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Summary record of the 4168th meeting*

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Chair: Ms. Abdo Rocholl

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* No summary records were issued for the 4164th to 4167th meetings.

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant
(continued)**

Seventh periodic report of Ecuador (CCPR/C/ECU/7; CCPR/C/ECU/QPR/7)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Ecuador joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Ecuador**, introducing his country's report (CCPR/C/ECU/7), said that Ecuador had consistently demonstrated its commitment to promoting and protecting human rights, both internationally and nationally. During the period under review, the Government had taken a number of legislative and other measures to implement the Covenant, in areas such as trafficking in persons, access to justice, sexual and reproductive rights and human mobility.
3. Human rights training and awareness-raising activities had been carried out on a range of topics, including the right to life, freedom of expression and peaceful protest, due process and effective judicial protection, and freedom of movement; a total of 25,844 people had participated. The judiciary had held training events on the prevention of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and crimes against humanity, aimed at students, civil servants and other relevant professionals. The Counsel General's Office provided ongoing training on the human rights set out in the Covenant for members of the national police and armed forces, as well as for civil servants working for the central Government and for the decentralized autonomous governments.
4. Specifically regarding freedom of expression, a State mechanism for the protection of media professionals had been established pursuant to the Organic Act on Communication, with a view to protecting the life and integrity of journalists and developing indicators on the murder, abduction, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists. In 2024, a total of 97 warnings of aggression against the media or media professionals had been issued, in response to which 78 protective measures had been taken.
5. The National Council for the Equality of Peoples and Nationalities had developed the Agenda for the Equal Rights of Indigenous Nationalities and Peoples, the Afro-Ecuadorian People and the Montubio People, in line with the National Development Plan, and in consultation with the organizations representing those nationalities and Peoples and with civil society. In 2023, the National Council had held 14 seminars with leaders and members of organizations representing Afro-Ecuadorian communities to discuss matters related to the International Decade of People of African Descent and to formulate proposals to be submitted to the Ecuadorian Committee on the International Decade of People of African Descent.
6. **A representative of Ecuador**, continuing the introduction of the report, said that the Ministry of Women and Human Rights, established in 2022, was devoted to preventing and eliminating violence against women and children. A total of 45 comprehensive protection services had been set up pursuant to the Comprehensive Organic Act to Prevent and Eradicate Violence against Women and the National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women (2020–2030). In addition, eight “Purple Centres” had been established and provided psychological assistance, legal assistance and social services free of charge. The Government funded 5 shelters and 22 comprehensive care centres, which provided services to direct and indirect victims of violence against women. Furthermore, the recently introduced technical standards for gender mainstreaming in public policies and initiatives ensured that every institution, programme and service took account of women's specific needs.
7. The National Council for Gender Equality had developed a national agenda for gender equality for the period 2021–2025. In January 2024, the Organic Act on Equal Pay for Women and Men had been adopted, and 18 September had been declared “Equal Pay Day”, to raise public awareness about the gender wage gap.
8. Between late November 2023 and August 2024, the Ministry of the Interior had approved 5,296 administrative measures for the immediate protection of victims of gender-based violence. In June 2024, the Organic Act for the Provision of Support and Transformative and Comprehensive Reparation to Daughters, Sons, Mothers, Fathers and

Other Relatives of Victims of Femicide and Other Gender-related Killings had been adopted. The Act provided for scholarships and financial assistance for motherless children, and medical care, including psychiatric support. The Government had made the elimination of sexual abuse and violence against children and adolescents in educational establishments a priority and had adopted a public policy on the subject, as well as a national plan that was intended to foster protective educational environments.

9. A series of measures had been taken to ensure the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. The Attorney General's Office had developed a policy on access to justice for the LGBTI+ community, establishing guidelines for investigating hate and discrimination crimes, as well as related crimes against the same community. The Diversity Action Plan (2022–2025) set out 148 actions and 151 indicators to improve the living conditions and uphold the rights of the LGBTI+ community in Ecuador. As part of the Plan, in 2023, an inter-institutional road map had been issued with a view to identifying, shutting down and prosecuting centres that sought to suppress or change individuals' sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression. The Ministry of Public Health had developed a manual of good practices for the provision of comprehensive healthcare to the LGBTI+ community and technical standards on comprehensive care for victims of gender-based violence and serious human rights violations. Between 2019 and June 2024, more than 39,000 health services had been provided to people who self-identified as LGBTI+.

