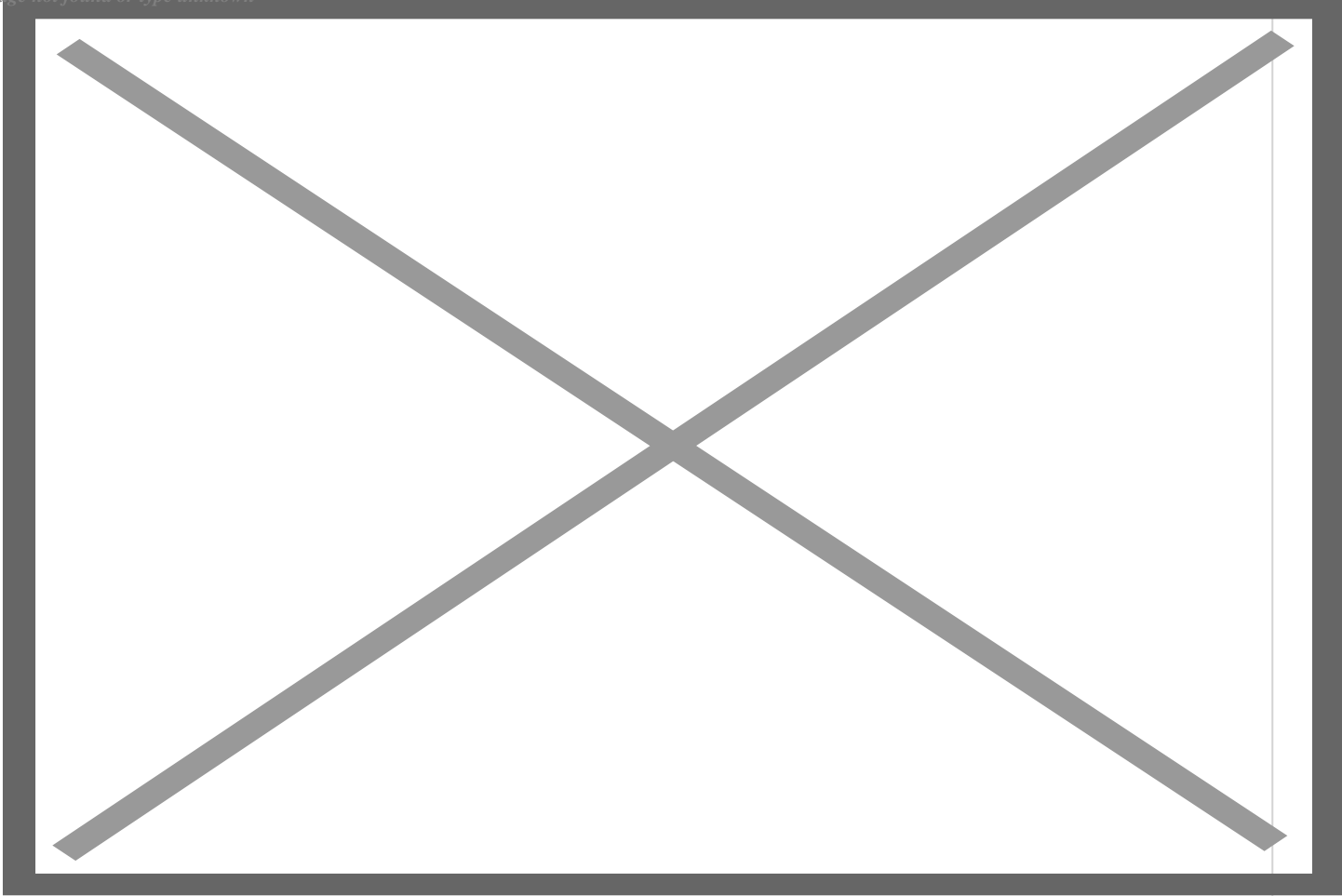


What will happen in Ecuador?

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National Assembly moves forward with the impeachment of President Guillermo Lasso.
(Photo:PL)

By María Josefina Arce

The decision of the National Assembly to move forward with the impeachment of Ecuador's President Guillermo Lasso for the crime of embezzlement of public funds dominates the panorama of the Andean nation, where the next few days will be crucial, given the reaction of the president who had previously threatened to apply the so-called "cross death".

This constitutional mechanism gives the president the possibility to dissolve the legislative body and call for early general elections, in which his office will also be at stake.

For four hours the parliamentarians debated this Tuesday on the issue, after the Commission of Control of the legislative body could not approve a report that intended to shelve the process against the president, who is considered to have allowed the continuity of some contracts for the transportation of oil in favor of third parties, despite being aware that the same represented a loss for the state.

The debate on Lasso's future has been marked by the constant demand of Ecuadorians that he resign from office, given his inability to solve the country's problems.

In fact, while the discussion was taking place in Parliament, numerous citizens gathered in front of the headquarters of the legislative body, in Quito. "Out, Lasso, out" and "Out narco Lasso" were some of the slogans that were heard.

The reality is that close to completing two years in office, more than 80% of the population disapproves of Lasso's administration, in the midst of the high wave of violence that has been shaking the nation for months.

Last year more than 4,500 violent deaths were registered in Ecuadorian territory, and the city of Guayaquil, in the province of Guayas, was the epicenter of homicides.

The authorities themselves have had to acknowledge that the country is currently experiencing the worst violence crisis in years. As of last April, more than 1,100 people had already been killed.

The Lasso government, which links the violence to drug trafficking, has decreed states of exception and deployed a high number of police and military on the streets, measures that do not go to the roots of the problem.

Ecuadorians demand the adoption of comprehensive public policies that lead to socio-economic development and improve living conditions. They point to poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and lack of access to basic services such as health as the real causes of the current situation.

We will have to wait and see what Lasso's reaction to the National Assembly's decision will be. For the time being, a vote of censure and possible dismissal is scheduled for the 20th and 22nd of this month.

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