



**Ms. Tania María Abdo Rocholl**

Chair, Human Rights Committee

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Palais Wilson - 52, rue des Pâquis

CH-1201 Geneva (Switzerland)

Via E-mail: [ccpr@ohchr.org](mailto:ccpr@ohchr.org); [ohchr-ccpr@un.org](mailto:ohchr-ccpr@un.org)

16 September 2024

**NGO Report on the Republic of Ecuador for the 142nd Session of the Human Rights Committee / Rapport des ONG sur la République de l'Équateur pour la 142ème session du Comité des droits de l'homme**

**Table of Contents**

<b><i>Introduction</i></b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b><i>Ecuador's Situation in the Combat Against Trafficking in Persons</i></b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b><i>Equal Rights for Men and Women in Ecuador</i></b> .....	<b>5</b>
Ecuador's Limitations in Regulating Discrimination Against Afro-Ecuadorians.....	5
Ecuador's Lack of Action Against Homophobia in Society and Professional Fields .....	6
Ecuador's Inability to Provide Support for Women in the Workplace .....	7
Limited Awareness to Healthcare for LGBTI+ Individuals.....	7
<b><i>Continued Violence Against Women, Children, and Adolescents</i></b> .....	<b>8</b>
Ecuador's Actions in the Courts Regarding Violence .....	8
Lack of Supportive Services.....	9
Child Maltreatment, Abuse, and Gender Based Violence .....	10
<b><i>Recommendations</i></b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b><i>Conclusion</i></b> .....	<b>12</b>

## Introduction

1. The Centre for Voters Initiative & Action presents this report to the United Nations Human Rights Committee ahead of the 142<sup>nd</sup> Session for the review of Ecuador. The Centre is a non-governmental organisation based in the Americas with an international focus. The Centre acknowledges there can be no secure tomorrow without ensuring youth have knowledge to vote, participate, and engage with the democratic processes.
2. The Centre works with multiple international mechanisms to convey dialogue, conduct research, and bring awareness to the thematic issues of electoral engagement around the world. We closely follow and participate in the United Nations human rights mechanisms in Geneva and abroad, including the Human Rights Committee.
3. The Centre submits this report ahead of the review of Ecuador under the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights. Recognizing the multilateral challenges Ecuador currently faces, the Centre aims to provide insights to the Committee concerning the State's compliance with issues related to youth civic engagement, human trafficking, gender inequality, and the lack of access to education and basic services, all of which weaken democratic structures. The Centre promotes the implementation of civic education policies and urges the Committee to address the lack of focus on civic education in Ecuador in their concluding observations. As this report outlines, civic education has the potential to build future leaders and encourage active participation, contributing to a stronger democratic society in Ecuador.
4. This report focuses on five key violations: (1) the lack of civil equality, particularly for Afro-Ecuadorians and indigenous groups, resulting in poor political and electoral representation; (2) the lack of quality civic education, limiting youth and marginalized groups' participation in electoral processes; (3) human trafficking, which disproportionately affects young people and undermines their ability to participate in civic life; (4) ongoing violence and discrimination against women and LGBTI+ communities, hindering their full participation in society; and (5) widespread corruption, resulting in a weakened democracy.
5. This report presents data and analysis intended to help the Committee understand Ecuador's social, political, and economic context, particularly regarding electoral participation. Of key importance is the need to ask the State party about its programs targeting youth civic education. Early civics education has the potential to address many of the issues discussed, by equipping the next generation with the tools necessary for fostering a healthy democracy and enabling their participation in public life.

## Ecuador's Situation in the Combat Against Trafficking in Persons

6. Trafficking in persons refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of individuals for the purpose of exploitation. Ecuador's new Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code (COIP), in effect since August 10, 2014, addresses various purposes and means of human trafficking in its article 91 of the first chapter, titled "Serious Human Rights Violations and Crimes Against International Humanitarian Law".<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the 2017 *Ley de Movilidad Humana y su Reglamento*, which focuses on migrant smuggling, complements the *Plan de Acción contra la Trata de Personas 2019-2030 (PACTA)*. Bilateral agreements with Colombia and Peru, participation in UNODC initiatives, inter-institutional agreements and labour laws designed to protect migrant workers are positive steps toward combating trafficking in persons. However, challenges persist in terms of funding and implementing anti-trafficking provisions new laws. The results remain alarming.
  