10. The Organic Act on Human Mobility set out the procedures for refusal of entry at the border, deportation and expulsion, all of which took into account international standards on non-refoulement. In addition, the regularization process for Venezuelan migrants, which had been initiated on 1 August 2022 and was ongoing, had resulted thus far in the granting of 97,000 temporary residence visas, including 896 for accompanied children and 871 for unaccompanied children.

11. **Mr. Quezada Cabrera**, welcoming the State party's periodic report, said that he would be grateful for information on the measures that had been taken to ensure full compliance with the Committee's Views in the cases of *Isaías Dassum and Isaías Dassum v. Ecuador* and *Pérez Barriga et al. v. Ecuador*. According to information received by the Committee regarding the Ombudsman's Office, the first Ombudsman had been removed from office by the National Assembly, and an interim Ombudsman had then been designated, without due consultation of civil society. Moreover, it was reported that regulations for the selection and appointment of the Ombudsman had been issued in March 2022, but that no selection process had begun, even though the term of the first Ombudsman had expired. He would appreciate an update on the situation, which was reportedly affecting the functioning of the Ombudsman's Office. He would also like to know whether sufficient resources had been allocated to the Office for it to fulfil its mandate, including its additional role as the national preventive mechanism.

12. He would welcome details of any specific mechanism or procedure that had been established for implementing the Committee's Views; additional examples of cases in which the domestic courts, other than the Constitutional Court, had invoked provisions of the Covenant; and updated statistics on the training carried out for justice officials, the Attorney General's Office, civil servants and civil society. It would be helpful if the delegation could comment on reports that certain vulnerable groups had been disproportionately affected by the restrictions imposed during the states of emergency and describe the safeguards provided by the State party to avoid negative impacts on those groups. Referring to the concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the State party's eighth periodic report (CAT/C/ECU/CO/8), he said that he would like to know whether, in its efforts to address the prison crisis, the State party was considering eschewing the use of states of emergency, with the participation of the armed forces in enforcing public security, in favour of other, human rights-based measures, and whether it was working towards the gradual and orderly withdrawal of the armed forces from prisons. He would welcome an update on the investigations into the allegations of torture and abuse of authority that had been made against the armed forces and the national police, and he would like to know whether anyone had been formally charged with committing such crimes.

13. The Committee would appreciate clarifications regarding President Noboa's declarations of a state of emergency on the basis of an "internal armed conflict", which the Constitutional Court had ruled on two occasions to be unconstitutional, as well as the significance of Decree No. 218 of 12 April 2024, on the persistence of an internal armed conflict led by organized armed groups, and its review by the Constitutional Court. The Committee would be grateful for information on any steps taken to implement the rulings of the Constitutional Court and to guarantee that any measure taken to protect the people during a state of emergency was temporary, proportionate, strictly necessary and subject to prompt judicial review.

14. **Mr. Gómez Martínez** said that he would like to know how many of the cases mentioned in the final report of the Truth Commission had still not been tried and how many of the victims mentioned in the same report had still not received reparations under the 2013 Act for the Reparation of Victims and the Prosecution of Grave Human Rights Violations and Crimes against Humanity That Occurred in Ecuador between 4 October 1983 and 31 December 2008. It would be useful to learn whether the State party intended to investigate serious past human rights violations, and what role victims had played in the establishment of the Museum of Memory, particularly in choosing its location.

15. He would appreciate updated information on cases involving the offence of terrorism, including the number of prosecutions, dismissals and convictions. Information on measures taken to ensure, in law and in practice, that persons charged with terrorism offences were afforded all procedural guarantees under article 14 of the Covenant would also be useful. He would welcome the delegation's comments on reports that 35,000 arrests on charges of terrorism had been carried out between January and May 2024 and would like to know how many of those arrests had led to prosecution. Lastly, it would be interesting to learn whether terrorism and organized crime were handled differently by the law enforcement agencies and by the courts, and how the results of President Noboa's Phoenix Plan were regarded, from a human rights perspective.

