

# *Violence escalates in Ecuador*

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By María Josefina Arce

With less than a month to go before the general elections in Ecuador, the situation is quite complex. Violence, already a daily occurrence in the Andean nation, has escalated in recent weeks. Prison riots, kidnappings and assassinations of politicians and candidates are marking the days leading up to the elections.

The latest of these crimes is that of Agustín Intriago, mayor of the city of Manta, where previously a candidate for the National Assembly for the Revolución Ciudadana party, of former president Rafael Correa, had been killed.

There was also a new prison riot. More than 30 people died as a result of the violence that prevailed for

three days in the Penitenciera del Litoral, in Guayaquil.

President Guillermo Lasso, in order to facilitate the intervention of the Armed Forces, signed a state of emergency decree, the sixteenth in the prison system since May 2021.

A measure that so far has not shown its effectiveness to put an end to the constant acts of violence in prisons that have left more than 400 dead in the last two years.

Luisa González, presidential candidate for the Citizen Revolution Party, summed up the feelings of many when she stated that they are going from decree to decree and nothing has been solved.

In this context, the president also decreed a state of exception, with curfew, in the provinces of Manabí and Los Ríos, as well as in the canton of Durán, in Guayas.

The government has put on the streets more police and military, without which neither has ceded the insecurity.

Dozens of violent acts were recorded in recent days in the cities of Guayaquil and Esmeraldas, where even where, it is attested against state institutions.

Experts and a large part of the public believe that the situation requires a different approach, since enormous amounts of resources are allocated to security that should go to social investment for local development, and thus close the door to crime.

It is essential that it is essential to focus more funds to education to combat schooling and prevent young people from ending up in the ranks of criminal organizations.

The reality is that insecurity is affecting the industry considerably, trade and tourism. Local businessmen claim that sales and job creation are being reduced.

There is great concern among Ecuadorian citizens about the prevailing situation in the country and its impact on election day, scheduled for August 20.

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