

URGENT ACTION

PROTECTION WITHOUT CONDITIONS NEEDED FOR CHILD CLIMATE ACTIVISTS

Two months after the 14-year-old climate activist, Leonela Moncayo, and her family suffered an explosion outside of their home, the authorities have not effectively investigated what happened and are conditioning her protection and that of the other eight girls, and their families, on stopping their activism. We demand Ecuadorian authorities to effectively investigate what happened and protect Leonela, the other eight girls and their families without these conditions.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Second Urgent Action 18.24**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

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Ecuadorian Embassy in the United States
Ambassador Mrs. Ivonne A – Baki
2535 15th Street,
NW Washington, DC 20009
Salutation: Dear Ambassador Mrs. Ivonne A – Baki

Ms. General Attorney Diana Salazar, or Dear Ambassador

I am deeply concerned by the lack of protection for the 14-year-old climate activist, **Leonela Moncayo** and other young climate activists, as well as their families that are fighting against routine gas flaring in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Leonela is the daughter of two recognized human rights defenders, Donald Moncayo and Silvia Lorena Ordoñez Zambrano, from the strategic litigation organization "Unión de Afectados por Texaco" (UDAPT).

On February 26, Leonela and her mother suffered an explosion from an improvised device in the yard of their house. This happened five days after Leonela and the group of brave climate activists she belongs to were stigmatized by the former Minister of Energy and Mines, Andrea Arrobo, who insinuated they "were manipulated".

Two months after these incidents, local authorities in the process of investigation, have told Leonela and her family that they can protect the girls only if they stop their activism.

I urge you to investigate effectively, independently, impartially, and without further delay what happened to Leonela and her family, and to provide protection without conditions for Leonela, the eight climate activists, and their families. This group of girls and their families are leaders in the fight against climate change.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Leonela Moncayo is a climate activist from the Ecuadorian Amazon. Leonela is part of the group of Amazonian girls that, together with UDAPT, [achieved a historic ruling against the operation of routine gas flaring in the provinces of Sucumbíos and Orellana in Ecuador](#). Routine gas flaring is one of the processes of oil extraction that contributes the most to climate crisis due to the emission of methane. Methane is thought to be [responsible for one-third of the net global warming since the industrial revolution](#). Routine gas flaring also has been linked with negative health impacts on [fence line communities](#), since it emits a variety of harmful gases and components.

On July 29, 2021, the Provincial Court of Justice of Sucumbíos established that the Ecuadorian State ignored the right to a healthy environment, disregarded the right to health of the plaintiffs, and failed to comply with its obligations to mitigate climate change. The Court established that the State must gradually eliminate the gas flares, especially those near populated areas, and provide reparations for the affected communities. Since the date of execution of the ruling, only the public apologies, the presentation of a “Substitute Regulation of the Environmental Regulation for Hydrocarbon Operations”, and two technical reports on routine gas flaring prepared by the Ministry of Energy and Mines have been complied with. No environmental remediation actions have been initiated.

On February 21, 2024, four of the nine plaintiff girls, including Leonela Moncayo, attended [a session in the Biodiversity Commission of the National Assembly](#) that had the aim of auditing the correspondent authorities the compliance of the ruling. In her intervention, the Minister of Energy and Mines, Andrea Arrobo, said that the government has “eliminated 2 flares” and thus “they have already complied with the ruling”. She mentioned that “one thing is to insist on eliminating gas flaring and another one is to cause panic”, underestimating the dimension of the problem. Also, the minister Andrea Arrobo insinuated the girls were “manipulated”, stigmatizing them like [Ecuadorian authorities have done in the past with other environmental defenders](#).

Amnesty International received information that the local prosecution is carrying out the investigation about the attack against Leonela and her family. In this process of investigation, authorities have offered protection of the nine girls and their families with the conditions of stopping their activism. This goes against the international human rights obligations of Ecuador. The Interamerican Commission of Human Rights [considers that](#) “States have a particular duty to protect and grant effective and adequate guarantees to human rights defenders so that they can freely carry out their activities, avoiding actions that limit or hinder their work, since the work they carry out constitutes a positive and complementary contribution to the efforts made by the State”.

Amnesty International has documented how Ecuadorian state has failed in the past to conduct criminal investigations and ensure protection measures to human rights defenders and leaders adequately and effectively, specifically, [Amazonian women](#).

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: July 31, 2024

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Leonela Moncayo (she/her)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr28/7775/2024/en/>