communities.

Government Human Rights Bodies: The Ombudsman's Office was an administratively and financially independent body focused on human rights and subordinate to the Transparency and Social Control branch of government. Some human rights groups viewed the Ombudsman's Office as lacking sufficient initiative and experience to deal effectively with critical human rights cases.

Section 6. Discrimination and Societal Abuses

Women

Rape and Domestic Violence: The law criminalized rape of men and women, including spousal and intimate partner rape and other forms of domestic and sexual violence. Rape was punishable with penalties of up to 22 years in prison. The law did not specify so-called corrective rape of LGBTQI+ individuals. The penalty for rape where death occurred was 22 to 26 years' imprisonment. Domestic violence was punishable with penalties ranging from four days to seven years in prison and a substantial fine for "damages, pain, and suffering," depending on the severity of the crime. The government did not enforce the law effectively.

According to local experts, reporting rapes and other forms of violence continued to be a traumatic and revictimizing process, particularly for girls. For example, a rape survivor had to file a complaint at the Attorney General's Office and submit to gynecological evaluations (akin to forensic exams designed) administered by medical experts. Many individuals did not report cases of rape and sexual assault due to fear of retribution from the perpetrator and social stigma. Women living in rural areas of the country encountered further difficulties reporting assaults, due to the limited presence of government offices in their towns.

The law provided for reparations to survivors of gender-based violence. The

law defined rape, including spousal rape or incest, forced prostitution, sexual harassment, and other analogous practices, as forms of sexual violence. It also entitled survivors to immediate protective measures designed to prevent or stop additional violence, such as police surveillance, placement in shelters, and assistance programs for the survivor and family. These measures were generally enforced.

According to human rights organizations, survivors were generally reluctant to press domestic violence charges. Judges lacked specialized training for dealing with gender-based violence, and the court system was insufficiently staffed to deal with the caseload.

Other Forms of Gender-based Violence or Harassment: The law provided for penalties of one to five years in prison for sexual harassment. The law mandated that judges prohibit contact between the aggressor and the survivor to prevent revictimization and intimidation, and the law was generally enforced. Despite the legal prohibition of sexual harassment and government implementation of the law, women's rights organizations said survivors tended not to report alleged harassment and that harassment remained common in public spaces, including on social media.

In November 2022, the government elevated the Secretariat of Human Rights to a ministry, renamed the Ministry of Women and Human Rights. Civil society and international organizations reported slow progress in government efforts to prevent femicides and implement the Unified

Registry of Violence Against Women, as stipulated by law.

As of August 23, the Attorney General's Office reported 64 femicides, on track to exceed the 88 total femicides in 2022. The Attorney General's Office also reported the judiciary had sentenced individuals involved in 13 of the 88 femicide cases in 2022.

Police Lieutenant Colonel German Caceres, sought for allegedly killing his spouse in September 2022, was captured by Colombian police in December 2022. Caceres confessed to the crime of femicide, and on May 25, a judge sentenced him to 34 years and eight months in prison. The judge also ordered Caceres to pay \$260,000 in compensation to the victim's family.

Discrimination: The constitution afforded women the same legal status and rights as men. Nevertheless, discrimination against women was prevalent, particularly with respect to economic opportunities for older women and for those in the lower economic strata. Women continued to face wage disparities compared with men. NGOs said women also faced discrimination in job recruitment, housing access, and some judicial proceedings, namely, in reporting and filing charges in cases of alleged sexual abuse.

According to union leaders, employers continued to assign women heavier workloads, forcing them to "clean up" workstations afterhours, especially in the agricultural sector. A workers' association alleged this also occurred in a textile factory where women regularly worked overtime and did not receive

minimum wage. Official statistics showed that in July, the average monthly income for an employed man was 22 percent higher than for an employed woman.

On January 10, the National Assembly approved a “violet economy law” to promote gender equality in the labor market. The law mandated that men and women in the public and private sectors receive equal pay; that companies with three or more members on their boards of directors ensure that at least one of them be a woman; that protocols exist to prevent sexual harassment and deal promptly and fairly with complaints; and that companies refrain from asking discriminatory questions during selection processes or request different or additional documents to verify women’s competencies. The law also strengthened the labor inspection system to adequately address gender issues. Private companies were to receive tax incentives when creating jobs for women.

On May 12, the legislature passed the “human care law,” which created and extended workers’ paid and unpaid leave for the birth of a child. The law extended nursing leave by three months, added five days of paternal leave after the baby was born, and granted paid leave to attend medical checkups for both parents during pregnancy, labor, and birth. The law provided for permanent lactation rooms in offices with 50 or more women of childbearing age and 20-minute breaks every two hours to use the rooms. At the worker’s request, employers were required to provide child care

onsite or pay for offsite child care for children under five years of age.

Reproductive Rights: There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities.

Some women's rights activists complained that a lack of comprehensive sex education limited individuals' ability to manage their reproductive health and that ineffective distribution of birth control reduced access to contraception. Emergency contraception was available as part of methods for family planning; however, conservative groups' stance against contraceptive use and social stigma, including potential social ostracization, discouraged women from seeking family planning services.

The government provided access to sexual and reproductive health services for survivors of sexual violence. Emergency contraception and postexposure prophylaxis was available as part of clinical management of rape.

A 2019 study found income status affected equity in sexual and reproductive health access and outcomes, with low income and rural individuals having significantly less access. UN agencies reported that vulnerable populations, including Afro-Ecuadorians, Indigenous groups, rural inhabitants, LGBTQI+ individuals, persons with disabilities, HIV-positive persons, and migrants, faced limited access and discrimination regarding the provision of reproductive health services. Adolescents also encountered barriers to access reproductive health services.

International organizations said public hospitals continued to face problems when stocking and restocking emergency contraception materials nationwide. Organizations reported that despite government efforts to make contraception materials available, the lack of supply and demand studies to accurately calculate quantities, delays in delivering material from central warehouses to local hospitals, the lack of updated population statistics, and unpredictable migration flows complicated these efforts.

While the law prohibited discrimination against girls who become mothers, NGOs reported some faced discrimination and subsequently left school. A lack of resources also resulted in young mothers discontinuing their education to pursue work.

Following a 2020 Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruling that held the state accountable for failing to protect the rights of a girl who was harassed and sexually abused by her school's vice rector, which led to her suicide, the Ministry of Education launched the National Strategy for Comprehensive Sex Education on August 14. Although several international and civil society organizations applauded the initiative, they reported that implementation remained the initiative's biggest problem.

Systemic Racial or Ethnic Violence and Discrimination

The constitution declared the state to be plurinational and affirmed the principle of nonviolence and nondiscrimination by recognizing the rights of

Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian, and Montubio (an independent ethnic group of persons with a mixture of Afro-Ecuadorian, Indigenous, and Spanish ancestry) communities. It also mandated affirmative action policies to provide for the representation of minorities. NGOs and civil society representatives said those provisions were not effectively enforced.

Citing 2021 official data, media reported Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian, and Montubio populations experienced the highest poverty rates in the country. Among those populations, the most affected were Indigenous children, followed by Montubio girls.

Afro-Ecuadorians, who accounted for approximately 4.8 percent of the population according to the most recent census (2022), suffered pervasive discrimination, particularly regarding educational and economic opportunity. Afro-Ecuadorian organizations noted that despite the absence of official discrimination, societal discrimination and stereotyping in media continued to result in barriers to employment, education, and housing. A national gender survey published in 2019 found Afro-Ecuadorian women were particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence and harassment based on racial, gender, and sexual stereotypes.

An Afro-Ecuadorian rights NGO reported media discriminated against Afro-Ecuadorians. Local human rights NGO Regional Human Rights Advisory Foundation reported that while conducting an operation, military personnel approached a young Afro-Ecuadorian on May 29 in Quito when he was

walking home after school. A news outlet was broadcasting the operation live, and journalists misconstrued the boy's presence and described him as an alleged criminal. A local human rights group provided legal assistance to the family and filed an injunction on June 12, arguing the journalists had violated his right to equality, nondiscrimination, identity, and good name, and demanding the journalists clear his name. On July 7, a judge rejected the injunction.

Afro-Ecuadorians reported employers often profiled them based on their job application photographs and racial stereotypes.

Indigenous and LGBTQI+ individuals as well as persons with disabilities also experienced employment discrimination.

Indigenous Peoples

There were isolated reports of restrictions on Indigenous persons and their institutions in decisions affecting their property or traditional ways of life.

The law provided Indigenous persons the same civil and political rights as other citizens. The constitution recognized Kichwa and Shuar as “official languages of intercultural relations.” The constitution obligated the state to consult local communities and Indigenous persons prior to initiation of projects on their lands through a process that was free, informed, and culturally appropriate (FPIC), although Indigenous peoples’ organizations noted public- and private-sector actors often ignored this process. In 2008,

Indigenous leaders began pressing the government to formally consult its communities affected by extractive activities, but the government had yet to pass a national-level community consultation law.

The constitution allowed Indigenous persons to participate in the economic benefits that natural resource extraction projects brought and to receive compensation for any damages that resulted. In the case of environmental damage, the law mandated immediate corrective government action and full restitution from the responsible company, although some Indigenous organizations asserted a lack of consultation and remedial action. The law recognized the rights of Indigenous communities to hold property communally, although the titling process remained incomplete in parts of the country.

On May 31, the government reformed the law that regulated the environmental consultation process (different from FPIC) required prior to granting environmental licenses for projects that impacted the environment within a community. The process consisted of informing involved communities regarding the details of extraction projects that would impact the environment (but not necessarily obtaining consent from those communities).

Human rights organizations reported violent confrontations on July 14 between antimining activists and police in Las Naves, Bolivar Province, during an information session for a mining project. The clashes resulted in

two arrests and 10 individuals injured. Antimining activists alleged the government deployed a disproportionate police and military force to the area to safeguard the process and repress protesters. The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador filed a lawsuit questioning the reform's constitutionality. The Constitutional Court accepted the case on August 1, which suspended the application of the new regulation, halting 178 key infrastructure, mining, renewable, and oil and gas projects for an unspecified amount of time.

Children

Birth Registration: According to UNICEF, registration of children with teenage mothers and fathers continued to pose a problem for the government, since the law required underage parents be accompanied by an adult to register their children. While the law prohibited schools from requesting civil registration documents for enrollment, some (mostly public) schools continued to require them. Other government services, including welfare payments and free primary health care, required some form of identification. Migrant children were particularly affected by this requirement, which prevented adequate access to these services.

Child Abuse: The law criminalized child abuse and provided penalties of 30 days to 26 years in prison, depending on the severity of the abuse. The government enforced the law effectively.

Child, Early, and Forced Marriage: The legal marriage age was 18. There were reports of early and forced marriage in rural and poor areas. The government did not enforce the law effectively.

According to a study by the Planning and Social Studies Center, Plan International, the UN Population Fund, and UNICEF, 27 percent of women ages 18-49 married or entered a domestic partnership before they turned 18. The study showed girls belonging to the poorest quintile were four times more likely to marry by age 18 compared with girls in the richest quintile.

Sexual Exploitation of Children: The law prohibited the sale, grooming, or use of children for commercial sexual exploitation, including sex trafficking, sexual exploitation of children, and child pornography, with penalties of 22 to 26 years' imprisonment. The government enforced the law effectively. The penalty for human trafficking, including child sex trafficking, was 13 to 16 years in prison. Authorities did not criminalize all forms of child sex trafficking. The criminal code required proof of force, fraud, or coercion as essential elements of a trafficking crime, neglecting to recognize that anyone younger than age 18 was unable to provide informed consent. The age of consent was 14.

Antisemitism

There was a small Jewish community, including an estimated 500 individuals

in Quito, 50 individuals in Guayaquil, and an unspecified number of individuals elsewhere in the country. The Jewish community reported the vandalization of an external wall of the Jewish cemetery in Quito with Nazi symbols on January 27. The community painted over the wall and decided not to take legal action against the aggressors.

Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Acts of Violence, Criminalization, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Expression, or Sex Characteristics

Criminalization: No laws criminalized same-sex conduct or gender identity or expression.

Violence and Harassment: The NGO Silueta X reported 25 killings of LGBTQI+ individuals as of November 20. The killings were allegedly perpetrated by nonstate actors. LGBTQI+ organizations claimed government institutions in general failed to properly register and categorize violent acts against the LGBTQI+ community, leading to underreporting. LGBTQI+ groups claimed police and prosecutors did not thoroughly investigate deaths of LGBTQI+ individuals, including when there was

suspicion that the killing was motivated by anti-LGBTQI+ bias. The NGO Fundación Ecuatoriana Equidad (Ecuadorian Equality Foundation), a sexual health and LGBTQI+ advocacy group, cited police and prosecutors' lax attitude and the lack of technical capacity and knowledge regarding LGBTQI+ individuals to explain insufficient investigations into crimes committed against LGBTQI+ persons.

The law also prohibited hate crimes, but LGBTQI+ activists asserted that since the legal codification of hate crimes in 2008, there had been no hate crime convictions for crimes against LGBTQI+ persons.

Discrimination: The constitution included the principle of nondiscrimination with respect to gender identity or sexual orientation. The law prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. LGBTQI+ persons continued to suffer discrimination from both public and private entities, particularly in education, employment, and access to health care. LGBTQI+ organizations reported transgender persons suffered more discrimination because they were more visible. The law recognized LGBTQI+ couples but did not allow same-sex adoption. For this reason, the law did not grant LGBTQI+ couples rights equal to rights of other persons.

LGBTQI+ persons continued to report the government sometimes denied them equal access to formal education. Fundación Ecuatoriana Equidad indicated the government did not comprehensively apply policy provisions to prevent and combat discrimination. LGBTQI+ students, particularly

transgender students, sometimes were discouraged from attending classes and were more susceptible to bullying in schools. Human rights activists argued the Ministry of Education and school administrators were slow to respond to complaints regarding harassment, discrimination, or abuse against LGBTQI+ persons.

LGBTQI+ persons involved in the commercial sex trade reported abusive situations, extortion, and mistreatment by security forces. In March, sex workers in Quito filed an unprecedented injunction against Quito's then Mayor Santiago Guarderas, who proposed to relocate them outside the city's historic center to remote locations, which they perceived would have been detrimental for their work. Local judges initially ruled in their favor, and as of August 3, the plaintiffs were awaiting the municipality's decision whether to appeal the ruling. According to a spokesperson for the plaintiffs, transgender sex workers would be among those most affected by a possible relocation.

Availability of Legal Gender Recognition: The law prohibited changing gender on identity documents for LGBTQI+ persons younger than 18, even with parental consent. As of August 2, a decision remained pending in a case before the Constitutional Court to determine the age at which transgender underage individuals could change their identity information.

In May 2022, the Constitutional Court ruled the Office of the Civil Registry could change an individual's sex on record at the person's request without

requesting any additional documents. An LGBTQI+ organization reported that despite the ruling, there were cases in which the Office of the Civil Registry denied individuals their right to change their sex on record. The same organization also noted migrants were more vulnerable to the denial of this right. The court also ordered the National Assembly to “discuss and approve a bill to regulate the procedure for changing the sex of transgender persons.” As of October, no bill had been approved.

Involuntary or Coercive Medical or Psychological Practices: An LGBTQI+ organization reported the existence of clandestine private treatment centers confining LGBTQI+ persons against their will to “cure” or “dehomosexualize” them despite the illegality of such treatment. LGBTQI+ organizations reported the practice persisted under the guise of religious or “wellness” retreats or drug addiction treatment centers. According to one LGBTQI+ organization, the government, with support from civil society organizations, had some success in identifying and closing such institutions. Another LGBTQI+ organization claimed the Attorney General’s Office had not taken any action against the individuals who ran these establishments. There were no reports medically unnecessary and irreversible “normalization” surgeries were performed on children or on nonconsenting adult intersex persons.

According to human rights NGO Diálogo Diverso (Diverse Dialogue), many individuals confined to the “clinics” were afraid to report involuntary or

coercive practices because in most cases their family members forced them into the “treatments.” The NGO reported that in 2022, 19 percent of young LGBTQI+ individuals reported being forced to receive “treatment” to change their gender identity or sexual orientation. LGBTQI+ organizations also reported relatives took LGBTQI+ persons to neighboring countries, where clinics reportedly used violent treatments, including rape, to attempt to change LGBTQI+ persons’ sexual orientation. With support from civil society groups, the government established an interagency roundtable on May 10 to provide effective and coordinated responses to the dangers posed by these so-called clinics.

Restrictions of Freedom of Expression, Association, or Peaceful Assembly:

In June, Guayaquil mayor Aquiles Álvarez did not approve a permit to allow the annual pride parade to pass through one of the city’s main avenues as it had since 2000, claiming it would cause “great impact to traffic.” Instead, the municipality offered secondary roads for the parade, which civil society organizations interpreted as a way of “hiding” LGBTQI+ individuals. Several LGBTQI+ organizations filed an injunction that led to a judge reversing the mayor’s decision. Álvarez allowed the parade to take place as long as there was not any “disorderly conduct, no nudity, and no mockery.”

Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibited discrimination against persons with physical, sensory,

intellectual, and mental disabilities. The law stipulated persons with disabilities had the right to health care and health insurance; to employment and job security; to education, including programs for scholarships and student loans; and to access buildings, transport, and communications. The government did not fully enforce the law.

By law, children with disabilities could attend specialized schools, but all educational establishments were required to accommodate students with disabilities. An advocacy NGO for persons with disabilities said nonspecialized institutions lacked the capacity and staff to accommodate the range of disabilities. The NGO said children with disabilities attended primary and secondary education at similar rates to other children, but they attended higher education at lower rates due to a lack of access to quality support and accessible infrastructure. According to the NGO, the lack of interagency coordination especially in the public sector hampered the possibility for persons with disabilities to transit smoothly from high school to universities or technical institutions and then to an independent life.

The law required that 4 percent of employees in all public and private enterprises with more than 25 employees be persons with disabilities, and it gave the Ombudsman's Office responsibility for following up on alleged violations of the rights of persons with disabilities, stipulating fines and punishments for lack of compliance. As of 2021, approximately one-half of enterprises complied with the law.

Other Societal Violence or Discrimination

Fundación Ecuatoriana Equidad said that although HIV-positive individuals were registered with the social security system, diagnosis, follow-up testing, and treatment continued to be inadequate due to mistreatment toward patients. The NGO said most HIV-positive individuals abandoned treatment due to discrimination from health-care providers.

Although Ministry of Labor regulations prohibited discrimination against hiring HIV-positive individuals and banned HIV tests as entry requirements for a job, LGBTQI+ organizations argued many employers continued requiring tests.

Section 7. Worker Rights

a. Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining

The law, with exceptions, provided certain workers the right to form and join trade unions of their choice, to bargain collectively, and to strike. The law required a minimum of 30 workers for the creation of an association, work committee, or labor union, regardless of the total number of employees in the workplace. The law did not allow foreign citizens to serve as trade union officers.

The law prohibited the dismissal of union members from the moment a union notified the labor inspector of its general assembly. Employers were not required to reinstate workers fired for union activity but were required to pay such workers compensation and a fine of one year's annual salary for everyone wrongfully dismissed. Individual workers still employed could take complaints against employers to the Labor Inspection Office. Individuals no longer employed could take their complaints to courts charged with protecting labor rights. While courts upheld the right for sectoral unions to negotiate, the government failed to issue implementing regulations, thus preventing negotiations.

Unions could take complaints to a tripartite arbitration board established to hear their complaints. Despite the legal obligation to begin mediation within 48 hours of issuing a complaint, these procedures often were subject to lengthy delays because the Ministry of Labor lacked the skills and staff to address all arbitration requests and appeals. All private employers with unionized employees were legally required to negotiate collectively when the union so requested.

Ministerial resolutions allowed for the use of certain types of short-term or outsourcing labor contracts, with specific provisions for the flower, palm, fishing, livestock, and construction sectors. Unions alleged contracts could be used to undermine the right to organize. For example, employers could refuse to renew a short-term or temporary contract to a worker who was

attempting to organize a union, or they could outsource workers to prevent collective bargaining.

The right for workers to organize at a sectoral level was recognized by the courts but was not always implemented. In 2021, a provincial court ordered that the Ministry of Labor recognize the Trade Union Association of Agricultural Banana Workers and Peasants as a sector-wide union for banana workers, and the court tasked the Ombudsman's Office with monitoring the decision's implementation. This decision followed requests by the International Labor Organization to permit sector-wide union organizing in compliance with international labor standards.

The law provided for the right of private-sector employees to strike and conduct three-day solidarity strikes or boycotts on behalf of employees in other industries but only after multiple mandatory steps had been taken. The law established that before most strikes, collective labor disputes had to be referred to courts of conciliation and arbitration.

The law required a 10- to 20-day "cooling-off" period from the time a strike was declared before it could take effect. During this time, workers and employers had to agree on how many workers were needed to ensure a minimum level of service; at least 20 percent of the workforce had to continue to work to provide essential services. The law provided the employer could contract substitute personnel only when striking workers refused to send the number of workers required to provide the minimum

necessary services. Contracting substitute personnel was effectively impossible, however, as the law did not provide for time-limited, seasonal, hourly, or part-time contracts.

The law prohibited formation of unions and restricted the right to collective bargaining and striking of public-sector workers in a long list of “strategic sectors,” including environmental sanitation, education, justice, social security, electrical energy, hydrocarbon production, fuel processing, transport and distribution, public transportation, and postal service and telecommunications, which exceeded the International Labor Organization standard for essential services. Workers in these sectors attempting to strike could face charges with penalties of two to five years’ imprisonment. The government effectively enforced the law on “strategic sectors.”

All unions in the public sector fell under the Confederation of Public Servants. Although most public-sector workers also maintained membership in labor-sector associations, the law did not allow such associations to bargain collectively or to strike. The law specified that only the private sector could engage in collective bargaining.

The government did not effectively enforce all applicable law. Penalties were commensurate with those for other laws involving denial of civil rights, such as discrimination. Penalties were rarely applied against violators.

