

# *Ecuador's Foreign Ministry Changes Hands to Enable Movement*

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Quito, July 21 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Ecuador's representative to the United Nations, Xavier Lasso, will take over managing the Foreign Ministry temporarily, as Ricardo Patiño takes a leave to organize the grassroots movement supporting the government and its Citizens' Revolution.

President Rafael Correa announced Thursday that Foreign Minister Patiño would step down to take a two-month leave to mobilize the base of supporters backing the ruling PAIS Alliance party in the face of right-wing opposition attempts to destabilize the government, particularly in Quito.

Correa requested Patiño take on the task due to the minister's past experience in political organizing, according to Ecuador's state media *El Ciudadano*.

Lasso has been Ecuador's U.N. representative for over two years. Before becoming a diplomat, he worked in Ecuador's public media sector in television, radio, and print media. Ricardo Patiño has been foreign minister since 2010 and will return to the post after a two-month leave.

According to local media, there has not been a disruption of activities in the foreign ministry since the announcement of Patiño's leave of absence.

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