16. **Mr. El Haiba** said that he would like to know what had been achieved by the national councils for equality and whether the State party had developed indicators for assessing the impact of their work. It would be helpful if the delegation could provide disaggregated data showing how the initiatives led by the National Council for Gender Equality had helped to reduce gender-based violence and to realize the rights of the LGBTI+ community.

17. He would be interested to know what the impact of the training provided to police officers on interculturalism and non-discrimination had been and how its effectiveness had been measured. Likewise, he would like to know what the training on sexual diversity provided to members of the legal profession and law students had achieved and how its effectiveness in combating discrimination had been assessed. Regarding the provision of healthcare to the LGBTI+ community, he wished to know how the State party ensured the successful implementation of the handbook and protocol mentioned in paragraph 26 of its report and what impact those materials had had. He would welcome information on any legislative measures taken to prohibit conversion therapy and the expected outcomes of those measures.

18. He would like to know what measures were in place to ensure that the police protocol on the arrest of members of the LGBTI+ community was followed and to monitor its effectiveness. It would be useful if the delegation could describe any legal and policy measures taken to protect and ensure the recognition of children belonging to the LGBTI+ community, including the children of same-sex couples, and any measures taken to ensure equal access to all institutions of family law, including adoption. He would welcome disaggregated data showing the extent to which transgender and intersex persons were able to exercise their rights, as well as information on any measures taken to improve their living conditions.

19. He wondered what conclusions had been drawn from the investigations into cases of gender-based violence mentioned in paragraph 37 of the State party's report and how those investigations had contributed to the fight against impunity and the provision of redress to victims. It would be interesting to know what progress had been made under the National Plan for the Elimination of Gender Violence against Children, Adolescents and Women and

what challenges remained in that area. He wished to know how soon the draft code for the protection of children would be adopted and what would be done to speed up the process. Lastly, he would like details of any measures taken to ensure that all women victims of violence, including sexual violence, had access to effective means of protection, such as shelters and medical, legal and rehabilitation services.

20. **Mr. Carazo** said that he would be interested to know how the State party would rate the support provided by the United Nations for its efforts to fulfil its human rights obligations, how that support could be improved and whether the State party would be willing to receive special envoys for the protection of human rights from the United Nations.

21. He would like the delegation to comment on reports that the number of cases of gender-based violence in the political sphere had risen as women's participation in politics had increased. He would be interested to know how the impacts of campaigns to combat gender stereotypes were monitored; what challenges the State party faced as it sought to increase the representation of women in decision-making positions, especially in rural, Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian communities; and how the State party ensured the effective implementation of the law that was intended to promote the participation of women in industries that had traditionally been dominated by men. He wondered what had been achieved through the "Let's Experience Equality" campaign thus far and how the long-term impact of the campaign would be measured.

22. He would like to know what steps had been taken to ensure that the recent electoral reforms would not only increase the political participation of women but also help them to remain in office; and what had been achieved through the campaigns to change perceptions of gender roles. It was his understanding that, on account of the current political situation in Ecuador and in accordance with the Constitution, a woman was to assume the office of President of the Republic, for the first time, in the 45 days prior to the presidential election that was scheduled for February 2025 and would remain in office until that election had been decided. He would be grateful if the delegation could confirm that his understanding was correct. He wondered why the representation of women, especially Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian women, in individual elections and political bodies remained limited, despite the legislative measures taken to promote the political participation of women. He would also welcome more information on the implementation, impact and limitations of the Organic Act on Equal Pay for Women and Men.

23. In view of the concerns raised in the report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples on her visit to Ecuador in 2018, he would like to know what measures had been taken to ensure the participation of Indigenous communities in the development of the Strategic Plan for Comprehensive Border Security; how allegations of human rights violations committed by law enforcement on the northern border were addressed; how the behaviour of law enforcement officers in the border area was monitored; and how the rights of internally displaced persons were protected during the implementation of security policies. Lastly, he wondered whether the State party might find a way to use the principles of land restitution to provide collective material reparation to Indigenous communities.

