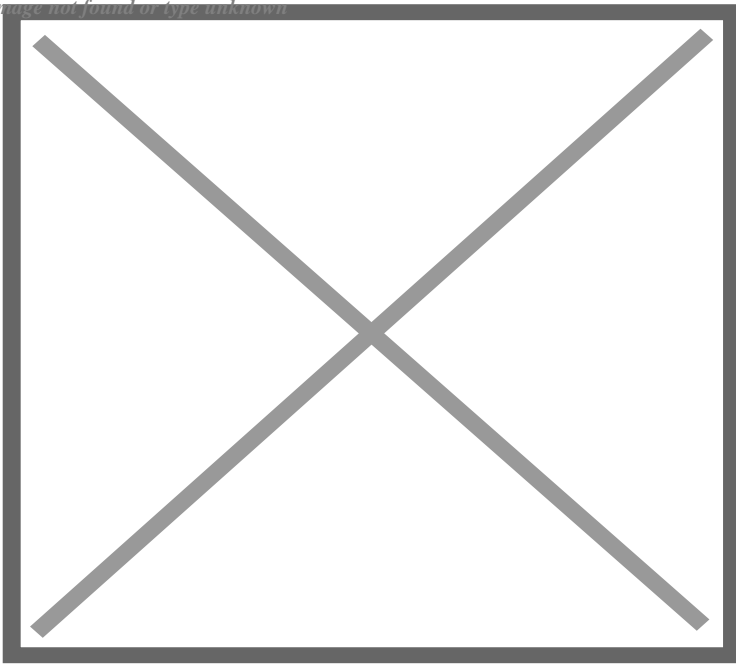


Ecuadorean president's impeachment moves one step forward

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**The sign reads, "Out with Lasso! Government of corrupt and narcos" | Photo: Twitter/
@GuillaumeLong**

Quito, May 9 (RHC)-- On Tuesday, the National Assembly began the debate to decide whether the impeachment trial against Ecuadorean President Guillermo Lasso moves to a phase in which legislators will vote for or against his removal.

The discussion in plenary began with the presence of 117 out of 137 lawmakers. They must analyze the charges against Lasso since the Oversight Commission President Fernando Villavicencio prepared a preliminary report that was rejected by his colleagues. The document drafted by this pro-government legislator recommended that the impeachment trial against Lasso be archived, arguing that "there is no evidence" on the accusations of embezzlement.

In order for the impeachment to continue, the opposition headed by the Citizen Revolution party needs to get 70 favorable votes in the plenary meeting in which the legislators must discuss the issues that the Oversight Commission report should have adequately addressed.

To remove Lasso from the position of President of the Republic, however, 92 votes are required, which is equivalent to two thirds of the number of legislators.

According to complaints collected by Viviana Veloz, a Citizen Revolution legislator who presented the impeachment motion, Lasso incurred in embezzlement because he did not avoid the damages against the State committed through a contract signed by the public company Ecuadorian Oil Fleet (FLOPEC) and the private firm Amazon Tanker.

While the political class decides what to do, the security situation in this Andean country continues to deteriorate and affects the presidential image. This week, the Imasen company published an opinion survey prepared with 1,500 surveys collected in the three Ecuadorian regions with a representativeness of 95 percent and a margin of error +/- 2.5 percent.

The survey shows that 81 percent of those interviewed are in favor of Lasso's dismissal, 80 percent disapprove of his administration, 78 percent think his administration has not done anything positive, and 76 percent think he is guilty of the corruption accusations.

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