

# Ecuador Strategy Flash

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**On Friday, the CONIAE decided to break negotiations with the administration, in addition to asking for the resignation of Mr. Lasso.** As President of the indigenous movement, Mr. Iza had called for a meeting to discuss the progress of the agreements with the government, to take place last Friday. As expected, the results were everything but flattering for the administration. The CONAIE issued fourteen resolutions, most of which are related to the election results and the political crisis suffered by the executive. For starters, Mr Iza praised the results obtained in the sectional elections by Pachakutik, and also celebrated the victory of the “No” in the referendum. In addition, he argued the administration’s implementation of the agreements was unsatisfactory to say the least, and consistently he declared the CONAIE would break the dialogue process and withdraw from the follow-up tables, holding the government accountable for the non-compliance. In turn, having showcased his disconformity with the administration’s fulfillment of the accords, he ratified the demand for the 10 points issued in June’s strikes.

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**On the political front, Mr. Iza dialed up the pressure on Mr. Lasso, not only asking for his resignation, but warning that a call up for the Muerte cruzada would be met with protests.** After lambasting the administration’s efforts in the negotiations, Mr. Iza also asked for the president’s resignation, based on his “inability to govern and solve the most heartfelt problems of Ecuadorians” and in the face of accusations of alleged corruption against his close circle. He also worked on another angle, as he exhorted the Encuentro Case Commission, the Assembly, the Constitutional Court and the Pachakutik bench to rigorously apply the legal mechanisms to make way for the political trial against the President. And as to cut off the administration entirely, he stated that “in the face of any dictatorial act or decision taken by the President (...) we will not allow him to try to dissolve State functions and govern by decree.” If that were the case, then the CONAIE would call for a national strike, mobilizing against the government. Finally, he made some call ups to defend nature against mining, and to stop the prosecution of those defending it, and another one to urge the movement to participate in the Women’s day march on March 8th.

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**The resolutions seem to be designed as a countermove to neutralize the government’s threat of the Muerte Cruzada, which is a key deterrent for the impeachment dangling over Mr. Lasso.** With the opposition working on several angles to undermine the administration’s power, we argued that it was not clear the incentives in the assembly aligned with impeaching the president for two main reasons. In the first place, even as correism came out of the sectional elections strengthened, the rest of the parties mostly did not, with the election being especially harsh with the PSC. So, for parties such as the ID and the aforementioned PSC (and even Pachakutik), elections now would probably mean losing seats to correism, a not very appealing scenario. Secondly, there are many assembly members that do not want to lose their seat, this being especially true for several Pachakutik members. And impeaching the president would risk losing their tenure, either by new elections, or by the administration triggering the “Muerte Cruzada” dissolving the assembly and governing by decree for six months. Mr. Iza’s sayings are meant to shore up the second weakness in the impeachment attempt. The idea behind it is clear, threatening with mobilizing the CONAIE’s power base against the administration if it triggers the “Muerte Cruzada”, strategy Mr. Lasso was prepared to use if the impeachment attempt showed any evidence of prospering. The strategy is then clear. With last year’s demonstrations showing

how much damage the CONAIE can do, the threat is not an empty one, and tries to handcuff Mr. Lasso, annulling his own blocking strategy. Still, the threat might not prove to be effective, as if the president finds himself between a rock and a hard place, he might choose to trigger the Muerte Cruzada regardless. There is an extra caveat to the resolution, as by May 14th, all the new local authorities would assume their charges. Any manifestations beyond that date would create a conflict of interest, as a new correist mayors in Quito and Guayaquil would not like to see their tenures stained by violent protests. Mr. Iza then nudged the impeachment attempt slightly closer to fruition, but still the opposition needs to align the rest of the parties' incentives in the Assembly, and see how they can get a favorable ruling from the constitutional court to proceed with the impeachment, two issues this declarations do not tackle.

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