



COI QUERY

Country of Origin	Ecuador
Title	Information on criminality in the Guayas Province
Reference period	January 2024 to 16 December 2025
Topic(s)	1. Overview of criminality and the main criminal groups, including their recruitment methods 2. Overview of gang violence, including its types and prevalence 3. Impact of violence on the civilian population
Date of completion	16 December 2025
Query Code	Q49-2025
Contributing EU+ COI units (if applicable)	N/A

Disclaimer

This response to a COI query has been elaborated according to the [EUAA COI Report Methodology](#) and [EUAA Writing and Referencing Guide](#).

Query responses are produced in response to COI information requests received from asylum authorities within EU+ countries or initiated by EUAA based on COI information needs. Query responses are produced within a limited time period, typically within 5 to 10 days. Within these time constraints, the information provided in this response has been researched, evaluated and processed with utmost care.

All sources used are referenced and cited in the bibliography section. A quality review has been performed in line with the above mentioned COI methodology. This document does not claim to be exhaustive or conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. If a certain event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

The information in the response does not necessarily reflect the opinion of EUAA and makes no political statement whatsoever. The target audience is caseworkers, COI researchers, policy makers, and decision-making authorities. Any event taking place after the reference period is not included in this query response.

Cite as: EUAA, Country of Origin Information Query, Ecuador, Information on criminality in the Guayas Province, 16 December 2025, [url](#)

COI QUERY RESPONSE – Ecuador

Information on criminality in the Guayas Province

1. Overview of criminality and the main criminal groups, including their recruitment methods

Sources noted that Ecuador has experienced an increase in violence due to organized crime, and in January 2024 President Daniel Noboa declared a state of emergency and an ‘internal armed conflict’ against criminal groups.¹ The state of emergency was ‘maintained’ throughout 2024 with authorities ‘deploying the military to patrol the streets’.² As of December 2025, the state of emergency has continued in the provinces: Manabí, Guayas, Santa Elena, Los Ríos, El Oro.³ The increase in violence has led to ‘unprecedented levels’ of homicide, with homicides increasing by 429 % between 2019 and 2024.⁴ Between January and September 2024, police received over 2 000 reports of kidnappings and more than 10 700 reports of extortion.⁵

A December 2024 report by The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) described that Ecuador’s ‘expanding role in the global cocaine trade’ since 2019 has ‘aggravated’ national and regional security issues, increased competition among criminal groups for control of key routes and ports, and fueled violence and instability. The same source added that Guayaquil, the capital of Guayas province and Ecuador’s largest port, serves as a ‘key transit point’, as ‘drug seizures indicate a significant rise in cocaine trafficking to Europe via Ecuador’.⁶

A November 2025 report by the International Crisis Group found that Ecuador had become ‘a crucial node’ within criminal networks, particularly in the cocaine supply chain, as ‘local criminal groups were quickly absorbed into a transnational grid’. Acting as subcontractors for international traffickers, the criminal groups oversee logistics, safeguard drug shipments, and maintain territorial control. Further, these criminal groups ‘collaborate with urban gangs,’ which are compensated with narcotics and weapons and are responsible for activities such as extortion, kidnappings, and retail drug distribution. Competition among local criminal groups ‘to partner with the transnational organisations that oversee the trafficking routes’ has, in turn, caused violence to ‘skyrocket’.⁷

¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Ecuador, 26 February 2025, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2025 – Ecuador, 25 January 2025, [url](#)

² Amnesty International, The State of the World’s Human Rights; Ecuador 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

³ Primicias, Daniel Noboa decreta estado de excepción en cinco provincias y tres cantones de Ecuador, 5 November 2025, [url](#); El Comercio, Daniel Noboa decreta el estado de excepción en cinco provincias y dos cantones por la ola de violencia, 5 November 2025, [url](#)

⁴ HRW, World Report 2025 – Ecuador, 25 January 2025, [url](#)

⁵ HRW, World Report 2025 – Ecuador, 25 January 2025, [url](#)

⁶ ACAPS, Ecuador: The escalation and impact of violence on children’s protection, education, and health in Esmeraldas and Guayas, 11 December 2024, [url](#), p. 3

