

URGENT ACTION

DETAINEES STILL AT RISK

Since at least 24 April, prisons authorities halted the provision of food and medication for detainees in five of the major prisons in Ecuador. On 2 May, a judge ordered the Ministry of Economy and Finance to transfer to the National Service for Integral Attention of People Deprived of Liberty the funds required to restore the supply of food, within 15 days. In the meantime, the families of detainees and charities have been forced to deliver food and medication at their own expense. We call on the National Service for Integral Attention of People Deprived of Liberty to coordinate with the Ministry of Economy and Finance and to comply in good faith with the judge's ruling immediately.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

General Luis Eduardo Zaldumbide López
Director General
Servicio Nacional de Atención Integral a Personas Adultas Privadas de la Libertad
Orellana E3-62 y 9 de Octubre
Quito - Ecuador
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Dear Director General Zaldumbide López,

I continue to be concerned about the situation of detainees in prisons in Ecuador, in particular those in the provinces of Esmeraldas, Manabí, Guayas, and Cotopaxi, which still do not have access to a regular supply of food and medication. Thousands face an imminent risk of acute hunger and other health-related issues.

I welcome the judicial injunction decided on 2 May after a request by a coalition of human rights organizations ordering the Ministry of Economy and Finance to transfer to the prison authorities the funds required to restore the supply of food, within 15 days. Nevertheless, the families of detainees and charities meanwhile continue to be forced to buy food and medication at their own expense.

International human rights law and standards clearly stipulate that States should guarantee the provision of food and medication to persons under their custody.

I call on the National Service for Integral Attention of People Deprived of Liberty to coordinate with the Ministry of Economy and Finance and to comply fully with the judge's ruling from 2 May immediately. The rights to food, health, and physical integrity of all detainees in Ecuador must be respected.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 24 April, prison authorities [informed](#) the families of detainees across Ecuador that the provision of food and medication would be suspended. According to national press coverage, this measure was [taken](#) because of a delayed payment to the private company that provides food to prisons across the country. The families of detainees were also given a list of medication they needed to buy for their relatives, as supplies were no longer available inside prisons.

That same day, the families of detainees [held](#) a peaceful protest outside the headquarters of National Service for Integral Attention of People Deprived of Liberty, to demand that information about the well-being of their relatives is provided and that the provision of food and medication is restored.

A coalition of human rights organizations in Ecuador requested precautionary measures to protect the rights of detainees (Process number: 17230202409062). At a hearing held on 2 May, a judge in Quito granted the measures, and ordered: 1) the Ministry of Economy and Finance to transfer prison authorities the funds required to pay the private company that supplies food to detainees, within 15 days, 2) the National Service for Integral Attention of People Deprived of Liberty to carry out a public procurement process in order to hire a supplier to guarantee the permanent and continuous supply of food in prisons, within three months, 3) the National Service for Integral Attention of People Deprived of Liberty to take interim measures to guarantee detainee have access to food, including by accepting donations, and 4) the Ombudsman's Office to oversee the compliance of the measures and to submit monthly reports with updates.

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) stipulate that prison administrations should provide every prisoner with food of nutritional value, access to drinking water, and that the provision of health care is a State responsibility.

In the ruling *Fleury and others v Haití*, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights established that States may not invoke economic limitations to justify detention conditions that do not meet minimum international standards and do not respect the dignity of the human being.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish. You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 6 June 2024

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Detainees in Ecuador (They/Them)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr28/7987/2024/en/>