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Statement on Narco-Criminal Violence in Ecuador

PRESS STATEMENT

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Since January 9, Ecuador has experienced appalling levels of violence and terrorism at the hands of narco-criminal elements targeting innocent civilians. More than 100 prison guards are being held hostage in multiple locations. The United States condemns these attacks and the criminals responsible. We reaffirm our commitment to a close partnership with Ecuador, including in the fight against criminal organizations. We will work with President Noboa to deepen our law enforcement cooperation through U.S. security assistance programs.

To accelerate that cooperation, senior U.S. officials will visit Ecuador in the coming weeks to explore with Ecuadorian counterparts ways we can work together more effectively to confront the threat posed by transnational criminal organizations. These officials include Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Assistant Secretary Todd Robinson, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary Kevin Sullivan, Commander of U.S. Southern Command General Laura Richardson. U.S. law enforcement officials will also travel to assist Ecuador in criminal investigations. In addition, the United States will increase intelligence sharing, cooperation to combat malicious cyber activity, and assistance with the implementation of prison reforms and will employ other available tools to hold accountable those individuals and organizations engaging in criminal activity and undermining the rule of law.

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