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US Helps Ecuador to Counter Common Threats



U.S. Navy Admiral Craig S. Faller, SOUTHCOM commander, and Admiral Fernando Donoso, Ecuadorian minister of National Defense, shake hands during the signing of a cooperation agreement, at the U.S. Embassy in Ecuador, on September 14, 2021. (Photo: U.S. Embassy in Ecuador)

By Lorena Baires/Diálogo
 October 19, 2021

On September 14, 2021, U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) and the Ecuadorian Ministry of Defense signed a memorandum of understanding for timely information exchange to strengthen the fight against narcotrafficking and provide humanitarian assistance, search and rescue, and relief to victims in cases of disasters, the U.S. Embassy in Ecuador indicated.

As such, Ecuador becomes a part of the Cooperative Situational Information Integration system (CSII). The CSII draws on the information that U.S. and other signatory countries' agencies provide, aiming to increase regional security upon receiving reports on suspicious activities related to illicit drug trafficking, and to support nations' capabilities to provide assistance during emergencies.

"This system, in which many of Ecuador's neighbors participate, enables countries to share information to combat narcotrafficking and provide data that can be used to provide disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, among other priorities," U.S. Navy Admiral Craig S. Faller, SOUTHCOM commander, said during the signing of the agreement at the U.S. Embassy in Ecuador.

Admiral Fernando Donoso, Ecuador's minister of National Defense, said that it is necessary to have the "direct participation of our Armed Forces with Colombia, Mexico, and the United States, with intelligence, training, and support in teams, among other [efforts], which are necessary to face common threats."

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A U.S. Coast Guard delegation met with their counterparts in Ecuador to analyze the possibility of expanding maritime patrols to combat illegal fishing by including C-27 aircraft, on July 22, 2021. (Photo: U.S. Embassy in Ecuador)

Ecuador has built a long relationship of cooperation with the United States on issues such as humanitarian assistance, air and maritime security, the combat of transnational organized crime, and unreported and unregulated illegal fishing.

In terms of humanitarian assistance, for example, the U.S. government announced in June 2021 that it would invest \$25 million to support displaced Venezuelans in Ecuador.

Concerning maritime security, on January 15, 2021, the U.S. Department of State announced additional support for the U.S. Coast Guard's Operation Southern Cross to combat illegal fishing in the South Atlantic, *Voice of America* reported.

"Most importantly, we are partnering with Ecuador as they seek to provide more security to the area surrounding the global ecological treasure [that is] the Galapagos Islands," Rear Admiral Brian Penoyer,

commander of the Eleventh U.S. Coast Guard District, said via Twitter, on September 15. "We hope to provide a better understanding of where those distant water fishing fleets are, how close they are coming, and what they are doing [...]."

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