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Why the victory of the Indigenous Movement in Ecuador is not total

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Indigenous people celebrate outside the Casa de la Cultura in Quito on October 13, 2019 after Ecuador's president and indigenous leaders reached an agreement to end violent protests. - Ecuador's president and indigenous leaders reached an agreement to end nearly two weeks of violent protests against austerity measures

put in place to obtain a multi-billion-dollar loan from the IMF. President Lenin Moreno met with Jaime Vargas, the head of the indigenous umbrella grouping CONAIE, for four hours of talks in the capital Quito broadcast live on state television. (Photo by Luis ROBAYO / AFP)

There are celebrations in Ecuador. They began Sunday night when the national government and the Indigenous movement centrally grouped in the Coordinadora de Nacionalidades Indígenas de Ecuador (Conaie) announced that they had reached an agreement on Decree 883, which removed gasoline subsidies.

The response was twofold. On the one hand, the streets were filled with euphoria after what was considered a victory after 11 days of protests in the face of strong repression. The battlefield in downtown Quito was then a scene of applause, horns, trucks carrying Ecuadorian flags, taxi drivers, and popular neighborhoods.

On the other hand, the question arose as to what exactly had been achieved. This was either an immediate and effective repeal, as announced and celebrated by Conaie, or an undated substitution, as President Lenín Moreno announced in his Twitter account.

Part of the response was clarified by the communiqué of the United Nations Ecuador, a mediating body in the dialogue, which stated that “Decree 883 is left without effect” and “we will proceed immediately to work on the elaboration of a new decree that will allow a policy of subsidies, with an integral approach, that will take care that these are not destined to the benefit of people with greater resources and smugglers, with rationalization, targeting and sectorializing criteria”.

On the same night, Conaie reported that the commission was set up to “draft the decree that replaces it 883 – that this does not end until the agreement is fully implemented”.

In this way a partial victory was achieved within the set of measures agreed between the Government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with Decree 883 being the one with the greatest impact on the economy and on the symbolic battle. The final result of this partiality will depend on the new decree agreed upon.

Outside the space for dialogue there was also, up to now, an agreement on a procedure to investigate the actions and abuses of the State security forces that resulted in at least 7 deaths, 1,152 detained and 1,340 wounded.

Is there a chance for a major victory? That question brings together the most important questions. According to those who took part in the meetings, namely Conaie, there was not. And the mobilizations, although they were not exclusively of the indigenous movement, focused mainly on its capacity for action, both in Quito and in the road blockades throughout the country.

Another scenario unfolded parallel to the debate on the decree: the persecution of leaders of the Citizens' Revolution and the political space of former president Rafael Correa. This action had been announced by Moreno when he discharged responsibility for the acts of violence that took place behind Correa's back. The Government's tactic was to recognize the indigenous people as legitimate representatives and criminalize Correism.

The persecutory deployment began during the days of the mobilization: the assemblywoman Gabriela Rivadeneira had to take refuge in the Mexican embassy and ex-mayor Alexandra Arce was arrested. The prefect of Pichincha, Paola Pabón, was arrested in the early hours of Monday, and the house of ex-assembly member Virgilio Hernández was raided this morning.

These arrests and persecutions through the judiciary, together with media condemnation, added to previous cases, such as that of former Vice President Jorge Glas, former Foreign Minister Ricardo Patiño, a refugee in Mexico, and Correa

himself.

Therefore, Ecuador advances over several simultaneous events: the celebration of the partial victory of Conai and the popular mobilization that lasted 11 days, the persecution of Correism as part of Moreno's political attack on his adversary, and that of the government that surrendered to Decree 883, which is seeking ways to avoid a substantial modification.

Within this scenario, an element of greater complexity is evident: the differences between the direction of the Conaie and Correísmo, which has taken place over several years, highlighted via Twitter during the days of protest, and were brought to the forefront during the dialogue when the president of the indigenous movement Jaime Vargas attacked the Citizens' Revolution.

Ecuador, which is beginning its first day with the decompression of mobilizations, is experiencing a complex situation. Moreno's government will not cease in its attempt to neoliberalize the economy, which has reached a point of deepening in the IMF, as well as in its alignment with the United States as the epicenter of its foreign policy. What will the next steps of Conaie be? What will Correism do in the face of political persecution? The pieces are in motion.

Source: [Resumen](#)

