

# URGENT ACTION

## DETAINEES AT IMMINENT RISK

Detainees in at least five of the major prisons in Ecuador are at imminent risk of facing hunger and health issues, as prison authorities have halted the provision of food and medication since 24 April. Amnesty International calls on the National Service for Integral Attention of People Deprived of Liberty (SNAI) to immediately restore access to food and medication and to guarantee the rights to health, food, and physical integrity of all detainees in Ecuador.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

**General Luis Eduardo Zaldumbide López**

**Director General**

Orellana E3-62 y 9 de Octubre

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Dear Director General Zaldumbide López,

*I am gravely concerned about the situation of detainees in prisons across Ecuador, including in the provinces of Esmeraldas, Manabí, Guayas, and Cotopaxi. Since at least 24 April, prison authorities have suspended the provision of food and medication to detainees, because of an alleged lack of payment by the state to the prisons' food services provider as the result of a diminished budget. In the meantime, the families of detainees have been forced to buy food and medication for their relatives, and prison authorities have not provided clear information on whether this is a temporary measure.*

*The health and physical integrity of detainees had already been put at grave risk following the declaration of a state of exception in Ecuador on 8 January, when health services were suspended inside prisons and the health of many detainees deteriorated because of this measure. Further, since the state of exception, Ecuador's Armed Forces have fully taken control of prisons in the country and human rights groups have received allegations of cases of ill-treatment against detainees.*

***I call on the National Service for Integral Attention of People Deprived of Liberty to ensure that the rights of detainees are not put at risk and to immediately restore access to food and medication.***

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For years now, Ecuador has been [living](#) through a sustained crisis in its penitentiary system, marked by repeated massacres. According to the Permanent Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDH), an estimated 600 people have died in prisons in Ecuador from 2019 to the present. In addition, according to information received by Amnesty International, health services inside Ecuador's prisons have been in practise non-functional since at least 2022.

The already critical situation inside prisons has been aggravated by recent measures adopted by President Daniel Noboa. On 8-9 January, the President [declared](#) a state of exception and an internal armed conflict, through which the Armed Forces assumed control of prisons across Ecuador. Both decrees have been extended. Since then, health services have been suspended inside prisons. Moreover, local human rights groups have [received](#) allegations of ill-treatment by soldiers against detainees during this period.

On 24 April, prison authorities [informed](#) the families of detainees across Ecuador that the provision of food and medication would be suspended. According to national press coverage, this measure was [taken](#) because of a delayed payment to the private company that provides food to prisons across the country. The families of detainees were also given a list of medication they needed to buy for their relatives, as supplies were no longer available inside prisons.

That same day, the families of detainees [held](#) a peaceful protest outside the headquarters of National Service for Integral Attention of People Deprived of Liberty, to demand that information about the well-being of their relatives is provided and that the provision of food and medication is restored.

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) [stipulate](#) that prison administrations should provide every prisoner with food of nutritional value, access to drinking water, and that the provision of health care is a State responsibility. International human rights law and standards also establish an absolute prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment against any person, including persons deprived of their liberty.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Spanish. You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 6 June 2024

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Detainees in Ecuador (They/Them)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** NA