



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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30 November 2005

ECU100831.FE

Ecuador: Protection offered by the authorities to civilians (whether from Ecuador or Colombia) against the activities of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) (2003-2005)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

For information on the activities of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in Ecuador and the measures taken at the border by Ecuadorian authorities, consult ECU100830.F of 30 November 2005.

Limited information on the protection offered to civilians against FARC activities could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Sources indicated that, following a Colombian FARC incursion in June 2005 from a camp located in Ecuador, the Ecuadorian army has conducted ongoing surveillance of its border with Colombia (AFP 26 June 2005; Fundación Seguridad y Democracia Sept. 2005). The authorities also increased their presence in the city of Lago Agrio and the area surrounding the San Miguel international bridge (AFP 26 June 2005). *Latin America Weekly Report* noted the presence of about 7,000 soldiers along the border (21 Mar. 2005); according to the Fundación Seguridad y Democracia, 10,000 Ecuadorian army soldiers were patrolling the border area (Sept. 2005).

In addition, relations between the two governments are still tense, primarily because of the neutrality declared by the Ecuadorian government, which refuses to call the FARC a terrorist organization (*La Hora* 2 Oct. 2005; Fundación Seguridad y Democracia Sept. 2005, 28; see also Latinamerica Press 7 Sept. 2005). This tension has made military cooperation difficult and limited (Reuters 30 June 2005).

According to the Fundación Seguridad y Democracia, the participation of security forces in resolving internal issues, which takes them away from their work of monitoring the borders, makes it easier for armed groups and criminal organizations to enter Ecuador (Apr. 2005).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Agence France-Presse (AFP). 26 June 2005. "Ecuador refuerza control en zona de combate entre FFAA colombianas y FARC." (Factiva)

Fundación Seguridad y Democracia [Bogotá]. April 2005. "Reporte del 1 al 30 de Abril de 2005." *Observatorio de Seguridad Suramericano*. <<http://www.seguridadydemocracia.org/docs/pdf/analisis/Abril.pdf>> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2005]

La Hora [Quito]. 2 October 2005. "Aumenta violencia y corrupción." <<http://www.lahora.com.ec/noticiacompleta.asp?noid=370836>> [Accessed 22 Nov. 2005]

Latinamerica Press. 7 September 2005. Luis Angel Saavedra. "Border with Colombia Heats up: Government to Stay on the Sidelines of Colombia Conflict." (Dialog)

Latin America Weekly Report. 21 March 2005. "Ecuador-Colombia: Quito Beefs up Border Defences." (Factiva).

Reuters. 30 June 2005. "Ecuador y Colombia cierran puertas a mayor cooperación por FARC." (Factiva)

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact the Ministerio de Gobierno y Policía, the Defensoría del Pueblo del Ecuador, and a sociologist from the Andina Simón Bolívar university were unsuccessful.

Internet sites, including: Colombia Week, *Country Reports 2004*, Ministerio de Gobierno y Policía del Ecuador, Resource Center of the Americas, Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA).

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