24. **Ms. Šurlan** said that she would like to know what steps had been taken to ensure that all children and adolescents who had been left motherless as a result of violent crime, including those living in rural and remote areas or belonging to vulnerable groups, had access to the allowance established by Executive Decree No. 370 of March 2022. She wondered what had been done to raise awareness of the right to that allowance among victims and the relevant civil servants; how the State party would ensure the existence of a sustainable budget for the full operationalization of the allowance; how the Organic Act for the Provision of Support and Transformative and Comprehensive Reparation to Daughters, Sons, Mothers, Fathers and Other Relatives of Victims of Femicide and Other Gender-related Killings would interact with Executive Decree No. 370; and when the central register of victims and early warning system provided for in the Act would be operational.

25. In view of reports that sexual violence against girls remained widespread in Ecuador, she wished to know what measures had been taken to empower girls to report acts of sexual violence and to raise awareness of the issue among the wider population. She would like more information on the penalties handed down in cases of sexual violence and the

compensation and support provided to victims. She wondered whether legal assistance was available to victims from vulnerable and low-income families. She would appreciate updated information on the implementation of the judgment of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the case of *Guzmán Albarracín et al v. Ecuador*. In particular, she would like to know whether the State party had held a public act of acknowledgment of international responsibility in the presence of high-ranking State officials and the victim's mother and sister.

26. It would be helpful if the delegation could clarify whether the Organic Act on the Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy for Girls, Adolescents and Women in Cases of Rape had been amended in response to the Constitutional Court's rulings to the effect that several articles of the Act violated human rights. She would be interested to know whether the State party was considering including incest and fetal malformation as grounds for abortion and what the State party viewed as the legal aim of criminalizing abortion in cases of fetal malformation. She wished to know whether there were plans to bring articles 149 and 150 of the Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code into line with the Covenant. She wondered whether sex education, including education on contraception, was provided to young people; whether contraceptive pills were available free of charge to women and girls on a low income; and whether family planning services were provided by healthcare facilities.

27. She would like to know what steps had been taken to raise awareness of the new regulations on abortion in cases of rape or sexual assault; whether awareness-raising campaigns had been carried out to ensure that members of the public, especially women and girls in rural and remote areas, knew where to go for immediate assistance if they were victims of violence; and whether awareness-raising campaigns had been conducted to prevent the stigmatization, harassment and intimidation of women and girls who had undergone abortions following rape.

28. It would be helpful if the delegation could describe the safeguards in place to ensure that women and girls in need of an abortion, especially those in rural and remote areas or from low-income families, received timely and professional healthcare. With regard to patient confidentiality, she wished to know whether the legislation on abortion had been brought into line with the Constitutional Court ruling of July 2023 that had, among other things, suspended the application of the provisions that required health professionals to report women and girls who had undergone consensual abortions; and whether steps had been taken to raise awareness among health professionals of the need to protect women and girls from public condemnation and stigmatization in cases of abortion following sexual assault.

The meeting was suspended at 4.10 p.m. and resumed at 4.40 p.m.

29. **A representative of Ecuador**, responding to Mr. Quezada Cabrera's request for updated statistics on human rights training, said that the figures that had been provided in the delegation's opening statement were valid as of July 2024.

30. **A representative of Ecuador** said that more than 1,150 direct and indirect victims of serious human rights violations had benefited from the comprehensive reparation programme that was being implemented by the Ombudsman's Office, with support from many other State institutions. The reparation provided ranged from medical care and psychological support to measures of public recognition and historical memory. As of June 2024, 12 of the cases documented in the report entitled "No Truth, No Justice" had been prosecuted.

31. In response to the judgment of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the case of *Guzmán Albarracín et al v. Ecuador*, various measures, including the provision of compensation and psychological support, had been implemented and a public policy on the prevention of sexual violence in schools had been adopted. The policy had been declared a government priority, and an accompanying action plan for the period 2024–2030 was being drawn up.

