



A teenager receives a dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine against COVID-19 at the Cecilia Rivadeneira Foundation in Quito, on July 21, 2021. (RODRIGO BUENDIA/AFP via Getty Images)

**WORLD** PREMIUM

# Vaccine Mandate in Ecuador Province Defeated by Legal Action

BY AUTUMN SPREDEMANN August 25, 2021 Updated: August 25, 2021

**A** Print

A grassroots organization defeated a government-backed COVID-19 [vaccine mandate](#) in [Ecuador's](#) Loja Province on Aug 5.

On July 6, the Emergency Operations Committee (EOC), which is a crisis response branch of Ecuador's state-level government, [released a decree](#) mandating COVID-19 vaccines for province residents over 16 years of age by Aug. 9.

The decree, which came as a shock to residents, imposed restrictions on unvaccinated individuals, including entry into government buildings, bill payment locations, banks, restaurants and other areas of daily commerce.

Nick Vasey, the founder of Human Rights Ecuador, spoke to The Epoch Times about the steps his organization took before the mandate went into effect.

“You had to extrapolate the real end result of all this,” Vasey said. “They [EOC] gave the Ecuadorian community zero time to respond to their decree and planned to steamroll the population.”

Human Rights Ecuador is a Loja-based group that promotes medical freedom.

Vasey’s lawyer filed injunction paperwork against the EOC on July 30. The lawyer then scheduled a meeting for Aug. 3 with the Loja Ombudsman’s office. This proved to be a critical step since the provincial ombudsman could override the measure put forward by the EOC. Consequently, the Loja Ombudsman’s office [released a statement](#) on Aug. 5 dismissing the vaccine mandate on the grounds of it being “unconstitutional.”

Vasey added, “There was formidable and constitutionally binding human rights opposition to the proposed measure.”

Ecuador’s Constitution guarantees citizens the right of refusal and treats all citizens without distinction of political ideology, socio-economic or cultural condition as equal before the law. Human Rights Ecuador claims [on its website](#) that the proposed vaccine mandate is also contrary to the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights, which takes precedence over local regulations under Article 425 of Ecuador’s constitution.

On Aug. 5, the Constitutional Court of Ecuador ruled against extending the state of emergency in the provinces of Guayaquil and El Oro, which was originally requested by President Guillermo Lasso's government. The newly elected President Lasso took office on May 24 of this year and claimed he would vaccinate 9 million people in the first 100 days of his administration. However, without the extended state of emergency, the EOC lacks the administrative power to push COVID-19 vaccines.

Vasey asserted that Loja was just the proving ground for a vaccine mandate program being drafted by different state governments, of which Guayaquil is likely to be the next.

Guayaquil is Ecuador's most populous province with over 5 million residents, in a nation of 17.9 million people.

The tiny South American nation suffered considerably in the first and second waves of the [CCP \(Chinese Communist Party\) virus](#) pandemic. Nearly 32,000 people died of COVID-19, the disease caused by the CCP virus, commonly known as the novel coronavirus.

Images surfaced last year of dead bodies being left in the streets outside residential homes and hospitals due to a critical lack of available resources to handle the fast accumulating number of victims. The grim phenomenon was especially prevalent in Guayaquil, many of whose residents remain fearful of the effects of the virus.

Ecuador has administered at least 15,516,237 doses of COVID-19 vaccines to date. During the last week, the country administered an average of around 250,098 doses per day.

The Minister of Public Health, Ximena Garzón, released a statement on June 9 explaining her department will continue coordinating with the armed forces and National Electoral Council to set up mass vaccination centers nationwide. Many of the aforementioned centers are voting locations that were used during the general election earlier this year.

The Epoch Times contacted the EOC office in Loja for comment with no response.



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