

Ecuador's president declares state of emergency in prison system

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SNAI estimates that the death toll left by the confrontation could exceed 110 inmates. | Photo: @PepeAV7

Quito, September 30 (RHC)-- Ecuadorean President Guillermo Lasso declared on Wednesday a state of emergency in the entire prison system, after the massacre that has left more than 100 dead occurred in Prison Number 1 in the city of Guayaquil, produced by a confrontation between criminal gangs.

"A state of exception for serious internal commotion is declared in all detention centers that make up the social rehabilitation system nationwide, without exception, for a period of 60 days from the signing of this executive decree," the president said in his statement.

The Ecuadorean president said that his decree is based on circumstances that have seriously affected the rights of the persons deprived of liberty, the personnel of the penitentiary security corps and police

agents, while maintaining that the state of exception intends to "safeguard the rights of the inmates as a group of priority attention," as well as those of the penitentiary guides and police officers.

Lasso urged the coordination of efforts and mobilization by the Armed Forces, the National Service of Integral Attention to Persons Deprived of Liberty and Adolescent Offenders (SNAI), and the Police in order to reestablish and maintain order, and prevent new events of social violence inside the prisons."

Meanwhile, the SNAI warned that so far at least 52 people are reported injured in the incidents, after a first intervention of special units, and remarked that the Prosecutor's Office, together with the police forces continue to make an assessment of the situation.

For his part, Bolívar Garzón, director of the SNAI did not hesitate to describe the events as a tragedy "this fight between gangs, groups of criminals who in the search for internal power reach these levels," he said while detailing that more corpses were being discovered as the intervention forces have entered pavilions nine and ten, where the massacre was concentrated.

Regarding the incident, Colonel Mario Pazmiño, former director of military intelligence, said that the riot in the Guayaquil penitentiary is evidence that "transnational organized crime has permeated the structure of the State, whose governance has been disrupted by the interference of international cartels such as Sinaloa and Jalisco Nueva Generación," which operate through local gangs.

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