⁷ International Crisis Group, Paradise Lost? Ecuador’s Battle with Organised Crime, 12 November 2025, [url](#), p. 4

International Crisis Group further described Guayaquil as ‘a nerve centre of drug trafficking and organised crime’, in which ‘crime groups employ targeted violence in their fight for control of strategic drug corridors, river routes, highways and illegal mining zones’. Furthermore, public officials were ‘routinely subject to intimidation or bribery’, including judges, prosecutors, mayors and port managers.⁸

On the main criminal groups, ACLED recorded that 37 gangs in 2024 were active in the country.⁹ International Crisis Group added that ‘organised crime in Ecuador is now dominated by two groups – Los Choneros and Los Lobos’, with ‘Los Lobos’ being ‘Ecuador’s largest criminal organisation, with a footprint that reaches into the highlands and the Amazon as well as the country’s penitentiaries’.¹⁰ ‘Los Tiguerones’ is another criminal group operating in Ecuador.¹¹ After the arrest of its leader, William Joffre Alcívar Bautista, known as ‘Negro Willy’, in Spain in October 2024, the group split into two factions ‘Los Fénix and Los Iguaitos’.¹² According to a local news source, Primicias, criminal gangs active in the city of Guayaquil, include: Chone Killers, Latin Kings, Mafia-18, and Los Tiguerones.¹³ However, the 2024 Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) Country Report on Ecuador stated that the criminal groups, ‘Los Choneros’ and ‘Los Lobos’, ‘respectively linked to the Medellín and Sinaloa drug cartels,’ [...] ‘compete for control of Guayaquil’.¹⁴

A September 2025 report by the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime described that, after the arrests of several gang leaders, the province of Guayas has become an ‘epicentre’ of ‘criminal reconfiguration’. Particularly affected was the city of Durán, in the Guayas province, which saw a ‘rise in intentional homicides among young people’ and has an ‘astronomically high homicide rate of 140 per 100 000 inhabitants’, following the fracturing of the criminal group Los Choneros, caused by the July 2025 extradition to the US of their leader, José Adolfo Macías Villamar.¹⁵

International Crisis Group, quoting a local community leader, indicated that in some communities in the Guayas province, the number of rival factions has ‘risen to the point where they are carving up neighbourhoods among them’ and gangs were ‘present every two blocks’ and ‘it’s impossible to determine how many there are’.¹⁶

On recruitment methods, according to ACAPS, citing external sources, in Guayas province, a hierarchical numbering system is used to indicate gang members’ status, with rank determined by experience and influence within the group, which ‘actively encourages child gang members to engage in increasingly violent acts’. The same source further described that

⁸ International Crisis Group, Paradise Lost? Ecuador’s Battle with Organised Crime, 12 November 2025, [url](#), p. 14

⁹ ACLED, Ecuador’s Noboa declared war on 22 gangs. In his new term, he faces many more, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰ International Crisis Group, Paradise Lost? Ecuador’s Battle with Organised Crime, 12 November 2025, [url](#), p. 7

¹¹ International Crisis Group, Paradise Lost? Ecuador’s Battle with Organised Crime, 12 November 2025, [url](#), p. 9;

Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, Ecuador’s Criminal Crisis, 22 September 2025, [url](#)

¹² Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, Ecuador’s Criminal Crisis, 22 September 2025, [url](#)

¹³ Primicias, Guerra por el sur de Guayaquil: Las bandas criminales redibujan el mapa de la violencia en la ciudad, July 2024, [url](#)

¹⁴ Bertelsmann Stiftung, Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) 2024 Country Report Ecuador, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁵ Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, Ecuador’s Criminal Crisis, 22 September 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶ International Crisis Group, Paradise Lost? Ecuador’s Battle with Organised Crime, 12 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 6-7

in Guayaquil, an informant reported that the authorities had discovered training centres for boys operated by criminal gangs. Moreover, boys were ‘typically prepared for combat roles’ and ‘often’ exposed to violence, leading to injury or death, whilst girls associated with gangs were used for domestic roles and were at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation.¹⁷

