

Ecuadorian regime invades Mexican embassy, kidnapping ex-vice president

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Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador suspended diplomatic relations with Ecuador after the invasion of the Mexican embassy on Friday night.

At 10:00 pm, a heavily armed elite unit of the police and military scaled the walls of the diplomatic building in Quito and then tore down its gates to kidnap former Ecuadorian vice president Jorge Glas, who had been granted asylum there. The Mexican consular chief Roberto Canseco reported that he was struck in the head and charged that the lives of the staff and Glas were put in danger.

The far-right government of President Daniel Noboa justified the operation by claiming that Glas, who was convicted in two cases of corruption, was a flight risk after Mexico requested safe passage to take him out of the country.

A day earlier, Noboa had declared Mexican ambassador Raquel Serur *persona non grata* and asked her to leave the country in protest over insinuations by López Obrador that Noboa was complicit in the killing of presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio last year. The Mexican president said Noboa was only elected thanks to this crime.

The announcement that a military plane would be sent to retrieve Serur generated widespread speculation that it would also be used to smuggle Glas out.

After the abduction, the Ecuadorian military flew Glas to the port city of Guayaquil and escorted him immediately to the maximum-security prison of La Roca.

So far, only two historical precedents for state incursions into embassies in Latin America have been reported in the media, both under military dictatorships.

In June 1976, Uruguayan police broke into the Venezuelan embassy and beat up several diplomatic

officials to kidnap Elena Quinteros, a left-wing schoolteacher who had jumped the fence to hide there. She was then taken to a torture center and executed. In response, Venezuela broke off diplomatic relations until 1984.

Twenty years earlier, in June 1956, the military dictatorship of Lt. Gen. Eugenio Aramburu sent armed men to break into the Haitian embassy and capture seven Argentine oppositionists escaping brutal repression. International pressures, however, forced the regime to return the seven to the embassy.

The most relevant precedent, however, was Ecuador's withdrawal of political asylum for WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange in April 2019, when Quito allowed British police to enter its embassy in London and drag out the journalist, who has since been imprisoned and now faces extradition to the United States. There is now abundant evidence that the CIA planned to kidnap or kill Assange at the embassy.

Whether under Republicans or Democrats, the US government has been the main sponsor of the shift to the right of the Ecuadorian ruling class, which went from granting asylum to Assange in 2012, to renouncing his asylum and now kidnapping a former vice president at a foreign embassy in Quito.

The treatment of Glas was cast as part of the "internal war" launched by Noboa ostensibly against gangs since early January when the regime declared a state of exception to deploy troops and suspend democratic rights nationally. The onslaught has resulted in nearly 15,000 detentions in three months and numerous reports by human rights groups of torture and extrajudicial executions.

This decision to let the armed forces run rampant against "terrorists" and dispense with any concern for democratic rights and legality had as its main supporter

the Biden administration, which ratified a military aid package of \$200 million and reached agreements for sending US troops to Ecuador. Washington then sent high level delegations and teams of US law enforcement officials to directly participate in the operations under the state of exception.

Noboa was not only emboldened by this support but likely received a green light and assistance from the Biden administration in the incursion at the Mexican embassy.

The only protest came from State Department spokesman Matthew Miller, who tweeted in a measured tone: “The United States condemns any violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. We encourage our partners Mexico and Ecuador to resolve their differences in accord with international norms.”

On Saturday, the US Southern Command confirmed the participation of Ecuador in a 4th Fleet deployment that will see officers from 11 nations tour Latin America for several months aboard the aircraft carrier USS George Washington.

The entire political establishment in Ecuador and in every country in the region, including the López Obrador administration in Mexico, have gone along with this shift to the right and embraced similar attacks on democratic rights and elevated the political role of the military under the pretext of fighting organized crime.

Just last month, the Noboa administration was essentially endorsed as a model on “security” and handed the presidency of the Latin American Committee for Domestic Security (CLASI), a European Union initiative that includes 14 Latin American countries, including Mexico, which is supposed to coordinate operations against organized crime.

Within Ecuador, under the banner of “national unity,” each party in Congress, the Stalinist-led union bureaucracy and indigenous nationalist leaderships, all endorsed the state of exception. The Citizen’s Revolution party of Jorge Glas and former President Rafael Correa, who lives in exile, repeatedly attacked Noboa from the right for not being tough enough against the increase in gang-related violence.

The kidnapping at the Mexican embassy represents an escalation in this lurch of the entire Ecuadorian ruling class toward the adoption of openly dictatorial forms of rule, whose ultimate target is the working class and

rural toilers.

Under the weight of economic and geopolitical pressures rooted in the emergence of a new redivision of the world, the only response by the Latin American bourgeoisies is to intensify their attacks on social and democratic rights at the behest of global finance capital.

At the same time, the economic and military conflicts sparked by the US drive to secure its hegemony on a global scale are leading to a breakdown of international relations across the region.

The violent incursion into the Mexican embassy, which is equivalent to an act of war, takes place amid diplomatic crises and mudslinging that have put the governments of Venezuela, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, Ecuador, and Guyana at each other’s throats. Nicaragua also broke ties with Ecuador to protest Friday’s events. Less than one year ago, moreover, Chilean and Peruvian troops faced each other at the border over attempts at driving migrants out of their respective countries.

The fact that the events in Quito took place the same week as the Israeli bombing of the Iranian embassy, which threatens to turn the genocide in Gaza into a broader war in the Middle East, highlights the rapidity with which capitalism is descending into world war, dictatorship and outright criminality.



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