7. The Ecuadorian government has made increasing efforts to eliminate trafficking in persons, but the outcomes remain unsatisfactory, even following the COVID-19 pandemic. Ecuador continues to be a source, transit, and destination country for trafficking victims, primarily for sexual exploitation and, to a lesser extent, labour exploitation. This affects both nationals and foreigners. The most vulnerable groups are children and adolescents, who are at high risk of being trafficked for sexual and labour exploitation. Adolescent females and young adults are more susceptible to sexual trafficking, while men are more often trafficked for labour. Most of the victims are Ecuadorian, although there are several reports of sexually trafficked teenage and young adult women from Colombia, Peru, and, especially, Venezuela.<sup>2</sup> This disproportionately affects youth participation, as the poorest and most vulnerable adolescents are more prone to being victims to human trafficking. According to Police data, of the 475 trafficking victims between 2019 and 2022, the majority were between 19 and 29 years old. No significant progress can be seen in statistics, as there is a drastic drop in the detection of victims for any of the purposes of trafficking in persons (-32%), as opposed to the increasing trend registered until 2019. However, this drop would be due to a lower institutional capacity for detection and the transfer of some forms of trafficking to greater clandestinely, making the detection of victims more difficult, in part due to the pandemic.<sup>3</sup> Further investment and support of NGOs is thus necessary to provide alternative services to the governments to the victims, who do not always trust it or want to reach out in fear of consequences.

---

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. "Código Orgánico Penal: Artículos 91-92." [https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/legislation/ecu/codigo\\_organico\\_penal/libro\\_primer/articulos\\_91\\_-\\_92/articulos\\_91-92.html](https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/legislation/ecu/codigo_organico_penal/libro_primer/articulos_91_-_92/articulos_91-92.html).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Global Report on Trafficking in Persons: Ecuador 2022 Brief. [https://www.unodc.org/documents/peruandecuador/Adjuntos/BriefGLOTIP2022\\_Ecuador.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/peruandecuador/Adjuntos/BriefGLOTIP2022_Ecuador.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. "Presentación del Informe Mundial de Trata de Personas 2022: Los Principales Hallazgos y las Perspectivas del Delito en Ecuador." [https://www.unodc.org/peruandecuador/es/noticias/2021/2023-presentacin-del-informe-mundial-de-trata-de-personas-2022\\_-los-principales-hallazgos-y-las-perspectivas-del-delito-en-ecuador.html](https://www.unodc.org/peruandecuador/es/noticias/2021/2023-presentacin-del-informe-mundial-de-trata-de-personas-2022_-los-principales-hallazgos-y-las-perspectivas-del-delito-en-ecuador.html).

8. Most of the victims, predominantly young women (66% of the total), are deprived of their education and fundamental human rights, making civic participation virtually impossible.<sup>4</sup> This issue is particularly pronounced in the already impoverished provinces of Los Ríos, Esmeraldas, Manabí, Chimborazo, Bolívar, Cotopaxi, and Guayas, from which most trafficking victims originate.<sup>5</sup> The absence of a strong governmental presence has created an institutional gap, leaving victims and their families isolated from the justice system and increasingly at the mercy of violent gangs, strongly involved in migrant trafficking to the United States and the rest of the Americas. The isolation of the victims, mostly young women, from the democratic system has made it extremely difficult for civil society to integrate or promote civic participation in communities, infiltrated by traffickers, often closely related to the victims.
  
