

# *Wave of anti-Venezuelan violence in Ecuador*

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Caracas, January 22 (RHC)-- Venezuelan citizens living in Ecuador have become victims of aggression and persecution in which a number of people have been injured and their property stolen.

The attacks were unleashed after President Lenin Moreno announced measures against Venezuelans, including "the immediate formation of task forces to control the situation of Venezuelan migrants on the streets, in workplaces and on the border." Moreno issued the statement after a 22-year-old Ecuadorian woman was stabbed to death by her partner, a Venezuelan man.

After her murder and the statement by Moreno, Ecuadoreans in Ibarra decided to carry out a "social cleansing" and began the persecution of Venezuelans living in that city, including children, seniors and women. The Ecuadorians who participated in the violent actions broke doors of hostels and houses where Venezuelans lived and forcibly evicted them.

In one instance, a group of people entered a house where Venezuelans were staying in the center of Ibarra, took their belongings and burned them in the street. Later, the group tried to enter a municipal shelter, where Venezuelan immigrants sleep, but the police stopped the attack.

The Ecuadoreans then walked the streets and began to chase Venezuelans in vehicles, honking their horns and shouting for them to leave. The attacks have forced many Venezuelan families to flee from

Ibarra, carrying just their bags and small children in their arms. The attacks based on nationality continued all the way to the central bus station where migrants bought tickets to unknown destinations.

Different sectors of Ecuadorean society have spoken out against the violence directed at Venezuelans and rejected the statements of President Lenin Moreno for inciting xenophobia. Former President Rafael Correa urged people to stop the violence against Venezuelans and blamed Moreno's government for the violence unleashed in the streets.

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