

UN experts gravely concerned about elimination of the Ministry of Women in Ecuador

GENEVA – Ecuador's decision to eliminate the Ministry of Women and Human Rights and merge it with the Ministry of Government represents a grave setback in the country's international commitments to gender equality and human rights, UN experts* said today.

"The Ministry of Women and Human Rights played a crucial role in preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls, as well as promoting their empowerment and access to justice and promoting gender equality, in politics, the economic empowerment of women and the fight against discrimination and violence against women and girls, among other aims. It played a crucial role in preventing and eradicating discrimination and violence against women and girls, empowerment and access to justice," the experts said. "Its elimination threatens to weaken the specialised institutional response to gender-based violence and undermines the visibility of this structural problem."

Created following Ecuador's Universal Periodic Review in 2022, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights was key to promoting gender equality in politics, economic empowerment of women and combatting discrimination, the experts noted. Through Executive Decree No. 60 of 24 July 2025, the Ecuadorian Government closed the ministry.

The experts warned that the closure of the Ministry had led to the dismantling of structures, services, and specialised technical teams.

"This leaves women, girls, survivors, and families of femicide victims in a state of greater vulnerability and lacking institutional protection," they said in a [letter](#) to the Ecuadorian State in August 2025.

The concern is heightened by alarming levels of violence against women and girls in the country, the experts noted. According to official data, 65 out of every 100 women have suffered some form of violence, a figure that rises to 71.8% among Afro-descendant women and 64% among Indigenous women. In 2022, 332 femicides were recorded, and it is estimated that a woman is killed every 26 hours, in most cases by her partner or a close family member.

The experts urged the Government of Ecuador to re-establish an autonomous entity with sufficient resources dedicated to gender equality and women's rights.

They recalled that the elimination of key institutional structures contradicts Ecuador's international obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Belém do Pará Convention.

"Ecuador must ensure the effective protection of the rights of women and girls and reaffirm its commitment to eradicating discrimination and gender-based violence," the experts said. "The international community is closely monitoring these developments."

***The experts:**

- **Reem Alsalem**, [Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls](#)
- **Claudia Flores (Chair), Ivana Krstić (Vice-Chair), Dorothy Estrada Tanck, Haina Lu, and Laura Nyirinkindi**, [Working Group on discrimination against women and girls](#)
- **Mama Fatima Singhateh**, [Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children](#)

Special Rapporteurs/Independent Experts/Working Groups are independent human rights experts appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council. Together, these experts are referred to as the [Special Procedures](#) of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. While the UN Human Rights office acts as the secretariat for Special Procedures, the experts serve in their individual capacity and are independent from any government or organization, including OHCHR and the UN. Any views or opinions presented are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the UN or OHCHR.

Country-specific observations and recommendations by the UN human rights mechanisms, including the special procedures, the treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review, can be found on the [Universal Human Rights Index](#).

For inquiries and media requests, please contact: hrc-sr-vaw@un.org

For media inquiries related to other UN independent experts please contact Maya Derouaz (maya.derouaz@un.org) or Dharisha Indraguptha (dhariasha.indraguptha@un.org)

Follow news related to the UN's independent human rights experts on X: [@UN_SPExperts](#).