The International Crisis Group described that child recruitment had increased as criminal groups expanded, and boys and young adults in impoverished neighbourhoods often felt ‘they have no choice but to join gangs’ due to economic necessity or social pressure. Further, boys and young men were ‘particularly vulnerable’.¹⁸ Moreover, young women and girls were targeted for recruitment, ‘sometimes in the guise of romantic relationships’. Members of criminal groups offered security and financial gain to families in exchange for their daughters, ‘whom they treat as property’ and were subjected to sexual exploitation and trafficking. These young women often handled administrative tasks, such as maintaining financial records or collecting extortion fees.¹⁹

2. Overview of gang violence, including its types and prevalence

Types of gang violence in Guayas province include homicide,²⁰ kidnappings,²¹ extortion,²² territorial disputes,²³ community-level criminality,²⁴ criminal threats,²⁵ and premeditated murders.²⁶

On homicide, between January and August 2025, the province of Guayas recorded 2 833 murders, representing 47 % of all violent deaths registered in the country during that period.²⁷ According to a local news source, Ecuador’s Zone 8, made up of Guayaquil, Durán and Samborombón, is [informal translation] ‘one of the most complex territories in terms of the incidence of violent deaths, since many of the gangs operate in this jurisdiction, including Los Choneros, Chone Killer, Lobos and Tiguerones, identified as the largest’.²⁸

¹⁷ ACAPS, Ecuador: The escalation and impact of violence on children’s protection, education, and health in Esmeraldas and Guayas, 11 December 2024, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁸ International Crisis Group, Paradise Lost? Ecuador’s Battle with Organised Crime, 12 November 2025, [url](#), p. 15

¹⁹ International Crisis Group, Paradise Lost? Ecuador’s Battle with Organised Crime, 12 November 2025, [url](#), p. 16

²⁰ ACLED, Ecuador’s Noboa declared war on 22 gangs. In his new term, he faces many more, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

²¹ KCH Comunicacion, Cinco zonas de Guayaquil y Durán concentran el 73 % de los homicidios, en medio de disputa de bandas por extorsiones y otros delitos, 15 June 2025, [url](#)

²² International Crisis Group, Paradise Lost? Ecuador’s Battle with Organised Crime, 12 November 2025, [url](#), p. 15

²³ Primicias, Guerra por el sur de Guayaquil: Las bandas criminales redibujan el mapa de la violencia en la ciudad, 23 July 2024, [url](#)

²⁴ El Universo, ‘Combos’ y ‘jefes de barrio’: así operarían las bandas en calles de Guayaquil, según investigación, 6 June 2025, [url](#)

²⁵ ACAPS, Escalation of violence in Nueva Prosperina, Guayaquil, 29 October 2025, [url](#), p. 2

²⁶ RSF, Ecuador: RSF condemns murder of journalist Álex Fernando Álvarez Vera, calls for rigorous, independent investigation, 4 November 2025, [url](#)

²⁷ Primicias, Zoom al crimen en las parroquias del Gran Guayaquil, el distrito más violento de Ecuador, 23 September 2025, [url](#)

²⁸ KCH Comunicacion, Asesinatos en la Zona 8 disminuyeron en un 14 % en 2024, pero Durán cerró como el distrito más violento de Ecuador, 2 January 2025, [url](#)

On extortion, according to an International Crisis Group report from November 2025, citing external sources, ‘urban gangs demand extortion payments from locals’, and in Guayas, several entire communities, among them staff at schools, hospitals and churches, were forced to pay extortion fees, known as ‘vacunas’. Furthermore, the same report citing data from the Attorney General’s Office of Ecuador Statistics and Information Systems Directorate, ‘reports of extortion have soared nationwide since 2022, with over 20,000 criminal complaints filed since 2024 alone, of which only 34 resulted in convictions’.²⁹

On kidnappings, according to the local news source, Primicias, Guayaquil accounts for 40 % of all kidnapping reports nationwide in the first half of 2025 and the province accounts for 50 % of the 1 989 alerts nationwide.³⁰ The same source described that Guayaquil was [informal translation] ‘experiencing the most serious security crisis in its recent history regarding kidnappings’, with records reaching up to four daily reports of abductions during the first seven months of 2025, according to official data from the Attorney General’s Office. The source also noted the rise in ‘extortion kidnappings’, which involved demanding a ransom or other financial gain.³¹