Employers did not always respect freedom of association and collective

bargaining, and labor rights advocacy groups said that influential business interests tied to local officials sometimes used criminal proceedings to restrict workers' right to unionize. Unions reported the Ministry of Labor delayed unions' requests to update their boards of directors, which led to delayed registration. Labor unions and associations reported difficulties and delays in registering unions in the ministry due to excessive and ever-changing requirements – sometimes not stated in the regulations – and ministry staff shortages.

There were several cases in which employers fired leaders of new unions while the unions were awaiting ministry registration. Even if a court supported a union's registration efforts, dismissed leaders were entitled only to compensation, not reinstatement, which undermined the union's ability to form. In addition, dismissed union leaders could not turn to the Ministry of Labor but had to go through the courts.

Independent union leaders alleged there were unions controlled by the government that received preferential treatment in administrative processes as well as invitations to roundtables to discuss labor policies.

b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

c. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment

See the Department of Labor's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/findings/>.

d. Discrimination (see section 6)

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

Wage and Hour Laws: The law provided for a minimum monthly wage, which was above the poverty income level. The law limited the standard work period to 40 hours a week, eight hours a day, with two consecutive days of rest per week. Minors were limited to six hours a day and could work only one additional hour a day with premium pay. Overtime was limited to no more than four hours a day and a total of 12 hours a week. Mandatory overtime was prohibited. The law mandated prison terms for employers who did not register domestic workers with the Social Security Administration.

The law allowed employers and employees to enter into force majeure agreements, although the dismissal of an employee was permitted only if the business ceased operations permanently. The law also permitted employers to reduce working hours and salaries by up to 50 and 45 percent, respectively, by signing "emergency contracts" with their employees to

prevent job losses. Citing government data, media reported that as of June 2022, companies had enrolled 111,826 workers under “emergency contracts”; most were in the agriculture, manufacturing, and trade sectors. Unions and labor organizations said the law enabled precarious work conditions, reduced wages below the minimum wage, and allowed unfair dismissals without due compensation because of employers’ leverage over employees. In 2021, the Constitutional Court declared the force majeure provision unconstitutional, arguing it was “incompatible with the right to legal certainty recognized in the constitution.” In June 2022, the National Assembly approved a partial repeal of the law, but the president vetoed the repeal in July 2022, which prevented the legislature from addressing it for a one-year period. Labor unions filed a lawsuit with the Constitutional Court the same month challenging other provisions in the law. The law remained in effect.

Labor leaders and NGOs said there were no specific sectors with a concentration of alleged violations of wage, hour, or overtime laws. They reported the number of complaints against public and private companies in the service, agricultural, and manufacturing sectors, however, was rising because of perceived unfair dismissals, mostly under “emergency contracts” as provided in the law. They stated women and young workers were sometimes vulnerable to wage exploitation in the informal sector, and that domestic and service-sector workers sometimes had to accept conditions including unpaid or underpaid overtime.

Occupational Safety and Health: The law provided for the health and safety of workers and outlined occupational safety and health (OSH) standards, which were appropriate for the country's main industries. Authorities could conduct labor inspections of formal workplaces either by appointment, after a worker complaint, or through unannounced visits. If a worker requested an inspection and a Ministry of Labor inspector confirmed a workplace hazard, the inspector then could close the workplace. Labor inspections generally occurred because of complaints, not as a preventive measure. In some cases, violations were remedied, but other cases were subjected to legal challenges that delayed changes for months.

Workers in the formal sector could generally remove themselves from situations that endangered health or safety without jeopardy to their employment, and authorities effectively protected employees in this situation. Labor representatives from the agricultural sector said they registered cases in which employers forced workers to return to plantations shortly after fumigations took place, risking illness or bodily harm.

Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement: The Ministry of Labor was responsible for enforcement of wage, hour, and OSH laws. The government did not effectively enforce the laws. Inspectors had the authority to make unannounced inspections. The ministry issued fines for wage and hour law and OSH violations. Penalties were commensurate with those for similar crimes, such as fraud or negligence, but were rarely applied to violators.

The ministry had an insufficient number of inspectors to ensure compliance.

The law singled out the health and safety of miners, but the government did not enforce safety rules in informal, often illegal, small-scale mines (frequently linked to local community leaders and criminal groups), which made up the vast majority of mining enterprises. Migrants and refugees were particularly vulnerable to hazardous and exploitative working conditions. According to media and labor associations, local organizations reported complaints of Venezuelans receiving below the minimum wage, particularly in the informal sector. Gig workers reported conditions that did not follow wage, hour, and safety laws.

The informal sector employed 55 percent of the working population as of July. The government did not enforce applicable labor laws in this sector. Wage, hour, and OSH regulations and standards did not apply to workers in the informal sector.

Exhibit 4

World Report 2026: Ecuador | Human Rights Watch

[hrw.org/world-report/2026/country-chapters/ecuador](https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2026/country-chapters/ecuador)

January 12, 2026

Ecuador

Ecuador continues to face high levels of violence, driven by organized crime. President Daniel Noboa's security response has failed to curb violence and has led to increased reports of human rights violations.

The government has advanced laws and measures that endanger rights, undermine the independence and security of Constitutional Court judges, and threaten constitutional safeguards.

Longstanding structural problems, including limited access to health care and employment, remain largely unaddressed.

Ecuador [was elected](#) to the UN Human Rights Council for the 2026-2028 term.

Violence and Organized Crime

After declining in 2024, homicides increased sharply in 2025, by about 40 percent by September according to the [Ministry of Interior](#), bringing Ecuador close to its [highest homicide rate](#) ever.

Between January and July 2025, the Attorney General's Office [recorded](#) 9,522 extortion complaints, down 40 percent from 2024. Kidnapping reports declined slightly compared to 2024 but remained at high levels.

[Organized crime groups have fragmented](#), giving rise to new groups. According to the [Armed Conflict Location & Event Data](#) monitor, the number of identifiable gangs increased 54 percent between 2023 and 2024.

"Internal Armed Conflict" and Human Rights Violations

Since January 2024, the government [has repeatedly invoked](#) the existence of an "internal armed conflict" in the country, which the Constitutional Court has [called into question](#), to justify loosening human rights protections in its fight against crime.

The government's response to organized crime has led to [serious human rights violations](#) by security forces, including [extrajudicial killings](#), [enforced disappearances](#), arbitrary arrests, and ill-treatment. On October 8, a judge [sent](#) 17 military officers to trial for the alleged enforced disappearance of four children unlawfully detained in December 2024 in Guayaquil and later found dead.

In June 2025, the Assembly passed laws granting the president broad powers to [declare](#) an "armed conflict," [dispense](#) with crucial human rights protections, and expand [intelligence gathering](#). The Constitutional Court [struck](#) some of them down.

Democratic Institutions and the Rule of Law

Democratic institutions remained fragile, plagued by impunity for abuses and by allegations of corruption.

Judges and prosecutors often [lack](#) basic tools and security to investigate organized crime groups. As of October, the Observatory of Rights and Justice had [registered](#) 10 attacks against the judiciary in 2025, including assassination attempts and killings of judges and prosecutors.

The government organized [demonstrations](#) against the Constitutional Court and senior officials called its judges "[enemies of the people](#)." The [UN special rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers](#), the [UN high commissioner for human rights](#), and [the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights](#) expressed concern regarding threats to the independence and security of the judges.

In September, President Noboa [issued](#) a decree establishing a referendum to convene a Constituent Assembly to draft a new Constitution. He attempted to bypass the Constitutional Court's review of the decree, as required under the Constitution, but electoral authorities ultimately referred the situation to the court. The court [approved](#) the referendum.

On November 16, Ecuadorians [voted down](#) the referendum proposals that included allowing the government to sign agreements to host foreign military bases and beginning a process to draft a new constitution.

Prison Conditions

Since January 2024, the military has overseen several prisons. As of August 2025, soldiers reportedly [remained](#) in 11 of the country's 34 facilities. Since the deployment of soldiers to prisons, monitors have reported instances of corruption, incommunicado detention, physical abuse, and obstruction of medical care.

[Media outlets](#) and [human rights groups](#) reported that tuberculosis killed dozens of detainees during 2025, notably during an outbreak in a Guayaquil prison.

More than 500 detainees [have been killed](#) in violent confrontations inside prisons since 2021. As of November, prison massacres in [Machala and Esmeraldas](#) left around 60 dead and others injured.

Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

As of June, 24 percent of Ecuadorians earned incomes below the nationally defined [poverty](#) line (US\$92 per month) and 10.4 percent were experiencing "extreme poverty" (monthly income below \$52), with rates much higher in rural areas (42 and 25 percent, respectively). The [unemployment rate](#) was just 3.9 percent, but 52.6 percent of workers were in the informal sector.

Almost [14 percent](#) of Ecuadorians face undernourishment due to insufficient food consumption, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

The public healthcare system faces a [severe crisis](#), including chronic shortages of medicines and food. In September, a patient advocacy group for people requiring dialysis [warned](#) that a clinic in Quito serving hundreds of patients would soon stop providing dialysis "due to the failure of the State to pay."

Children's Rights

Between 2014 and April 2025, the Ministry of Education [received reports](#) that 8,378 children suffered school-related sexual violence committed by teachers, students, and other school staff. Government measures to address these abuses have [not progressed](#) at the scale and pace needed.

Rising violence by organized crime groups has affected children, with 504 [homicides of children](#) aged 10 to 19 between January and June 2025, a 68 percent rise from 2024. Organized crime groups [recruit](#) children to engage in various [roles](#); some are sexually exploited.

In June, President Noboa officially [declared](#) that preventing and eradicating the recruitment and use of children by non-state actors was a “national priority.” He ordered the creation of an interinstitutional committee tasked with formulating and implementing public policies to achieve this goal.

Later that month, the National Assembly [passed amendments](#) to the Child and Adolescent Code, [raising sentences](#) for children sentenced for crimes tied to the “internal armed conflict” from 8 to 15 years and prohibiting the use of any measures other than incarceration for children sentenced to five years or more. In February, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child had [urged](#) Ecuador to allow the detention of children only as a last resort and for the shortest time necessary. The Constitutional Court [struck down](#) the amendments in September.

Environmental Protection and Indigenous People’s Rights

The government has [not complied with a 2023 nationwide referendum](#) establishing a moratorium on oil drilling in the Ishpingo, Tambococha, and Tiputini (ITT) area of Yasuní National Park. The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that the government should end the drilling by 2024 but the government has dragged its feet, at [times citing the country’s security crisis](#). As of September, most of the block’s 240 wells remained active.

In September, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, joined by other Indigenous and social movements, conducted [protests](#) on cuts to diesel subsidies and the expansion of oil extraction in Indigenous territories.

Women’s and Girls’ Rights

Abortion is criminalized in Ecuador except in cases of risk to health or life, or rape, and even then access remains limited due to stigma, mistreatment, fear of prosecution, and restrictive interpretations of the law. Ecuadorian law [fails](#) to protect women and girls from violence and discrimination, undermining their autonomy and perpetuating gender inequality.

The Ministry of Women and Human Rights [reported](#) 429 violent deaths of women and girls as of late June, almost doubling the number [reported](#) during the same period in 2024.

That ministry is one of six that President Noboa [merged](#) in July, incorporating it into the Ministry of Government.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

In January, the Constitutional Court [ruled in favor](#) of a transgender girl whose school failed to respect her gender identity (preferred name, uniform, bathroom access). The court ordered authorities to adopt a mandatory protocol for addressing sexual orientation and gender identity diversity in schools.

At time of writing the legislature had not taken action to align the law with other court orders to revise [civil marriage](#) provisions to include same-sex couples, regulate assisted reproduction, and allow same-sex couples [to register](#) children with their surnames.

The constitution prohibits same-sex couples from adopting children.

Internal Displacement and Migration

According to the [Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre](#), the data analysis center of the Norwegian Refugee Council, in 2024 Ecuador had the region's third-highest number of people displaced by violence, after Haiti and Colombia. The Ombudsperson's Office [estimates](#) that 316,000 were displaced internally between 2022 and 2024.

Many migrants and asylum seekers in Ecuador [struggle](#) to obtain regular status and [integrate](#). In August, Ecuador [ended](#) an agreement that simplified the procedure for Venezuelan citizens to obtain visas and residency in the country.

During a visit by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Ecuador [said](#) it would accept third-country nationals deported from the United States.

Freedom of Expression and Association

[Journalists](#) and civil society organizations have [reported](#) growing stigmatization, harassment, and [attacks](#) by organized crime groups and authorities.

In August, the National Assembly passed a [law](#) that allows authorities to shut down organizations that commit "grave" infractions, such as carrying out "unauthorized" activities. The law also allows authorities to freeze the bank accounts of groups without a court order.

Authorities restricted freedom of assembly and at times [used excessive force](#) in their response to anti-government protests that started in mid-September. They [froze the bank](#) accounts of environmental and Indigenous groups and

leaders, claiming they had [funded](#) violent protests, and [suspended community media outlets](#). Protesters were involved in some [violent incidents](#).

[Browse countries](#)

Exhibit 5

World Report 2025: Ecuador | Human Rights Watch

[hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/ecuador](https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/ecuador)

December 20, 2024

Ecuador

In a context of fragile democratic institutions, Ecuador has seen a sharp increase in violence by organized crime, which took homicide rates to unprecedented levels.

Following President Daniel Noboa's announcement that the country is in an "internal armed conflict," security forces engaged in serious human rights violations.

Longstanding structural problems, related, among other things, to access to health, education, and employment, remain unaddressed, limiting the enjoyment of economic and social rights.

Violence and Crime

Homicides rose 429 percent from the first half of 2019 to 2024, when 3,036 were [recorded](#). A 16 percent drop compared to the same period in 2023 but still higher than the 2,128 in 2022, according to the Ecuadorian Observatory on Organized Crime. As of September, police [reportedly](#) received over 2,000 reports of kidnappings and over 10,700 reports of extortion. One in three Ecuadorians [has been a victim](#) of crime, the highest number in the region.

Since January, following a [surge in violence](#), President Noboa has [decreed](#) long-lasting states of emergency and an "internal armed conflict" against criminal groups, without providing "sufficient information to justify the existence of one or more non-international armed conflicts," according to the Constitutional Court.

Ecuador's militarization of its streets and prisons since January has led to [serious human rights violations](#) by security forces, including [extrajudicial killings](#), arbitrary arrests and ill-treatment.

Prison Conditions

The lack of state control, overcrowding, and poor prison conditions have enabled organized crime to dominate prisons.

Since January, the military has held many detainees incommunicado for long periods, obstructing access to lawyers and medical care. Other [documented](#) abuses against detainees include beatings, the improper use of tear gas, electric shocks, sexual violence, and killings.

In February, a judge [ruled](#) that the military endangered detainees and prison authorities failed in their duties, ordering medical care and an investigation into torture. [Human rights groups, detainees' families](#), and the [United Nations Committee against Torture](#) also raised concerns about inhumane prison conditions, including food shortages.

Democratic Institutions and the Rule of Law

Democratic institutions, particularly the judicial system, remained fragile, plagued by allegations of corruption and weak capacity to combat impunity and organized crime.

The Attorney General's Office has [opened](#) several investigations against judges, prosecutors and authorities from the Judiciary Council for alleged organized crime, bribery, money laundering, influence peddling, and obstruction of justice.

Judges and prosecutors are at risk and lack adequate protection. At least 15 have been killed since 2022.

Allegations of lack of due process in judicial proceedings and improper pressures on courts and judges continued. In February, President Noboa labeled a judge "unpatriotic" after the judge ruled against security forces due to human rights violations in prison.

Reports continued of problematic selection and appointment procedures for senior officials. [The UN Human Rights Committee](#) and [civil society groups](#) voiced concerns about the selection process for judges, including of the National Court of Justice, claiming that the processes lacked transparency and citizen involvement, raising questions about its impartiality. [Concerns](#) have also been raised regarding the delays and rules for the selection process for the next attorney general.

In November, the Ministry of Labor [suspended](#) vice president Verónica Abad for "unjustified abandonment" of her duties just weeks before she was supposed to replace President Noboa during the electoral campaign. The Ministry failed to provide a legal basis for its decision. The same month, the Supreme Electoral

Tribunal [barred](#) Jan Topic from running for president in the 2025 election, based on “confidential evidence,” raising concerns over respect for due process and political rights.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

As of June, close to 26 percent of Ecuadorians were living below the national [poverty line](#), with figures climbing to around 43 percent in rural areas. Additionally, 10.6 percent lived in “extreme poverty,” reaching 24.1 percent in rural areas, meaning their per capita family income was below US\$51.60 per month.

Despite a slight decrease in [unemployment rates](#) compared to the second semester of 2023, the national unemployment rate stood at 3.5 percent, with 52.5 percent of those employed working in the informal sector.

Ecuador follows Bolivia and Venezuela as the third country with the highest prevalence of hunger in South America, impacting 2.5 million people, according to [the UN Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition](#).

Millions of people have been impacted by nationwide [power outages](#) due to a drought disturbing hydroelectricity power generation, affecting their rights to education, work and health.

Freedom of Expression

In November, the organization Fundamedios [reported](#) over 160 “attacks” on freedom of expression and freedom of the press, including stigmatizing speech, verbal assaults against journalists, and barriers to accessing information, most of which were carried out by state actors and organized crime.

In June, the TV program “Los Irreverentes” was [cancelled](#), reportedly after pressure from the government, according to Fundamedios. In the same month, the Foreign Minister’s Office [cancelled](#) Cuban journalist Alondra Santiago’s visa for “threatening public safety and the structure of the State” after she criticized the government with a song based on the national anthem.

Migrants, Asylum Seekers, and Refugees

Despite a progressive constitutional and legal framework, many migrants and asylum seekers in Ecuador [struggle](#) to obtain regular status and integrate. Despite having over [77,900 refugees](#) in the country, Ecuador’s application of the Cartagena Declaration’s expanded refugee definition is inconsistent.

A 2022 regularization process [granted](#) over 95,000 foreign nationals, mainly Venezuelans, a two-year legal status, but the process is currently closed. In August, the government [extended](#) the regularization process to legalize Venezuelans who had registered within the established deadlines but had not obtained visas.

While just a few hundred Ecuadorians crossed the Darien Gap between Colombia and Panama in 2021, the number spiked in 2023, spurred by economic factors and general insecurity, reaching 57,250. Over 14,700 crossed the gap between January and August 2024.

Children's Rights

Sexual violence remains endemic in Ecuador's schools and finding justice is elusive for many survivors. Between January 2014 and August 2024, authorities [registered](#) over 6,700 cases of sexual violence against students committed by teachers, school staff, other students or bus drivers.

Government measures to respond to sexual violence in schools have [not progressed](#) at the scale and pace needed to ensure that all children are safe.

In August, President Noboa [signed](#) a policy to eradicate sexual violence in schools by 2030, following the 2020 Inter-American Court ruling in *Paola Guzmán Albarracín v. Ecuador*. Civil society groups [voiced](#) concerns over lack of adequate funding for its implementation.

The surge in violence and organized crime severely impacted children's rights, with homicides of adolescents [rising](#) 17 percent compared to the first semester of 2023, according to the Ecuadorian Observatory on Organized Crime. It has also led to increased child [recruitment](#) and compromised the [right to a safe learning environment](#).

In April, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child [cancelled](#) its upcoming session due to lack of funds, reducing scrutiny of developments in Ecuador.

Women's and Girls' Rights

Abortion is criminalized in Ecuador, except when a pregnancy threatens a person's health or life or results from rape. In April, Justa Libertad, an Ecuadorian coalition of eight civil society organizations, [filed](#) a lawsuit before the Constitutional Court of Ecuador seeking to decriminalize abortion in all circumstances.

There remain significant barriers to this essential service, including stigmatization, mistreatment by healthcare providers, fear of criminal prosecution, and a narrow interpretation of legal exceptions for abortion. Women and girls who face prosecution under restrictive laws are often living in poverty and come from Indigenous or Afro-descendant communities.

The Ministry of Women and Human Rights [reported](#) 222 violent deaths (murders, homicides and femicides) of women and girls as of late June. The Attorney General's Office [reported](#) 59 femicides—murders deemed gender-related—between January and September.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

In June, the government [issued a regulation](#) implementing a legal gender recognition procedure for transgender people based on self-determination, to comply with a 2017 ruling by the Constitutional Court.

The legislature has not complied with other court orders to revise [civil marriage](#) provisions to include same-sex couples, regulate assisted reproduction, and allow same-sex couples to [register](#) children with their surnames.

The constitution excludes same-sex couples from adoption.

Environmental Protection and Indigenous Peoples' Rights


In May, President Noboa [created](#) a committee in charge of establishing the mechanisms to comply with the [people's 2023 vote](#) to halt current and future oil drilling in the Ishpingo, Tambococha, and Tiputini (ITT) area of Yasuní National Park. The park is a UN World Biosphere Reserve and the ancestral territory of the Waorani, the Tagaeri and the Taromenane Indigenous peoples, of which the latter two are uncontacted. The government did not comply with the [one-year deadline](#) established by the Constitutional Court to suspend the activities and [affirmed](#) this will be done "progressively."

Indigenous girls [kept advocating](#)—despite [reported](#) acts of intimidation—for the government to end gas flares impacting their communities in the Amazon region, as required by a 2021 ruling. By May, the government had [quenched](#) 145 of the 424 registered gas flares.

Browse countries

Exhibit 6

Human rights in Ecuador Amnesty International

 [amnesty.org/en/location/americas/south-america/ecuador/report-ecuador](https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/americas/south-america/ecuador/report-ecuador)

Ecuador

Amnesty International takes no position on issues of sovereignty or territorial disputes. Borders on this map are based on UN Geospatial data. © Amnesty International

[Back to Ecuador](#)

Ecuador 2024

Gas flaring and oil drilling in the Amazon continued. Conditions in prisons remained extremely poor. There were reports of possible extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances. Human rights defenders continued to face security risks and the government failed to protect them. Arbitrary arrests were prevalent. Mining went ahead without the consent of Indigenous Peoples. Access to abortion remained severely restricted. Impunity prevailed for human rights violations committed by security forces in 2019 and 2022.

