

URGENT ACTION

FAMILIES AND DETAINEES AT RISK AFTER MASSACRE

A massacre broke out on 22 July in del Litoral, Ecuador's largest prison, in the city of Guayaquil. The first reports pointed to several deaths, as well as hunger strikes, and 137 prison guards taken hostage simultaneously in several prisons around the country. The president declared a state of emergency in all prisons on 24 July. On 25 July 2,700 security police and military entered del Litoral prison. As of 27 July, the total number of deaths confirmed from the massacre is 31, with 14 wounded. Family members await outside the prison, traumatized by lack of information and forensic services that are struggling to properly identify cadavers and provide information. Prisoners inside the prison lack proper safety and health services.

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

Guillermo Rodríguez
Director General
National Service for Integral Attention of People Deprived of Liberty (SNAI)
Av. Orellana E3-62 y 9 de Octubre.
Quito - Ecuador
Telephone/Fax: 593-2-3932-520
Email: guillermo.rodriguez@atencionintegral.gob.ec

Dear Director General Rodríguez,

I am gravely concerned about the situation in del Litoral prison where at least 31 people were killed and 14 wounded. Family members are at risk as they are waiting outside the prison in precarious conditions and lack information on detainees.

Days after the massacre, forensic services have not yet identified all the bodies of the deceased. Thousands of people detained inside the prison lack sufficient access to health services.

I call on you to ensure the health, physical safety, and integrity of all detainees in del Litoral prison, as well as all those detained in prisons throughout the country; proper coordination with investigative and forensic services to ensure the prompt investigation of the events; and that family members are treated with respect and precise information regarding the remains of their deceased relatives.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to the Permanent Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDH), an estimated 600 people have died in prisons in Ecuador from 2019 to the present. Ecuador has been living through a sustained crisis in its penitentiary system and there have been no major structural measures taken to resolve the situation.

On 24 July, President Guillermo Lasso emitted Executive Decree, 823 which declared a state of emergency in all of Ecuador's prisons, allowing for armed forces and police to enter prisons. This is not the first time armed forces and police have entered prisons in response to massacres.

According to local human rights groups on the ground, investigative authorities are failing to properly carry out their duties, with forensic services delaying in properly identify bodies and remains of those deceased and families receiving distressing and confusing information on the fate of their loved ones.

In addition, according to information received by Amnesty International, health services inside Ecuador's prisons have been practically non-functional since at least 2022. The Ministry of Health no longer provides doctors stationed inside del Litoral prison, which houses over 5,000 prisoners. Those wounded during the massacre of 22 July were transported, after significant delays, to external health posts with the help of emergency services.

In 2022, the UN Sub-Committee for the Prevention of Torture (SPT) carried out a country visit to Ecuador and will shortly provide the Ecuadorian government with their final report. The government has the option to publish the results of the report.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 20 August, 2023

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: N/A

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: N/A