On territorial disputes, gangs fight over territorial control of Guayaquil due to its role in international drug trafficking, and the territorial landscape of organized crime continues to shift in Zone 8 (Guayaquil, Durán and Samborondón), in response to police interventions, power vacuums, and logistical demands of gangs, according to local news source, Primicias.³²

On community-level criminality, according to a local news source, El Universo, ‘neighbourhood bosses’ in Guayaquil were involved in [informal translation] ‘the transfer or custody of drugs, money or weapons, the management of street criminal economies, such as extortion, robberies and micro-trafficking, and the carrying out of acts of violence, including murders’.³³

On criminal threats, there were over 4 600 reported cases of threats in Guayas province between January and September 2025, and 3 000 in Guayaquil, amounting to 64.8 % of the cases in the province and 17.8 % of cases across the country, according to ACAPS. The same source added that these patterns reflect the ‘systematic use of coercion to enforce control over communities, businesses, and authorities’ by organised criminal groups.³⁴

On premeditated murders, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) in November 2025, citing an external source, described that at least six contract-style killings were recorded in Guayas, ‘reflecting the deterioration of security’ in the province. Concerning journalists in the region,

²⁹ International Crisis Group, Paradise Lost? Ecuador’s Battle with Organised Crime, 12 November 2025, [url](#), p. 15

³⁰ Primicias, Guayaquil registra un 43% más de alertas por secuestro en 2025; cinco casos diarios se reportan al ECU-911, 4 June 2025, [url](#)

³¹ Primicias, Guayaquil vive la peor crisis de secuestros de su historia con hasta cuatro denuncias diarias, según datos de la Fiscalía, 20 August 2025, [url](#)

³² Primicias, Guerra por el sur de Guayaquil: Las bandas criminales redibujan el mapa de la violencia en la ciudad, 23 July 2024, [url](#)

³³ El Universo, ‘Combos’ y ‘jefes de barrio’: así operarían las bandas en calles de Guayaquil, según investigación, 6 June 2025, [url](#)

³⁴ ACAPS, Escalation of violence in Nueva Prosperina, Guayaquil, 29 October 2025, [url](#), p. 2

the same source added that ‘levels of violence, extortion and territorial control by criminal groups have directly affected journalists’ ability to report’.³⁵

3. Impact of violence on the civilian population

According to local news sources, as of December 2025, the authorities have maintained a state of emergency in the province of Guayas, justified by the rates of violence, crime and the perpetration of illegal acts by criminal groups.³⁶

An October 2025 report by ACAPS on the humanitarian situation in Nueva Prosperina, a neighbourhood of Guayaquil, described that escalating violence in Nueva Prosperina has exposed the population to ‘severe and multiple protection risks’, such as killings, forced displacement, child recruitment, kidnapping, extortion, explosives-related incidents, and gender-based violence, indicating an ‘erosion of civilian protection and state control’.³⁷ Criminal violence has caused a ‘severe strain on the local health system, collapsing access to primary care and placing extreme strain on hospitals’. Insecurity and a lack of personnel at local health centres have caused a ‘burden’ to major hospitals such as ‘Monte Sinaí’, located in the centre of Nueva Prosperina, which now treats nearly 1 000 patients daily, including ‘individuals injured in shootings and those linked to criminal incidents’.³⁸

The September 2025 report by the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, noted that ‘since late 2024, marginalized neighbourhoods in Guayaquil, the province’s capital, have experienced an increase in homicides driven by the recruitment of minors into gangs, the use of explosives and vying for control over strategic access points to the city’s ports’.³⁹ Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) further affirmed in a June 2025 study that ‘almost 80% of recorded gang violence has taken place in five of the country’s 24 provinces’ including Guayas province, with Guayaquil being a ‘hotbed of violence, accounting for around one-fourth of gang violence events’ recorded in Ecuador in 2024. Guayaquil ranked third amongst Latin American cities in 2024 with 570 events related to non-state armed groups’ violence.⁴⁰