Background

In January, President Daniel Noboa declared an “internal armed conflict” and state of emergency in response to actions by organized crime groups. Authorities maintained states of emergency throughout the year, deploying the military to patrol the streets. In April, voters in a national referendum approved further powers for the military in public security tasks.

In May, the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights reported on “a vicious cycle of poverty and insecurity”, predominantly affecting racialized sectors of the population who continued to experience discrimination based on intersecting markers of identity.

Right to a healthy environment

The government continued to allow gas flaring in the Amazon, despite a 2021 court ruling that flares, which can be harmful to the environment and people’s health, must be extinguished.

At the end of the year, the authorities had failed to halt oil drilling in the Amazon's Yasuni National Park, missing the deadline imposed by a 2023 referendum.

Executive Decree 754 remained in force, even though human rights organizations continued to express concern that it was not in line with international standards on the right to participation in environmental decision-making processes.

Detainees' rights

Prisons remained chronically overcrowded and reports of torture and other ill-treatment increased after the military was given control of prisons in January. Access to food and medical services was inadequate. At least three prison directors were killed during the year.

The UN Committee against Torture called on Ecuador to address the prison crisis and its systemic causes, "prioritizing policies of rehabilitation, re-education and social reintegration, [and] the demilitarization of control of prisons."

Extrajudicial executions

The Public Prosecutor's Office noted a spike in reports of possible extrajudicial executions, with 27 reported in the first half of 2024, an increase on previous years.

Enforced disappearances

Human rights organizations and residents in coastal regions reported several arbitrary detentions by security forces during their operations, some of which could constitute enforced disappearances, according to the Public Prosecutor's Office.

In December, the Public Prosecutor's Office pressed charges against 16 members of the military for the alleged enforced disappearance of four children in Guayaquil, who were later found dead.

Human rights defenders

Human rights defenders continued to face hostility and security risks, particularly land, territory and environmental defenders. Incidents included threats, intimidation, online violence and killings.

Numerous human rights defenders from Las Naves, Bolívar province, faced criminal proceedings in relation to their work on the right to water in the context of mining operations. At least six of these defenders were sentenced to prison.

President Noboa repeatedly stigmatized human rights defenders working for the rights of detainees. The government failed to carry out meetings with civil society to ensure a participative approach in designing its security policy.

In November, at least two human rights defenders were arrested while observing protests against power shortages in the capital, Quito.

Arbitrary arrests and detentions

Security forces carried out thousands of possible arbitrary arrests, resorting to the pretext of on-the-spot arrests of people caught committing a crime, apparently with little justification. Civil society organizations and media sources suggested that these arrests were disproportionately directed at groups historically subject to discrimination, including Afro-descendants, Indigenous Peoples, people of lower socio-economic status and young people. Authorities failed to maintain fully transparent records of these arrests.

Indigenous Peoples' rights

In March, in Cotopaxi province, more than 70 individuals, including Indigenous leaders and human rights defenders, faced criminal investigations following protests against mining activities and a consultation process they deemed illegitimate.

The UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty recommended strengthening the anti-discrimination framework by “guaranteeing legal security of tenure concerning Afro-descendants’ and Indigenous peoples’ traditional land, territories and natural resources and by ensuring free, prior and informed consultation and consent for establishing and managing protected areas.”

Right to truth, justice and reparation

Several UN experts highlighted the importance of the Constitutional Court hearing in April relating to grave human rights violations, including forced labour and servitude, suffered by hundreds of agricultural workers in Ecuador’s *abaca* plantations over decades. Many of the workers were Afro-descendants. At the end of the year, the Constitutional Court ruled that a foreign company had maintained

“a practice of servitude akin to slavery” and ordered the company to pay individual reparations to the victims as well as ordering a public policy to combat servitude.

Sexual and reproductive rights

Despite legal advances in recent years, access to abortion remained severely restricted even in circumstances allowed by law. The lack of information about legal protections, social stigma and denial of lawful services for reasons of conscience, among other barriers, impeded pregnant people from exercising their reproductive rights.

Impunity

Human rights violations committed by security forces during protests in 2019 and 2022 remained unpunished.

1. [Ecuador: The Amazon is Burning, the Future is Burning!, 12 August ↗](#)

GET THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT 2024/25

[Download](#)

Exhibit 7

Ecuador: Freedom in the World 2025 Country Report

 freedomhouse.org/country/ecuador/freedom-world/2025

A country or territory's Freedom in the World status depends on its aggregate Political Rights score, on a scale of 0–40, and its aggregate Civil Liberties score, on a scale of 0–60. [See the methodology.](#)

Overview

Ecuador holds regular, competitive elections, but the influence of organized crime and related violence have increased significantly in recent years, affecting the functioning of state institutions and the security of ordinary citizens. Due process violations, attacks on journalists, human rights abuses, and official corruption are ongoing challenges, and the new government of President Daniel Noboa Azín has engaged in practices that further threaten civil liberties.

Key Developments in 2024

- In January 2024, President Noboa declared a state of emergency and an “internal armed conflict,” deploying the military to combat organized crime groups. By the end of the year, however, concerns about abuses by the armed forces were mounting, particularly after the deaths of four children whose bodies were discovered near a military base in December.
- The country's economy and political agenda were severely disrupted by an energy crisis. At its peak in the last quarter of the year, the government was forced to impose continuous blackouts of up to 14 hours per day.
- The government was accused of interfering with press freedom, including through alleged pressure on the political analysis program *Los Irreverentes* and the expulsion of Cuban journalist Alondra Santiago from the country, both in June.
- Tensions arose between President Noboa and Vice President Verónica Abad Rojas, with Noboa's administration assigning Abad to diplomatic duties abroad and ultimately suspending her in November in an apparent effort to

avoid transferring presidential powers to her during Noboa's reelection campaign in early 2025.

Political Rights

A Electoral Process

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?

The 2008 constitution provides for a directly elected president. The president has the constitutional authority to dissolve the National Assembly, which triggers new elections for both the legislature and the presidency. Then-President Guillermo Lasso Mendoza invoked this authority after lawmakers moved to impeach him in May 2023, and early elections were held in August of that year.

No candidate won a majority in the first round of the presidential election. Noboa, backed by the conservative National Democratic Action (AND) party, defeated leftist Citizens' Revolution candidate Luisa González Alcívar in the October runoff, taking nearly 52 percent of the vote. Noboa was set to serve through the end of Lasso's four-year term in May 2025, but was eligible for reelection. Although the balloting generally adhered to international standards of integrity, the campaign was marked by unprecedented levels of political violence. Several candidates at both at the local and national levels were murdered during the campaign period, including presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio Valencia.

The potential for violence remained a major concern during 2024, ahead of the general elections scheduled for early 2025, prompting one presidential candidate to cease public campaign activities in November.

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?

In April 2024, based on the 2022 census, the National Electoral Council (CNE) approved an increase in the number of seats in the National Assembly from 137 to 151. The new total comprised 15 members elected by national proportional representation, 130 provincial representatives elected in multimember districts (up from 116), and 6 representatives for constituencies of Ecuadorians living abroad. This change was slated to take effect with the February 2025 general elections.

Legislative polls were held concurrently with the first round of the presidential election in August 2023, but issues with the telematic voting system used by Ecuadorians abroad prompted electoral authorities to repeat that balloting in October. No party won a majority in the snap elections. Citizens' Revolution secured 51 seats, Villavicencio's liberal Build Ecuador Movement (MCE) won 26, the Social Christian Party (PSC) won 18, and ADN won 14. No other party won more than 10 seats. Several members had shifted allegiances by the time the new legislature met in November, leaving Citizens' Revolution with 51 members, the MCE and the PSC with 18 each, and the ADN with 17. While violence marred the elections, domestic and international observers concluded that they were credible and fair.

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?

Although the CNE has generally displayed transparency and independence, electoral authorities have sometimes faced accusations of politicization and bias. The procedure for replacing the council's members on a rolling basis, overseen by the Citizen Participation and Social Control Council (CPCCS), has been delayed for several years due to legal and political obstacles, and it remained stalled during 2024. One dispute centered on the question of whether members could be replaced while the 2025 electoral process was already underway. Separately, in August 2024, three judges of the Electoral Disputes Tribunal (TCE) removed fellow judge Fernando Muñoz as the tribunal's president, a move that Muñoz said was motivated by "partisan interests and personal ambitions."

B Political Pluralism and Participation

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?

Multiple parties compete in Ecuador's political system, but historically they have been largely personality based, clientelist, and fragile. According to the 2008 constitution, political organizations must collect voters' signatures equivalent to 1.5 percent of the electoral roll to register and participate in general elections. If a party or group fails to win 4 percent of the vote for two consecutive elections, its registration can be revoked, disadvantaging smaller parties.

Ecuador's legal framework creates opportunities for political parties to opportunistically delay and challenge the registration of rival candidates, especially in the context of early elections. International observers noted that this factor stalled the registration of a candidate to replace Villavicencio in 2023. Also that year, several presidential candidates failed to comply with campaign expense reporting as required by the CNE; lack of enforcement could benefit some parties more than others.

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?

Ecuador has undergone regular rotations of power through elections in recent decades, and opposition forces are often well represented in the legislature. In the 2023 elections, the opposition Citizens' Revolution maintained its status as the single largest party in the National Assembly, even as Noboa prevailed in that year's presidential election; Lasso, the incumbent, did not seek reelection.

In August 2024, a total of 17 presidential candidates sought registration with the CNE ahead of the 2025 general elections. In November, the TCE disqualified United Society More Action (SUMA) candidate Jan Topic, who was considered a leading challenger to Noboa. Although Topic had been able to run in 2023, the TCE argued that he retained "effective control" over companies whose shares he had divested, allegedly violating a ban on candidates owning companies that contract with the state. The secretary general of the Organization of American States had warned that Topic's disqualification would be "a serious setback for Ecuadorian democracy," prompting the government to denounce the remarks as improper interference in Ecuador's domestic affairs. SUMA registered another candidate to replace Topic later in November.

Score Change: The score declined from 4 to 3 because an electoral court disqualified a prominent opposition presidential candidate on dubious grounds.

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means?

Ecuadorians' political choices are increasingly constrained by criminal organizations and related violence. The surge in political violence in 2023 and concerns about illicit campaign financing persisted in 2024. At least three mayors

were murdered during the year, leading the Association of Municipalities of Ecuador (AME) to petition the government for special police protection. The AME's president reported that at least 100 of the country's 221 mayors were at risk of criminal violence. In addition, journalists have exposed the ability of organized crime groups to co-opt and bribe political and security authorities, particularly to protect lucrative activities such as illegal mining, which also facilitates money-laundering operations.

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?

Citizens enjoy formal political equality regardless of race, gender, and other such distinctions, though some disparities in access and influence persist in practice. Electoral regulations mandate that women account for 50 percent of the candidates on party lists in multimember districts, and women must also lead half of a party's lists; presidential tickets must include a woman candidate for president or vice president. However, efforts to increase electoral participation among ethnic and racial minority groups, as well as LGBT+ people, remain incomplete. While some parties, such as the Indigenous movement Pachakutik, advocate for the interests of minority groups, these issues are not a focus of major parties' platforms.

C Functioning of Government

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?

Recurring power struggles between the presidency and legislature have disrupted governance in recent years, culminating in President Lasso's decision to trigger early elections in 2023. Severe disagreements between the two branches continued under President Noboa in 2024, complicating their efforts to implement comprehensive economic and social reforms.

Separately, a strained relationship between President Noboa and Vice President Abad escalated into a legal dispute late in the year. Noboa had given Abad the additional role of ambassador to Israel in an apparent effort to avoid assigning her domestic responsibilities. She was transferred to Turkey in September, then suspended from her duties in November after she failed to promptly relocate.

Although a judge overturned the suspension in December, the vice president was again assigned to diplomatic duties in Turkey. Observers suggested that the moves were designed to prevent Abad from serving as interim president while Noboa went on leave to campaign for reelection in early 2025.

In January 2024, Noboa declared an “internal armed conflict” and deployed the military to combat organized crime, but high levels of insecurity and criminal activity continued to undermine the ability of national and local elected officials to exercise effective control over state institutions and the country’s territory.

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?

Ecuador has long been racked by corruption, and the weak judiciary and lack of investigative capacity in government oversight agencies contribute to an environment of impunity. In April 2024, the government transformed the former Anti-Corruption Secretariat into the Secretariat of Public Integrity, which will oversee the implementation of public integrity policies and advise the president on such issues, though it was unclear whether the new body would have more resources or authority than its predecessor. In another notable action during the year, the Public Enterprises Coordinating Company (EMCO)—which had been linked with several corruption scandals in recent years, particularly in the energy sector—was formally liquidated in August, in keeping with reform legislation adopted in late 2023.

Does the government operate with openness and transparency?

The law guarantees citizens’ right to access public information, though some government bodies remain reluctant to disclose such information. Public procurement processes are frequently opaque, and malpractice involving government contracts is common.

Since coming to power in 2023, the Noboa administration has been criticized for a pattern of secrecy and delayed public responses in the face of certain crises, such as electricity blackouts that intensified in the final quarter of 2024.

Civil Liberties

D Freedom of Expression and Belief

Are there free and independent media? 2 4

Although the previous two presidents oversaw significant improvements in press freedom, including a 2018 reform of the restrictive Organic Communications Law that permitted more diverse coverage in state-run outlets, the threat of criminal violence and political pressure have increasingly constrained the work of journalists in recent years.

In June 2024, *Los Irreverentes*, a political opinion show that often featured criticism of the government, was canceled by the television broadcaster Canal RTU and taken off the air. RTU had reportedly been threatened with the possible suspension of government advertising contracts and unusual information requests from the Telecommunications Regulation and Control Agency (ARCOTEL), though RTU's general manager declined to comment on the matter.

Also in June, the government revoked the visa of Alondra Santiago, a Cuban journalist who had lived in Ecuador for almost two decades. She had recently posted a social media video that was critical of the Noboa administration.

Separately, a series of Ecuadorean journalists have sought safety abroad after facing threats for investigating organized crime and corruption, and this trend continued in 2024.

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?

Freedom of religion is constitutionally guaranteed and generally respected in practice.

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?

Academic freedom is generally upheld, and the education system is mostly free of political indoctrination. In the country's largest public universities, however, political parties and movements have traditionally controlled key positions of authority.

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?

Discussion of controversial topics among private citizens is generally free, but criminal groups continue to intimidate voters, community leaders, and activists in certain parts of the country.

E Associational and Organizational Rights

Is there freedom of assembly? 3 4

Protests typically occur throughout the country without incident. However, national security legislation provides a broad definition of sabotage and terrorism, extending to acts against persons and property by unarmed individuals. States of emergency that were declared for security reasons in recent years have also periodically affected freedom of assembly.

In January 2024, President Noboa declared a state of emergency to combat organized crime, then announced an "internal armed conflict" shortly thereafter. The emergency decree, which was in place or renewed for most of the year, specifically allowed security forces to limit freedom of assembly. The

Constitutional Court, ruling in November on the latest version of the emergency declaration, struck down that component and stated that the right to peaceful protest must be respected.

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance–related work?

Current regulations for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), although less restrictive than under former President Rafael Correa, still allow authorities to close organizations that are perceived to be participating in politics, or organizations that are deemed to perform activities different from those for which they were created.

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?

Private-sector labor unions have the right to strike, though the labor code limits public-sector strikes. Only a small portion of the general workforce is unionized, partly because many people work in the informal sector.

F Rule of Law

Is there an independent judiciary?

The Constitutional Court has earned a reputation for autonomy in recent years, repeatedly demonstrating a willingness to challenge sitting governments. The broader judicial system has been implicated in extensive corruption and exposed to the influence of organized crime.

In 2024, the Attorney General's Office announced corruption indictments against several current and former public officials, including members of the judiciary. In one case that came to light during the year, the former president of the Judicial

Council, who had been arrested in 2023 as part of an investigation into organized crime, was separately accused of interfering in the process of appointing judges to the National Court of Justice.

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?

Judicial processes remain slow, and procedures designed to expedite cases have been implemented at the expense of defendants' due process rights. Many people are held in pretrial detention for longer than the law allows. While the number of public defenders has increased in recent years, the state is still unable to provide adequate legal counsel to all defendants who are unable to obtain their own. In cases that involve powerful political interests, certain guarantees of due process and a fair trial are subject to manipulation and corrupt influence.

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?

Ecuador's homicide rate is among the highest in the world. The rate of 38.76 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants recorded in 2024 was the second highest in the country's history, surpassed only by the figure of 45 per 100,000 in 2023. In January 2024, a group of armed assailants took over the premises of the public television station TC Televisión. This crisis, along with a prison break by organized crime leader José Adolfo "Fito" Macías Villamar, led President Noboa to declare a state of emergency and "internal armed conflict" that month.

Noboa identified 22 organized crime groups as terrorist organizations and deployed security forces, including the military, to combat them. In the subsequent campaign, there were reports of abuses during patrols, arrests, and enforcement actions within detention facilities. For example, in February, a 19-year-old with no criminal record was fatally shot by security personnel at a Guayaquil military checkpoint. In a separate high-profile incident in December, also in Guayaquil, four children disappeared after they were detained by a military patrol. Weeks later, the children's remains were found in a field near a military

base, showing signs that they had been burned and mutilated. Prosecutors subsequently brought charges against 16 military personnel who were allegedly involved.

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?

Ecuador's laws and public policies formally guarantee equal treatment to all segments of the population. However, some de facto practices, such as discrimination in employment and education, effectively disadvantage groups including women, ethnic minorities, immigrants and refugees, and LGBT+ people.

Indigenous people suffer widespread societal discrimination, and oil-drilling and mining projects on Indigenous lands are frequently carried out without consulting local Indigenous communities, as required by the constitution. In 2020, the Constitutional Court reinforced consultation requirements for proposed changes to the status of Indigenous ancestral territories, and in 2023, referendum voters approved a proposal—long demanded by Indigenous groups—to end new oil exploration in the Yasuní National Park.

G Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?

There are typically few formal restrictions on the free movement of citizens, but the current security situation has resulted in temporary or de facto restrictions, particularly in sectors of the country's coastal and Amazon regions where the presence of the state and law enforcement agencies is very limited or violently challenged.

After the president's declaration of a state of emergency in January 2024, a curfew was imposed throughout the country, and it remained in force in 61 out of 221 cantons until early April. As the year progressed, the curfews were limited to provinces with the most significant organized criminal activity.

Due to a combination of economic difficulties and the threat of violence and extortion, tens of thousands of Ecuadorians emigrated north through Central America during the year.

Score Change: The score declined from 3 to 2 because Ecuadorians’ freedom of movement within the country was constrained by government-imposed curfews and ongoing criminal violence.

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?

The government does not impose significant restrictions on the right to own property and establish private businesses. However, corruption can obstruct business activity, and extortion by criminal groups is a major threat to property rights.

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?

There are few significant restrictions on people’s freedom with respect to marriage, divorce, and other personal status issues. Same-sex marriage has been legal since 2019. However, abortion remains criminalized except in cases of rape or when the woman’s life is at risk, and protections against domestic violence are inadequate. A study from the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses found that 65 percent of Ecuadorian women had suffered abuse in some form during their lives. Ecuadorian NGOs documented 274 femicides in 2024, including 126 cases involving intimate partners, family members, or sexual violence.

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation? 2
4

Adults and children are sometimes subjected to forced labor and sexual exploitation in Ecuador; Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian people, as well as migrants and refugees, remain most vulnerable.

The government has taken some action to address the problem of economic exploitation, including by increasing human trafficking–related law enforcement operations. However, services for victims are inadequate, and some public officials believed to be complicit in trafficking operations have escaped punishment.



Exhibit 8

2025 Country Conditions: Ecuador

Ecuador, wedged between Colombia and Peru, was once known as an island of peace in the Andes. In 2020, its homicide rate was [6.7 per 100,000](#) inhabitants, one of the lowest in the region.

Today, drug trafficking and associated gang violence have fractured this peace. In January 2024, cartel members, armed with explosives, took television broadcasters hostage in front of a live audience. Prisoners from the major cartels posted videos of themselves holding knives to the necks of the guards. Gang leaders staged a jailbreak. The recently inaugurated President, Daniel Noboa, declared a state of emergency, casting the country into lockdown.

At [44.5 homicides per 100,000 people](#), Ecuador's homicide rate is now beyond that of Mexico, El Salvador, and Honduras, and the highest in South America. Children and youth are particularly targeted, experiencing a [640% increase in child homicides](#) since 2019. Increasing numbers of people are being displaced: after Venezuelans, Ecuadorians are now the [second](#) most intercepted population in the Darien Gap, the infamously dangerous border crossing from Colombia to Panama.

Yesterday, Noboa was reelected, beating leftist candidate Luisa González. Noboa has taken his win as a mandate to continue his iron-fisted approach to tackling the country's spiraling security crisis. González refuses to accept the result, citing concerns that Noboa manipulated the vote by declaring a state of emergency in seven states only days before the election. To situate the election results, USCRI explores Ecuador's ongoing crisis of crime and displacement.

Background: From an 'Island of Peace' to an Armed Conflict

Ecuador's rapid spiral from peace into conflict repeats some patterns that have driven crime in the Americas in the past, from Medellín in the 1980s to Ciudad Juárez in the 1990s. A highly profitable illicit economy for cocaine, driven by demand from consumers in Europe and the United States, creates a high-stakes competition to control the market. Elite corruption and criminal impunity further metastasize into human insecurity. Unsafe conditions displace people, driving them to seek safety elsewhere.

Ecuador's insecurity comes in the [aftermath](#) of peace in Colombia. In 2016, the Colombian government signed a peace accord with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, a leftist guerilla group commonly known as the FARC, for its acronym in Spanish. The FARC financed its war with the sale of cocaine. In Ecuador, they controlled the market. As Ecuador itself is not a coca producer, its role within the drug trade stems from the strategic location of its ports along the Pacific Coast. Drugs are brought in from neighboring Peru and Colombia, then shipped to Europe.

