



## Open Letter to Ecuador's Government & Constitutional Court: Respect the People's Vote To Protect Yasuni

We write this letter to you as concerned citizens that are inheriting the Earth and the intensifying climate crisis we are in. We are joined by thousands of allies from countries across the world.

On 20th August 2023, Ecuadorian voters participated in a historic precedent of climate democracy, a referendum that ensured national citizens had the right to decide over oil extraction in the country. Over 59% of voters voted "Yes": **Yes to halting oil drilling in Yasuni, Yes to forcing the oil industry to dismantle its operations in the area, and Yes to a future where Earth's most biodiverse place is protected.**

We write to you, the Ecuadorian Government and the Constitutional Court, because you both have the **legal and moral responsibility to respect the courageous decision of the Ecuadorian people to protect life over profits, to protect the forest from oil, to protect our climate from destruction.** In a time of planetary crisis, you also have a stunning **opportunity in your hands** to protect the most biodiverse forest in the world, keep almost a billion barrels of oil in the ground, and lead the way in protecting Mother Earth.

**Ecuador has a long legacy of oil industry impunity and the Yasuni decision marks the time for change.** Since the start of its operations in the 1960s, oil companies have left behind a tragic legacy of negligence, devastation and abuses, including widespread pollution of the Amazon's forests and rivers and systematic rights violations of Indigenous and local communities. The much-touted economic and political benefits of oil have also failed to materialize: the reality is that Ecuador finds itself debt-ridden with spiraling levels of poverty, inequality and insecurity.

The decision on Yasuni represents the **hope for a new future, a world where rights are secured and forests are protected.** A future of clean water, clean air and climate safety. By implementing the decision of its citizens, the Ecuadorian government can help keep 726 million barrels of oil underground, ensuring 345 million tons of carbon don't get released.



Globally, the fossil fuel industry is the single largest driver of the climate crisis. Ecuador now has the chance to be a frontrunner in climate action for the world, in a time that desperately needs countries to step up to tackle the planetary crisis. This is a choice between preserving a dignified future for humanity, or preserving the future of the oil industry. Put simply, there is no conceivable future for us all unless we leave the fossil fuel era behind.

**We demand:**

- the executive branch of the Ecuadorian Government ensure compliance with the Yasuni decision: ending oil drilling in Yasuni and ensuring the dismantling of oil infrastructure in the area.
- that the Ecuadorian government support local communities economically reliant on the oil industry in a just transition that guarantees their right to a dignified life.
- that Ecuador's Constitutional Court guarantee compliance with its own established rights. The right to consultation is a right guaranteed by the constitution and the Yasuni vote took place after being authorized and legitimized by the Constitutional Court itself.
- that Petroecuador, Ecuador's state oil company, comply with the decision made by the Ecuadorian people in August 2023. There are no 'ifs' or 'buts' with binding popular referendums. It's time to comply.
- that the world at large recognizes that the oil left in the ground in Yasuni is a decision that benefits not just Ecuadorians but the world as a whole. The decision to forsake oil revenues is a bold action of climate leadership and should be met with reciprocity. We also call upon all States to take bold action to address the climate crisis, especially the richest countries in the world, who owe a massive climate debt to the Global South.