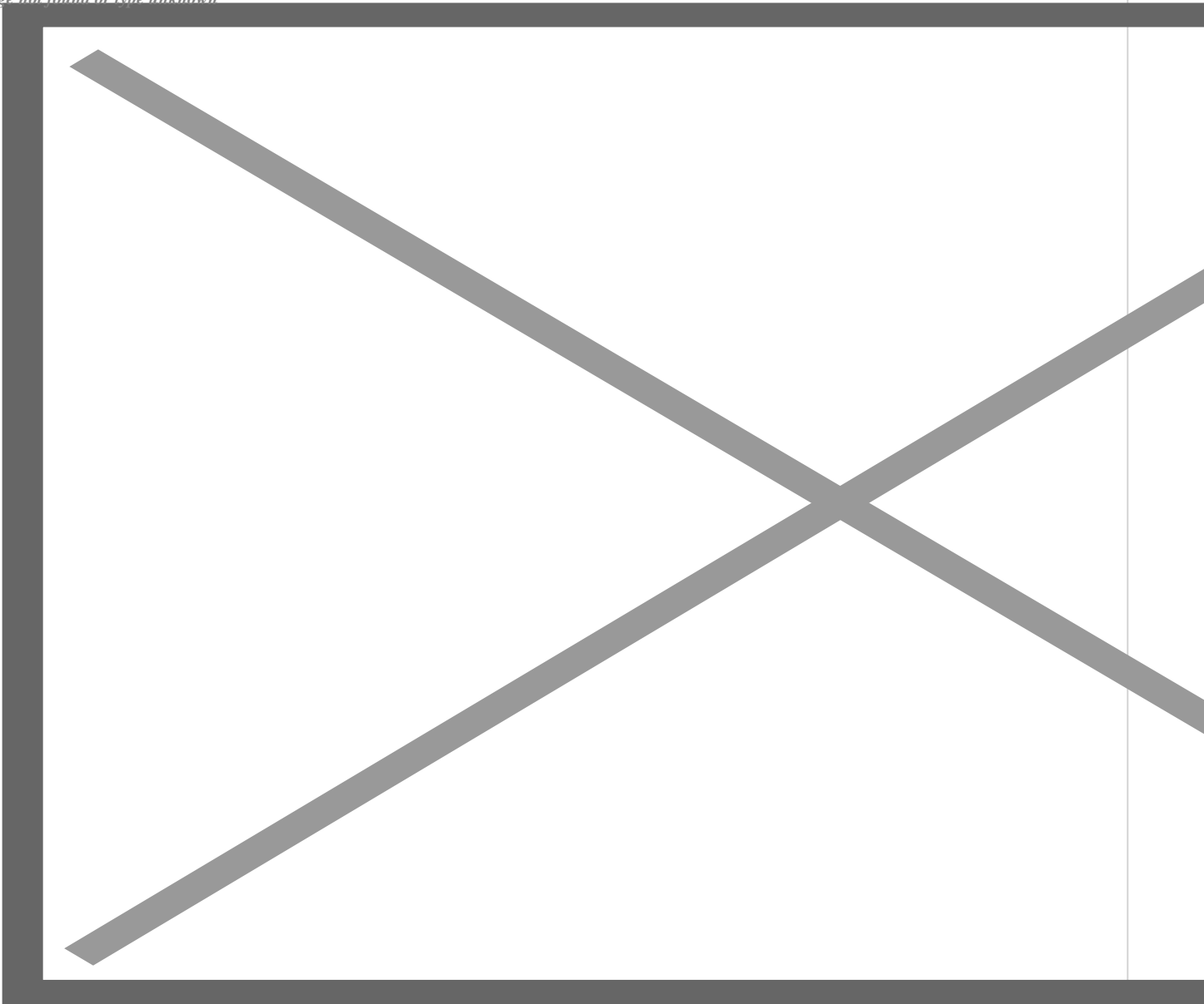


Violence is still present in Ecuador

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The wave of violence continues in Ecuador. Image: extra.ec

By María Josefina Arce

In Ecuador, violence continues to lacerate the lives of citizens. The events of recent days have shocked the society of the Andean nation, which last year hit bottom with more than 7 thousand murders and became the most violent in Latin America.

In the midst of the state of emergency and the declaration by the government of President Daniel Noboa of an internal armed conflict, violent events have continued to occur, such as the murder this weekend of Brigitte Garcia, the councilwoman of the municipality of San Vicente, in the province of Manabi.

This was not the only incident. There was also a bomb threat in a stadium in the city of Latacunga, capital of Cotopaxi province, while six people were killed in Santa Elena province, on the coast.

These are facts that corroborate that insecurity continues to dominate the panorama of the Andean nation, even though the government has said that violence has decreased thanks to the fact that the military are in the prisons and streets, a measure questioned by many due to the possibility of human rights violations.

In fact, there have been reports of violations of the prerogatives during the operations of the Armed Forces and the arrests that already total more than 13,000.

Last February, Judge Manuel Peña determined that the Armed Forces violated the rights of the prisoners in the midst of the state of emergency. The magistrate held the Ecuadorian State responsible for "action and omission".

Experts have pointed out that the deployment of the military may register initial achievements, but that it is doubtful that they will be sustained over time. As stated by security specialist Fernando Carrión, if structural changes are not made, violence will once again gain ground.

In statements to ECUAVISA television network, reproduced by Prensa Latina news agency, the professor of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences, said that this is the current scenario in Ecuador, where kidnapping and extortion figures are still on the rise.

Ecuador needs a comprehensive response to close the door to violence. It requires putting an end to impunity, strengthening the judicial system and restoring credibility to institutions.

But public policies and investments in social programs that guarantee citizens a dignified life, access to health, education, employment and drinking water, among other essential human rights, are also urgently needed to prevent criminal groups from taking advantage of poverty and inequality.

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