

Urgent Action Office 3-1992 Yonge Street Toronto ON M4S 1Z7 Phone: (416) 363-9933 Fax: (416) 363-3103 [urgentaction@amnesty.ca](mailto:urgentaction@amnesty.ca)  
First UA: 15/25 Index: AMR 28/9031/2025 Ecuador of February 12, 2025

## ECUADOR

### 23 MEN STILL MISSING AS SEARCH EFFORTS STALL

The fate of 23 men remains unknown after military operations took place across Los Ríos, Esmeraldas, and Guayas in 2024. A local NGO reports that families and witnesses suspect the Army's involvement and accuse its members of criminal responsibility.

Despite these serious allegations, search efforts have stalled. The Public Prosecutor's Office must take immediate action to locate the missing men and investigate these cases as possible enforced disappearances.

#### Write to the Attorney General urging the authorities to:

- Immediately conduct thorough search efforts to locate the missing individuals.
- Investigate these cases as possible enforced disappearances under Article 84 of Ecuador's Criminal Code and in accordance with international law and standards.

#### Write to:

Diana Salazar Méndez  
Attorney General  
Fiscalía General de Estado  
Juan León Mera N19-36 and Av. Patria,  
Quito, Ecuador  
Email: [salazarmd@fiscalia.gob.ec](mailto:salazarmd@fiscalia.gob.ec)  
Salutation: *Dear Attorney General,*

#### And copy:

His Excellency Esteban Jabier Crespo Polo  
Ambassador  
Embassy of the Republic of Ecuador  
99 Bank Street, Suite 230  
Ottawa, ON K1P 6B9  
Tel: (613) 563-8206  
Email: [eecucanada@cancilleria.gob.ec](mailto:eecucanada@cancilleria.gob.ec)

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to CDH Guayaquil, 23 men remain missing after military operations in 2024. The victims include Bruno Rodríguez, Fardi Muñoz, Cirilo Minota, Oswaldo Morales, Neivi Quiñonez, Ariel Cheme, Jordy Morales, Dave Robin Loor 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.

Despite mounting concerns, authorities have not investigated these cases as enforced disappearances, even though Ecuador is legally obligated to do so under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Ecuador has seen a sharp rise in violence in recent years, especially in coastal provinces. Organized crime groups are fighting for territorial control, often clashing with security forces. In response, the government has increasingly relied on the military while failing to ensure proper civilian oversight.

In January 2024, President Noboa declared a state of emergency (Decree 110) and an internal armed conflict (Decree 111) to curb violence. These measures, part of the government's "Plan Fénix" security strategy, have led to widespread military deployment in civilian areas for over a year. Civil society groups report a rise in human rights violations, including torture, extrajudicial executions, and enforced disappearances allegedly committed by the military.

On December 8, 2024, four children disappeared during a military operation in Guayaquil. Their bodies were found on December 24, showing signs of torture. On December 31, the Public Prosecutor's Office charged 16 military personnel with enforced disappearance. This case drew national and international condemnation, including statements from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNICEF.

Following this tragedy, the families of 23 missing individuals turned to CDH Guayaquil, the same organization representing the children's case. CDH Guayaquil now represents 27 disappearance cases and has identified a pattern of disappearances occurring during military operations. Despite clear obligations under international law, the Public Prosecutor's Office continues to classify these cases as "involuntary disappearances" rather than enforced disappearances. The NGO also reports that authorities have failed to conduct proper search efforts for the missing.

The UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances has issued urgent actions calling for search efforts and protection for victims' families. Under Articles 12 and 24(2) of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, Ecuador must actively search for and locate missing persons. The UN's guiding principles on enforced disappearances require that searches begin immediately, follow public protocols, assume the person is alive, and be coordinated across state institutions.

Despite these legal obligations, Ecuadorian authorities have yet to take meaningful action to find the missing or hold those responsible accountable.

***Please take action as soon as possible until March 31, 2025! The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.***