



Faculty of Legal Sciences

School of Internacional Studies

**ECUADOR AND THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE
CONFLICT: FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS
(2014-2024)**

Project prior to obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in Internacional
Studies

Author:

María José Rosas Rodas

Advisor:

Diana Alexandra García Orellana

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For my mommy Beatriz and my daddy Manuel who have been the main people in this journey, for their support, their love, their affection and for never leaving me alone at any moment, this is for them.

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ECUADOR AND THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT: FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS (2014- 2024)

ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the evolution that Ecuador's foreign policy had before the Israel-Palestine conflict during the period 2014-2024, examining the diplomatic positions in the governments of Rafael Correa, Lenín Moreno, Guillermo Lasso and Daniel Noboa, using a triangulation methodology that mixes literature review, survey and case study. It identifies the main internal and external factors that influenced the Ecuadorian position. The results show a transition from a principled foreign policy in solidarity with Palestine to a progressively pragmatic approach oriented towards economic interests and technological cooperation. The duality of Ecuador's international actions in the face of the conflict is evident. Changes of government, international pressure, the need for economic diversification and the influence of actors are factors that determine the configuration of foreign policy.

Keywords:

Ecuador, foreign policy, Israel-Palestine, government, conflict.

ECUADOR Y EL CONFLICTO ISRAEL- PALESTINA: ANÁLISIS DE LA POLÍTICA EXTERIOR (2014-2024)

RESUMEN

Esta tesis analiza la evolución que tuvo la política exterior del Ecuador ante el conflicto Israel-Palestina durante el periodo 2014-2024, examinando las posiciones diplomáticas en los gobiernos de Rafael Correa, Lenín Moreno, Guillermo Lasso y Daniel Noboa, utilizando una metodología de triangulación que mezcla la revisión literaria, la encuesta y el estudio de caso. Se identifica los principales factores tanto internos como externos que influyeron en la postura ecuatoriana. Los resultados de la misma presentan una transición desde una política exterior principista y solidaria con Palestina, hacia un enfoque progresivamente pragmático y orientado hacia intereses económicos y de cooperación tecnológica. Se evidencia la dualidad en la actuación internacional que tuvo Ecuador frente al conflicto. Los cambios de gobierno, la presión internacional, la necesidad de diversificación económica y la influencia de actores son factores que determinan la configuración de la política exterior.

Palabras claves:

Ecuador, política exterior, Israel-Palestina, gobierno

ECUADOR AND THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT: FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS (2014-2024)

1. Introduction

One of the factors that motivated the research of this topic is the complexity of how two neighboring countries, such as Israel and Palestine, have maintained a conflict that has lasted for many years, generating thousands of situations of instability in different areas, such as economic, political and international relations. In this context, it is relevant to analyze how a Latin American country such as Ecuador, which has a very particular and limited geopolitics in terms of global influence, can participate in conflicts of great magnitude. This allows us to evaluate whether its foreign policy has been active, passive or neutral.

The period from 2014 to 2024 has witnessed key moments in Ecuadorian foreign policy, with several changes of government that could have influenced its stance towards the Israel-Palestine conflict. It is interesting to explore how this stance has evolved in each presidential term.

The positions of Latin American countries, particularly Ecuador, have been little studied in comparison with more prominent actors such as the United States, the European Union or the powers of the region. Therefore, this research provides a valuable analysis of how Ecuador approaches issues such as human rights, self-determination and sovereignty when it comes to conflicts outside its domestic context.

Likewise, this study will allow a better understanding of the scope of Ecuadorian diplomacy, generating a broader academic interest, not only in international relations, but also in areas such as human rights and peace studies. Finally, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has a significant impact in terms of migration, security, human rights and economy, which has kept both sides in constant tension. Understanding the positions of international actors is fundamental to promoting more stable development and coherent foreign policies.

1.1 Objectives

1.1.1 General Objectives

To analyze the participation of the Ecuadorian State in foreign policy in the face of the Israel-Palestine conflict during the period 2014-2024, with the purpose of evaluating the diplomatic positions adopted, their international implications and the internal and external factors that have influenced its stance..

1.1.2 Specific Objectives

- a) To analyze Ecuador's foreign policy between 2014-2024 in the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- b) Identify the internal factors and international context that have influenced Ecuador's foreign policy stance on the conflict.
- c) To analyze how political and economic factors affected Ecuador's position on the Israel-Palestine conflict.

