

Canadian Organizations Stand in Solidarity with Indigenous, Labour and Civil Society Organizations in Ecuador Protesting Neoliberal Economic Reforms

Since October 2, Indigenous organizations, along with trade unions, social movements and peasant organizations, have been demonstrating across Ecuador against a set of economic austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international lending institutions that have resulted in: increases of up to 120 percent in fuel prices; labour reforms that undermine labour protections in Ecuador, such as turning good private sector employment into precarious jobs, and the downward “harmonization” of wages resulting in a 20 percent cut in wages for new hires in the public sector; and the imposition of extractive projects (mining, oil, and gas) to solve the debt crisis.

The government of Ecuador has responded with extreme violence, including using tear gas, rubber bullets and even live bullets on protesters. Organizations have reported that more than [700 people](#) have been arrested, three protesters have been killed, and at least 100 have been injured.

We condemn the “State of Exception” declared by the Ecuadorian President on October 3rd, granting the police and military exceptional powers to “maintain order and peace.” In practice this has meant imposing a state of terror on Indigenous, labour, and civil society organizations who are exercising their right to protest.

We reject the IMF-imposed “Paquetazo”, a grotesque package of economic austerity measures, and recognize them for what they are: heavy-handed neoliberal structural adjustment policies which seek to privilege private foreign investment over the public good, at the expense of working peoples’ livelihoods and Indigenous rights. There is ample experience of the catastrophic impact these kinds of reforms have had in the region, and strong evidence demonstrating that while rewarding banks, investors, and elites, they exacerbate poverty and inequality and produce irreparable impacts on the socio-ecological fabric of communities.

We call on the Ecuadorian government to repeal the recently announced austerity measures, cancel the agreement with the International Monetary Fund and respect indigenous peoples’ decision to keep their territories free of extractive industries.

We denounce the exorbitant use of state-mandated force to quell protests. The Ecuadorian Ombudsperson’s office reported on October 7th that the repression and criminalization of protesters, especially Indigenous peoples and youth, is unprecedented when compared to other protests in recent years. They report that 485 protesters were detained between October 3 and October 7th, many of whom demonstrate evidence of serious injuries and abuse.

We denounce the companies who, in attempting to assure their shareholders of the benefits of investing in a country where mining is overwhelmingly opposed, are using Ecuador’s foreign debt crisis to demonstrate that their projects will have strong government support. Similarly, we condemn any actions of Canadian mining companies to use the State of Exception to further their exploration activities in areas where they have otherwise been unable to advance due to organized resistance. [Canadian mining](#) will [not solve](#) the foreign debt crisis.

We call on the Canadian government to end its silence with regard to the massive protests affecting the country and the disproportionate use of force by the government of Ecuador. We also note its complicity as a member of the Organization of American States, which released a statement on October 8th condemning the violence of protestors without condemning the excessive and well-documented state-ordered force against them.

We call on the Canadian press to report on the state-ordered abuses and repression in Ecuador with the same rigor and attention as their reporting on the protests in Hong Kong or Venezuela.

We stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in Ecuador who are currently opposing this predatory economic model. We hear you and are with you in spirit.

Signatories

Association Québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale (AQOCI)

British Columbia Teachers' Federation

Carleton University Political Economy

Common Frontiers

Comité pour les droits humains en Amérique latine (CDHAL)

Convergencia Social Toronto

Groupe de solidarité avec le peuple shuar

International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group (ICLMG)

Inter Pares

Kitchen Table Collective

Latin American & Caribbean Solidarity Network

Mining Injustice Solidarity Network (MISN)

Mining Justice Action Committee (MJAC)

MiningWatch Canada

Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation

The United Church of Canada / L'Église Unie du Canada

Unifor

Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs

United Steelworkers

Timeline of recent events

[Mar 2019](#) - IMF executive board approves 4.2 billion dollar loan to Ecuador, on top of billions already loaned by IDB, World Bank, and IMF.

[Sep 23](#) - IMF reaches agreement at second review of program; notes that structural adjustment legislation should be implemented in the near future.

Oct 1 - Moreno informs the public that the government will be implementing a series of economic austerity measures (Presidential Decree 833).

[Oct 2](#) - IMF applauds government for the measures to improve Ecuadorian economy

Oct 2 - Frente Unitario de Trabajadores (FUT), Frente Popular, CONAIE, and other organizations call for nation-wide protests against the economic austerity measures, demanding the revocation of the Presidential Decree.

Oct 3 - Moreno declares "State of Exception" (State of Emergency) granting military and police exceptional powers to "maintain order and peace". Repression of protesters ensues. Acts of violent repression are recorded across the country and continue over the weekend.

[Oct 5](#) - Indigenous organization CONAIE announces its own "state of exception", demanding immediate withdrawal of military and police from communities or they will face "Indigenous justice".

Oct 6 - Repression continues. In some regions where Indigenous organizations take the lead, like Morona Santiago and Imbabura, it intensifies.

[Oct 7](#) - Media reports that 20,000 Indigenous members of CONAIE arrive in Quito to continue the protests; they are welcomed by the city, but attacked by the police.

[Oct 7](#) - The Ecuadorian Ombudsperson's office releases a report on "The State of Exception 2019" noting this week's events to be the most intense in recent years. They note excessive use of military and police force, especially against Indigenous peoples; the use of physical violence against protestors; evidence of torture of detainees; and a total of 485 reported detentions between October 3 and October 6.

Oct 8 - Lenin Moreno imposes a nation-wide curfew, Decree 888

[Oct 8](#) - The Organization of American States releases statement condemns acts of "violence" by protestors. Says nothing of State-ordered repression, detentions, and killings.

[Oct 15](#) - After massive protests, Indigenous leaders and the government reached an agreement officially repealing the cuts to fuel prices.

Summary of IMF Conditions to reduce fiscal spending to more effectively pay the foreign debt include (not [exclusive](#))

1. Reduce government fuel subsidies (the spark that ignited the strikes)
2. Tax reform to make more favourable for foreign direct investment (FDI),
3. Lowering taxes paid by foreign companies
4. Increase labour market "competitiveness" to favour FDI
5. Rationalize wages to favour FDI (wage cuts around 20%)
6. Substantially reduce vacation time for public-sector employees
7. Restructure fiscal management
8. Prioritize debt repayment
9. Encourage mining and oil extraction by foreign companies