According to a 2024 study called the Global Safety Report by Gallup, ‘no other region anywhere in the world — excluding active war zones — felt less secure than Guayas, Ecuador, where Guayaquil is located’ in 2023. Moreover, just 11 % of residents in the country’s most populous province stated, ‘they felt safe walking alone in their area at night’.⁴¹

³⁵ RSF, Ecuador: RSF condemns murder of journalist Álex Fernando Álvarez Vera, calls for rigorous, independent investigation, 4 November 2025, [url](#)

³⁶ Primicias, Daniel Noboa decreta estado de excepción en cinco provincias y tres cantones de Ecuador, 5 November 2025, [url](#); El Comercio, Daniel Noboa decreta el estado de excepción en cinco provincias y dos cantones por la ola de violencia, 5 November 2025, [url](#)

³⁷ ACAPS, Escalation of violence in Nueva Prosperina, Guayaquil, 29 October 2025, [url](#), p. 2

³⁸ ACAPS, Escalation of violence in Nueva Prosperina, Guayaquil, 29 October 2025, [url](#), p. 3

³⁹ Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, Ecuador’s Criminal Crisis, 22 September 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁰ ACLED, Ecuador’s Noboa declared war on 22 gangs. In his new term, he faces many more, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

⁴¹ Gallup, The Global Safety Report: Measuring Personal Security Worldwide, 1 October 2024, [url](#), pp. 5-6

The International Crisis Group, citing a study from a France-based NGO, reported that as of December 2024 over 90 000 Ecuadorians were internally displaced ‘due to criminal violence’, as the security situation ‘has also triggered a spike in internal displacement’.⁴²

The same source reported that in the Guayas province, ‘gangs lord over poor communities through extortion, kidnapping and retail drug sales’ and ‘extortion of local businesses and residents has become a parallel economy in the canton of Durán’. Moreover, ‘urban gangs demand extortion payments from locals’.⁴³

On humanitarian access, a report by United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), covering November 2024, noted that violence between armed groups and their control over territory in Guayas province has created an environment of insecurity that affects the population and restricts access to essential services’ such as health, gender-based violence support, justice, safe reporting mechanisms and child protection causing internal displacement to become ‘evident’.⁴⁴

On the impact of violence towards children, the December 2024 report by ACAPS described that the increase in violence in Guayas has significantly impacted many children’s safety and wellbeing, as children living in areas of violence were at ‘increased risk’ of forced displacement and other threats, including association with criminal gangs.⁴⁵

Additionally, a March 2024 Human Rights Watch article reported that following President Daniel Noboa’s January 9 declaration of an ‘armed conflict’ against gangs, Ecuador’s Ministry of Education temporarily halted all in-person classes and transitioned to online learning nationwide, impacting approximately 4.3 million children. According to the same source, in previous months, the ministry had already moved to online learning in cities such as Guayaquil and Durán, which were among the areas ‘most affected by gang violence’.⁴⁶ The October 2025 report by ACAPS added that provincial-level statistics for Guayas indicate that 12.7 % of children under five were suffering from chronic malnutrition and 23.3 % from anemia in 2024, however, these figures were ‘likely significantly higher for crisis-affected families’. Furthermore, ACAPS noted that the control of organized criminal groups ‘restricts mobility and reduces purchasing power through extortion’, which ‘undermine households’ ability to access or afford nutritious food, critically compromising child nutrition’.⁴⁷

According to an International Crisis Group report from November 2025, ‘violence against children has grown exponentially’ in Ecuador, as the child homicide rate increased by 640 % between 2019 and 2023, while there were 403 reported cases of such murders in 2024, with nearly half occurring in Guayas province.⁴⁸

⁴² International Crisis Group, Paradise Lost? Ecuador’s Battle with Organised Crime, 12 November 2025, [url](#), p. 17

⁴³ International Crisis Group, Paradise Lost? Ecuador’s Battle with Organised Crime, 12 November 2025, [url](#), p. 15

