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IOI expresses concerns regarding the developments in the Republic of Ecuador

The International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) has become aware of concerning developments affecting the Office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Ecuador and its current incumbent, Ombudsman Dr. Ramiro Rivadeneira Silva.

As the only global organization for the cooperation of 188 independent Ombudsman institutions worldwide, the IOI is committed to promoting and strengthening the concept of ombudsmanship. In order to further the cooperation and networking, the IOI focuses on enabling the membership of Ombudsman institutions around the world.

Independence is a fundamental aspect of Ombudsman institutions and should be guaranteed by provisions in the national legislation and preferably in the Constitution, as well as in practical and functional terms. The independence of an Ombudsman is therefore also an important requirement for membership in the IOI. According to Article 2 and 6 of the IOI Bylaws, an Ombudsman may „not receive any direction from any public authority which would compromise its independence“.

It is therefore with great concern that the IOI has learned of the plans of the Government of Ecuador to subject the national Ombudsman to the scrutiny of an administrative body which may dismiss employees of the Ombudsman's office and even start a process of replacing its current incumbent, Ombudsman Dr. Rivadeneira Silva.

A strong and independent Ombudsman is a necessary feature of any state to ensure good governance and justice, as well as human rights. These aspects of the institution are particularly important during times of reforms and changes, in order to continue to protect due administrative proceedings and the human rights of all citizens. Furthermore, strong and independent Ombudsman institutions may offer important insights concerning the continued implementation of

international human rights obligations at the national level, in particular in case of Constitutional amendments.

The IOI is therefore of the opinion that to weaken the independence of the Ombudsman of Ecuador in such circumstances could restrict not only the free expression of complaints by Ecuadorian citizens during the current reform process, but may also impact the state's compliance with international human rights obligations.

The IOI therefore shares the concerns of the Latin American Ombudsman Institute (ILO) as well as the Ibero-American Ombudsman Federation (FIO) with regard to the planned reforms in Ecuador and reiterates its commitment to strengthening and upholding the independence of Ombudsman institutions around the world.



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