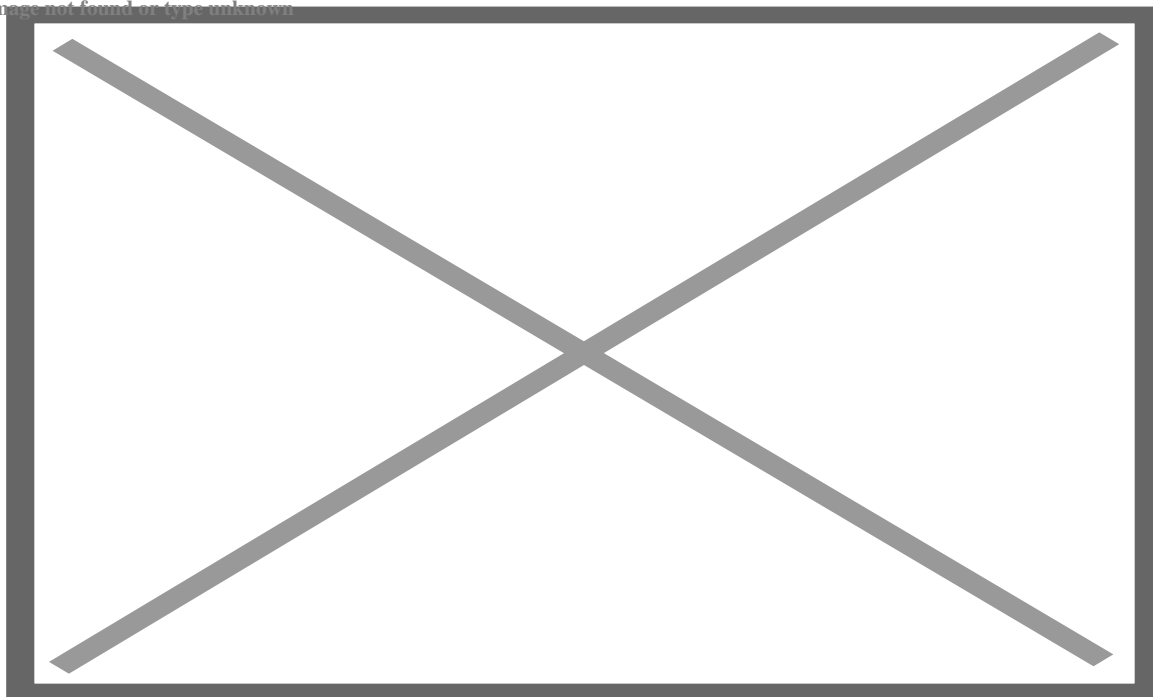


The government of Ecuador intends to declare criminal gangs as terrorists

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Quito, Apr 27 (RHC) Ecuador's Public and State Security Council (COSEPE) may declare eight criminal organizations as terrorists amid the insecurity crisis the country is suffering.

The said measure would be a strategy of the Executive so that the Armed Forces engage criminal gangs directly.

According to the Minister of Government, Henry Cevallos, there are criminal structures associated with drug trafficking which are the cause of the wave of violence in the national territory.

The COSEPE meeting, initially scheduled for April 16 and suspended due to President Guillermo Lasso's health problems, will soon take place after General Wagner Bravo took office on Wednesday as the new Secretary of Public Security.

The president also appointed General Paco Moncayo as his advisor for security matters.

Ecuador is experiencing an unprecedented wave of violence, including shootouts, bombings, massacres, inmate deaths, prison riots and police murders, which the government attributes to gangs associated with drug trafficking and their response to actions to deal with them.

The provinces of Esmeraldas and Guayas have become the epicentre of crime in Ecuador, although both are under a state of emergency decreed by President Lasso. (Source: Prensa Latina)

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