32. Psychological support was provided to victims of sexual violence through various channels, including at the Purple Centres managed by the Ministry of Women and Human Rights. Several ministries had protocols for referring victims to mental health services. The central Government worked with the decentralized autonomous governments and cantonal

boards to protect the rights of victims of sexual violence. Work on the central register of victims was under way.

33. **A representative of Ecuador** said that, since the adoption of the Organic Act on the Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy for Girls, Adolescents and Women in Cases of Rape, the Ministry of Public Health had worked with other State institutions to develop guidelines for the implementation of the Act, disseminate its content and train around 4,200 healthcare professionals in applying the procedures established thereunder, such as those for obtaining patients' informed consent. The public prosecution service had informed its staff of their obligation to accept complaints from victims of rape who had decided to end the resulting pregnancy. The requirement for such victims to file a complaint in order to undergo an abortion had, however, been lifted. Guidelines had been drawn up to ensure that biological samples would be collected from victims only with their consent and that any refusal to provide such samples would not prevent victims from obtaining access to justice. Victims who filed complaints through an online form would be notified that all women who fell pregnant as a result of rape had the right to seek an abortion and to receive assistance in exercising that right in public health centres across the country.

34. Ecuadorian law provided for the progressive autonomy of children, the consideration of their best interests and their right to participate in decisions affecting them. Eleven texts relating to child protection had been adopted to ensure compliance with international standards on access to justice and prevent revictimization. A manual on the delivery of care to pregnant girls under 15 years old had been issued in 2022 and training on that subject had been provided to more than 1,500 healthcare professionals in 2024. Steps had been taken to ensure that girls who were pregnant as a result of rape had access to safe abortion services. From 2021 to date, the Ministry of Public Health had not reported any cases in which victims of rape had been denied access to such services.

35. While individuals had the right to conscientiously object to abortion, all public and private healthcare providers must ensure that they had staff who were willing to perform the procedure. Conscientious objection was prohibited in cases in which the mother's life or health was at risk. All healthcare professionals had a duty to provide victims of rape with information on their abortion rights in a neutral and sensitive manner. They were obliged to comply with international confidentiality standards and protect the privacy of all women who chose to undergo the procedure. A clinical guide on abortion had been published to help those professionals meet the highest standards of care and safety. The Ministry of Public Health had established a hotline through which individuals could, on a free and confidential basis, obtain sexual and reproductive health information and guidance on the circumstances under which abortion was permitted.

36. The National Council for Gender Equality was responsible for, among other things, monitoring the implementation of policies aimed at achieving gender equality, promoting respect for the rights of women and individuals of diverse gender identities and preventing and eradicating violence against women and members of the LGBTI+ community. Since 2022, it had formed part of an inter-institutional committee tasked with developing policies to address sexual violence in educational settings. It had worked with the National Service for Adults Deprived of Liberty and Adolescent Offenders and other stakeholders to improve the care provided to members of the LGBTI+ community in detention facilities. During the drafting of laws and regulations, the Council was called upon to help ensure that the text in question promoted gender equality. Its other areas of focus included discrimination against women in the media, workplace discrimination and early childhood services.

37. The National Council for Gender Equality had worked with social organizations to develop a guide for the creation of gender equality agendas in 10 cantons, with the aim of strengthening the capacity of local governments to integrate a gender-based approach in all their policies, thereby dismantling the structural barriers faced by women and promoting a life free of violence and discrimination for all women and members of the LGBTI+ community. The National Agenda for Gender Equality, for its part, focused on nine strategic areas, which included the economy, employment and sexual and reproductive rights. Guidelines had been established under each area of focus, taking into account women's needs. The Agenda took an intersectional approach, raising awareness of the issues faced by

Indigenous women, women of African descent, rural women, migrant women and those who had been deprived of their liberty.

38. The guidelines under the Agenda were associated with specific targets to allow for their implementation to be monitored by the relevant State institutions. The National Council for Gender Equality had recently issued a report on the progress made by the Ministry of Public Health in meeting its targets in the area of sexual and reproductive health, which included reducing maternal mortality and underage pregnancy. According to the report, some progress had been made in those areas as a result of the improvement of maternal healthcare services, the enhanced training of healthcare professionals and the decision to authorize abortion in cases of rape. The report had also indicated, however, that progress had been slower than expected and that there was a need for stronger preventive policies, comprehensive sexual education and additional efforts to reduce pregnancy among girls aged between 15 and 19 years.

