

# *Over 930,000 Ecuadoreans Sign Petition to Let Rafael Correa Run Again*

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Quito, August 3 (RHC)-- An Ecuadorean collective called “Rafael Always With You” says it has collected more than 930,000 of the one million signatures it needs for the country’s National Electoral Council to allow a referendum on whether to let President Rafael Correa stand in next year's election.

Estephania Baldeón, a member at the collective, announced the news on her Twitter account. According to the collective’s website, the group had secured 934,585 signatures. When reaching one million signatures, the collective will submit them to the electoral authority for validation. Once approved, the Ecuadorian top court will have to rule on whether a referendum on the issue of Rafael Correa running for president would be constitutional or not.

The 2017 election will mark the first vote since 2006 where current President Correa’s name will not appear on the ballot. Correa announced last year that he would not seek a third term.

The Ecuadorean constitution was amended in December 2015 to allow for unlimited consecutive re-elections of political posts, including the president. However, lawmakers included a provisional measure that made it so that term limits would only be eliminated after May 24, 2017: after the next general

elections.

That transitional provision was proposed by President Correa in an effort to calm critics who accused the president of seeking to extend his time in power. In April, Ecuador's high court ruled that a referendum could be held on repealing the December constitutional amendments after an appeal to the court in March by the organization "Rafael Always With You" asking for Correa's re-election to be allowed.

The court ruled that the group needed to collect signatures of eight percent of voters, or one million people, within 180 days starting from May 1 in order to go ahead with the referendum.

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