Focused largely on their strategic objectives in Colombia, the FARC—a structured and hierarchal organization—treated the cocaine trade in Ecuador as a business enterprise. Their demobilization in 2016 opened space for new and old criminal networks to fill the void. At the same time, the demand for cocaine in Europe soared, increasing the value of Ecuador's ports for drug traffickers. The combination of a power vacuum after the FARC's demobilization and a shift in demand created a climate ripe for violent competition.

This new dynamic was worsened by the age-old problem of political corruption. The political elite in Ecuador enriched themselves with the cash flow brought in by gangs and cartels. Members of Rafeal Correa's (2007-2017) government were wrapped up in drug trafficking scandals, with Correa himself later sentenced to eight years for bribery. The judiciary and cartel leaders developed a symbiotic relationship, money exchanged for favorable sentences. Colón Pico, the leader of the Los Lobos gang, was released from jail on six [different](#) occasions—each time by the same judge.

Within this climate of corruption, Ecuador's prison system became fertile ground for its security crisis. Slashes to the [national penitentiary budget](#) worsened prison overcrowding and facilitated the growth of a thriving illicit economy within the prison system. Prison authorities were understaffed, and the government's control over the nation's prisons unraveled. Authority over the prison system and its multi-million dollar criminal economy has [allowed](#) gangs to finance their activities and recruit new members. This, combined with an impunity problem—in 2023, [90% of crimes](#) committed in Ecuador went unpunished—has meant that the state has no real mechanism to contain rising violence.

In 2023, the [assassination](#) of presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio crystallized the extent of the crisis, an incident chillingly reminiscent of Pablo Escobar's assassination of Luis Carlos Galán in Colombia during the 1980s. Villavicencio had run a campaign promising to tackle corruption and criminal networks. He reportedly received death threats from the Sinaloa cartel, although members of the Los Lobos gang remain the most prominent suspects in his murder. Daniel Noboa, the son of Ecuador's richest man, would ultimately win the snap election defined by Villavicencio's assassination.

The situation in Ecuador reached a tipping point in January of 2024, with Noboa's declaration of 'internal armed conflict.' The declaration followed the escape of key gang leaders, including Colón Pico, prison riots, and an attack on a live television broadcast. A nightly curfew was imposed, with Noboa deploying the military to the streets. Since the declaration was announced, human rights [advocates](#) have raised concerns about its impact on civilians. There has been at least [one reported incident](#) of an extra-judicial killing, and numerous instances of arbitrary detainment, with prisoners reporting being subject to cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment by authorities.

Citizen Insecurity

Drug trafficking and political instability have manifested into human insecurity for Ecuador's people, with violence concentrated in the coastal provinces of Esmeraldas, Manabí, El Oro, and Guayas.

The number of [massacre victims](#) in Ecuador surged from 30 in 2022, to 375 in 2021, to 834 in 2023. While massacres were originally concentrated within the penitentiary system, they have since seeped outside of it. [Experts](#) state that massacres in Ecuador are a tool for armed actors to intimidate civilian populations and assert control over territory. In coastal towns, gangs go door to door demanding payment in exchange for protection.

Durán, on the coast of Guayas, provides a window into how Ecuador's crisis has entangled crime and governance, with civilians suffering the consequences. At the center of Ecuador's drug trade, Durán is now [one of the world's murder capitals](#). Humanitarian aid and the Ecuadorian government are absent from the city, which lacks even adequate water and sanitation facilities. This vacuum has fostered a

climate [ripe](#) for drug traffickers to create a parallel service economy, providing citizens with security, income, and services that the state and international community have failed to provide. Criminal actors have also [infiltrated](#) the municipal government, buying off political candidates in exchange for appointments upon election.

The Latin Kings and Chone Killers dominate the city’s criminal landscape—fighting between them is [credited](#) with the city’s homicide increase. While the Latin Kings principally do not prey on civilians in their territory, the Chone Killers do not have similar rules. The treatment of civilians depends on the mood of faction leadership—who often govern with cruelty. Residents interviewed by [Insight Crime](#) reported that the Chone Killers rob and extort even schoolchildren. Some are also employed by criminal gangs, a trend that has worsened since the COVID-19 pandemic.



Refugees and Forced Displacement

Ecuador, given its history of stability, is home to one of South America’s largest refugee populations, [hosting nearly 500,000 people in need of international protection](#). The majority are Venezuelans fleeing the Maduro regime and surrounding humanitarian crisis. 2024 also saw a [sharp](#) increase in the number of asylum applications filed by Colombians in Ecuador. Despite Colombia’s peace agreement with the FARC, the internal armed conflict persists, dominated by FARC dissidents, paramilitary groups, criminal gangs, and the National Liberation Army. Shelters hosting both Colombians and Venezuelans are above capacity, with little relief in sight: only [3.3% of the migrant and refugee response plan](#) is funded. Now grappling with its own armed conflict, the Ecuadorian government is [strained](#) to provide essential services and protection to refugees and asylum seekers.

As the security situation in Ecuador rapidly deteriorates, its own citizens are now driven from their homes, pushed to seek safety elsewhere. Recent survey data estimates that, between January and October of 2024, more than [80,000 people](#) from Ecuador were displaced internally as a result of armed violence.

Others seek safety across borders, with Ecuadorians now the second largest population crossing the dangerous route through the Darien Gap. Because criminal actors have infiltrated Ecuador's law enforcement agencies, Ecuadorians threatened by the cartels lack a safe internal relocation option. [Data](#) from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) shows a sharp increase in encounters with Ecuadorians that aligns with the changes in security. In 2022, CBP [reported](#) 24,936 encounters with Ecuadorians migrating irregularly across the southwest border; in 2023, that number rose to 117,487, mounting to 124,023 encounters in 2024. These are the numbers of a population driven from their homes by insecurity: they desire to live in safety, without worrying about being kidnapped or having their family members disappear.

Exhibit 9

Annual Results Report

2024

Ecuador

Acknowledgements

UNHCR would like to thank all the stakeholders that contributed data and evidence to this report and reviewed their progress against the joint results of the strategy, including forcibly displaced and stateless people, host communities and host governments, United Nations agencies, and international and national non-governmental organizations, civil society and private sector. Their contributions enable us to create positive changes in the lives of the people we serve.

Contact us

www.unhcr.org

Note:

The baseline values presented in this document reflect previous year's progress when available. If such data is not available, strategy baseline values are used instead.

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- 4.1 - Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

Section 1: Context and Overview

1.1 Changes to the Operational Context

With weakened state institutions, Ecuador has seen a sharp increase in organized crime, leading to unprecedented levels of violence. Enduring structural problems and limited social rights have caused chronic discontent, prompting many Ecuadorians to leave the country. This exodus is now further driven by escalating violence.

In January 2024, following a surge in violence, including the takeover of a state-owned TV channel, President Noboa declared an “internal armed conflict” and labeled 22 criminal groups as “terrorists.” Several localized states of emergency have been declared since. While overall homicides have decreased, extortions, child recruitment, and kidnappings have risen, and the security situation remains challenging, particularly at the community level.

In 2024, Ecuador entered a political campaign for the presidential and national assembly elections in February 2025 and a second round in April. UNHCR has been adapting its protection and solutions response to the security situation, engaging with community leaders, and limiting support in livelihoods to avoid extortion of beneficiaries.

Ecuador continues to witness the forced displacement of people seeking safety. Ecuador remains the main country of asylum for Colombians, recognizing the largest number of refugees globally (an estimated 75,000 according to the Government’s historical figures). 2024 saw the highest number of asylum claims from Colombians on record since 2014, with nearly 7,000. Despite concerns of an influx of Venezuelans due to the July 2024 Presidential Elections, arrivals average 600 per day, with most exiting towards other countries. UNHCR worked with the Ecuadorian government on regularization exercises, including a new decree in August 2024. Ecuadorians continue to be internally displaced or leave the country, with over 103,000 pending asylum applications from Ecuadorians, by mid-2024, in the United States of America and Spain, citing violence and extortion by criminal gangs.

1.2. Progress Against the Desired Impact

1. Impact Area: Attaining Favorable Protection Environments

Forcibly displaced people receive protection according to international standards and in line with their rights and specific needs.

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2024)
1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%

In 2024, UNHCR and partners registered 48,515 forcibly displaced people, representing a decrease of approximately 19% from those registered in 2023. Around 71% had unmet basic needs, including legal status, education, or severe medical conditions. Nearly 65% of those assisted were Venezuelan, 25% Colombian, and 10% other nationalities. UNHCR supported asylum authorities through the Quality Assurance Initiative (QAI), enhancing reception and civil registration. 14,486 individuals were registered with protection needs, an increase compared to the 10,740 in 2023, including 4,117 recognized as refugees, reducing the asylum backlog to 6,997 cases. Refugee recognition rates increased to 69%, and processing times decreased to about five months.

Lack of documentation and regular status remained key barriers. Ecuador continued regularizing mostly Venezuelans with technical and financial support from UNHCR and IOM, providing temporary residence visas (VIRTE). The government registered 259,084 individuals, issued 199,000 migratory stay certificates, and 95,809 temporary residence visas. A new regularization program, VIRTE II, was launched in August 2024 to benefit 100,000 individuals who could not apply for the VIRTE visa.

According to the 2023 Results Monitoring Survey (RMS), 75% of respondents were aware of specialized services to address violence against women and girls. In 2024, UNHCR supported 2,903 survivors through specialized services and protection shelters. Coordination with the Ministry of Women and Human Rights was reinforced to improve access to services for women and girls through Centros Violeta. Child protection efforts included advocacy for the regularization of unaccompanied and separated children. However, the ministries have yet to reach a consensus on the procedure. Child protection case management was strengthened, achieving a BIA process in 70.2% of cases, with 21.7% requiring alternative care measures. In 2024, 122 adolescents received direct support for protection.

2. Impact Area: Realizing Rights in Safe Environments

Most vulnerable forcibly displaced people are able to cover their basic needs and access rights, including health and education.

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2024)
2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	16.55%	16.55%
2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	79.71%	79.71%

Direct subsistence support enabled the most vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers to cover part of their survival needs. The operation targeted 10,636 individuals/3,024 households with the assistance.

The PDM confirmed 42% of the people assisted were able to cover half or more of their basic needs with 90.1% being able to access the required goods and services. Although, thanks to the assistance, 91% of the households reported improvements in their living conditions and 89% noted a reduction in stress levels, most households (98%) reported having had to recur to negative coping mechanisms. The gap between the assistance provided and the cost of living was partially mitigated through coordination between UNHCR and the World Food Programme through the provision of food vouchers for part of the population assisted, even though unmet needs still represented a challenge for most of the households.

Beyond the policy of universality and gratuity that guarantees access to health services for all people, including those in human mobility, there are serious limitations to making this right effective. On the one hand, there is a process of state weakening, with the reduction of budget allocations for the social sector, which limits the quality and coverage of these services. On the other hand, the presence of criminal groups in certain territories has created a context of insecurity, violence, and criminality, particularly affecting the education sector, forcing parents to withdraw their children from schools.

Based on the Results Monitoring Survey (RMS) conducted in 2023, 65% of children were enrolled in the educational system. According to the Ministry of Education, 53,013 Venezuelan children were enrolled for the 2023-2024 period which is 2,746 fewer than in the 2022-2023 period. In terms of health, RMS data from 2023, it shows 79% measles coverage and 97% professional childbirth care.

4. Impact Area: Securing Solutions

Forcibly displaced people achieve self-reliance and progressively find durable solutions in resilient and cohesive communities.

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2024)
4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,427	3,878
4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Unknow	9
4.3b Number of refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	70,649	73,051

Socio-economic integration efforts focused on creating dignified job and entrepreneurship opportunities for refugees while strengthening strategic collaboration with development actors.

Between 2023 and 2024, refugees access to decent work increased by 7 percentage points, reaching 31% of the forcibly displaced population. UNHCR supported 6,050 individuals through business and entrepreneurship training (3,612), employment counselling (1,996), and technical training (442). The private sector network expanded to 170 companies and a coalition of 16 local governments was formed to promote inclusive policies.

Collaboration with development actors, like the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), CAF, and BMZ-GIZ proved useful to promote the inclusion of refugees in government projects and/or local development strategies in the education, labour market and social protection sectors. Working across the humanitarian-development nexus has contributed to responding effectively to the needs of forcibly displaced and stateless people and to find durable solutions for those with the intention to stay in Ecuador.

UNHCR launched a strengthened version of “Un Mundo Posible,” integrating new initiatives like the ToolBox, launched at the end of 2024, to support advocacy efforts in different levels and across several audiences in settings like education institutions, health centers, media, and others. Through an integrated

and streamlined message, UNHCR was able to influence discourse across several audiences.

Resettlement and complementary pathways were also part of the solutions strategy of the operation. In 2024, 11,744 people were submitted for resettlement to the United States of America (USA), Australia, Canada and New Zealand and 3,878 were resettled to these countries. Regarding complementary pathways, 4 individuals were accepted under Canada's Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot and 9 individuals departed to the USA through the Welcome Corps programme.

Other Core Impact Indicators

Country	Population Type	Baseline	Actual(2024)
3.1 Proportion of people who have the right to decent work			
Ecuador	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	23.61%	31.22%
3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary education			
Ecuador	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	78.42%	78.42%
3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education			
Ecuador	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	48.95%	48.95%
3.3 Proportion of people feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark			
Ecuador	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	34.47%	34.47%

1.3 Challenges to Achieving Impacts

Ecuador continues to have a favourable protection environment, but with very limited resources to adequately respond to international protection and solution needs and the growing phenomena of internal displacement. Therefore, the country is very dependent on international financing cooperation.

Challenges in 2024 were a continuation of 2023, in terms of governance, limited access to rights, structural socio-economic difficulties and a stagnated economy at 0 growth and further deterioration of the security situation prompting the declaration of an internal conflict. Despite measures undertaken by the Government, no major improvements had been observed, beyond the number of homicides. Nevertheless, territorial disputes, extorsions, kidnappings and recruitment continued, mostly in coastal areas. Insecurity not only affected refugees and migrants, but also Ecuadorians who resorted to displaced internally or to abandon the country. UNHCR had to adapt its localized strategy by actively engaging with communities where the security situation allowed for interventions, strengthening institutions including local governments, increasing collaboration with local organizations and leaders and trying to foster positive change and support building of resilience. However, addressing root causes of violence, and implementing interventions to address social, economic, and environmental factors remains unresolved in Ecuador.

Regarding extreme weather events, 2024 was reported as the driest year in the last 60 years, provoking as of September, an energy crisis with electricity blackouts of up to 14 hours daily. The impact of the electricity crisis called for the operation to find back up mechanisms to guarantee power supply for registration and other service delivery activities.

1.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

Partnerships with key collaborators were essential to UNHCR's ability to achieve results for displaced people in Ecuador. This included UNHCR's leadership and coordination role through the R4V national platform in Ecuador (GTRM, Grupo de Trabajo para Refugiados y Migrantes). Throughout 2024, UNHCR exercised leadership roles in the national GTRM in Ecuador and its sectors and working groups (particularly in Protection, Shelter, Integration, Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), Information Management (IM) and Communications) as well as through co-leadership of ten local GTRMs (in Quito, Guayaquil, Tulcán, Lago Agrio, Esmeraldas, Ibarra, Ambato, Manta, Huaquillas and Cuenca) together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This network was key to coordinating the response of 70+ organizations participating in the Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants (RMRP) in Ecuador, with UN agencies, international and national NGOs, including 12 refugee- and migrant-led organizations.

In 2024, UNHCR closely coordinated with 16 non-governmental organizations, including three international and 13 local organizations. A key milestone was the first implementation of grant agreements with 5 grassroots organizations, addressing various issues like healthcare and community protection.

UNHCR coordinated with development actors like the World Bank and the IDB and collaborated closely with government authorities (including the Ministries of the Interior, Social Inclusion, Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility, Public Health, Education, Women and Human Rights and the local Autonomous Decentralized Governments) to ensure the complementarity of UNHCR's activities in support of the integration of displaced people into national and local development plans.

UNHCR also coordinated activities through the Humanitarian Country Team, the UN Country Team and other mechanisms and initiatives facilitated by the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Ecuador.

Section 2: Results

2.1. Outcomes and Achievements

1. Outcome Area: Access to Territory, Reg. and Documentation

Forcibly displaced people are timely identified and referred to protection services

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
1.1 Proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	98.53%	98.00%	98.53%
1.3 Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator	
	Actual (2024)	
01.1.1 Number of people registered on an individual basis		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	48,369	
01.2.1 Number of people supported to obtain civil status, identity or legal status documentation		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4,676	

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2024, Ecuador maintained an open border policy for asylum-seekers and refugees, generally complying with protection standards at entry points. UNHCR worked with government institutions to improve international protection delivery and promote sustainability, ensuring forcibly displaced people had access to registration, documentation, legal services, and refugee status determination.

48,515 refugees, asylum seekers and others displaced were registered by UNHCR, a decrease from 60,000 in 2023. This reduction reflects a decline in arrivals, a reduced UNHCR and partner capacity, as well as heightened security risks, including recruitment by criminal groups and invisible borders, combined with limited resources, which restricted individual freedom of movement and access to UNHCR and partner offices.

Despite these challenges, new SOPs enabled UNHCR and partners to carry out data collection, map specific protection needs, and enhance referrals for local integration. Registration practices and data interpretation were standardized, facilitating informed decision-making and situation analysis. Data quality monitoring tools improved overall accuracy by 25%, increasing from 66% to 83% across field offices and partners, strengthening protection responses.

UNHCR worked closely with asylum authorities to implement the Quality Assurance Initiative (QAI), developing adequate reception arrangements, including inter-institutional protocols to identify and refer forcibly displaced people at entry and border points, strengthen civil registration and address rights violations. Few protection incidents related to arrivals at airports were reported, and authorities generally guaranteed access to the territory for those seeking asylum. Only five cases of refoulement incidents were registered.

UNHCR supported institutions mandated to provide protection and specialized services for people with specific protection needs, survivors of violence, and children at risk, representing 71% of those registered by UNHCR and partners. This support enabled individuals to exercise their rights and access services, addressing unmet basic needs (28,698 people) and lack of legal documentation (16,028).

Access to registration and documentation for asylum-seekers and refugees was generally guaranteed by law and accessible in practice. However, practical challenges remained for people in remote or border locations, who lacked internet connectivity or needed access to information on their rights or alternative protection pathways.

2. Outcome Area: Status Determination

Forcibly displaced people have access to fair and efficient refugee status determination procedures

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
2.1 Average processing time (in days) from registration to first instance asylum decision			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	312.00	200.00	298.00
2.2 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to legal representation			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
2.3 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to an effective appeal mechanism after first instance rejection of their claim			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2024)
02.1.1 UNHCR has provided capacity development support to strengthen the national status determination system(s), in accordance with international standards	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

During 2024, the Government of Ecuador registered 14,486 people with potential international protection needs (a substantive increase compared to 2023 mostly by an increase in Colombian applications), recognized 4,117 individuals as refugees (over 12% more than the past year) and reduced the backlog of pending cases to 6,997 people (an 18% reduction from 2023), continuing the positive trends in asylum indicators since 2022. Similarly, among asylum-seekers, Colombian registrations increased continuously since 2021, with 6,878 applications in 2024 due mostly to the grave deterioration of the security situation in

that country, while Venezuelan applications also scored a considerable increase compared to the previous year, with 6,958 new asylum applications in 2024 (due mostly to a strong advocacy for access and the discontinuation of alternative pathways like the regularization). Refugee recognition rates rose, achieving an overall of 69% for all nationalities (compared to the 67.5% of 2023), attributed mainly by the high recognition rate for the Colombian caseload (above 89%). At the same time, the number of Venezuelans recognized as refugees presented a slight decrease compared to 2023, at 24% of all applications, possibly in line with the increase of registrations from that nationality.

Very positively, the average processing time for protection cases was significantly reduced from previous years, to about five months from registration to first instance decision (about just three months from the eligibility interview to the determination decision). In addition, UNHCR continued to support an initiative initiated in 2023 to improve and update government records systems, clarify the current number of asylum-seekers still awaiting decisions and close other inactive cases within the refugee status determination process.

UNHCR provided the Directorate for International Protection (DPIN) with on-site office support with processing needs (such as Guayaquil and Lago Agrio) and reinforced support to deploy mobile registration and eligibility brigades. In total, twelve brigades were carried out (Esmeraldas, Lago Agrio, Machala, Santo Domingo, Manta, Guayaquil, Azogues and San Lorenzo) registering 4,966 people, a significant increase from approximately 3,600 last year, out of which DPIN carried out 1,073 eligibility interviews. UNHCR partners including NRC and HIAS provided additional support and assistance to complement the brigades, particularly through legal and documentation services.

UNHCR facilitated several operational field visits by DPIN central authorities to their field units, to carry out capacity-building activities. For the second year in a row, UNHCR also conducted a protection workshop for DPIN staff, bringing together field and central-level colleagues.

UNHCR also consolidated its role (voice but no vote) in the periodic meetings of the Asylum Eligibility Commission.

4. Outcome Area: Gender-based Violence

Gender-based violence survivors have access to specialized protection responses in a safe environment

Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator			
Population Type	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
4.1 Proportion of people who know where to access available GBV services			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	75.37%	75.00%	75.37%
4.3 Proportion of survivors who are satisfied with GBV case management services			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	84.85%	100.00%	93.01%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
04.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from specialized GBV programmes	
Host Community	4,486
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	3,959

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2024, UNHCR carried out interventions aligned with the pillars of Prevention, Risk Mitigation, and Response to violence against women and girls, ensuring safe and comprehensive actions for 2,902 survivors, including refugees, asylum-seekers, migrants, and host community members.

