

Ecuador's 2025 Elections: Implications for U.S. Policy

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On February 9, 2025, Ecuador held national presidential and legislative elections. Incumbent President Daniel Noboa of the center-right [National Democratic Action](#) (ADN) obtained 44.17% of the vote. His principal challenger for the presidency, Luisa González of the left-leaning [Citizen Revolution-Total Renovation](#) (RC-RETO) political alliance, secured 44.0%. A runoff election between these top two candidates is scheduled for April 13, 2025.

Congress has taken an active role in shaping U.S.-Ecuador relations at times. Congress enacted the United States-Ecuador Partnership Act of 2022 (Title LV, Subtitle B, of P.L. 117-263), which aims to deepen bilateral economic and security ties. In the 118th Congress, Members supported strengthening bilateral relations with Ecuador, while expressing divergent views about the best U.S. policy approach to do so. After organized crime-fueled violence swept Ecuador in early 2024, some Members [expressed](#) support for President Noboa's security policies and [called](#) for increased U.S. security assistance to the country. In late 2024, some Members [advocated](#) that U.S. policy prioritize human rights in its engagement with Ecuador. The 119th Congress may monitor Ecuador's 2025 elections and their implications for U.S.-Ecuador relations, including security cooperation.

Electoral Context and First-Round Results

Noboa's lead in the February vote was smaller than [some polls](#) projected. The other candidate who garnered more than 3% of the presidential vote was Leonidas Iza, representing [Pachakutik](#), the party of the [Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador](#), with 5.25%.

Elections to select all 151 members of the newly expanded National Assembly also were divided largely between the two leading political blocs. [Media outlets project](#) that neither RC-RETO (67 seats) nor ADN (66 seats) will obtain a 77-seat legislative majority. The presidential election winner likely will need to forge a legislative majority with smaller parties.

Both [Noboa](#) and [González](#) alleged irregularities in the first-round vote, though a [preliminary report](#) from the Organization of American States stated that the election was [without widespread irregularities](#). In the runup to the elections, the political opposition accused Noboa of flouting electoral [rules](#) requiring officials running for reelection to take a leave of absence. Days before the election, Ecuador's Constitutional Court

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[ruled](#) that two decrees Noboa had issued to temporarily confer presidential powers to the interim vice president (rather than to the elected vice president) for short periods were unconstitutional, while declining to rule on whether Noboa must take a leave of absence.

Candidates

[Noboa](#) is seeking reelection 18 months after assuming the presidency to complete the term of his predecessor, President Guillermo Lasso (2021-2023), who had dissolved the National Assembly and called snap elections in 2023. Under the Noboa administration, Ecuador has continued to grapple with security, energy, and other issues that have challenged previous administrations and contributed to slowing [economic growth](#) and increased [unauthorized migration](#). Noboa's efforts to address an [organized crime-fueled security crisis](#)—including by [enacting reforms](#) to permit the armed forces to conduct public security functions—appear to have had mixed results. Homicides [fell by nearly 15%](#) in 2024 from a year prior but surged in [January 2025](#), when authorities recorded the most homicides in a single month since late 2023. Some international organizations have [argued](#) that Noboa's approach has led to [human rights abuses](#).

Opposition candidate [González](#) is a [close ally](#) of Citizen Revolution (RC) [leader](#) and former President Rafael Correa (2007-2017). Correa faces a [2020 corruption conviction](#) in Ecuador and resides in Belgium. Correa—a left-leaning populist whose presidency included robust social spending and allegations of authoritarianism—remains a divisive figure in Ecuador.

[Polling suggests](#) insecurity is among voters' top concerns. Both candidates favor what some analysts have termed “[hardline](#)” security policies, while the two appear to have somewhat competing views regarding international security cooperation. Noboa has proposed expanding international cooperation to counter transnational crime, including [reversing](#) a Correa-era constitutional ban on foreign military bases in Ecuador and [temporarily allowing](#) foreign special forces from allied countries to support Ecuadorian forces. González supports [reinforcing information sharing](#) about organized crime with international partners, while [criticizing](#) Noboa's proposals.

Implications for U.S. Policy and the 119th Congress

The presidential runoff's result could have implications for U.S.-Ecuador security cooperation. The first Trump Administration and the Biden Administration sought to increase law enforcement and security cooperation with Ecuador to counter transnational crime following a period of strained relations under former President Correa, who [halted some cooperation](#) in these areas. Since 2023, the two countries have established a [Defense Bilateral Working Group](#) and implemented [several agreements](#) to deepen military cooperation.

The election's result also could have implications for U.S. anti-corruption efforts in Ecuador. Ecuador's attorney general's office has initiated investigations into organized crime-linked corruption that have resulted in [several convictions](#). [Former President Correa](#) and some [RC lawmakers](#) have accused the office of political bias. [Some observers assess](#) that a González victory could facilitate Correa's return to Ecuador, potentially complicating ongoing anti-corruption efforts. In October 2024, the State Department publicly designated Correa and one of his former vice presidents, Jorge Glas, for [U.S. visa restrictions](#) for “involvement in significant corruption,” pursuant to Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-47, Division F). Some Members of Congress [voiced concerns](#) about Noboa's commitment to international law after he ordered security forces to invade the Mexican Embassy in Quito to detain Glas on corruption charges, a move the Biden Administration [condemned](#).

The State Department has allocated security assistance to Ecuador primarily under the congressionally appropriated International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement account for programs intended to build Ecuador's capacity to counter transnational organized crime and corruption, among other activities. The Trump Administration's 90-day "pause" on foreign assistance and subsequent [cancellation](#) of awards [reportedly interrupted](#) some U.S.-backed counternarcotics efforts. In February 2025, the Trump Administration [reportedly exempted](#) some security and counternarcotics programs from the pause. Congress may seek to conduct oversight on how, if at all, these changes have affected (and/or may continue to affect) counternarcotics and anti-corruption efforts in Ecuador.

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