39. The provision of support to vulnerable women was another area of focus under the Agenda. Strategies had been developed to integrate such women into the digital economy and facilitate their access to credit. Steps were being taken to ensure that women in rural areas had access to land ownership and financial services that would promote their economic independence. Eradicating violence and discrimination was key. For that reason, in 2023 and 2024, representatives from the justice sector and security forces had received training on human rights, gender and the prevention of violence against pregnant women. The National Council for Gender Equality was working closely with the National Statistics and Census Institute to incorporate a gender-based approach in national surveys and censuses. Up-to-date statistics covering areas such as education, gender-based violence and employment had been made available on the Council's website, with a view to supporting State institutions in developing inclusive policies and ensuring civil society was as well informed as possible. Training on handling data would be provided to the technical staff of local governments. The Government had adopted a regulation providing for the mainstreaming of a gender-based approach in the work of State institutions to ensure that their internal procedures were inclusive, non-discriminatory and helped to promote a human-rights based culture.

40. **A representative of Ecuador** said that, in its efforts to address the prison crisis, the Government had sought to uphold respect for human rights and the dignity of individuals deprived of their liberty. One of its objectives was to end self-governance in detention facilities and ensure that the State authorities regained control of each of the country's 35 prisons and 10 centres for juvenile offenders. Its ultimate goal, however, was to guarantee that all prisoners had access to services allowing for their effective rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The Government was committed to taking all necessary steps to that end, including the improvement of prison infrastructure, which should help to address issues such as corruption and overcrowding. Two new prisons, each with the capacity to house 800 detainees, were currently under construction. It was hoped that the operationalization of those prisons would enable the Government to meet the targets set by the National Social Rehabilitation System with regard to the reduction of overcrowding and the provision of rehabilitation services.

41. Protocols had been established to ensure cooperation between the police and the armed forces in their efforts to regain control of prisons. The armed forces were present in just eight of the country's prisons. The remaining facilities were run by the National Service for Adults Deprived of Liberty and Adolescent Offenders, which was working tirelessly to establish security systems that would prevent a repeat of the violence seen in recent years. The Service considered the improvement of security in prisons to be a key step towards ensuring that detainees had access to employment, recreational, cultural, education and health services and could remain in contact with their families. It worked with the Ministry of Public Health to address outbreaks of tuberculosis, which were a particular problem in two prisons.

42. All prison staff were provided with training. Plans were in place to create a school for the training of prison officers, with a view to bringing the ratio of officers to prisoners into line with international standards. In the next five years, the Service hoped to train almost 7,000 new officers, who would be required to follow courses on emotional intelligence and ensuring respect for human rights and the dignity of prisoners. Specific actions were being taken under the National Social Rehabilitation System to protect the rights of women

prisoners; for example, women were no longer housed in the same facilities as men and were therefore safer and less likely to experience gender-based violence.

43. **A representative of Ecuador** said that the Government had issued a standing invitation to the special procedure mandate holders and stood ready to take any action necessary to protect human rights. It was grateful for all support received from the United Nations system, which had been crucial in helping the authorities to implement the Committee's Views. Additional support from the Committee in that area would be welcome, as would assistance in seeking friendly settlements. The friendly settlement mechanism of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights had enabled the Government and petitioners to reach agreements that guaranteed the provision of reparations to alleged victims of human rights violations.

44. As the international human rights instruments ratified by Ecuador were applicable directly and immediately, there was in principle no need for specific mechanisms to give effect to the Views adopted by the Committee under the first Optional Protocol. All the same, procedures for the coordination of the steps to be taken to ensure the fulfilment of obligations arising from the inter-American and universal human rights systems had been set forth in a set of rules adopted in August 2023.