UNHCR ensured a comprehensive case management framework through continuous capacity-building of case managers, development and implementation of tools, and updating guidelines and standard operating procedures for incidents of violence. This included launching a relocation protocol for survivors and their dependents as an exceptional protection mechanism. According to proGres, 1,064 cases were managed nationally. 8,445 individuals benefited from specialized services, including social work, psychological support, legal counseling, and shelter in safe houses. A satisfaction survey showed 93% of survivors were satisfied or very satisfied of the services received.

Furthermore, UNHCR conducted training sessions for personnel specialized to protect women and girls from violence as well as those who are non-expert in the area. These sessions ensured appropriate and sensitive interventions, such as managing safely the disclosure of incidents of violence. A total of 1,960 individuals from organizations and institutions received training. As part of the Safe from the Start initiative, three safe spaces for women and girls were equipped in Lago Agrio, Cuenca, and Huaquillas, ensuring their operation aligned with interagency minimum standards.

The prevention of violence against women and girls aimed at strengthening community interventions and increasing awareness about harmful behavioral patterns that perpetuate violence. These efforts reached 4,552 refugees, asylum seekers, and host community members. A key highlight was the first-ever implementation of the Engaging Men through Accountable Practices (EMAP) model in Ecuador, including a national training for trainers supported by IRC and a pilot rollout in Esmeraldas. Additionally, two women-led organizations in Manabí and Santo Domingo received grant agreements to implement community-based prevention programmes and establish support networks for women and girls.

Regarding interagency coordination, collaboration was significant to protect women and girls from violence with initiatives with local governments in Carchi, Imbabura, Esmeraldas, Sucumbíos, Manabí, Pichincha, and El Oro. The successful implementation of the 2024 work plan with the Ministry of Women and Human Rights focused on training technical teams, providing advisory support on forced displacement, developing content, supplying equipment to enhance services, and distributing informational materials on protection pathways and available support services. UNHCR also co-led the technical working group on the elimination of violence against women (MEGECI) and continued to provide technical support to other interagency platforms, including the UN Gender Working Group and the Gender-based Violence Subgroup of the Refugees and Migrants Working Group (GTRM).

5. Outcome Area: Child Protection

Unaccompanied, separated or at-risk children and adolescents have access to efficient protection responses

Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator			
Population Type	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
5.1 Proportion of children at heightened risk who are supported by a Best Interests Procedure			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	55.41%	99.00%	70.25%
5.2 Proportion of children who participate in community-based child protection programmes			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	18.53%	34.00%	18.53%
5.3 Proportion of unaccompanied and separated children who are in an alternative care arrangement			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	27.26%	49.00%	21.72%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
05.1.1 Number of children and caregivers who received child protection services	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	5,888

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

UNHCR strengthened case management for children at risk, reaching 70.2% of unaccompanied and separated children. Staff specialized in child protection conducted a best interest assessment and initiated case management. 21.7% of unaccompanied and separated children benefitted from alternative care in strict coordination with the child protection authorities of the Ecuadorian State. Additionally, 122 unaccompanied adolescents over 16 years old, received subsistence support with a protection component. Furthermore, UNHCR trained 934 individuals working for key organizations and institutions on child protection.

On the other hand, insecurity and violence caused by criminal groups in locations increased protection risks for children and adolescents. Mental health issues, school dropouts, exposure to substance use and abuse, and the risk of recruitment, use, or exploitation of children by criminal groups are some of the key protection risks to which this population is exposed. In this context, UNHCR strengthened the participation and involvement of adolescents in their community. Sport for Protection was a central axis in these community interventions, with actions from different disciplines integrating protection concepts into sports activities. UNHCR has also invested significant efforts in developing key alliances with sports actors, including with the Ministry of Sports, further enhancing the inclusion of children, adolescents, and young people in sports programmes across the country. According to the 2023 RMS, 19% of children and adolescents are estimated to have participated in community-based child protection programmes, i.e. 4,942 children and adolescents were reached.

6. Outcome Area: Safety and Access to Justice

Forcibly displaced people have access to the justice system, legal services and state protection mechanism

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
06.1.1 Number of people who received legal assistance	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	62,060

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Ecuador has a solid legal framework to protect forcibly displaced and stateless people and a long-standing asylum tradition. The country has recognized asylum and other protection principles (such as non-refoulement, non-discrimination, access to documentation, and rights, among others), at the constitutional

level, and has established specific legislation (LOMH 2021 and its Regulation) on Asylum and Statelessness. The country is also party to all main human rights instruments at the global and regional levels, providing complementarity in international protection to those in need.

The 1951 Refugee Convention and the Cartagena refugee definitions are set in law and applied in practice. National legislation provides refugee status and stateless determination procedures consistent with international standards.

In 2024, in addition to carrying out the Quality Assurance Initiative (QAI) and through a more robust collaboration with the Directorate for International Protection (DPIN), UNHCR developed strengthened working relations with other relevant justice system actors, including the National Assembly and the Judiciary Council, as well as with human rights institutions that have constitutional oversight of administrative decisions, such as the Public Defender’s Office and the Ombudsperson’s Office. These collaborations helped to preclude potential challenges in legislation and protection frameworks, by anticipating issues of concern and addressing them through informal means.

In terms of the operational response to displaced people in need of legal services, UNHCR strengthened its programme with the Public Defender’s Office. Thanks to this collaboration, in 2024, 63,123 displaced people accessed legal services and representation (an increase of around 23% from 2023). Out of these 63,123, 9,592 received direct legal representation and 5,431 other forms of legal counsel, while 8,449 received legal services and representation within the asylum system and 6,574 in regularization mechanisms. Within the asylum system, 6,454 people received direct legal representation and 1,997 received other forms of legal counsel. Most interventions supported asylum-seekers and refugees access the asylum system, presenting appeals, renewing documentation, and prepare for interviews. In the regularization pipeline, 3,140 people received direct legal representation and 3,434 received other forms of legal counsel. Most interventions provided counsel in regularization, preparing and following up on applications, as well as appeals.

During 2024, UNHCR was involved in drafting and/or providing comments on several pieces of legislation, including the reform of the Human Mobility Law (Ley Orgánica de Movilidad Humana) and the protocols for access to international protection at airports and other entry points.

7. Outcome Area: Community Engagement and Women's Empowerment

Host communities and forcibly displaced people develop strategies to mitigate violence and insecurity risks.

Inclusive community-based networks are strengthened to mitigate protection, security and environmental risks and facilitate social cohesion

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
7.1 Extent participation of displaced and stateless people across programme phases is supported.			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate
7.2 Proportion of people who have access to safe feedback and response mechanisms			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	6.50%	14.00%	6.50%
7.3 Proportion of women participating in leadership/management structures			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	55.76%	100.00%	55.76%

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2024)
07.1.1 Number of people consulted through Participatory Assessments	
Host Community	140
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	683

07.2.1 Number of people who used UNHCR- supported feedback & response mechanisms to voice their needs/ concerns/feedback	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4,932
07.3.1 Number of people who received protection services	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	62,060

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

UNHCR Ecuador carried out community interventions across 13 provinces, reaching 16,271 displaced people and host community members. These interventions supported diverse profiles, including people with disabilities, Afro-descendants, and indigenous people with initiatives that addressed discrimination, xenophobia, and violence exacerbated by insecurity, while fostering peaceful coexistence, solidarity, inclusion, and creating safe community spaces and support networks.

A key priority of the community-based protection strategy was advancing localization initiatives to strengthen and support organizational processes led by displaced individuals and local community members. These initiatives were carried out through organizations and community structures that foster integration, rebuild social cohesion, prevent violence, and promote collective action. A total of 72 community-based organizations received support, including refugee-led and women-led organizations, which were provided with technical assistance, capacity-building, and essential equipment. Additionally, five organizations received grant agreements to enhance their local programmes, focusing on community inclusion, sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention and response, and protection of women and girls from violence. Moreover, five women-led organizations from Quito, Santo Domingo, Lago Agrio, and Cuenca participated in global and regional platforms addressing gender equality, the protection of women and girls from violence, and access to asylum.

Community consultation exercises ensured meaningful participation of forcibly displaced people across different ages, genders, and diverse backgrounds. A total of 823 people nationwide took part in these consultations, offering insights into various challenges, needs, risks, and potential solutions. The most significant initiative was the 2024 Participatory Assessment, which engaged 327 individuals on issues related to confinement and forced displacement caused by insecurity and organized criminal groups. Among the participants, 51% identified as female and 49% as male.

Feedback mechanisms remained essential for two-way communication with displaced individuals. 11,065 people accessed relevant information through the UNHCR chatbot service, and there were 487,751 visits to the HELP page. Surveys among HELP users revealed that 64% were women, 22% had relocated within Ecuador due to economic or security concerns, and 64% intended to leave the country for similar reasons.

8. Outcome Area: Well-Being and Basic Needs

Forcibly displaced families improve access to basic needs and relevant services

The emergency response to forcibly displaced persons is relevant and efficient, including climate change actions, and mitigation of violence and insecurity risks

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
8.1 Proportion of people that receive cash transfers and/or non-food items			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4.16%	6.00%	6.40%
8.2 Proportion of people with primary reliance on clean (cooking) fuels and technology			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	98.57%	100.00%	98.57%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator		Actual (2024)
Population Type		
08.1.1 Number of people who received cash assistance		
Host Community		575
Refugees and Asylum-seekers		19,878
08.2.1 Number of people who received non-food items		
Host Community		1,812
Refugees and Asylum-seekers		10,142

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

The 2024 PDM confirmed that 42% of assisted households covered at least half of their basic needs, and while 90.1% accessed essential goods and services, 98% relied on negative coping mechanisms. Among the most severe, 64% accrued rent debt, 58% sought financial help from strangers, 47% sold productive assets, and 40% withdrew children from school. Additionally, 40% of households reported rising prices, particularly for food, further straining their ability to meet basic needs.

To respond, UNHCR and partners strengthened safe reception facilities in Tulcán, Ibarra, Lago Agrio, Quito, Santo Domingo, Cuenca, Guayaquil, and Huaquillas, providing temporary shelter to 13,736 people. To further provide safe spaces, infrastructure improvements and equipment upgrades were carried out in 21 additional shelter facilities: 10 for families in transit or homelessness, 6 for unaccompanied children, 4 for survivors of violence, and 1 for LGBTIQ+ individuals. Moreover, 8,991 people received food in community kitchens supported by UNHCR.

Coordination with national and local stakeholders enhanced emergency response, and UNHR trained 281 individuals in shelter management with a focus on emergency response, protection and security.

Aligned with the UNHCR Strategic Framework for Climate Action, efforts were made to reduce environmental impact. Procurement was optimized by prioritizing sustainable materials and suppliers, while framework agreements streamlined logistics and costs. A key milestone in the strategy was the installation of emergency solar backup systems in 5 UNHCR’s field offices, 1 shelter, and 1 community center across Ecuador, ensuring uninterrupted critical functions during severe power outages caused by the 2024 drought. Looking forward, this initiative enhances preparedness, reduces carbon emissions, and strengthens resilience against extreme weather events.

Guided by robust data-collection tools and close coordination with the Humanitarian Country Team and GTRM platforms, UNHCR continued delivering evidence-based interventions that integrate preparedness against extreme weather events, disasters and displacement, mitigate risks, and reinforce reception systems. These efforts underscore UNHCR’s commitment to sustainability, durable solutions, and long-term impact for displaced populations and host communities.

10. Outcome Area: Healthy Lives

Forcibly displaced people improve their access to primary health care services, and especially to maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health and mental health and psychosocial support

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
10.1 Proportion of children aged 9 months to five years who have received measles vaccination			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	79.17%	100.00%	79.17%
10.2. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	96.97%	100.00%	96.97%

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2024)
10.2.1 Number of consultations in UNHCR supported mental health and psychosocial support services	
Host Community	1,438
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	7,690

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

According to RMS data from 2023 health indicators show a coverage of 79% for the measles vaccine in children aged 9 months to 5 years, and 97% for women with live newborns who received professional care during childbirth. Ecuador continued to maintain universal and free access to the public health system for all people, including refugees and other forcibly displaced people. From a qualitative approach through various consultations with people, it is evident that the economic crisis, the reduction of resources for the sector, as well as issues of insecurity and violence, affected the possibility of maintaining universality and gratuity, resulting in health services with many deficiencies that prevent people from receiving timely responses to their health needs. Complaints about the quality and timeliness of health services were widespread. In this context, UNHCR sustained support for primary health centers in areas with a significant presence of refugees. Infrastructure and equipment support was provided to the Augusto Egas Health Center in Santo Domingo, where the emergency room and the first reception room for survivors of violence were optimized. This allowed for increased service coverage. Additionally, 15 services in the northern and southern borders received support in sexual and reproductive health supplies to improve their response capacity within the framework of the HIV Prevention and Response Programme. In Sexual and Reproductive Health, the focus was on HIV prevention in key populations, working with sex workers, LGBTIQ+ individuals (especially transgender people), and adolescents and young people. Through training and awareness sessions, a total of 957 refugees, other forcibly displaced people, and host community members were reached. Additionally, 451 people from organizations were trained. These efforts were complemented with the distribution of 805 HIV prevention kits to people participating in the processes. Finally, significant efforts were made to sustain community-based psychosocial support mechanisms using scalable WHO tools and strengthening the articulation of this community level with psychosocial support services through partners and public health services. 573 psychological consultations were provided. Additionally, psychosocial support was also provided to people in shelters, reaching a total of 9,128.

11. Outcome Area: Education

Vulnerable children and adolescents have improved access to, stay in school, and completion of primary and secondary education in a safe and inclusive environment.

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
11.2 Proportion of children and young people enrolled in the national education system			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	65.11%	100.00%	65.11%

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2024)
11.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from education programming	
Host Community	1,870
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	272

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

According to RMS data from 2023, school enrolment of children and adolescents reached 65%. This figure was already lower than the national average, and considering the changes in the context, especially related to the presence of criminal groups and their activities in educational environments, it has been qualitatively identified that families, for security reasons, are deciding to withdraw their children from school. This is affecting both the refugee population and other forcibly displaced persons, as well as the host population. Similarly, it is important to consider that last year there was no Education Can not Wait funding for education interventions (within the framework of MYRP phase 2, which began in 2024). This led to a reorientation of UNHCR's intervention in education. The application of the community model for educational inclusion was maintained through our registration and community-based protection processes, identifying children outside the educational system who were channelled through different actors to achieve their access to the system, and through the protection system to respond to certain specific protection needs that were identified in parallel.

Additionally, the training processes using the "Respiramos Inclusión" (We Breathe Inclusion) methodology were maintained, with necessary adaptations to apply this tool in community contexts and other institutions beyond the initial educational framework. This adaptation allowed for the integration of educational interventions with the "Sport for Protection" work, which began its implementation in 2023X. as a result, the methodology was expanded to include community and institutional actors, from educational, municipal, and sports related sectors. Within this framework, a total of 2,142 people were trained, as well as 756 children and adolescents from educational institutions.

13. Outcome Area: Self Reliance, Economic Inclusion and Livelihoods

Forcibly displaced people improve their ability to generate income in conditions of safety and dignity and are integrated into local socioeconomic networks

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
13.1. Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	29.26%	100.00%	29.26%
13.2. Proportion of people who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4.43%	19.00%	4.43%

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2024)
13.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions	
Host Community	2,578
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4,464

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Despite Ecuador's security and economic challenges, in 2024, UNHCR facilitated economic inclusion for 8,412 forcibly displaced people in 10 cities, indirectly benefiting over 22,000 family members and dependents.

UNHCR provided 3,612 displaced people with business training and entrepreneurship services and distributed financial capital to 201 entrepreneurs to grow their businesses. Through the initiative Purchase with Purpose, UNHCR facilitated access in 58 local markets retailers for 155 refugee and host community entrepreneurs, 32 new businesses obtained licenses to operate, and more than 1,200 entrepreneurs were supported with commercialization opportunities. Together with HIAS, UNHCR provided employment counseling to 1,411 people and 7 job fairs reached 1,500 people with more than 80 companies involved. The employability route project had trained and supported nearly 1,000 people, 500 of whom were formally hired.

UNHCR also enhanced business opportunities in the Green Economy, engaged 234 people in ecological initiatives, supported a Community of Circular Economy in Cuenca with 80+ entrepreneurs involved, while in the northern border 5 agrobusiness (20 households) from Colombian refugees were reinforced. In Manta, the "Guardians of the Ecosystem" solar panel programme empowered refugees and locals with skills for green jobs opportunities.

In 2024, UNHCR strengthened partnerships with financial service providers (FSPs), helping 611 refugees open bank accounts. UNHCR supported the National Financial Strategy and assisted FSPs in adopting November 2023 regulations that ease documentation requirements for refugees for accessing savings accounts.

UNHCR expanded its private sector network from 120 to 170 companies that, in a context of unemployment and economic stagnation, demonstrates UNHCR maintained the agenda of refugee inclusion relevant. The third edition of the Inclusive Company Seal recognized 102 companies nationwide as having positive hiring and employment practices with refugees. In addition, 1,260 people were assisted through Practical Training with Companies, a programme that promotes the development of technical and vocational skills through a combination of technical and practical training with private enterprises.

In the public sector, UNHCR worked closely with 19 local governments and expanded public economic services across 10 provinces. Additionally, UNHCR established a group of 16 local governments committed to developing solutions for forcibly displaced people and promoting inclusive policies. UNHCR also intensified advocacy efforts with governmental entities. For example, the Ministry of Production integrated refugees into public services (National Entrepreneurship Registry, trade fairs and exhibitions); the National Secretary of Higher Education streamlined the process for recognizing university diplomas; and the Ecuadorian Institute for Social Security revised its taxonomy to offer alternative codifications for asylum-seekers.

15. Outcome Area: Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

An increased number of forcibly displaced people are resettled through strengthened and efficient mechanisms

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
15.1 Number of refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,962	11,060	11,744

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2024)
15.1.1 Country issues machine-readable travel documents	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Resettlement remained a key component of UNHCR's protection and solutions strategy in 2024. Ecuador continued to surpass figures recorded in previous years, submitting 11,744 individuals to the United States of America, Australia, Canada and New Zealand compared to 2,972 and 1,585 individuals in 2023 and 2022 respectively. UNHCR Ecuador met and exceeded resettlement quotas for 2024. The number of individuals departing to resettlement countries also increased to 3,878 individuals departed in 2024.

Throughout 2024, most cases were submitted under the Safe Mobility Initiative (SMI), which was launched on 18 October 2023. Through the SMI, refugees and migrants could self-identify and register on the SMO portal for consideration by the Government of the United States for humanitarian and other regular pathways. The programme was opened for Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan, Venezuelan, and Colombian nationals who were in Ecuador on or before 18 October 2023 and who had applied for asylum or initiated their regularization process in the country. By December 2024, 55,915 individuals had completed applications, of which 33,219 individuals were assigned to UNHCR, 11,271 individuals were assigned to IOM and 11,425 did not meet the eligibility criteria and/or were not assigned to either organization. Between January and December 2024, a total of 11,206 were submitted for resettlement to the United States. The primary nationalities submitted for resettlement consideration in 2024 were Venezuelans and Colombians, followed by Cubans.

UNHCR also continued to receive protection referrals from field offices and partners, particularly people with urgent protection needs. Therefore, the resettlement programme continued to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. Legal and/or physical protection needs was the primary submission category in 2024,

reflecting the limited of access to a durable legal status for many displaced people in Ecuador and the increase of physical protection needs resulting from the deteriorating security situation in the country. Many applicants reported facing multiple displacements within Ecuador due to extortion and threats of recruitment by gangs. A notable proportion of cases also continued to be submitted under the Survivors of Violence and/or Torture and Women and Girls at Risk categories.

In February 2024, 200 individuals attended the virtual job fair, organized in coordination with TalentLift in order to identify possible applicants for Canada's Economic Mobility Pathway Pilot, following which 4 candidates were accepted to the programme. Moreover, between November and December 2024, 6 informative sessions (3 in-person, 3 virtual) were carried out together with WUSC to identify candidates for the Welcome Corps on Campus education pathway.

16. Outcome Area: Integration and other Local Solutions

Forcibly displaced people have access to alternative migration pathways and documentation that supports their local integration

Needs of forcibly displaced people and host communities are addressed within development agendas and included in social protection programs and policies

Public opinion and host communities have a more inclusive approach of forcibly displaced people

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
16.1 Proportion of people with secure tenure rights to housing and/or land			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	13.36%	33.00%	13.36%
16.2 Proportion of people covered by national social protection systems			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers		4.00%	1.79%

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2024)
16.1.1. Government Social protection system is inclusive of forcibly displaced and stateless people	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Partially
16.2.1 Number of people supported by UNHCR to acquire nationality, permanent residency status or to access naturalization procedures	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	133

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Lack of documentation and irregular status remained key barriers to protection and integration for many refugees and migrants. To address this, the Government finalized the registration and regularization exercise by April 2024, with support from UNHCR and IOM. This initiative registered 259,084 individuals and issued 199,000 migratory certificates and 95,809 temporary residence visas (VIRTE). Due to the high number of individuals who could not access the regularization, the government launched VIRTE II in August 2024, expected to benefit 100,000 additional individuals.

As part of a UN initiative, UNHCR promoted the inclusion of forcibly displaced people in the National Development Plan 2024-2025. The World Bank, IDB, GIZ, and UNHCR furthered joint advocacy to maximize refugee inclusion in national and local agendas. The WB and UNHCR supported the government in issuing a ministerial agreement to recognize foreign university degrees (4,091 requests post-reform). The World Bank also involved UNHCR in a Social Safety Net project to improve refugee access to social programmes and economic inclusion opportunities. Additionally, the World Bank, UNHCR, and INEC published a study based on the 2022 Population Census to update the characterization of forcibly displaced people in Ecuador. IDB and UNHCR partnered to assist Manta and Quito in expanding socioeconomic opportunities and services for vulnerable people. GIZ and UNHCR linked their livelihoods strategies in Guayaquil and supported the implementation of the “Ordinance on People in Human Mobility” with the Prefecture of Azuay.