⁴⁴ UNOCHA, Ecuador: Humanitarian Access - Guayas Province (November 2024), 4 February 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁵ ACAPS, Ecuador: The escalation and impact of violence on children’s protection, education, and health in Esmeraldas and Guayas, 11 December 2024, [url](#), p. 3

⁴⁶ HRW, Ecuador’s Uptick in Violence Heightens Risks for Schoolchildren, 12 March 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁷ ACAPS, Escalation of violence in Nueva Prosperina, Guayaquil, 29 October 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁴⁸ International Crisis Group, Paradise Lost? Ecuador’s Battle with Organised Crime, 12 November 2025, [url](#), p. 16



On the impact of violence towards women, femicides and gender-based violence have increased in Ecuador in the past five years and according to a civil society coalition tracking femicides in the country, nearly half of the gender-related killings of women documented in 2024 were connected to organised crime.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ International Crisis Group, Paradise Lost? Ecuador's Battle with Organised Crime, 12 November 2025, [url](#), p. 17

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ACAPS (Assessment Capacities Project), Ecuador: The escalation and impact of violence on children's protection, education, and health in Esmeraldas and Guayas, 11 December 2024, https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20241210_ACAPS_ECUADOR_-_The_escalation_and_impact_of_violence_on_children.pdf, accessed 9 December 2025

ACAPS (Assessment Capacities Project), Escalation of violence in Nueva Prosperina, Guayaquil, 29 October 2025, https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20251029_ACAPS_Ecuador_-_Escalation_of_violence_in_Nueva_Prospalina_Guayaquil_.pdf, accessed 16 December 2025

ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data), Ecuador's Noboa declared war on 22 gangs. In his new term, he faces many more, 3 June 2025, <https://acleddata.com/report/ecuadors-noboa-declared-war-22-gangs-his-new-term-he-faces-many-more>, accessed 10 December 2025

Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights; Ecuador 2024, 29 April 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/americas/south-america/ecuador/report-ecuador/>, accessed 12 December 2025

Bertelsmann Stiftung, Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) 2024 Country Report Ecuador, 19 March 2024, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2024_ECU.pdf, accessed 5 December 2025

El Comercio, Daniel Noboa decreta el estado de excepción en cinco provincias y dos cantones por la ola de violencia [Daniel Noboa decrees a state of emergency in five provinces and two cantons due to the wave of violence], 5 November 2025, <https://www.elcomercio.com/actualidad/seguridad/daniel-noboa-decreta-estado-de-excepcion-cinco-provincias-cantones-violencia/>, accessed 12 December 2025

El Universo, 'Combos' y 'jefes de barrio': así operarían las bandas en calles de Guayaquil, según investigación ['Combos' and 'neighborhood bosses': this is how gangs operate on the streets of Guayaquil, according to an investigation], 6 June 2025, <https://www.eluniverso.com/noticias/seguridad/combos-y-jefes-de-barrio-asi-operarian-las-bandas-callejeras-en-calles-de-guayaquil-segun-investigacion-nota/>, accessed 12 December 2025

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Ecuador, 26 February 2025, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/ecuador/freedom-world/2025>, accessed 5 December 2025

Gallup, The Global Safety Report: Measuring Personal Security Worldwide, 1 October 2024, available at: https://insightcrime.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Gallup_Global-Safety-Report-2024.pdf, accessed 12 December 2025

Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, Ecuador's Criminal Crisis, 22 September 2025, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/ecuadors-criminal-crisis/>, accessed 5 December 2025

HRW (Human Rights Watch), Ecuador's Uptick in Violence Heightens Risks for Schoolchildren, 12 March 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/03/12/ecuadors-uptick-violence-heightens-risks-schoolchildren>, accessed 9 December 2025

HRW (Human Rights Watch), World Report 2025 – Ecuador, 25 January 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/ecuador>, accessed 5 December 2025

International Crisis Group, Paradise Lost? Ecuador's Battle with Organised Crime, 12 November 2025, https://www.crisisgroup.org/sites/default/files/2025-11/109-ecuador-organised-crime%20%281%29_0.pdf, accessed 9 December 2025