1.2 Theoretical framework

1.2.1 International Relations

International relations is considered a field of study that helps to explain and understand the dynamics of different international actors, be they states, international organizations, corporations and non-state groups. Thanks to the different theories that are created within this field, various analytical frameworks are provided for the understanding of global behavior and power structure in the international system. Theories function as conceptual maps that help to simplify the understanding of the globalized world, making it possible to identify patterns, propose solutions to international problems or make certain predictions. In the absence of a basic theory, the analysis of world politics becomes difficult and fragmented. There are three main groups: traditional theories, intermediate theories and critical theories. The first has been dominant for decades, with realism and liberalism. The second with constructivism and the English School with traditional and critical approaches. The third with Marxism, post-colonialism and feminism, challenging established ideas and seeking to add marginalized perspectives to the discipline. Theories evolve in response to changes in the international system. Various global situations such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, climate change, terrorism and globalization force the development of new theoretical approaches, leaving behind classical models (McGlinchey et al., 2017).

International interactions are those reciprocal actions between actors with autonomous power that affect the international context and in turn the internal structure, with the difference that in international relations processes of longer duration and structure are formed. It is a social system that is based on the interdependence of its members, sustained by links of mutual influence, therefore, international society could not exist without these interactions (Calduch, 1991) .

The economy is a determining factor in international relations, since economic and financial interests play a central role, as this can be seen as a symbol of power. Technological and scientific advances directly affect international relations as they can change power strategies, increase competition between nations and deepen inequality between states. Likewise, militarization is a key component, playing a role in defense spending, regional stability and armed conflicts. Ideology in international relations influences political decisions and the perception that states have of each other, with nationalism and religion hindering cooperation between countries. International relations are marked by a constantly changing world order, e.g. regional blocs, globalization and economic interdependence have redefined the structure of global power (Relaciones Internacionales I. Cuaderno de Trabajo – II Ciclo, n.d.).

1.2.2 International Relations and its theories

1.2.2.1 Realism in International Relations

We can take into account the different theories of international relations that maintain their approach and point of view. Realism in international relations is based on some premises that have been formulated by one of the main exponents of classical realism. Statocentrism is a central feature of classical realism therefore the state is the main actor in the international system and acts rationally. A state's foreign policy is based on the national interest, which can be defined in terms of power. However, the state is a historical construct, so it can be said that it could be replaced by another form of organization in the future. A Hobbesian view of the international system is adopted, where states exist in a kind of state of nature without a higher power to impose power. The behavior of states is not based on the struggle for power but on the anarchy of the international system that imposes restrictions and opportunities on states. It is also said that politics must be analyzed from a realistic and pragmatic point of view where there is no moral or ideological influence (Barbé, 1987).

Realism emphasizes power, conflict and competition as the main elements in the international system. There is no global authority above the states that can impose some kind of order. The way states act is based on their own interests and security, therefore, they prioritize their survival, leading to the attainment of military, political and economic power. The balance of power is essential therefore for a state to become hegemonic and maintain advantage or dawn to others, states try to balance power through certain agreements or alliances (McGlinchey et al., 2017).

Realism has certain variants, i.e. it is classified according to its argumentation. Classical realism states that international politics is influenced by selfish human nature and the quest for power, proposing to avoid war and chaos. Structural realism says that the international system is what determines the behavior of states, therefore, the behavior of these is according to their position in the hierarchy of global power. Offensive realism asserts that states seek regional hegemony in order to secure themselves in security matters and avoid threats. Finally, defensive realism states that a balance of power is sought, but not total domination (McGlinchey et al., 2017).

1.2.2.2 Liberalism in International Relations

Liberalism in relation to international relations can be analyzed under its theoretical foundations and its different currents. It is based on the possibility of a peaceful international order based on cooperation and international law. It maintains fundamental pillars such as individual freedom, human rationality, human rights, democracy and the limitation of state power. Unlike realism, it considers that conflict is not inevitable and that peace can be achieved through cooperation and interdependence. Three currents of liberalism were created; Liberal internationalism, which proposes that peace can be achieved through international trade, free movement of workers and capital and greater interdependence between states. It promotes a global authority to reduce anarchy and in turn foster cooperation; Idealism focuses on peace building through international institutions, which advocates democratization of the international system, peaceful settlement of disputes, collective security, protection of human rights and self-determination of peoples. Finally, institutional liberalism stands out for the emergence of new dynamics in international relations, such as international organizations, economic integration and complex interdependence (Abad Quintanal, 2019).