UNHCR's external engagement strategy aimed to drive support from media, private sector, sports entities, the Government, donors, and host communities through the Un Mundo Possible initiative. This included events, missions, interviews, and multimedia production. UNHCR developed tools to promote an inclusive approach, including a ToolBox with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and regular donor engagement briefings. UNHCR also formed alliances with sports teams and athletes to shape an inclusive narrative for people forced to flee. UNHCR reached over 3.2 million social media accounts through Instagram with nearly 700 digital products and achieved nearly 500 mentions in local media, saving the operation more than USD 620,000.

Other Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Baseline	Target(2024)	Actual(2024)
3.1 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol			
None	Broadly aligned	Broadly aligned	Broadly aligned
3.2 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness			
None	Broadly aligned	Broadly aligned	Broadly aligned

Other Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Actual (2024)
03.1.1 UNHCR has engaged in legislative and judicial processes to strengthen laws and policies for the protection of refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless people and/or the reduction and prevention of statelessness	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
09.1.1 Number of people who received shelter and housing assistance	
Host Community	241
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	13,495
14.1.1 Number of people who received counselling and/or information on voluntary repatriation	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0

2.2. Age, Gender and Diversity

UNHCR made key improvements in case registration and management under an Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD) approach, enhancing the identification and response to protection needs. The initial registration process was refined to minimize revictimization, especially for women, children, and LGBTIQ+ individuals, by integrating structured questions to assess risks and circumstances accurately. A detailed framework for addressing protection needs was developed with targeted training. Digital illiteracy was recognized as a specific protection need, facilitating tailored support for document management in regularization and asylum applications in Ecuador.

UNHCR conducted consultation exercises with diverse profiles to incorporate their perspectives on context, risks, needs, and solutions into programs. These consultations also explored issues related to confinement and forced displacement caused by violence and criminal groups in Ecuador. A total of 823 refugees, asylum seekers, and host community members were consulted, including children, adolescents, LGBTIQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, Indigenous and elderly people. 61% of those consulted were women, ensuring their voices were included.

ChatBot and Help remained primary feedback mechanisms for displaced people. Due to increasing insecurity, consultations from Ecuadorians were also recorded. In 2024, 498,816 interactions were registered on both platforms. A survey with 1,274 individuals through Help revealed 64% of users were women; 68% were Venezuelans, 18% Ecuadorians, and 12% Colombians. Mobile suggestion boxes were promoted in community activities to facilitate access for people with limited mobility. All feedback channels, including suggestion boxes, email, and telephone lines, served 4,932 individuals.

To protect survivors of violence, UNHCR implemented a Relocation Standard Operating Procedure for survivors and their dependents at the end of 2024. This SOP serves as an exceptional protection and case management mechanism.

Section 3: Resources

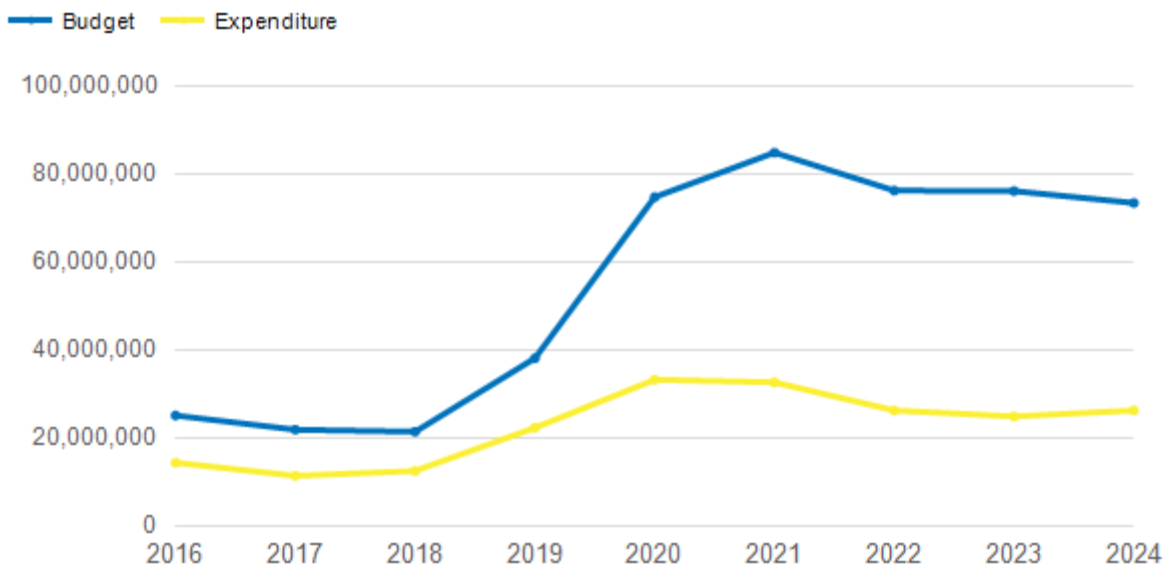
3.1 Financial Data

(Financial figures in USD)

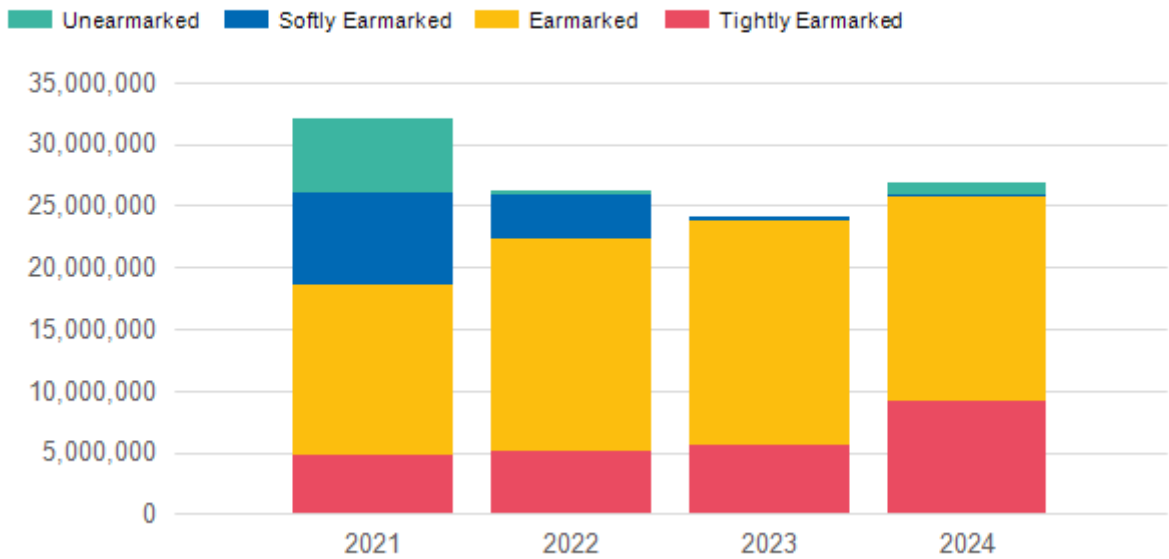
Impact Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
IA1: Protect	23,350,603	10,062,659	43.09%	10,062,659	100.00%
IA2: Assist	16,226,667	3,071,033	18.93%	3,071,033	100.00%
IA4: Solve	33,722,729	13,047,625	38.69%	13,047,625	100.00%
All Impact Areas		60,379			
Total	73,300,000	26,241,697	35.80%	26,181,317	99.77%

Outcome Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
OA1: Access/Doc	7,418,055	3,409,269	45.96%	3,409,269	100.00%
OA2: Status	3,317,777	1,661,495	50.08%	1,661,495	100.00%
OA4: GBV	3,119,881	1,644,667	52.72%	1,644,667	100.00%
OA5: Children	2,721,636	1,254,492	46.09%	1,254,492	100.00%
OA6: Justice	2,273,253	725,578	31.92%	725,578	100.00%
OA7: Community	6,986,661	2,235,288	31.99%	2,235,288	100.00%
OA8: Well-being	11,648,825	2,640,261	22.67%	2,640,261	100.00%
OA10: Health	781,394	185,274	23.71%	185,274	100.00%
OA11: Education	3,796,448	245,499	6.47%	245,499	100.00%
OA13: Livelihood	17,890,814	3,419,211	19.11%	3,419,211	100.00%
OA15: Resettle	4,820,073	5,754,682	119.39%	5,754,682	100.00%
OA16: Integrate	8,525,184	3,005,602	35.26%	3,005,602	100.00%
All Outcome Areas		60,379			
Total	73,300,000	26,241,697	35.80%	26,181,317	99.77%

Budget and Expenditure Trend



Contributions Trend by Type



3.2. Resources Overview

In 2024, UNHCR continued to prioritize operational needs by strengthening the government's registration capacity and providing life-saving support through subsistence support for vulnerable displaced populations. Upholding its mandate, UNHCR funded initiatives to improve access to the asylum system and enhance reception support, including emergency shelter, essential kits, and assistance to various humanitarian actors.

Despite these efforts, significant gaps remain, especially in the ability to meet the growing needs—particularly in regions affected by escalating violence, where large numbers of refugees and migrants

continue to seek safety and support.

Activities implemented through direct implementation represented 59% of the budget, while partner agreements and grants accounted for 41%. Of the budget for partners, international organizations implemented 68% of the budget, and the remaining 32% went to local and grassroots organizations. The response to the most vulnerable forcibly displaced populations, including separated and unaccompanied children and survivors of violence, was maintained through partnerships.

The operation managed to raise 36% of the overall operational requirements thanks to the support of donors. Despite all efforts, it continues to be challenging to raise funds from the private sector and to expand the donor base for the operation.

Section 4: Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

4.1 Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

Considering the prevailing context in Ecuador compounded with the constant reduction of funding, UNHCR needs to redouble its efforts in advocating for the maintenance of a favourable protection environment, enhance institutional capacity to respond to protection needs, and further the socio-economic inclusion of forcibly displaced people to promptly stabilize their situation and avoid risky coping mechanisms and dangerous onward movements.

Strategic alliances will be key to maintain and improve the protection and solutions environment including the private sector as well as development actors which are playing a key role in delivering funding to Ecuador with a refugee-protection and inclusion lens.

Violence and internal displacement, including of Ecuadorians is an issue UNHCR takes seriously, prompting the organization to commission a study to gather data on the magnitude of the phenomena; findings and recommendations of the study are still work in progress and should be factored in UNHCR's future strategy. However, funding would be required to implement such recommendations, other than advocacy to position the matter on the institutional agenda, to be able to set up a pertinent response.

In terms of solutions, the operation's focus was on improving access to regular documentation which remains key to access livelihoods opportunities. However, access to regular documentation remains a significant challenge. UNHCR will continue to advocate for longer and more sustainable options for regularization of forcibly displaced people beyond temporary and extraordinary procedures that have continued to be restrictive in the long run for many. Considering the 2025 presidential measure derogating the August 2024 decree (370) and stopping the regularization process, UNHCR will remain vigilant to opportunities to keep working with the new administration in finding sustainable regularization avenues for Venezuelans.



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Exhibit 10

Ecuador

Multi-year Strategy 2023 – 2025



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1.1 Executive Summary

Ecuador hosts nearly 500,000 refugees, asylum seekers and other people in need of international protection, including one of the largest recognized refugee populations in Latin America – the majority of whom have fled from neighbouring Colombia. Between 2023 and 2024, the country witnessed the entry of a daily average of 1,000 refugees and migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as well as Colombian asylum seekers, many of whom travel in mixed movements and are exposed to sexual abuse, trafficking, and limited access to food, health care and shelter. In this context, UNHCR aims to strengthen existing legal and administrative frameworks for the protection of forcibly displaced people in Ecuador through strategic actions.

First, UNHCR will consolidate the protection space by supporting the development of asylum capacities, as well as strengthening government capacity in responding to specific protection needs. In this line, efforts to support the government to implement other legal stay arrangements through, for instance, a regularization process for all foreigners in an irregular situation, mostly Venezuelans, will continue as already started in mid-2022.

Second, UNHCR will provide basic humanitarian assistance to new arrivals and those with specific needs on a priority basis with available resources. It will do so, mostly, providing direct cash assistance and in partnership with relevant stakeholders like IOM, UNICEF as well as with WFP through the United Nations Common Cash Statement.

Third, UNHCR will promote progressive access to socio-economic rights and facilitate durable and sustainable solutions primarily towards local integration, and through resettlement and complementary pathways.

Finally, the Office will continue engaging with national institutions to reinforce governance and accountability in favour of forcibly displaced people in Ecuador.

To ensure an adequate response in providing protection, humanitarian assistance and solutions to refugees, other displaced people, and their host communities in Ecuador, in 2025 UNHCR will work with 13 specialized national and international partners with different expertise to address issues related to child protection, gender-based violence, shelter, among others. UNHCR will work in close coordination with line ministries and local authorities; will expand its partnerships with the private sector to facilitate the economic inclusion of refugees, other displaced people, and their hosts; and will

cooperate with bilateral development actors to enhance inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in development plans.

UNHCR actively aligns its work with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework in strengthening access to social protection and quality social services; in promoting the reduction of poverty and inter-sectional economic inequality; and in supporting State institutions to ensure social cohesion. The leadership of the national R4V Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants (GTRM for its acronym in Spanish), together with IOM, will be key to continue ensuring a coordinated regional response to the persistent needs of Venezuelans in Ecuador, in line with the national chapter of the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP).

In this context, continued donor support in 2025 is essential for UNHCR to adequately provide protection, respond to needs and safeguard the rights of refugees.

1.2 Situation Analysis

Ecuador hosts one of the largest numbers of recognized refugees in Latin America and the Caribbean, the majority fleeing Colombia's ongoing armed conflict and seeking international protection across the border. Ecuador is also home to the fifth-largest population of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region, most of them continuing to enter irregularly due to visa requirements.

Deteriorating conditions across the region continues to place Ecuador as one of the main major transit countries for people from Africa, Asia, Haiti, Cuba, among others, mainly heading north. In view of the worsening situation in Ecuador, these complex mixed movements are joined by thousands of Ecuadorians, with over 350,000 nationals having left the country since 2022, according to Government figures. While in the past decade the departure of Ecuadorians was mostly due to economic reasons, violence is increasingly prompting nationals to seek protection abroad (Ecuadorians being the third nationality to have crossed the Darien) or having fled utilizing other routes or forcibly displaced internally from highly insecure areas. It is also reported that some 12,000 to 15,000 Ecuadorians had been returned in the last year mainly from the United States of America.

According to the Attorney General's office, crime rates increased by 45.7% between 2021 and 2022. According to Police data, 2022 was the most violent year with 25,32 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants. Security analyses reveal that organized criminal groups linked to transnational drug cartels are the main cause of increasing violence and are

dedicated to mainly illegal mining, smuggling of goods and people, drugs and arms trafficking, money laundry, and trafficking of people. Their influence has resulted in, among others, increased GBV, higher risks for children and adolescents, and a wider spread of extortion and threats, including to displaced people and Ecuadorians. An increased need to support spontaneous internal relocations of refugees and migrants has been observed since 2023. During 2024, UNHCR is carrying out a comprehensive study on drivers and trends of internal displacement of nationals and refugees, which will inform operational planning and possible interventions towards affected populations. While results are available, by October 2024, UNHCR had registered nearly 1,098 security incidents in ProGres, including the internal displacement of 403 people.

This complex situation is aggravated by an economy that has not recovered from the effects of the pandemic and is now experiencing one of the slowest growths. Violence, extractive economies, the effects of climate change and severe droughts that has led to power outages nationwide in 2023 and 2024, added to increasing food prices prompted by additional taxes and crop reductions, are causing strains on both Ecuadorians and displaced people. In 2023, the economy grew by 2,4%, lower than the 6,2% growth achieved in 2022 (Central Bank of Ecuador). In February 2024, the unemployment rate stood at 4,2% - a 0,3% increase as compared to the same period in 2023.

Following the election of a new government at the end of 2023, Ecuador is currently in a transitional period with new presidential elections to take place in February 2025. With the declaration of the internal armed conflict, continuous state of emergency declarations and the positive results of security-focused popular consultations in 2024, UNHCR' s operation will be facing a challenging context for the next years.

All these issues have increased social discontent among locals, with worsening xenophobia and discrimination against forcibly displaced people, all supported by an overall migration narrative. This has continued to reinforce the negative perception of displaced people who are scapegoated as perpetrators of violence and competitors for resources and employment.

Despite all these challenges, Ecuador continues to deliver international protection to the increasing asylum claims . For a fifth consecutive year, Colombians and Venezuelans accounted for over 90% of new applications. In 2023 and 2024, UNHCR identified an increasing trend in asylum claims from Colombians. As of end of 2024, the Office foresees that the total number of people forced to flee will reach 496,996: 77,227 asylum-seekers and refugees from Colombia and 17,790 from Venezuela; 399,039 will be others in need of international protection from Venezuela and around 1,896 refugees and asylum-seekers from other nationalities. For 2025, UNHCR foresees that the total number of forcibly displaced people will reach 469,169: 28,992 asylum seekers and refugees from Colombia and 8,812 from Venezuela; 429,469 others in need of international protection from Venezuela; and 1,896 refugees and asylum-seekers of other nationalities.

While the legal framework in Ecuador sets high standards with regards to access to protection in the region, the asylum system continues facing challenges and remains dependent on technical and financial support from UNHCR. UNHCR will continue to support through the implementation of the Quality Assurance Initiative (QAI) to enhance access to asylum, quality decision-making and improved case-management.

To address irregular status among Venezuelans, the Government began the second regularization process in 2022, which ended in April 2024, with a perspective of extension or renewal and limited results in terms of impact for those most in need. By the end of the regularization process in April 2024, over 200,000 people had a stay certificate and around 96,000 had obtained visas – around one third were granted to people who entered irregularly. Following announcements during the L.A. Declaration meeting, the Ecuadorian Government decreed in August 2024 the beginning of a regularization process for Venezuelans who had registered and obtained a stay certificate but were not able to obtain the visa during the previous process. This effort, which aligns to the country's sound commitment to the protection and inclusion of forcibly displaced people, is expected to support 100,000 people as estimated by the Government, as well as the thousands more who will renew their visas. as part of UN Country Team and as co-lead of the GTRM in Ecuador, UNHCR will continue to support this nation-wide effort.

Refugees and migrants continue to face serious challenges and practical barriers to fully access rights, including food, employment, shelter/housing, and documentation. Furthermore, significant barriers persist regarding their socio-economic inclusion, including restrictions on entering formal labour markets, exacerbated by the lack of documentation.

In 2024, 93% among forcibly displaced people held informal employments (RMNA, 2024), in contrast to 55% for nationals, according to INEC (National Institute for Statistics and Census). For 59% of the population, access to integration, protection and shelter were among the major concerns (RMNA, 2024).

In this complex scenario, UNHCR in Ecuador implements a three-pronged protection and solutions strategy: i) ensuring access to effective protection (asylum, quality RSD, justice, migratory alternatives and documentation, GBV, child protection and community-based strategy to mitigate risks related to violence); ii) addressing specific protection needs and vulnerabilities through an adapted community-based protection approach, ensuring access to basic rights; and iii) enhancing social and economic inclusion through safe livelihoods opportunities and self-reliance, community resilience and promoting access to durable solutions.

1.3 Vision and Strategic Orientation

UNHCR Ecuador envisions a future where people forced to flee and their hosts can live in safety, dignity and hope, rooted in the belief that when everyone is protected, empowered and supported, stability and brighter futures can be achieved. The Agency strives to attain this vision, where no one is left behind, through strategic and a long-term whole-of-society approach that fosters sustainability.

UNHCR' s vision and strategy, as also reflected in the national chapter of the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP), is connected to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework launched in August 2022, including: strengthening access to social protection and quality social services for vulnerable people; reducing poverty and intersectional economic inequality through economic opportunities and sustainable livelihoods, decent work and resilience; strengthening State institutions to ensure social cohesion and guarantee the exercise of citizen rights by reducing the different types of violence (criminal, gender-based, and social); and strengthening a participatory society and the mechanisms of representation and effective and efficient public institutions.

For the next three years, the objectives detailed above will be implemented in strategic alliance with a wide variety of traditional and non-traditional actors like national and local authorities, the private sector, international and national civil society organizations, international and national financial and development institutions, associations of people in human mobility, and by increasing UNHCR engagement with host communities.

1.4 Fair Access and Representation

UNHCR and partners have mapped over 340 community organizations, including refugee and migrant-led associations. These structures are key to UNHCR' s work in the field while contributing to ensure the promotion of gender equality, safeguarding child rights, and working with a diversity of populations, like elderly people, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ people and other groups.

UNHCR will strengthen the capacity of its partners to provide disaggregated data as well as updated qualitative information to ensure all needs related to age, gender and diversity are considered in programming. This aims to strengthen participation and inclusion, as well as to improve communication channels with refugees, providing more information about programmes and ensuring accountability with communities.

To reinforce a two-way communication with refugees and other displaced people across Ecuador, UNHCR will not only consolidate the existing innovative initiatives to continuously produce content (community-led social networks, chatbot, Dale Play, and other community interventions) but will also focus on improving traditional

communication channels, by ensuring direct contact with grassroots organizations. With these variety of communication channels, UNHCR expects to improve feedback and response mechanisms while also empowering communities to lead in communication efforts.

Age, gender and diversity strategies will be developed at the field level, considering participatory assessments, and ensuring that specific vulnerable populations are not left behind. Finally, UNHCR' s commitment to gender equality will be enhanced through collaboration with women-led organizations and developing their capacities.

All these key actions, coupled with reinforced community-based protection and communication with communities' strategies, will help upscale the implementation of age, gender and diversity and accountability to affected population policies in Ecuador and ensure higher standards in delivering protection.

2. Impact Statements

Impact statement

Forcibly displaced people receive protection according to international standards and in line with their rights and specific needs.

