

URGENT ACTION

23 DISAPPEARANCES, SEARCH EFFORTS STALLED

The whereabouts of 23 men remain unknown following military operations carried out throughout 2024 in the provinces of Los Rios, Esmeraldas, and Guayas, according to the latest research of a local NGO. Families and witnesses have denounced members of the Army as suspected of criminal responsibility, with reports that search efforts are stalled. We call on the Public Prosecutor's Office to immediately search for the victims and to investigate these events as possible cases of enforced disappearances.

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

Diana Salazar Méndez

Attorney General

Fiscalía General de Estado

Juan León Mera N19-36 and Av. Patria,

Quito, Ecuador

Email: salazarmd@fiscalia.gob.ec

Dear Attorney General,

I am gravely concerned about the disappearance of at least 23 men in the provinces of Los Rios, Guayas, and Esmeraldas, in the coastal region of Ecuador, as denounced by relatives of those disappeared and confirmed by the documentation of the local NGO CDH Guayaquil. According to their families, victims were last seen after military operations carried out throughout 2024, as part of President Daniel Noboa's security policy known as "Plan Fénix". In all cases, families and witnesses have pointed to members of the Armed Forces as the alleged perpetrators.

The victims include: Bruno Rodríguez, Fardi Muñoz, Cirilo Minota, Oswaldo Morales, Neivi Quiñonez, Ariel Cheme, Jordy Morales, Dave Robin Loo Roca, Juan Santillan, Jairo Tapia, Dalton Ruiz, Cristian Sandoya, Oscar Adrihan, Jonathan Adrihan, Jeampier Castañeda, Justin Valverde, Justin Alvarez, Fabricio Alvarado, Jason Franco, Miguel Morán, Kleiner Pisco, Carlos Pisco, and Jonathan Villon Velazco, according to CDH Guayaquil.

CDH Guayaquil has denounced that public prosecutors have failed to examine the allegations of enforced disappearances, an obligation imposed on Ecuadorian authorities by the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

I call on the Public Prosecutor's Office to immediately carry out exhaustive search efforts for those missing, and to investigate these events as cases of possible enforced disappearances as per Article 84 of Ecuador's Criminal Code and in line with international law and standards.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Violence in Ecuador has [risen](#) sharply in recent years in the wake of a spike in confrontations between organized criminal groups disputing territorial control, and between these and security forces. The coastal region of the country has been particularly [affected](#). In response to these challenges, Ecuador's authorities have [relied](#) more heavily on the armed forces while neglecting to ensure sufficient civilian oversight.

Amnesty International is concerned about allegations of possible human rights violations and crimes under international law in connection with the declarations of a state of emergency (Decree 110 of 8 January 2024) and internal armed conflict (Decree 111 of 9 January 2024) in response to increased violence in Ecuador. These initial decrees have been [extended](#) in a number of provinces in the coastal region of the country. The measures, which are part of Noboa's security policy known as "Plan Fenix," have effectively allowed for the widespread and continued deployment of the military in the streets for public security tasks, for over a year.

In this context, civil society organizations have [denounced](#) a rise in human rights violations and crimes under international law, including potential cases of torture, extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances, allegedly committed by members of the Armed Forces.

On 8 December 2024, four children went missing after a military operation in Guayaquil, in the Guayas province. They were [found](#) death with signs of torture on 24 December 2024; and the Prosecutor's Office [filed](#) charges against 16 members of the Armed Forces for the crime of enforced disappearance on 31 December 2024. The case received widespread media attention and was [condemned](#) by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNICEF.

Following these events, the families of other 23 missing individuals approached CDH Guayaquil, the organization that represents the case of the 4 children, to request accompaniment, according to the organization. In total, the NGO now represents 27 cases of disappearances. In a report documenting the cases, CDH Guayaquil [identified](#) a pattern of disappearances committed during military operations and noted that the Public Prosecutor's Office had failed to adequately investigate these events as potential enforced disappearances, by classifying them as "involuntary disappearances." This, in spite of obligations enshrined in the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) to which Ecuador is a state party. In the same report, the organization denounced that state-led search efforts for the missing have not been carried out. The UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances has [issued](#) urgent actions for several of these cases, calling for search efforts and protection measures for the families of the victims.

According to Articles 12 and 24 (2) of the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED), the obligation to search for and locate forcibly disappeared persons arises from the convention's recognition of the right to know the truth. The UN Guiding principles for the search for disappeared persons further establish that the search is a continuous obligation that should start without delay, be governed by public protocols, be conducted under the presumption of life, and coordinated among the different relevant state institutions.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: [Spanish]

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 31 March 2025

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

NAME AND PRONOUN: [Disappeared men in the coast of Ecuador] (They/Them)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: NA