9. Access to justice and protection for trafficked refugees, migrants, and locals remains a significant challenge. Accurately assessing the number of victims is inherently difficult. The Ministry of Government, in the PACTA document, acknowledged that one of Ecuador's major weaknesses is in statistical management, which is hampered by the nature of the crime, victims' fear of stigma, violent threats, limited access to justice, bureaucratic complexity, and a lack of trust in the system.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, greater investment in statistical management, law enforcement in vulnerable areas, anti-corruption mechanisms and special prosecutors who focus exclusively on human trafficking is essential. Furthermore, there is a need for proactive identification and investigation mechanisms that focus on victims while adopting a comprehensive approach, as is not only a matter of age, but also of nationality, gender, economic capacities and legal status. The existing mechanisms in Ecuador are underfunded and lack thorough implementation, even if the efforts to combat exist and tend to go in the right direction.<sup>7</sup> Under these circumstances, civic education and participation are particularly difficult, especially for vulnerable youth, who are disproportionately affected by trafficking in persons. Young people from these areas bear the brunt of the trafficking crisis, while irregular migrants face an additional threat to their integration; democratic participation suffers consequently. Without a safe environment for youth participation in the most elemental civic activities, democratic society is at risk, and in Ecuador's case, the future of it, as the most affected by trafficking are young adolescents.

**We urge the Committee to press the Ecuadorian delegation to increase funding and efforts in law enforcement mechanisms and to create a specialized prosecution office focused solely on trafficking in persons, as well as a dedicated victim service, particularly for young adults, boys and girls.**

<sup>4</sup> Gobierno de Ecuador. "Mapa del Ecuador: Estadísticas sobre Trata y Tráfico de Personas." <http://www.trataytrafico.gob.ec/estadisticas/mapaecuador>.

<sup>5</sup> Ministerio de Gobierno de Ecuador. Plan de Acción Contra la Trata de Personas 2019-2030. <https://www.ministeriodegobierno.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2019/12/PLAN-DE-ACCIO%CC%81N-CONTRA-LA-TRATA-DE-PERSONAS-1.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Refer to footnote 5.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of State. 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Ecuador. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-trafficking-in-persons-report/ecuador/>.

## Equal Rights for Men and Women in Ecuador

### Ecuador's Limitations in Regulating Discrimination Against Afro-Ecuadorians.

10. Ecuador's history in connection to Afro-Ecuadorians has been highly discriminative, and destructive. Afro-descendant people in Ecuador make up 40% of the population living in poverty, and they continue to be denied equal rights.<sup>8</sup> In Esmeraldas, nearly 70% of the population identifies as Afro-Ecuadorian. It is one of the poorest provinces in Ecuador, 23% of people lack basic services and rights, and 15% of the population is illiterate.<sup>9</sup> Water and the environment belonging to Afro-Ecuadorians is also being heavily contaminated and is another form of discrimination against their people. The discrimination faced by Ecuadorians of African descent transcends statistical data, and it is at a heightened level within the society and culture of Ecuador.
11. Due to their economic situations and increased environmental discrimination, Afro-Ecuadorians struggle to access education and employment.<sup>10</sup> Afro-Ecuadorians suffer from stereotyping which results in a lack of job opportunities or educational paths. Many Ecuadorians of African descent have stated that their job position was taken away after a photograph was submitted for the job application. In addition, a national gender survey in 2019 found that Afro-Ecuadorian women were harassed and vulnerable to gender-based violence in the workplace environment.<sup>11</sup> Because the level of poverty that Afro-Ecuadorian people face is increasingly high, their access to job opportunities is low. When an individual obtains a limited opportunity to apply for a financially beneficial job, they are turned down due to racial prejudices and stereotypes.
12. Afro-Ecuadorians that grow up in a poverty-stricken household with few job opportunities and financial benefits are limited to attend school. If they do attend school despite the discrimination that they face economically and socially, the access to materials and resources needed for education is not on the same level as non-Ecuadorians of African descent. It is imperative that schooling conditions and accommodations are made to bridge the systemic gap between students.
13. In relation to civic education and involvement, Afro-Ecuadorians are not represented. Their voices cannot be heard because of the lack of access that they must voting and the information regarding the process of voting. To increase voter participation amongst this population, education reforms must be made, and that action starts in the classroom. Ecuador has begun implementing educational courses for police officials regarding the discrimination faced by Ecuadorians of African

---

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. "Ecuador: Discrimination and Environmental Racism Against People of African Descent." <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2019/12/ecuador-discrimination-and-environmental-racism-against-people-african>.