KCH Comunicacion, Cinco zonas de Guayaquil y Durán concentran el 73 % de los homicidios, en medio de disputa de bandas por extorsiones y otros delitos [Five areas of Guayaquil and Durán account for 73% of homicides, amidst gang disputes over extortion and other crimes], 15 June 2025, <https://kchcomunicacion.com/2025/06/15/cinco-zonas-de-guayaquil-y-duran-concentran-el-73-de-los-homicidios-en-medio-de-disputa-de-bandas-por-extorsiones-y-otros-delitos/>, accessed 12 December 2025

KCH Comunicacion, Asesinatos en la Zona 8 disminuyeron en un 14 % en 2024, pero Durán cerró como el distrito más violento de Ecuador [Murders in Zone 8 decreased by 14% in 2024, but Durán ended the year as the most violent district in Ecuador], 2 January 2025, <https://kchcomunicacion.com/2025/01/02/asesinatos-en-la-zona-8-disminuyeron-en-un-14-en-2024-pero-duran-cerro-como-el-distrito-mas-violento-de-ecuador/>, accessed 12 December 2025

Primicias, Daniel Noboa decreta estado de excepción en cinco provincias y tres cantones de Ecuador [Daniel Noboa decrees a state of emergency in five provinces and three cantons of Ecuador], 5 November 2025, <https://www.primicias.ec/politica/estado-excepcion-ecuador-daniel-noboa-decreto-violencia-conmocion-interna-108727/>, accessed 12 December 2025

Primicias, Guayaquil vive la peor crisis de secuestros de su historia con hasta cuatro denuncias diarias, según datos de la Fiscalía [Guayaquil is experiencing the worst kidnapping crisis in its history, with up to four reports filed daily, according to data from the Prosecutor's Office], 20 August 2025, <https://www.primicias.ec/seguridad/guayaquil-crisis-secuestros-historia-cuatro-denuncias-diarias-datos-fiscalia-103225/>, accessed 12 December 2025

Primicias, Guayaquil registra un 43% más de alertas por secuestro en 2025; cinco casos diarios se reportan al ECU-911 [Guayaquil registers 43% more kidnapping alerts in 2025; five cases daily are reported to ECU-911], 4 June 2025, <https://www.primicias.ec/seguridad/guayaquil-alertas-emergencias-secuestros-reportes-llamadas-central-ecu911-97654/>, accessed 12 December 2025

Primicias, Guerra por el sur de Guayaquil: Las bandas criminales redibujan el mapa de la violencia en la ciudad [War for southern Guayaquil: Criminal gangs redraw the map of violence in the city], 23 July 2024, <https://www.primicias.ec/seguridad/guerra-sur-guayaquil-bandas-criminales-redibujan-mapa-violencia-ciudad-74611/>, accessed 12 December 2025

Primicias, Zoom al crimen en las parroquias del Gran Guayaquil, el distrito más violento de Ecuador [Zooming in on crime in the parishes of Greater Guayaquil, Ecuador's most violent district], 23 September 2025, <https://especial.primicias.ec/2025/quayas-asesinatos-parroquias2/>, accessed 12 December 2025

RSF (Reporters Without Borders), Ecuador: RSF condemns murder of journalist Álex Fernando Álvarez Vera, calls for rigorous, independent investigation, 4 November 2025, <https://rsf.org/en/ecuador-rsf-condemns-murder-journalist-%C3%A1lex-fernando-%C3%A1lvarez-vera-calls-rigorous-independent>, accessed 16 December 2025

UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Ecuador: Humanitarian Access - Guayas Province (November 2024), 4 February 2025, <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/ecuador/ecuador-humanitarian-access-guayas-province-november-2024#:~:text=1.,internal%20displacement%20are%20becoming%20evident>, accessed 16 December 2025

ADDITIONAL SOURCES CONSULTED

Asylum Research Centre; Crisis24; ecoi.net; EUAA COI Portal; Fédération internationale pour les droits humains (FIDH); Germany – Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF); France – Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides (OFPRA); International Organisation for Migration (IOM); Norwegian Refugee Council; Global Protection Cluster; Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)