Impact area: Attaining favourable protection environments

Outcome statements

Forcibly displaced people are timely identified and referred to protection services

Outcome area: Access to territory, registration and documentation

Forcibly displaced people have access to fair and efficient refugee status determination procedures

Outcome area: Refugee status determination

Forcibly displaced people have access to the justice system, legal services and state protection mechanism

Outcome area: Safety and access to justice

Forcibly displaced people have access to alternative migration pathways and documentation that supports their local integration

Outcome area: Local integration and other local solutions

Gender-based violence survivors have access to specialized protection responses in a safe environment

Outcome area: Gender-based violence

Unaccompanied, separated or at-risk children and adolescents have access to efficient protection responses

Outcome area: Child protection

Host communities and forcibly displaced people develop strategies to mitigate violence and insecurity risks.

Outcome area: Community engagement and women's empowerment

Impact statement

Most vulnerable forcibly displaced people are able to cover their basic needs and access rights, including health and education.

Impact area: Realizing rights in safe environments

Outcome statements

Vulnerable children and adolescents have improved access to, stay in school, and completion of primary and secondary education in a safe and inclusive environment.

Outcome area: Education

Forcibly displaced people improve their access to primary health care services, and especially to maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health and mental health and psychosocial support

Outcome area: Healthy lives

Forcibly displaced families improve access to basic needs and relevant services

Outcome area: Well-being and basic needs

The emergency response to forcibly displaced persons is relevant and efficient, including climate change actions, and mitigation of violence and insecurity risks

Outcome area: Well-being and basic needs

Impact statement

Forcibly displaced people achieve self-reliance and progressively find durable solutions in resilient and cohesive communities.

Impact area: Securing solutions

Outcome statements

An increased number of forcibly displaced people are resettled through strengthened and efficient mechanisms

Outcome area: Resettlement and complementary pathways

Forcibly displaced people improve their ability to generate income in conditions of safety and dignity and are integrated into local socioeconomic networks

Outcome area: Self-reliance, economic inclusion and livelihoods

Needs of forcibly displaced people and host communities are addressed within development agendas and included in social protection programs and policies

Outcome area: Local integration and other local solutions

Inclusive community-based networks are strengthened to mitigate protection, security and environmental risks and facilitate social cohesion

Outcome area: Community engagement and women's empowerment

Public opinion and host communities have a more inclusive approach of forcibly displaced people

Outcome area: Local integration and other local solutions

3. Ecuador 2025 Indicators and Targets

Country	Results Level	Result Area	Indicator	Population Type	Baseline	Target 2025
Ecuador	Impact	IA1: Protect	1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	Not applicable
Ecuador	Impact	IA1: Protect	1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	Not applicable
Ecuador	Impact	IA2: Respond	2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	17%	Not applicable
Ecuador	Impact	IA2: Respond	2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	80%	Not applicable
Ecuador	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.1 Proportion of people who have the right to decent work	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	24%	Not applicable
Ecuador	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in	Refugees and	78%	Not applicable

			primary education	Asylum-seekers		
Ecuador	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	49%	Not applicable
Ecuador	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.3 Proportion of people feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	34%	Not applicable
Ecuador	Impact	IA4: Solve	4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	Not applicable
Ecuador	Impact	IA4: Solve	4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,427	Not applicable
Ecuador	Impact	IA4: Solve	4.3b Number of refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	70,649	Not applicable
Ecuador	Outcome	OA1: Access/Doc	1.1 Proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	100%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA1: Access/Doc	1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	99%	100%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA1: Access/Doc	1.3 Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	100%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA2: Status	2.1 Average processing time (in days) from registration to first instance asylum decision	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	312	180
Ecuador	Outcome	OA2: Status	2.2 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to legal representation	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	100%

Ecuador	Outcome	OA2: Status	2.3 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to an effective appeal mechanism after first instance rejection of their claim	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	100%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA3: Policy/Law	3.1 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol	None	Broadly aligned: ≥90 points	To be confirmed
Ecuador	Outcome	OA3: Policy/Law	3.2 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness	None	Broadly aligned: ≥90 points	To be confirmed
Ecuador	Outcome	OA4: GBV	4.1 Proportion of people who know where to access available GBV services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	75%	75%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA4: GBV	4.3 Proportion of survivors who are satisfied with GBV case management services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	85%	90%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA5: Children	5.1 Proportion of children at heightened risk who are supported by a Best Interests Procedure	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	55%	72%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA5: Children	5.2 Proportion of children who participate in community-based child protection programmes	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	19%	19%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA5: Children	5.3 Proportion of unaccompanied and separated children who are in an alternative care arrangement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	27%	37%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.1 Extent participation of displaced and stateless people across programme phases is supported.	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Moderate: 40-69 points	Moderate: 40-69 points
Ecuador	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.2 Proportion of people who have access to safe feedback and response mechanisms	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	7%	50%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA7:	7.3 Proportion of women	Refugees	56%	50%

		Community	participating in leadership/management structures	and Asylum-seekers		
Ecuador	Outcome	OA8: Well-being	8.1 Proportion of people that receive cash transfers and/or non-food items	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4%	50%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA8: Well-being	8.2 Proportion of people with primary reliance on clean (cooking) fuels and technology	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	99%	99%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA10: Health	10.1 Proportion of children aged 9 months to five years who have received measles vaccination	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	79%	81%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA10: Health	10.2. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	97%	98%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA11: Education	11.2 Proportion of children and young people enrolled in the national education system	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	65%	70%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.1. Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	29%	30%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.2. Proportion of people who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4%	11%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.3 Proportion of people (working age) who are unemployed	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	11%	13%
Ecuador	Outcome	OA15: Resettle	15.1 Number of refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,962	To be confirmed
Ecuador	Outcome	OA16: Integrate	16.1 Proportion of people with secure tenure rights to housing and/or land	Refugees and Asylum-	13%	32%

				seekers		
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Exhibit 11

ECUADOR COUNTRY GENDER SCORECARD

December 2021



The Regional Gender Coordination and the LAC Gender Innovation Lab (both in LAC Poverty and Equity) prepared this scorecard. For more information, please contact Eliana Rubiano-Matulevich (erubiano@worldbank.org) and Diana Galeano (dgaleano@worldbank.org).

ECUADOR



- **Ecuador has made some progress towards gender equality in the past decade, but gaps between women and men remain in several monetary and non-monetary measures of well-being.**
- **Gender gaps in human endowments have narrowed and even reversed in favor of women.** For instance, net enrollment rates are slightly higher for women in primary and secondary education, while the difference in tertiary education is negligible. Reverse gender gaps are observed in completion rates: while primary completion is almost universal, women's educational attainment is higher in secondary and post-secondary education.
- **When it comes to health outcomes, maternal mortality rates have decreased substantially since 1996, almost closing the regional gap.** The universalization of (maternal) health services fostered by the government is a likely driver of this reduction. However, teenage pregnancy and child marriage remain important issues in the country. The adolescent fertility rate has remained high compared to the regional level (76 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19, compared to 64 births for the LAC region) and it has also declined at a slower pace compared to the regional average.
- **Women have been consistently disadvantaged in terms of economic opportunities, and the pandemic has aggravated existing gender inequalities.** Not only do women participate less in the labor market, but those who are employed usually have "lower quality" jobs (i.e., informal, longer working hours, unpaid and underemployed). Women feature more prominently than men in the informal sector. Informality rates were two percentage points higher for women than for men in 2019 (47.9% and 45.9%, respectively) and the gap widened to almost 4 percentage points in 2020 (53.7% vs 50.2%, respectively)¹. As a result, women's earnings represent only 87% of men's earnings. In contrast, the share of women entrepreneurs in Ecuador is among the highest in the world despite their relative limited access to financial products compared to men.
- **Political representation of women is also among the highest in LAC both in the executive and legislative branches.** The proportion of women in the national parliament increased from 15% in 2000 to almost 40% in 2020.
- **Violence against women remains a significant issue.** Six out of ten Ecuadorian women reported that they have been subjected to some form of violence in their lifetime (psychological, physical, sexual, or economic violence)². Physical violence is exacerbated for Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and rural women, while sexual violence is considerably higher for women in the urban areas compared to their counterparts in rural settings (37% vs. 23%).

1. INEC (2019, 2020) ENEMDU December rounds

2. INEC (2019). Encuesta Nacional sobre Relaciones Familiares y Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres – ENVIGMU- 2019. Available at: <https://www.ecuadorencifras.gob.ec/violencia-de-genero/>

Country Performance³



Human Endowments	COUNTRY BASELINE	YEAR	PERFORMANCE	YEAR	LAC	YEAR	UMC	YEAR
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	48.6	2000	86.0 ●	2018	79.1	2018	83.9	2018
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	46.9	2000	83.4 ●	2018	76.0	2018	80.7	2018
Lower secondary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	57.7	2000	98.6 ●	2018	82.0	2019	88.2	2019
Lower secondary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	56.6	2000	95.1 ●	2018	77.3	2019	86.2	2019
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	n.a.	n.a.	48.4 ●	2015	59.7	2019	58.2	2019
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	n.a.	n.a.	41.5 ●	2015	45.9	2019	48.6	2019
Female share of graduates from STEM programmes (%)	n.a.	n.a.	29.2	2016	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Share of youth not in education, employment or training, females (% of female youth population) ⁴	30.5	2000	25.8	2019	27.4	2019	n.a.	n.a.
Share of youth not in education, employment or training, males (% of male youth population)	9.6	2000	10.0	2019	14.6	2019	n.a.	n.a.
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled est. per 100,000 births)	122.0	2000	59.0 ●	2017	74.0	2017	41.0	2017
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	98.2	2004	96.0 ●	2018	93.8	2018	98.4	2018
Prevalence of HIV, female (% ages 15-24)	0.1	2000	0.1	2019	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Prevalence of HIV, male (% ages 15-24)	0.1	2000	0.1	2019	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Contraceptive prevalence, any methods (% of women ages 15-49)	72.7	2004	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	78.7	2017
Economic Opportunity	COUNTRY BASELINE	YEAR	PERFORMANCE	YEAR	LAC	YEAR	UMC	YEAR
Labor force participation, female (% of female population 15+) ◇	51.5	2000	55.2 ●	2019	52.5	2019	56.0	2019
Labor force participation, male (% of male population 15+) ◇	83.7	2000	80.7 ●	2019	76.7	2019	74.8	2019
Account at a financial institution, female (% age 15+)	n.a.	n.a.	42.6 ●	2017	52.0	2017	69.3	2017
Account at a financial institution, male (% age 15+)	n.a.	n.a.	60.2 ●	2017	58.6	2017	77.0	2017
Vulnerable employment, female (% of female employment) ◇	53.1	2000	58.3 ●	2019	33.8	2019	38.1	2019
Vulnerable employment, male (% of male employment) ◇	34.6	2000	41.6 ●	2019	33.4	2019	35.6	2019
Voice and Agency	COUNTRY BASELINE	YEAR	PERFORMANCE	YEAR	LAC	YEAR	UMC	YEAR
Women who were first married by age 18 (% of women ages 20-24)	22.2	2004	22.2	2018	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women, ages 15-19)	84.2	2000	78.3 ●	2019	61.2	2019	29.5	2019
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%)	14.6	2000	39.4 ●	2020	32.8	2020	26.5	2020
Firms with female top manager (% of firms)	n.a.	n.a.	22.9 ●	2017	20.1	2020	19.1	2020
Proportion of women subjected to physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months (% of women 15-49)	n.a.	n.a.	10.8	2011	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Sources: World Bank World Development Indicators, World Bank Gender Statistics, and World Health Organization. Country Baseline provides a reference point for the indicator. Circa 2000

LAC = Includes the 42 countries (all income levels) in Latin America and the Caribbean, as classified by The World Bank Group

UMC = In FY21, upper-middle-income countries are those with a GNI per capita between \$4,046 and \$12,535 (calculated using the World Bank Atlas method)

◇ Modeled ILO estimate

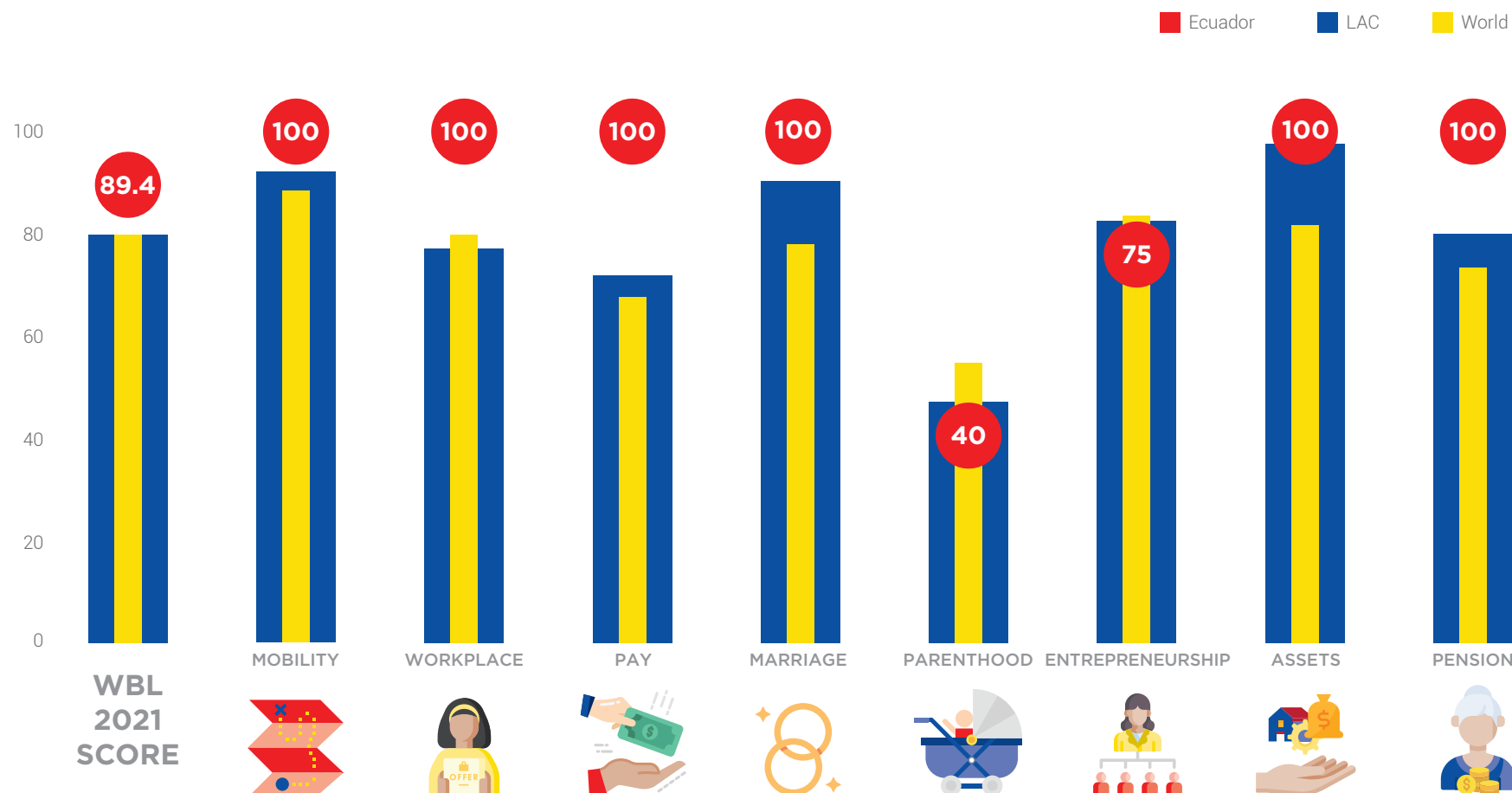
3. The scorecard shows the latest country data available and comparisons of country performance with the LAC region and the country's income-level group in the same or similar year. The country performance is scored relative to the comparison groups using a Traffic Light System: **green** ● if the country performs better than the two comparison groups (LAC and the similar-income group); **yellow** ● if the country performs better than one comparison group; **red** ● if both comparison groups perform better than the country. N/A means lack of data. No color indicates that comparisons cannot be made. This scorecard features available sex-disaggregated data (men/women).

4. Share of youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) is the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment, or training to the population of the corresponding age group: youth (ages 15 to 24); persons ages 15 to 29; or both age groups. When data are available for more than two age groups in a given year, one value for persons ages 15 to 29 is taken, considering that not all people complete their education by the age of 24. World Development Indicators.

Gender Equality in the Law

The Women Business and the Law index⁵ score presents the share of good laws in the economy and it is structured around a woman's working life

Ecuador - Latin America & Caribbean - World Comparison (2021)











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5. Thirty-five data points are scored across eight indicators composed of four or five binary questions, with each indicator representing a different phase of a woman's life. Indicator-level scores are obtained by calculating the unweighted average of responses to the questions within that indicator and scaling the result to 100. Overall scores are then calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest possible score, meaning that the country gives women and men equal legal rights in the measured areas. Source: [WBL 2021](#).

Gender Equality in the Law

In total, 35 questions are scored across the eight indicators. Overall scores are then calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest possible score.

Topic	Question	Answer	Indicator Score
MOBILITY 	Can a woman choose where to live in the same way as a man?	Yes	100
	Can a woman travel outside her home in the same way as a man?	Yes	
	Can a woman apply for a passport in the same way as a man?	Yes	
	Can a woman travel outside the country in the same way as a man?	Yes	
WORKPLACE 	Can a woman get a job in the same way as a man?	Yes	100
	Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender?	Yes	
	Is there legislation on sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	
	Are there criminal penalties or civil remedies for sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	
PAY 	Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?	Yes	100
	Can a woman work at night in the same way as a man?	Yes	
	Can a woman work in a job deemed dangerous in the same way as a man?	Yes	
	Can a woman work in an industrial job in the same way as a man?	Yes	
MARRIAGE 	Is there no legal provision that requires a married woman to obey her husband?	Yes	100
	Can a woman be head of household in the same way as a man?	Yes	
	Is there legislation specifically addressing domestic violence?	Yes	
	Can a woman obtain a judgment of divorce in the same way as a man?	Yes	
	Does a woman have the same rights to remarry as a man?	Yes	
PARENTHOOD 	Is paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers?	No	40
	Does the government pay 100% of maternity leave benefits?	No	
	Is paid leave available to fathers?	Yes	
	Is there paid parental leave?	No	
	Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?	Yes	
ENTREPRENEURSHIP 	Does the law prohibit discrimination in access to credit based on gender?	No	75
	Can a woman sign a contract in the same way as a man?	Yes	
	Can a woman register a business in the same way as a man?	Yes	
	Can a woman open a bank account in the same way as a man?	Yes	
ASSETS 	Do men and women have equal ownership rights to immovable property?	Yes	100
	Do sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets from their parents?	Yes	
	Do female and male surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets?	Yes	
	Does the law grant spouses equal administrative authority over assets during marriage?	Yes	
	Does the law provide for the valuation of nonmonetary contributions?	Yes	
PENSION 	Is the age at which men and women can retire with full pension benefits the same?	Yes	100
	Is the age at which men and women can retire with partial pension benefits the same?	Yes	
	Is the mandatory retirement age for men and women the same?	Yes	
	Are periods of absence due to childcare accounted for in pension benefits?	Yes	
WBL 2021 Index Score			89.4

Click on the links below for more information



Interventions to close Gender Gaps

Human endowments

- [Facilitating school-to-work transition](#)
- [Attracting more women into STEM fields](#)
- [Reducing boys' school dropout and helping boys at risk](#)

Economic opportunity

- [Expanding access to affordable and quality care](#)
- [Improving women's access to quality employment](#)
- [Improving the performance of women-owned firms](#)
- [Increasing women's ownership and control of productive assets](#)

Voice and agency

- [Preventing and addressing violence against women and girls](#)
- [Reducing teen pregnancy](#)

Project-Level Indicators to monitor progress in narrowing Gender Gaps

- [Illustrative progress indicators aligned with the LCR Gender Action Plan \(RGAP\) priority areas](#)

Useful resources

Legislative and regulatory framework

- [Ecuador 2-page snapshot of laws and regulations affecting women's economic opportunities \(2021\)](#)

Gender strategic framework

- [Gender Assessment - Gender Gaps in Ecuador: An Overview \(2018\)](#)
- [Ecuador Country Partnership Framework FY19-23](#)

Country-specific data and analysis

- [Ecuador Country Profile – Gender Equality Observatory, ECLAC Ecuador](#)
- [Fact Sheet – UN WOMEN](#)

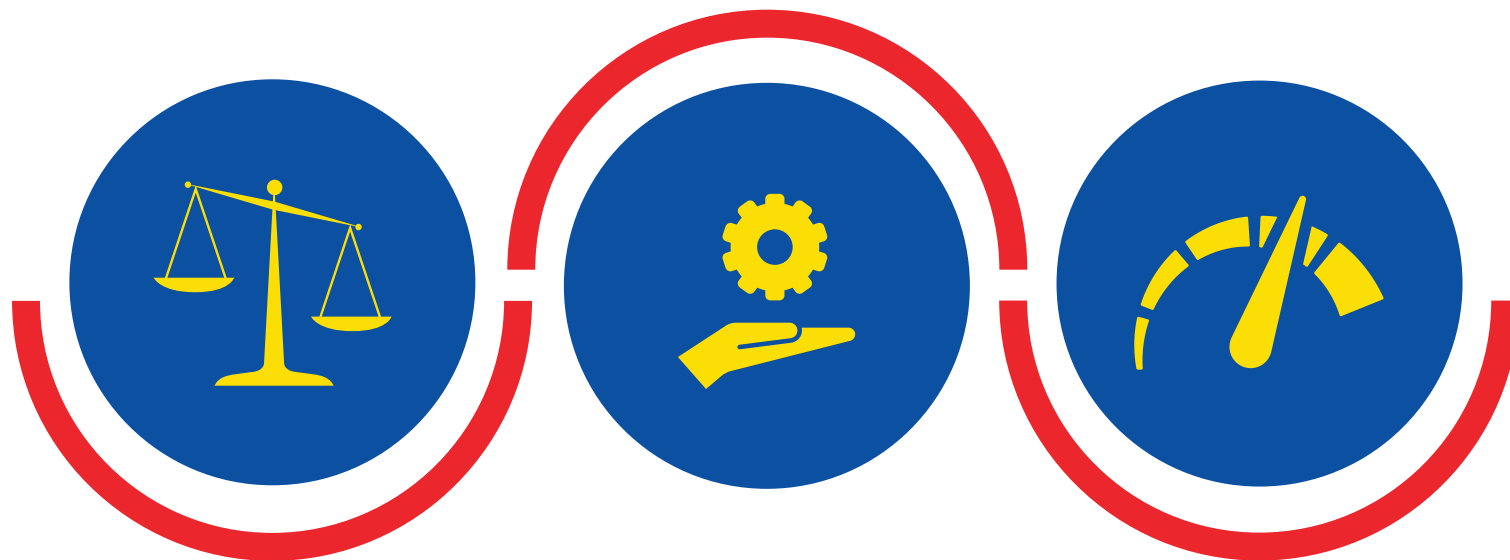
Evidence on what works to close gender gaps

- [LAC Gender Innovation Lab](#)
- [Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality](#)
- [IDB's Gender and Diversity Knowledge Initiative - GDLab](#)

IN ACTION: Integrating Gender into Project Design

Territorial Economic Empowerment for the Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorians and Montubian Peoples and Nationalities (P173283)

Objective: To improve livelihoods and support COVID-19 relief for targeted Indigenous Peoples and Nationalities, Afro-Ecuadorians, and Montubians (IPAM), in accordance with their vision and priorities for development.



