

Ecuador

Republic of Ecuador



Key Facts



OAS Membership Date: 30 April 1948

Head of State / Head of Government: President Lenin Moreno Garces

Capital city: Quito

Population: 16,498,502

Language(s): Spanish (Castilian) 93% (official), Quechua 4.1%, other indigenous 0.7%, foreign 2.2%

Religions: Roman Catholic 74%, Evangelical 10.4%, Jehovah's Witness 1.2%, other 6.4%, atheist 7.9%

Ethnic Groups: mestizo (mixed Amerindian and white) 71.9%, Montubio 7.4%, Amerindian 7%, white 6.1%, Afro-ecuadorian 4.3%, mulatto 1.9%, black 1%, other 0.4% (2010 est.)

Currency: United States dollar (USD)

Gross domestic product (PPP): \$193 billion (2017 est.)

Legal System: civil law based on the Chilean civil code with modifications; traditional law in indigenous communities

Political system: Ecuador is a presidential republic. The president is elected by absolute majority popular vote and is eligible for two 4-year terms, and the Cabinet is appointed by the President. The unicameral National Assembly, or Asamblea Nacional, consists of 137 representatives; 116 members represent local districts and are directly elected by simple majority vote, 15 members are directly elected in a single

nationwide constituency by proportional representation vote, and 6 are directly elected to represent Ecuadorians living abroad by simple majority vote. Members of the National Assembly serve 4-year terms. There are two high judicial bodies: the National Court of Justice (Corte Nacional de Justicia), consisting of 21 judges and organized into 5 specialized chambers, and the Constitutional Court (Corte Constitucional), consisting of 9 judges. The justices of the National Court of Justice are elected by the Judiciary Council, a 9-member independent body of law professionals. Constitutional Court judges are appointed by the executive, legislative, and Citizen Participation branches of government. All judges are appointed for 9-year non-renewable terms with one-third of the membership of each body renewed every 3 years.

Economy: Ecuador is substantially dependent on its petroleum resources, which accounted for about a third of the country's export earnings in 2017. Besides oil, Ecuador has large agriculture and food processing sectors – approximately 25% of the Ecuadorean labor force is employed in agriculture or a related industry. Remittances from overseas Ecuadorians also provide a substantial source of revenue. In 2000, Ecuador's economy suffered from a banking crisis that led to some reforms, including adoption of the US dollar as legal tender, which stabilized the economy and led to growth in the subsequent years. In 2013, a large trade deficit compelled Ecuador's government to impose significant tariffs on approximately a third of the nation's imports; this policy, combined with a decline in global oil prices, caused Ecuador's economy to fall into recession in 2015. Since then, growth has resumed in the country, but various economic policies rolled out in recent years, such as an announcement in 2017 that Ecuador would terminate 13 bilateral investment treaties (including one with the US), have generated economic uncertainty and discouraged private investment. China is currently Ecuador's largest foreign lender, accounting for 77.7% of the nation's debt and remaining the largest single market for its petroleum exports. Ecuador is also an associate member of Mercosur, a Latin American trade bloc formed in 1991. Aside from these ventures, however, the level of foreign investment in Ecuador continues to be one of the lowest in the region as a result of an unstable regulatory environment, weak rule of law, and the crowding-out effect of public investments.

Diplomatic Relations

Relations with the OAS: Ecuador is a founding member of the OAS, having signed the Organization's Charter of 1948 and the organization's supplementary foundational documents in Bogota, Colombia. The OAS has several missions currently dispatched to Ecuador in pursuit of the organization's goals of security, democracy, human rights, and integral development in each of its member states. The most impactful project to date is the election observation mission the OAS dispatched to the nation in 2018 as part of the action plan adopted at the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption -- following the departure of two vice presidents from office due to corruption, the OAS Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation sent a team of experts to monitor and maintain the transparency of the local and municipal elections which took place in March 2019. The OAS has also sponsored several projects with the aim of ameliorating Ecuador's economic lethargy, such as Young Americas Business Trust (YABT) Ecuador, which creates employment opportunities and builds entrepreneurial capacity for young Ecuadorians.

Relations with Venezuela: Ecuador has historically enjoyed positive relations with Venezuela -- the two nations were once both part of the state of Gran Colombia, which gained independence from Spain in 1819 and dissolved in 1831. In 1852, the two nations established diplomatic relations by appointing ambassadorial delegations to one another's capitals; Ecuadorian-Venezuelan ties increased politically and militarily for over a century and a half thereafter. In June 2009, Ecuador joined the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA), a Venezuela-led regional cooperation initiative with the goal of integrating Latin American and Caribbean nations socially, economically, and politically. Additionally, in March 2010, Venezuela and Ecuador announced several bilateral economic projects and companies, including joint oil

and gas companies and the Venezuela-backed creation of Ecuadorian public television. However, since the 2017 election of President Lenin Moreno Garcés, Ecuador has distanced itself from Venezuela due to its leaders' inflammatory rhetoric and the human rights violations occurring within the country. In July 2018, Ecuador withdrew from ALBA, and in October of the same year, Ecuador expelled Venezuelan ambassadors from Quito after the Venezuelan communications minister called President Moreno a "liar". Throughout the crisis, Ecuador has received large numbers of Venezuelan immigrants – reportedly as many as 6,000 a day – and has regularly provided economic and social assistance to them. Despite the mounting tensions between the two nations, Ecuador is not a member of the Lima Group, a 14-nation coalition whose goal is to establish a peaceful exit to the crisis in Venezuela and whose members are harsh critics of the current Venezuelan administration.