

# URGENT ACTION

## CHILD CLIMATE JUSTICE ACTIVIST INTIMIDATED IN HER HOME

14-year-old climate activist, Leonela Moncayo, reported that on February 26, there was an explosion outside her home caused by an improvised explosive device. This happened five days after Leonela was stigmatized alongside eight other girls by the Minister of Energy and Mines in the National Assembly due to their activism against routine gas flaring. Leonela, her family, and eight other child activists may be at risk. We demand Ecuadorian authorities to effectively investigate what happened, refrain from stigmatizing child activists, and protect them so that they can carry out their work safely.

### 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 **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.

#### Ms. General Attorney Diana Salazar

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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 gravely concerned about the situation suffered by the 14-year-old climate activist, **Leonela Moncayo**, and her family outside their house. On February 26, Leonela and her mother heard a noise in the yard of their house. When they went out to verify what happened, they observed abundant white smoke that smelled like pyrotechnics. After the smoke cleared, they saw an improvised explosive device made of quadua cane, paper, and a tube made of carion. I am concerned that this might be a threat and an act of intimidation against Leonela and her family's climate justice activism.

Leonela is one of nine brave child climate activists from the Provinces of Sucumbíos and Orellana that achieved a historical ruling that obliges the Ecuadorian state to eliminate all gas flares that significantly contribute to the climate crisis and harm the health of fence line communities. On February 21, four of the nine plaintiff girls, including Leonela, went to a session in the Biodiversity Commission of the National Assembly of Ecuador to demand the compliance with the ruling, where they were stigmatized by the Minister of Energy and Mines, who insinuated the children "were manipulated" and said the "government has already complied the ruling".

We urge you to investigate effectively, independently, and impartially the attack against Leonela Moncayo and her family. All people suspected of criminal liability must be brought to justice in fair trials. Further, I urge Ecuadorian authorities to refrain from stigmatizing the nine plaintiff girls, guaranteeing their security so that they can carry out their work in defense of human rights and the climate in a safe environment.

Yours sincerely,

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Leonela Moncayo** is a climate activist from the Ecuadorian Amazon. She is the daughter of two recognized human rights defenders, Donald Moncayo and Silvia Zambrano, from the strategic litigation organization, "Unión de Afectados por Texaco" (UDAPT). 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, nor have the right to health or any other rights been repaired.

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 with 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".

[Amnesty International documented throughout 2018](#) a series of attacks and threats perpetrated against women human rights defenders and leaders - Patricia Gualinga, Nema Grefa, Salomé Aranda, and Margoth Escobar - members of Mujeres Amazónicas (Amazonian Women) collective. In February 2023, Eduardo Mendúa, leader of the A'I Cofán indigenous people, [was shot and killed](#). Mendúa had been outspoken in his opposition to oil exploitation in the area. These examples and the unfortunate situation of Leonela and her family show how Ecuadorian authorities continue to fail to protect human rights defenders, especially land, territory, and environmental defenders, and guarantee them a safe and enabling environment to carry out their work.

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

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** April 2024

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Leonela Moncayo [she/her]