

FROM: Sara Flores  
SUBJECT: Pray for Ecuador  
6/25/2022, 3:43 PM



## **PRAY FOR ECUADOR**

The protest in Ecuador is against the economic policies of the current government of Guillermo Lasso and his inaction and inattention to the needs and requests of poorer sectors of the population. It started with the banana growers - Ecuador is the largest exporter of bananas in the world - and was soon joined by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, the Federation of Indigenous Evangelicals of Ecuador, and other indigenous organizations who presented 10 demands to the government last November.

The protest is mainly made up of rural agricultural and lower-class urban populations that have been hit hard by the economic effects of the pandemic and the current inflationary trend. With no satisfactory response from the government, a nationwide strike was called and has gained more support, in response the government has now instituted martial law and the Indigenous movement has marched on Quito and the larger cities of Ecuador to press their demands. The demands include increasing the subsidies on fuel and agricultural fertilizer, guarantees of not privatizing government services, prohibition on mining in protected areas and watersheds, increasing the public education budget for bilingual education, decreasing the interest rate from 10% to 5% on small business loans, etc.

The strike has been going on for 2 weeks now with the major highways in the mountain region of the country and around the major cities blocked and daily protests in the cities. There has been some violence, so far 4 protesters have died, and many protesters, police and soldiers have been wounded. There is a move in the National Assembly to remove the President, but it is doubtful that this has enough support at this time.

The protesters have stated that they continue the protest until their demands are met and the government has said they will now start to increment the use of force in controlling the protests. It currently appears to be a stalemate and may escalate as we enter into the third week of the crisis.

The Church in Ecuador is praying every day at 3pm.

Please pray for Ecuador.

Dakin and Sara  
Quito June 2022

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FROM: Sara Flores  
SUBJECT: Pray for Ecuador July  
7/9/2022, 11:16 AM

Dear friends,

Thanks for your prayers for Ecuador in those difficult times.

The social protests are part of social process of democracy in countries like Ecuador, and this happens very rarely after many years.

In societies with large economic differences, with most of the population in a situation of poverty and inequality in opportunities; in societies of precarious economic development in which the government must meet the great needs of the entire population and does not have all the resources to do so. It's complicated. Rural and especially indigenous populations feel that the government has laws to support large companies and not the economy of small family and rural businesses. And in cases like this, the populations of the margins took the only way to be heard, and follow the legal path that the laws allow, the right to social protest.

The indigenous organizations had presented their needs and asked the government for dialogue 1 year ago, and now at the beginning of the peaceful protest, they hoped that in a few days the government could open space for dialogue to improve its economic and social laws, but the government instead put martial law, and in few places in the country this peaceful protest became out of control and turned very conflictive between police, military, and protesters.

The strike lasted for 18 days with the major highways in the mountain region of the country and around the major cities blocked and daily protests in the cities with pacific marching in the main streets, women, men, children, elderly from rural communities, young people from universities, and some people from the barrios around Quito.

After 1 failed dialogue table, in which the representatives of the government left, new efforts were made, and June 30<sup>th</sup>, the Ecuadorean Episcopal Conference of the Catholic Church and other Churches were finally able to bring the government and the indigenous movements to the table and broker a deal in which the government agreed to reduce the price of gasoline and diesel by 15 cents a gallon, lift martial law, subsidize the price of some agricultural fertilizer, limit petroleum development in indigenous areas and prohibit mining in protected watersheds, and few other achievements for health and education. The indigenous movements have lifted their blockades and protests and have returned to their communities. The pending issues will be negotiated over the next 90 days, and life has return back to normal.

A big organization of Evangelical Indigenous Churches also was part of this movement, and some friends from our churches in the rural communities of Ecuador were involved in different aspects of the pacific protests, as part of their communities. In Quito, some members of the churches together with population from the city, supported their sisters and brothers who had come to the city sharing with them blankets, clothing, food, and medicines during this time. The Methodist Church in Ecuador held special fast day and prayer services via Zoom praying for dialog and peace.

Dakin and I live in Quito, near the universities where the protesters were housed, and provided some support to friends and people from the communities who came to the city without anything to live for days.

These are difficult times, because churches and families have differences in opinion, some have protesters and police/military as members; a process of reconciliation, healing and more dialogue is required in the church and throughout society.

We believe and follow the hope and promises of our God, and that way, with joy in all the churches in the cities and in the indigenous communities, we are still sing, pray and share the love and teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*“Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other. Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven. The LORD will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest.”*  
*Psalm 85. 10-12*

Please, keep praying for us, for the church and the country.  
Life has return back to normal, and we are traveling again to churches and projects.  
Please send our greetings to your church.

Sara & Dakin  
UMC Missionaries serving in Ecuador  
Quito - Ecuador