

# *Ecuador faces wave of corruption amid pandemic*

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Quito, May 13 (RHC)-- Amid the coronavirus crisis, Ecuador, one of the South American countries most affected by the pandemic, faces the corruption virus that takes advantage of the difficult situation.

The Prosecutor's Office recorded that masks are being sold in the country for \$12 U\$D, when they should have cost \$4 U\$D. The same is happening with body bags, which are being sold for more than \$148 and should be worth only \$12.

Meanwhile, baskets of food products are almost double their value and other similar cases are also currently under investigation by the Prosecutor's Office.

The first scandal that broke out was the process of the Ecuadorian Institute of Social Security (IESS) buying overpriced medical supplies to combat the coronavirus pandemic. In late March, Ecuador's attorney general, Diana Salazar, ordered a preliminary investigation into the case.

This institution was known to have intended to acquire 131,890 N95 masks at \$12 each, when their price was around \$4. The purchase was for a total of \$1,582,680, when it should have been \$514,371.

The State Comptroller General's Office reported that in this case there was a loss to the State of \$1,068,309 U\$D.

Subsequently, Salazar confirmed, following the report by the Office of the Comptroller and the searches carried out, that the Attorney General's Office had evidence to bring charges.

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