

# *Foreign Military Bases in Ecuador*

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Noboa brought up the issue of foreign military presence on Ecuadorian soil again. Image: YouTube

By María Josefina Arce

In 2009, the controversial Manta base was closed, and the U.S. soldiers stationed there left. Ecuador regained its full sovereignty and blocked foreign interests.

The new constitution, approved by referendum in 2008 under the presidency of Rafael Correa, prohibited the establishment of such enclaves in Ecuadorian territory in Article 5.

However, President Daniel Noboa, shielded by the high level of insecurity in the Andean country — one of the main concerns of citizens — and using the excuse of fighting organized crime, has brought up the idea of foreign military presence on Ecuadorian soil again.

Last October, Noboa proposed a constitutional amendment to allow foreign bases in Ecuador, which the National Assembly recently approved.

Social, political, and human rights organizations questioned the constitutional reform and noted that foreign military presence has never yielded the desired results in combating organized crime.

The Plurinational Unity Movement Pachakutik noted that these forces have been used in other countries to suppress social movements and political opponents and to protect territories handed over to foreign companies.

For its part, the Citizen Revolution party stressed that amending this article of the constitution implies dismantling the culture of peace and opening the territory to foreign geopolitical confrontations.

For many, the Manta base, where US troops were stationed for ten years, is a bad memory. Residents of the area witnessed an increase in prostitution, rising costs of living, and sinking fishing boats.

Promises of employment and improved living conditions were never fulfilled.

Experts have repeatedly emphasized that the security Ecuadorians desire cannot be achieved through a military strategy alone.

There is a need for social policies that lead to an improvement in living conditions, enabling access to work, education, health and drinking water, among other human rights.

Now the Constitutional Court must rule on the reform, which will be submitted to citizen scrutiny in a referendum.

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