<sup>9</sup> Refer to footnote 8.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

descent that have improved the understanding and balanced prejudices that officials had in the past. Only through education of the people in power can the less fortunate gain power.

**We urge the Committee to further support the education of Afro-Ecuadorian students to combat discrimination and the lack of civic representation by enforcing informational courses regarding the discrimination faced by Afro-Ecuadorians on educational instructors. The same materials and course information provided by The Attorney General's Office would be used to inform educational instructors on how to improve support towards students of African descent.**

#### Ecuador's Lack of Action Against Homophobia in Society and Professional Fields

14. In 2019, Ecuador made great strides in affirming the rights and happiness of LGBTI+ individuals. They extended marriage rights to same sex couples and gave them the rights to adopt children as well. Transgender people are also allowed to change their legal documents to feel protected and validated. The constitution in Ecuador also includes sexual identity as a right that is protected.
15. Regardless of these strides towards improving the lives and rights of LGBTI+ peoples, violence and discrimination against them remains incredibly high in Ecuador. The awareness and full implementation of these laws remains limited, and the education regarding same sex marriage is limited as well. 27 people were killed in Ecuador in 2023 because of direct homophobia, and the violence and hate speech against them is high as well.
16. The violence that LGBTI+ people face impacts their education and voice as well. Homophobia is a part of Ecuadorian society, due to religious beliefs and societal constructs. These individuals are ridiculed and harassed at school and at work as well.<sup>12</sup> This limits their ability to learn and therefore have the tools to advocate for themselves as well.
17. The impact on LGBTI+ education is deeply correlated with their ability to have a voice in their government to enact the change they want to see. Diane Rodriguez is the first trans person to be elected to the country's National Assembly, and she faces a dangerous amount of hatred.<sup>13</sup> If there are limitations on the education and access of safety and security for homosexual individuals to vote, then the representation they receive will be limited.

---

<sup>12</sup> Washington Blade. "Violence Against LGBTQ Ecuadorians Increases Amid Internal Armed Conflict." <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2024/01/20/violence-against-lgbtq-ecuadorians-increases-amid-internal-armed-conflict/>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

**We urge the Committee to create a safer environment for LGBTI+ students by implementing clubs and organizations in public schools that educate students on the rights of LGBTI+ people.**

#### Ecuador's Inability to Provide Support for Women in the Workplace

18. Ecuadorian women make up 50.4% of the population.<sup>14</sup> The Ecuadorian Constitution addresses gender inequality, and Ecuador's initiatives towards the rights of women are improving substantially. In terms of women who are in positions of leadership and power, Ecuador is succeeding substantially as well. They are the country with the second largest number of congresswomen in the region.
19. However, in local and societal culture, the rights of women are neglected. In many areas, women are still being seen in a traditional lens, and their right to work and gain a salary is limited in that regard. Economic Empowerment is a necessary factor for women to gain equal rights. The right to control their money and how it is spent offers power and freedom for many women, so it is imperative that women are given that support. In Ecuador, women make substantially less money than men, even though they work 15-23 more hours per week than men.<sup>15</sup> Women's salaries are 13-26% lower than their male peers.<sup>16</sup>
20. For women to gain equal rights, representation needs to take place at a local level. This means that local stereotypes and traditionalist culture need to be addressed effectively. If women have more local representation, workplace and monetary rights will be improved.

**We urge the Committee to improve workplace rights for women by implementing local business assessments on the roles of women in the workplace. Businesses must make their pay equity audit transparent to employees in order to ensure honesty and equality in the workplace.**

#### Limited Awareness to Healthcare for LGBTI+ Individuals

21. The awareness of healthcare for homosexual people is limited in Ecuador. Ecuador has made recent strides in ensuring the health care and safety of LGBTI+ individuals. In 2020, Ecuador's Assembly approved a bill furthering the right to health for LGBTI+ people. It guarantees access to sexual and reproductive health. It also reinforces the prohibition on conversion therapy which was already contained by the Criminal Code.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> UN Women. "Ecuador." <https://lac.unwomen.org/en/donde-estamos/ecuador>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> ILGA World. "Ecuador: LGBTI." Accessed September 16, 2024. <https://database.ilga.org/ecuador-lgbti>.



