

## Modi: Voice of the Global South; Crime in Ecuador & Bananas

February 25, 2024

**February 2024: Quito, Ecuador:** President **Daniel Noboa**, 37, ratified three Agreements with China, Russia and USA, while his Government is battling with terrorists and crime in the streets.

These days, Ecuador, a **small** country, is grappling with its **big** problems, while for super-powers of today's multi-polar world, Ecuador is nothing more than a **pawn** on the chess-board of their politics.

**February 23, 2024: Quito, Ecuador:** U-TURN in the face of REPRISAL by Russia: Ecuador canceled a plan to acquire modern US arms worth \$200 Mn in exchange for outdated Soviet-era weapons.

The US arms were for its Police so that **the young President** could make the streets safe and crime-free for Ecuador's citizens. "This is going forward **no matter what**," **Noboa** had told Ecuavisa, an Ecuadorean television station, on January 30, 2024.



***Daniel Noboa, President, Republic of Ecuador (from 23 November 2023)***

When President **Noboa** learnt that USA planned to transfer the Russian Soviet-era arms, based on Soviet-era designs, to the Ukrainian army, (which had been equipped and trained on Russian arms only,) and, when Russia **in reprisal** canceled the contracts for buying bananas from five Ecuadorian exporters, Ecuador **backed down** through a statement by its Foreign Minister **Gabriela Sommerfeld**, who stated in the National Assembly, that "There is a clear guideline from the President that **Ecuador will not send any war materiel to a country in an international armed conflict.**" BACKGROUND: Ecuador is world's largest exporter of Bananas. In 2021, exports of Bananas were worth \$704 Mn. Russia is Ecuador's **third-largest trade partner**. About 20% of its exports of bananas in 2023 was directed to Russia.



**ECUADOR: Population (2023 Estimate): 17.48 Mn (73<sup>rd</sup>), Density: 69/Km<sup>2</sup> (148<sup>th</sup>)  
**GDP (2024 estimate): \$122.76 Bn (63<sup>th</sup>), GDP/capita: \$6,630 (95<sup>th</sup>);**  
 Largest city: **Guayaquil**: (founded: 25 July 1535): Population (2022): 2.65 Mn, Metro: 3.62 Mn  
 Capital: **Quito** (founded: 6 December 1534): Population (2022): 1.76 Mn, Metro: 2.9 Mn  
**Quito** is the second largest city of Ecuador. Ecuador also includes the **Galápagos Islands** in the Pacific, about 1,000 KM, west of the mainland. (Please see page 5 for a map of the islands.)**

The small country of Ecuador (**shown in blue** and located on the Pacific) is facing powerful international drug gangs of Brazil, Mexico, Colombia and Argentina, much larger countries than Ecuador.

**On 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2024**, President **Noboa** had declared an **Emergency in Ecuador** after gunmen took journalists and staff at a TV station hostage during a live broadcast. On that very day, Gang Members of a Group, dealing in drugs, stormed a hospital in the town of **Yaguachi**, in **Guayas** province. The gang had tried to take over the ward of the hospital, in which a member of their gang, was receiving treatment as a patient

in the ward. The gang's aim was to guard the patient from potential attacks from rivals. *(The patient had arrived at the hospital in the early hours of Sunday with gunshot wounds. He had since died of those wounds.)*

After securing the hospital, the security officers took over the **Drug Rehabilitation Centre**, located near the hospital. *(Such **Centres** are often used by gangs as the **Command Centre** for their illegal operations.)*



*68 Gang Members, arrested by the Police*

**BACKGROUND:** Ecuador had been suffering from criminal gangs and a poor law-and-order state for years. Violence, gang escapes, and explosive incidents had become common across the country.

**February 15, 2024:** Quito, Ecuador: President **Noboa** said he would accept all the help the international community could offer to fight organized crime.

In **January 22, 2024**, President **Daniel Noboa** ratified the **Agreement** to carry out **joint operations with the United States** to combat illegal activities such as drug trafficking, trafficking of weapons, people, and illegal fishing, after a favorable ruling from Ecuador's constitutional court. The agreement had been signed by **Noboa's** predecessor, **Guillermo Lasso**, in 2023.

Recently, Ecuadorian security forces, led by the army and police, had conducted significant operations against drug gangs in prisons. Ecuador is also taking the help of USA in these efforts. More than 2,700 suspects have been arrested since President **Noboa** declared war on the gangs. Ecuador's LOSS: An Ecuador's prosecutor, **César Suárez**, probing the TV studio attack, was shot dead in **Guayaquil**.

*(Note: The President of **El Salvador** (a small country of **less than 7 Mn** in Central America) **Nayib Bukele** had directed his Police to arrest every one, suspected of criminal activities by using the additional authority, due to the Emergency. 72,000 persons were arrested caring for human rights of the suspects and without bothering about the lack of minimum facilities in prisons for the huge number of arrests. These huge arrests drastically reduced crimes and proved to be popular, increasing the vote for Bukele from 53.4% to 84.6%. President **Noboa** tried to follow similar policies.)*

UNDUE PRESSURE from RUSSIA changes ECUADOR's POLICIES: For providing the Police with arms, equivalent to those with drug-mafia, Ecuador's young **President had plans of acquiring modern arms**, from USA, **worth \$200 Mn** in exchange for out-dated arms, based on Soviet design. However, **Ecuador had to go back on the plans** to avoid Russia's cancelation of five contracts for import of Banans.

**February 7, 2024: Quito, Ecuador: Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with China** After **Chile, Peru and Costa Rica**, Ecuador became the 4<sup>th</sup> country of Latin America to sign an FTA with **China**.

HAS FTA with CHINA been FORCED on ECUADOR? The Wall Street Journal had reported, last year, that **China** had agreed to **restructure \$5 Bn** of its loan and had **allowed Ecuador to sell more oil in the open market**. (To repay a large part of **26.3 Bn** of loan from China, the Ecuadorian government owes as many as **160 million barrels of oil** to help repay loans. About 80% of China's overseas lending portfolio of more than \$1 trillion currently supports countries in financial distress.)

**Indigenous groups, environmentalists and ecologists** opposed the FTA. They were afraid that the FTA would open the door to the entry of toxic waste and **fishing fleets from China** to Ecuadorian waters. The non-white local people (called **Indigenous**) form **79%** of total population. They are poor and their fishing boats can operate in coastal waters only. But, the **indigenous** are not politically influential.

DIS-ENGAGEMENT from CHINA: **The West** is supposed to be working on **dis-engagement or de-risking of its economies wrt China**. However, China Incorporated seems to be making gains in both Latin America and *Africa*.

*A few days back, **Rio Tinto** and five **Chinese** companies announced from London, UK, that it would invest \$6.2 Bn in a mine, rail-road and port in the **Republic of Guinea**. None of the technologies in building ports, railways or mining of copper*



