UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
TREATY BODIES

The Committee on the Rights of the Child

Statement on Ecuador

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expresses its deep concern about reforms to the Child and Adolescent Code, introduced by the Public Integrity Law (6/6/25) that violates international law regarding the rights of children in the justice system.

Specifically, it contains provisions aimed at severely punishing children accused of serious crimes, such as increasing the length of pretrial detention from 90 days to one year and increasing maximum sentences from 8 years to 15 years.

The Committee reiterates its deep concern, as it has done in its concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Ecuador published earlier this year, about the increasing deterioration in insecurity and gang violence, the increase in homicides of children, and the impact of these on children's rights. It reminds the State to prioritize tackling violence by addressing risk factors which can lead children to being used and recruited by organized crime groups. In this regard, the Committee welcomes President Noboa's decision to declare the prevention and eradication of child recruitment by non-state actors a national priority, as well as the creation of an interinstitutional committee tasked with formulating related policies. However, the Committee remains concerned that recent legal reforms threaten children's rights and fail to provide adequate protection for children who have been used or recruited by organized crime.

The Committee is also aware of plans the Ministry of Education has to allow law enforcement to enter schools in cases of imminent risk, which can threaten the safety of students and the educational community. As stated in its most recent concluding observations, the Committee urges Ecuador to ensure that schools remain safe learning environments, free from militarization. The State must also thoroughly investigate all reports of children's rights violations committed by police or military forces, including the killing of four Afro-Ecuadorian children in the Las Malvinas area of Guayaquil in December 2024.

The Committee reminds the State of the latest recommendations made this year in its concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Ecuador, amongst others paragraph 32 a), b), c), d) and paragraph 56 c), d), e), f), h).

The Committee reminds the State that the System must ensure effective guarantees for the exercise of children's rights and will continue to closely monitor and follow-up on the situation, including implementation of the law, arrests, detention and prosecution of children as well as efforts to challenge the compliance of the new law with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Committee urges Ecuador to comply with its international human rights obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

22 July 2025