22. However, there is limited awareness to the increasing rights for LGBTI+ individuals in terms of healthcare. Many individuals are still unaware of their rights and the access they can possess for gender affirming care and reproductive rights. This is an issue because the lack of knowledge and awareness spreads into society, so homophobia is still rampant in terms of these issues.
23. The lack of awareness for LGBTI+ people to be aided by healthcare deeply impacts education levels as well. Many reports show that homosexual people that are not given gender affirming care develop depression and the lack of motivation for school. If there was more awareness regarding the healthcare and support, they could receive, LGBTI+ people will succeed in higher rates regarding their education.

**We urge the Committee to spread awareness regarding healthcare offered to LGBTI+ people by implementing educational workshops for families that show the benefits and rights given to people that want gender affirming care.**

## Continued Violence Against Women, Children, and Adolescents

### Ecuador's Actions in the Courts Regarding Violence

24. Ecuador has taken important steps over the past decades to improve their rates of violence against women and minors. Child abuse and gender-based violence can unfortunately be common in developing countries.<sup>18</sup> The constitution of Ecuador set standards and regulations to prevent and condone violence against children, criminalizing activities such as the recruitment of children and adolescents into the military.<sup>19</sup> By these standards' violence against others, particularly children should be punished appropriately. Ecuador's report outlines the different categories of the 50,865 reported cases including rape, sexual violence, and femicide for 2021. Two years prior in 2019 1,128 were ruled in favour of the victims by the Attorney General's Office.<sup>20</sup>
25. Although they are working towards transparency it is estimated that 6 in 10 Ecuadorian women have experienced a form of violence.<sup>21</sup> This indicated that rates of reporting and ruling cases are much lower than the rates at which the violence is occurring. These cases of violence are most often targeted towards indigenous women and girls, pointing towards deeper issues of race in Ecuadorian communities. Such issues are based on social standards and norms in the country, setting up men to view women as property and less than.<sup>22</sup> The Attorney General's Office has been

<sup>18</sup> Nash, Ellen. "Problems Faced by Children in Ecuador: Realizing the Rights of Children." ResearchGate. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368690844\\_Problems\\_faced\\_by\\_Children\\_in\\_Ecuador\\_Realizing\\_the\\_Rights\\_of\\_Children](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368690844_Problems_faced_by_Children_in_Ecuador_Realizing_the_Rights_of_Children).

<sup>19</sup> 18 Plan International. Universal Periodic Review: Ecuador. [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/session13/EC/PI\\_UPR\\_ECU\\_S13\\_2012\\_PlanInternational\\_E.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/session13/EC/PI_UPR_ECU_S13_2012_PlanInternational_E.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Humanium. "Ecuador." <https://www.humanium.org/en/ecuador/>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.



taking an active part in national and international discussions regarding women and minors rights and how to preserve them. Even so, with such high rates of abuse and reports of violence, Ecuador's actions seem to be falling short of diminishing the issue.

26. By having an unsupportive system for victims to turn to, Ecuador is allowing these acts of violence against women, children, and adolescents to continue. Societal standards within the country lead men to feel like they have the power and right to abuse, rape, and kill women and children. These standards are carried throughout all aspects of life, making it more difficult for women and children to feel safe in their communities. This impacts their lives in places like school, taking a toll on their mental health and limiting women from pursuing a higher education.
27. This limit on their lives leads to re-enforcing a power imbalance as women and children with affected mental health tend to struggle more in class. The recurring violence towards these groups can also limit their engagement with the community as a whole and their participation in social activities or programmes.

We urge the Committee to create a more supportive process in the courts by developing an atmosphere in the country that demonstrates a just and unprejudiced attitude when handling the cases of victims.