GAPS

- IPAM women lack access to employment opportunities due to social norms, lack of time, skills, and discrimination.
- IPAM women have been historically excluded from leadership positions.
- Women are 7.5% less likely than men to have an account at a financial institution. More than 70% of women-owned SMEs have inadequate or no access to financial services.

ACTIONS

- Use incentive criteria in the selection of livelihood subprojects (at least 25% of entrepreneurs are women).
- Establish a 30% quota for women's participation in employment interventions and in the national and territorial dialogue.
- Conduct assessment on specific barriers for IPAM women to access financial services.

INDICATORS

- New internships or jobs for IPAM women.
- Share of IPAM women participating in decision-making platforms at the national and territorial levels.
- IPAM women in prioritized territories that have secured for the first time formal financial services.

Exhibit 12

Country Fact Sheet | UN Women Data Hub

 data.unwomen.org/country/ecuador



Ecuador

Americas

Globally, some progress on women’s rights has been achieved. In Ecuador, 88.9% of legal frameworks that promote, enforce and monitor gender equality under the SDG indicator, with a focus on violence against women, are in place. 22.2% of women aged 20–24 years old who were married or in a union before age 18. The adolescent birth rate is 2.4 per 1,000 women aged 15–19 as of 2021, up from 2.2 per 1,000 in 2020. As of February 2024, 43.1% of seats in parliament were held by women. In 2018, 82.5% of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) had their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods.

However, work still needs to be done in Ecuador to achieve gender equality. In 2018, 8.1% of women aged 15-49 years reported that they had been subject to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months. Also, women and girls aged 15+ spend 19.2% of their time on unpaid care and domestic work, compared to 4.8% spent by men.

As of Dec-20, only 45.1% of indicators needed to monitor the SDGs from a gender perspective were available, with gaps in key areas, in particular: key labour market indicators, such as the gender pay gap. In addition, many areas – such as gender and poverty, physical and sexual harassment, women’s access to assets (including land), and gender and the environment – lack comparable methodologies for regular monitoring. Closing these gender data gaps is essential for achieving gender-related SDG commitments in Ecuador.

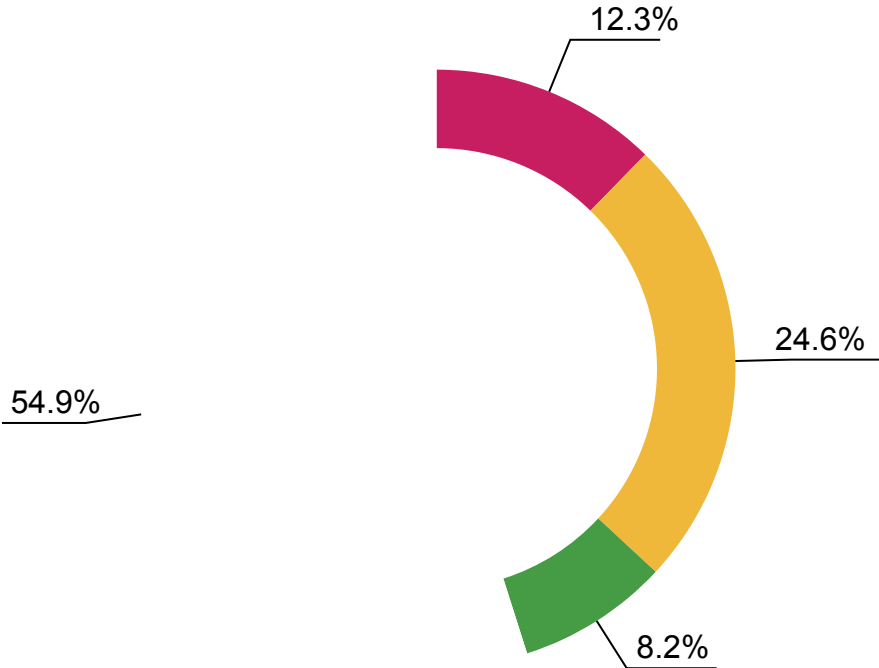
Gender data gaps and country performance

For this score, we use the 72 gender-specific SDG indicators in the Women Count Data Hub’s SDG Dashboard for the 193 UN Member States. For each indicator, we calculate the 33rd and 66th percentiles of the distribution and, based on those two values, countries are classified as

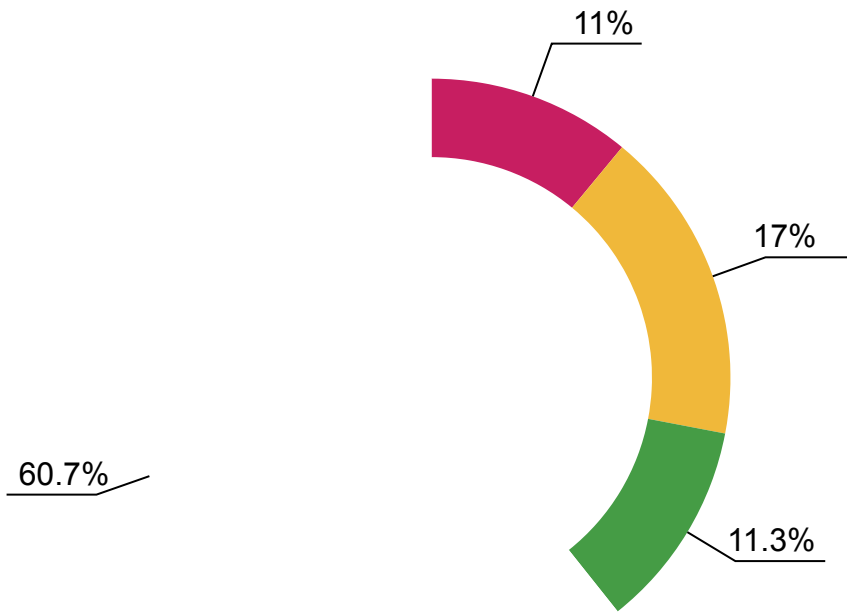
belonging to high performance, medium performance and low performance categories. For more details, see the [methodological note](#) and the article [“We now have more gender-related SDG data than ever, but is it enough?”](#)

- Low performance
- Medium performance
- High performance
- Missing data

Country score - Ecuador



Average region score - Americas



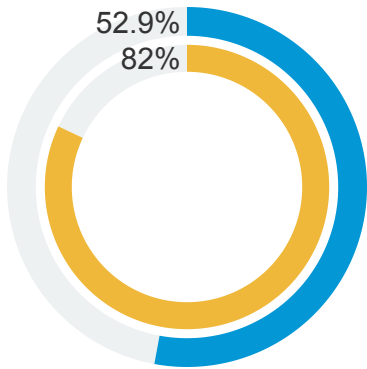
Economic

Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work



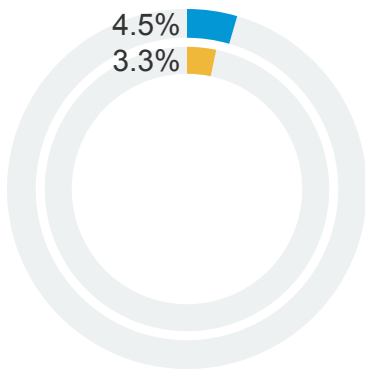
1.1.1 Employed population below international poverty line. Age 15+.

- Female
- Male



1.3.1 Proportion of population above statutory pensionable age receiving a pension.

- Female
- Male



8.5.2 Unemployment rate. Age 15+.

- Female
- Male

Social

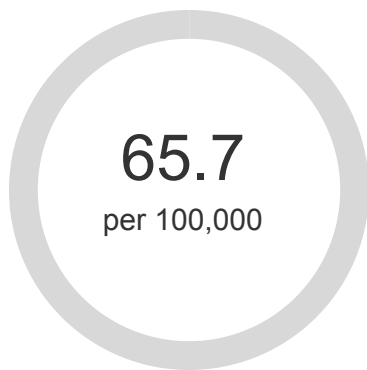
Social protection, poverty and freedom from violence, stigma & stereotypes



1.3.1 Proportion of mothers with newborns receiving maternity cash benefit.

2.1.2 Prevalence of severe food insecurity in the adult population (%).

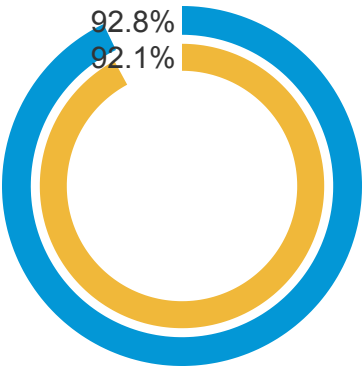
- Female
- Male



3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio (Per 100,000 live births).

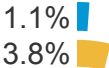


3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate (per 1,000 women aged 15-19 years).



Literacy rate, age 15+.

- Female
- Male

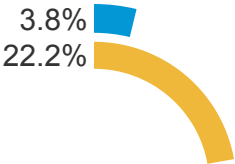


Rate of out of school children. Primary and Lower Secondary education.

- Female
- Male

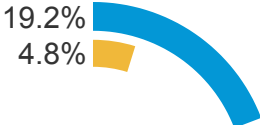


5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months. Age 15-49.



5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 18 (%)

- Before age 15.
- Before age 18.

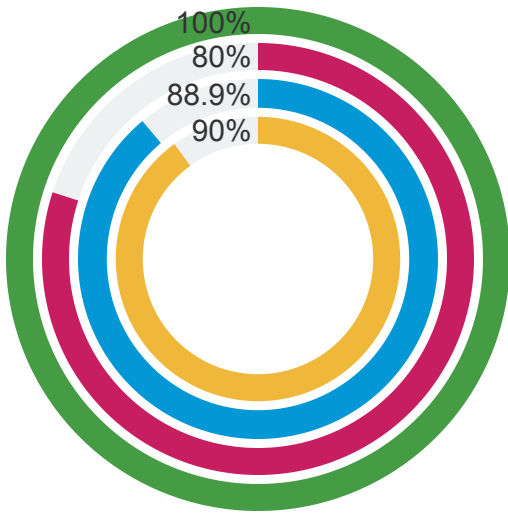


5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic chores and care work. All locations.

- Female
- Male

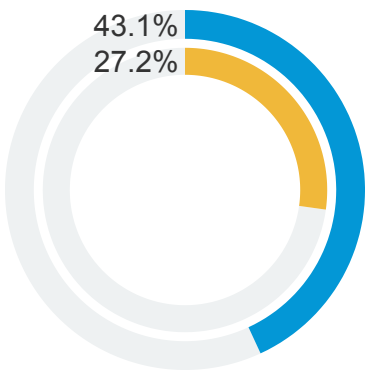
Political

Political participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions



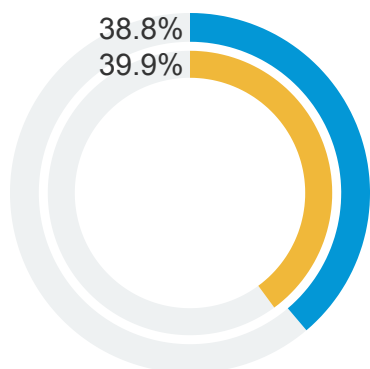
5.1.1 Legal frameworks that promote, enforce and monitor gender equality (percentage of achievement, 0 - 100)

- Area 1: overarching legal frameworks and public life
- Area 2: violence against women
- Area 3: employment and economic benefits
- Area 4: marriage and family



5.5.1

- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (% of total number of seats)
- Proportion of elected seats held by women in deliberative bodies of local government



5.5.2

- Proportion of women in managerial positions
- Proportion of women in senior and middle management positions

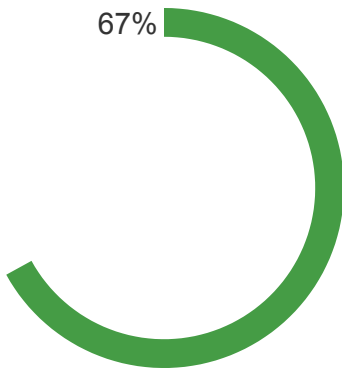
5.c.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Environmental

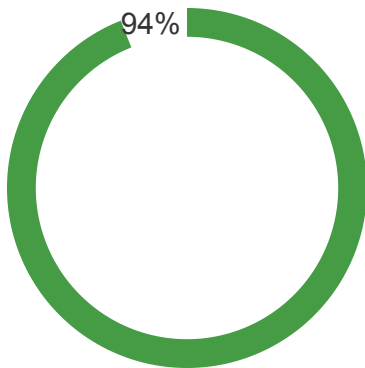
Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation



3.9.1 Age-standardized mortality rate attributed to household air pollution (deaths per 100,000 population).



6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services, by urban/rural.



7.1.2 Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology.

Gender-specific indicators

Value increased

Value decreased

Value unchanged

Low performance

Medium performance

High performance

expand all collapse all

1. No Poverty	Dimension	Women	Men	Total
1.1.1 Employed population below international poverty line, by sex and age (%)	Age: 15+	-	-	4.2
1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line (%)	Location: All areas	-	-	33
1.2.2 Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	Age: All ages; Location: All areas	-	-	37.3
1.3.1 Proportion of population with severe disabilities receiving disability cash benefit, by sex (%)		45.4	38.8	41.7
1.3.1 Proportion of mothers with newborns receiving maternity cash benefit (%)		5	-	-
1.3.1 Proportion of population above statutory pensionable age receiving a pension, by sex (%)		52.9	82	66.1
1.3.1 Proportion of unemployed persons receiving unemployment cash benefit, by sex (%)		3	4.7	3.8
1.4.2 Proportion of people with legally recognized documentation of their rights to land out of total adult population, by sex (%)		-	-	-
1.4.2 Proportion of people with secure tenure rights to land out of total adult population, by sex (%)		-	-	-
1.b.1 Proportion of government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor and vulnerable groups		-	-	-
2. Zero Hunger				

1. No Poverty	Dimension	Women	Men	Total
3. Good Health & Wellbeing				
4. Quality Education				
5. Gender Equality				
8. Decent Work to Economic Growth				
9. Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure				
10. Reduced Inequalities				
11. Sustainable Cities & Communities				
13. Climate Action				
16. Peace, Justice, & Strong Institutions				
17. Partnership for the Goals				

The Women Count Data Hub is made possible by the partners of the Women Count programme, which include the Governments of Australia, Ireland, France, Mexico, Sweden, the United States and the United Kingdom and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Alibaba Foundation and Elizabeth Arden.

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Exhibit 13

Shining a Light on Gender-based Violence in Ecuador

 unsdg.un.org/latest/stories/shining-light-gender-based-violence-ecuador

Caption: According to authorities, a woman is killed every 26 hours in Ecuador, often at the hands of a family member or an intimate partner.

“[Sixty-five per cent of women in Ecuador](#) have suffered some form of violence during their life.” When I arrived in Ecuador in 2020 to take up the position as UN Resident Coordinator, this was one of the first statistics that I memorized, simply because it struck me as almost unbelievable. Sixty-five per cent, means 2 out of 3 women, probably the fourth highest figure of gender-based violence in the region.

Since then, I have spent countless hours deepening my understanding of the situation. I learned from national authorities that a woman is killed every 26 hours in the country, often at the hands of a family member or an intimate partner. From women’s organizations, I understood the challenges in implementing the 2019 Organic Law for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women, including the lack of inter-institutional coordination, data, training and resources. And in emotional sessions with survivors of violence and families of victims of femicide, I learned how stereotypes and cultural practices fuel the problem, making all women vulnerable, regardless of social class, ethnicity or age. It was clear the violence deeply impacted women and their families. But the issue also undermined society as a whole and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ecuador.

From awareness to action

Understanding the need for urgent, coordinated and decisive engagement to turn the tide, I leveraged my role leading the work of the UN in Ecuador, calling for concrete, sustainable and tangible actions. I spearheaded dialogues with government leaders, civil society, and survivors to elevate gender-based violence as a national priority. I also forged partnerships with international donors, advocating for funding that could be leveraged to tackle the systemic roots of violence and its devastating daily consequences. This wasn’t just about policies; it was about ensuring every survivor’s voice shaped our response. UN agencies mobilized around a shared strategy, and we worked tirelessly with our partners to mainstream the issue into Ecuador’s political agenda.

Our UN team proposed concrete, implementable solutions, notably with the national launch of the [Spotlight Initiative](#), a global partnership between the European Union (EU) and the United Nations, focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. In Ecuador, [UN Women](#), the [UN Population Fund \(UNFPA\)](#) and the [UN Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#) work together to implement this programme, which contributed to shaping laws and policies tackling gender-based violence.

The initiative also contributes to boosting the skills and resources of national authorities and civil society groups, developing mechanisms harnessing the power of data to deliver progress. For example, the UN has supported the development of the “Single Registry for Violence,” a tool that collects data on violence against women and activates an early warning system that identifies high-risk cases in real time and automatically alerts police, social services, and judicial authorities to intervene swiftly. To tackle the high rates of impunity, the UN has worked with judicial authorities to develop protocols to investigate femicides, strengthened capacities of the police to collect evidence and improved services to survivors of violence.

The Spotlight Initiative has also prioritized work aimed at preventing gender-based violence, launching important communication campaigns to change deep-rooted misogynistic beliefs and behaviours. To effectively reach all segments of the diverse Ecuadorian society, innovation was key. Spotlight worked through community radio, television and digital platforms in multiple languages, partnered with famous musicians, influencers, football teams and private sector companies. Dance troupes launched flash mobs in public spaces.

This communication and advocacy work engaged more than 17 million people at the national and regional level. Working with youth organizations, universities and media companies, Spotlight also promoted important discussions on gender, equality and masculinity that aim to sensitize the problem of gender-based violence, prevent violence and honour the memory of survivors and victims.



Caption: The Spotlight Initiative promoted important discussions on gender, equality and masculinity.

Photo: © UN Ecuador

Spotlight 2.0

Personally, I was deeply invested in the Spotlight Initiative. I coordinated the work of the agencies and co-chaired the Steering Committee. I used my voice and platform as the highest-ranking UN official on the ground, representing the Secretary-General on development issues, to become a visible champion for gender equality and a trusted ally for women’s organizations and human rights defenders. I blogged about my visits to women’s shelters, and I advocated with national authorities and international partners to mobilize political will and resources.



Caption: UN Resident Coordinator in Ecuador, Lena Savelli, speaks at launch of the second phase of the Spotlight Initiative in Quito.

Photo: © UN Women/Karen Toro

Our collective engagements bore fruit: in February 2024 Ecuador was the first country in Latin America to launch Spotlight 2.0, a second phase of the Initiative, which raised nearly \$3 million from EU and other partners. At the launch event, I was proud to share the stage with civil society leaders, Ambassadors, parliamentarians, Government Ministers and the First Lady of Ecuador – a powerful sign of the political significance now attached to gender-based violence and a reaffirmation of the whole-of-society approach needed to address it.

Adapting to new threats

Building on the foundations of these hard-earned gains, our work continues. The dramatic increase in drug-related violence and insecurity that has plagued Ecuador over the past few years is exacerbating the challenge we face in tackling gender-based violence. Unfortunately, women and girls are, once again, deeply affected. In addition to increases in femicides, a study by UN Women shows that women and girls are increasingly at risk of other forms of violence and coercion, including forced recruitment into criminal gangs, human trafficking and sexual exploitation. In the second phase of the Spotlight Initiative, our UN Ecuador team is mobilizing to adapt to this new context and new challenges. The promise of a world free of violence for women and girls can wait no longer. Count me in to lead the charge.

This blog was written by UN Resident Coordinator in Ecuador Lena Savelli. Read more coordination results from the UN in Ecuador [here](#).

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Photo: © UN Ecuador

Spotlight 2.0

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Proof of Service

On this date, I, Natalia Vieira Santanna, served a copy of the following documents:

RESPONDENT’S COUNTRY CONDITIONS - ECUADOR

To the following:

Office Location:	Mailing Address:
Office of the Principal Legal Advisor Department of Homeland Security 100 Montgomery Street, Suite 200 San Francisco, CA 94104	US Immigration and Customs Enforcement US Department of Homeland Security Office of the Principal Legal Advisor P.O. Box 26449 San Francisco, CA 94126-644

by:

- Through the EOIR Courts and Appeals System (ECAS), which will automatically send service notification to both parties that a new document has been filed.

Natalia Vieira Santanna (Bar N. 337502)
Attorney at Law
P.O. Box 7528
Oakland, CA 94601
Counsel for Respondent