45. Since 2022, when the country's periodic report had been submitted, the Isaías Dassum brothers had been provided with an effective remedy, as had been recommended in the Views adopted by the Committee in the case *Isaías Dassum and Isaías Dassum v. Ecuador*. Although court rulings in the brothers' favour would not be made final until the resolution of further proceedings instituted by the State, the rulings were in the process of being enforced.

46. The executive decree containing a presidential proclamation of a state of emergency had to lay out the reasons for the proclamation, as well as the scope and duration of the state of emergency. In accordance with article 4 of the Covenant, other States parties were notified of any limitation or suspension of Covenant rights. In 2022, there had been a state of emergency as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. More recently, the President's declaration of an internal armed conflict had been upheld by the Constitutional Court.

47. Rates of violent crime were going up, and organized crime groups, whose activities posed a threat to the State, were an increasingly prominent feature of the social and institutional fabric. The country's prisons were one of the hubs of the breakdown of law and order. The states of emergency that had been declared in a bid to restore order had been reviewed by the Constitutional Court, which had in some cases limited their scope. The measures that had been taken by the executive authorities to combat the armed criminal groups active in Ecuador were compatible with both the Covenant and the country's Constitution.

48. **A representative of Ecuador** said that, in recent years, nearly 500 children and adolescents under the age of 18 who had been left motherless as a result of violent crime had received the monthly allowance to which they were entitled.

49. Measures had been taken to protect Indigenous Peoples living in voluntary isolation. For example, flight paths and minimum altitudes had been established for aircraft serving the airports or landing strips in Shell, Puerto Francisco de Orellana and the Bamenó community. A protocol for encounters with Indigenous Peoples living in voluntary isolation in or near the Tagaeri-Taromenane Protected Zone had been adopted in August 2023, and in February 2024 the Government and an association of Waorani women had signed a cooperation agreement intended to help communities living in or near the Protected Zone. In addition, third-party access by river or by air to the Protected Zone and its buffer zone had been regulated in July 2024.

50. **Mr. El Haiba** said that, as there was evidently a wide gap between the institutional and legal framework and the reality on the ground, he wondered whether the criminal groups mentioned by the delegation were more powerful than the State; what practical steps were being taken, including by the judiciary, to put an end to the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of violence and discrimination against women and members of the LGBTI+

community; and what was being done to ensure access to justice and adequate reparation for victims.

51. **Mr. Quezada Cabrera** said that he wished to know, as he had noted earlier, what progress the Attorney General's Office had made in the investigations of allegations of torture and abuse of authority that it had opened in the first half of 2024. As some of the figures relating to the number of judicial and other public officials who had received human rights training were unclear, he would welcome information in writing that indicated exactly how many and which public officials had received training related to the Covenant.

52. **Mr. Gómez Martínez** said that he wondered why, despite recommendations made by victims, the Museum of Memory had not been set up at the historically significant former headquarters of SIC-10, a secret police unit that had been created to counter what had been termed subversion. He would welcome an indication of the size of the prison population in the State party both before and after the adoption of the Phoenix Plan. It would be helpful to learn, too, whether the eight militarized prisons were the State party's largest and most modern prisons, whether plans had been made to demilitarize the prison system, what the current ratio of prison officers to inmates was and what it was meant to be once the ongoing efforts to train additional officers had borne fruit.

53. **Ms. Šurlan** said that she wondered whether abortion was likely to be further decriminalized, whether both boys and girls learned about contraceptives in sex education courses and whether contraceptives were made widely available, including to people of limited means.

54. **Mr. Santos País** asked whether each motherless child or adolescent received the special monthly allowance in full, regardless of how many siblings he or she had.

55. **A representative of Ecuador** said that clarification of the number of officials who had received training on the Covenant would be provided in writing in due course.

56. **A representative of Ecuador** said that more information on the special allowance would be provided at the meeting on the following afternoon. The central register of victims of violence against women was expected to be usable in late 2024 or early 2025. The register, which would include data collected by 15 public agencies, would make it possible to identify patterns of violence countrywide. It would also help make it possible to close the gap between the law and practice.

57. **A representative of Ecuador** said that the Government was seeking to ensure that the country's prisons had 4 prison officers for every 10 inmates.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.