#### Lack of Supportive Services

28. Over the last years Ecuador has taken action towards improving their situation of rates of violence against these groups; however, they have failed to create services which can fully support the victims of these crimes. Within the education system on its own, there were 2,827 registered cases of violence in four years.<sup>23</sup> Within these institutions there are thousands of cases where the faculty take advantage of the students, and no one reports it despite being aware of the actions. These people range from bus drivers to the vice principals at schools. All of which hold a position of power against these children.
29. The main issue with these cases is the lack of support for those who have been victims of this violence as well as those trying to report it and pursue it in the courts. In the search for justice these people have been met with serious barriers as well as retraumatizing situations.<sup>24</sup> If these victims and their families believe that their pursuit for justice will be met with a wall of obstacles and additional trauma, they are significantly less likely to take action.
30. To combat this issue of violence Ecuador has to take significantly greater action against violence against anyone, particularly children and adolescents in school.

---

<sup>23</sup> Human Rights Watch. *Patchwork: Ecuador's Slow Progress in Tackling and Preventing School-Related Sexual Violence*. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/07/24/patchwork/ecuadors-slow-progress-tackling-and-preventing-school-related-sexual>.

<sup>24</sup> Refer to footnote 23.

Although they have created various plans and acts, there are notable gaps leaving victims vulnerable and unsupported. Institutions like schools still fall short in applying the proper protocol and reporting abuses.

31. The continued emotional, physical, and sexual violence which these kids face in school limits their education. The need for schools to maintain their prestige trumps over the victims getting any justice and diminishes their voices, making them feel unheard. The effects of abuse on children can impact every aspect of their lives. Kids who at one point experience abuse or neglect are more likely to have developmental, mental health, and learning issues.<sup>25</sup> All of this can be detrimental to how a child grows up, impacting their education and social life.

**We urge the Committee to create and enforce supportive services, ensuring all cases of violence and abuse are reported in institutions by enforcing current measures and punishing those who fail to follow procedure under the law.**

### Child Maltreatment, Abuse, and Gender Based Violence

32. Ecuador's issue with violence is not only that there is a lack of ability to support the victims, but also that there are so many in the first place. A study found that 69.6% of their participants had experienced child maltreatment and 47.6% experienced physical abuse.<sup>26</sup> The participants consisted of female and male students at the largest universities in Ecuador. Cases of sexual violence have been increasing since 2014 including cases with victims of all ages in schools.<sup>27</sup>
33. These cases of violence are in part because of societal norms. In Ecuador physical violence and abuse are often seen as acceptable forms of punishment despite the country's new constitution banning any forms of violence towards children.<sup>28</sup> Not only that, but 6-7 out of 10 women are reported to have been victims of domestic violence at a point in their lives. This culture which Ecuador currently condones puts both women and children in danger while framing it as an acceptable course of action to put others "in their place".
34. Ecuador has seen continued issues regarding violence but has noted improvement over the past decades thanks to plans and programmes. Yet, it seems that their actions are still not enough to overcome this issue. The primarily affected party of gender-based violence are girls and women from indigenous Afro-Ecuadorian and

---

<sup>25</sup> National Research Council (US) and Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on the Science of Adolescence. *The Science of Adolescent Risk-Taking: Workshop Report*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2011. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK195987/>.

<sup>26</sup> 25 Cortés, María-Belén, Andrea García, and Julia Maldonado. "Child Maltreatment in Ecuador: A Study on Prevalence and Associated Risk Factors." *Child Abuse & Neglect* 96 (2019): 104103. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0145213419304077>.

<sup>27</sup> Refer to footnote 21.

<sup>28</sup> Nash, Ellen. "Problems Faced by Children in Ecuador: Realizing the Rights of Children." ResearchGate. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368690844\\_Problems\\_faced\\_by\\_Children\\_in\\_Ecuador\\_Realizing\\_the\\_Rights\\_of\\_Children](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368690844_Problems_faced_by_Children_in_Ecuador_Realizing_the_Rights_of_Children).

Montbuan groups.<sup>29</sup> The issue of gender-based violence reaches about 68% of women in Ecuador.<sup>30</sup> That number is far too high for a country which is supposedly creating plans and legislation to lower it.

35. Until Ecuador can change its societal view of violence against women, children, and adolescents, no law or constitution will be able to protect any member of these groups. If it is justified by the majority of society, child maltreatment and abuse will continue to be a problem throughout the country. This will in turn affect how these victims or possible targets will behave in society and may make them less likely to speak up in fear of physical retribution which is deemed appropriate by many in Ecuador's society.

**We urge the Committee to prevent violence against children, adolescents, and women, working to change societal norms of abuse as discipline or punishment by setting an example through punishment of the law and by discouragement it in popular culture.**

### Recommendations

36. The human rights challenges in Ecuador are escalating and must be thoroughly addressed. Should these challenges persist, Ecuadorian civil society may not be able to fully realize their rights under the Covenant. In response to the current situation and the issues outlined in this report, we urge the State party to take the following actions, and hope the Committee will resonate these recommendations during the interactive dialogue with the Committee:

- Push the Ecuadorian delegation to increase funding and efforts in law enforcement mechanisms and to create a specialized prosecution office focused solely on trafficking in persons, as well as a dedicated victim service, particularly for young adults, boys and girls;
- Further support the education of Afro-Ecuadorian students to combat discrimination and the lack of civic representation by enforcing informational courses regarding the discrimination faced by Afro-Ecuadorians on educational instructors. The same materials and course information provided by The Attorney General's Office would be used to inform educational instructors on how to improve support towards students of African descent;
- Create a safer environment for LGBTI+ students by implementing clubs and organizations in public schools that educate students on the rights of LGBTI+ people;
- Improve workplace rights for women by implementing local business assessments on the roles of women in the workplace. Businesses must make their pay equity audit transparent to employees in order to ensure honesty and equality in the workplace;

---

<sup>29</sup> Refer to footnote 21.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

- Spread awareness regarding healthcare offered to LGBTI+ people by implementing educational workshops for families that show the benefits and rights given to people that want gender affirming care;
- Create a more supportive process in the courts by developing an atmosphere in the country that demonstrates a just and unprejudiced attitude when handling the cases of victims;
- Create and enforce supportive services, ensuring all cases of violence and abuse are reported in institutions by enforcing current measures and punishing those who fail to follow procedure under the law; and
- Prevent violence against children, adolescents, and women, working to change societal norms of abuse as discipline or punishment by setting an example through punishment of the law and by discouragement it in popular culture.

## Conclusion

37. The human rights challenges facing Ecuador, particularly in the areas of trafficking in persons, discrimination against marginalized communities, and violence against vulnerable groups, are serious and multi-faceted. Despite some progress in legislation and international cooperation, the implementation of these measures remains insufficient. The most affected groups (youth, Afro-Ecuadorians, LGBTI+ individuals, and women) continue to face systemic inequalities that restrict their civic participation and limit their access to essential services like education, healthcare, and justice.
38. To ensure that Ecuador fulfils its obligations under the Covenant, further action is required to address these shortcomings. This includes increasing funding for law enforcement mechanisms, providing specialized victim services, and fostering a culture of inclusion through education reform and civic engagement initiatives.
39. In moving forward, Ecuador must prioritize the enforcement of existing laws and the creation of robust mechanisms to monitor progress. By doing so, Ecuador can address the root causes of human trafficking, discrimination, and violence, and work toward a more equitable and just society for all its citizens.
40. We thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide insight into the human rights situation in Ecuador, and hope you find this information to be valuable during the review process. We kindly implore you to remember that civics education is an essential tool in securing a more prosperous tomorrow; we hope the Committee will recognise that and take this, along with many other recommendations, to the table. We look forward to the interactive dialogue which will follow.
41. This submission may be published on the OHCHR website or any other places necessary. For any inquiries regarding this submission, kindly contact primary contributors Santiago Ruiz Pérez ([srperez@cvia.ch](mailto:srperez@cvia.ch)), Julia Elliot Ortega ([jeortega@cvia.ch](mailto:jeortega@cvia.ch)), and Miranda Elliot Ortega ([meortega@cvia.ch](mailto:meortega@cvia.ch)). This report was finalised by supplementary contributor Samad Quraishi ([squraishi@cvia.ch](mailto:squraishi@cvia.ch)).