Liberalism is one of the main IR theories and can be considered as a great alternative to realism. Its main focus is on cooperation between states, the role of international entities and the stability of the global economy. In comparison with realism, here they consider that institutions, individuals and international organizations can avoid the negative consequences of the anarchic international system. Although states can be anarchic, they collaborate with each other and make agreements and multilateral bodies such as the UN, the WTO and the IMF. It is known that cooperation generates benefits for both, as opposed to the realist view where states only seek to outdo each other. It asserts that peace is achievable through trade and democracy, so in the theory of Democratic Peace it says that democratic states can rarely go to war with each other, because there are institutions that limit power and promote democracy. Global trade that connects states reduces the incentives for war, because disagreements or conflicts disrupt economic relations and affect national welfare. After World War II, a world order based on liberal institutions and norms was established (McGlinchey et al., 2017).

Like realism, liberalism maintains two variants. Classical liberalism states that individuals and markets must be protected from state interference to ensure their freedom. Institutional neoliberalism says that international institutions help reduce uncertainty and enable cooperation among states. Liberalism also underestimates the great military power and power struggles between states, and also relies too much on international institutions (McGlinchey et al., 2017).

1.2.2.3 Constructivism in International Relations

Constructivism is another current related to international relations, focusing on the fundamental role of ideas, identities and discourses in the social and political world, arguing that the international system is not a pre-existing objective reality, but a social construction. The international political reality is not something that is given or something that is created naturally, it is born or constructed by the actors through interaction. States do not respond to material structures, but in turn create meanings, norms and values that justify their actions. This theory mentions that states act according to who they believe they are and how they see others, rather than seeking power or wealth. State entities are central to defining foreign interests and policies, and also international norms are created and maintained by international actors through discourse and practice. Here states can transform their anarchic behavior and structures to cooperative ones through social interaction, and he explains that the rules of international law and diplomacy are constructed through language and narratives (Silva Velazco, 1998).

Constructivism is presented as a theory that challenges traditional concepts such as realism and liberalism. It sees states as rational actors who are motivated by their material interests. It asserts that social interests and the construction of meanings play a key role in international politics. Emphasizes that international reality is not an immutable objective fact, but is constructed behind norms, ideas and identities. It maintains an objective structure that challenges the realist view of international hierarchy. States and other international actors do not have fixed objectives, but these are constructed on the basis of their identities and relationships with other actors. Norms are created and consolidated when actors accept and internalize them. Constructivism holds that actors can transform the social structure through new practices and interpretations (McGlinchey et al., 2017).

1.2.3 National Identity

National identity is the sense of permanence that an individual has with a specific nation, based on common elements that unite a community, for example; language, religion, culture, and shared history. It is a concept that is not static, as it evolves over time according to historical, political and cultural processes. This identity is based on both objective elements such as territory, language, and shared history, and subjective elements such as the feeling of belonging or identification with national symbols. In some countries, national identity coincides with the state; in others, various identities coexist within the same state. The main characteristics of national identity include elements of cohesion that allow citizens to feel part of a political and social community. Governments use national symbols, civic education and historical narratives to strengthen national identity. Some models of national identity can foster inclusion of different groups, while others generate exclusion. It can be the basis for the development of nationalist movements seeking greater autonomy or independence. Globalization and supranational structures have weakened national identities in some countries, generating new forms of transnational identity (Vicente Canela & Moreno Ramos, 2009).

National identity, its concept as such, was born with the formation of nation-states in the modern age and consolidated when nationalist ideologies began to fade in the 19th century. Benedict Anderson points out that the nation is an “imagined community”, explaining that even if its members do not know each other personally, they maintain a shared idea of belonging and common destiny (Gayubas, 2025).

National identity in globalization has generated a crisis in the traditional concept of national identity, giving rise to transnational identities and new forms of belonging based on culture, religion or ideologies. Some authors argue that globalization has generated a loss of national identity, while others consider that it has given rise to new forms of nationalism in response to cultural homogenization (Vicente Canela & Moreno Ramos, 2009).

1.2.4 National Interest

National interest is a fundamental concept in the international relations and foreign policy of states. It can be defined as the defense and promotion of the essential objectives of a state in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. Its main function is to ensure the survival and security of the state and the well-being of its population. It is a fundamental guide to a country's foreign policy and diplomacy. It maintains three essential areas; the survival and security of the state i.e. the protection of the terrain and sovereignty, the pursuit of power and economic growth strengthens the country's influence in the international system, the defense of national values and culture for the protection of identity and traditions. States define their national interests according to their internal and external context, adapting to new threats and opportunities (Herrero de Castro, n.d.).

The national interest was born in thinkers such as Thucydides, Machiavelli, Richelieu, who said that the priority of the collective or common interests of a State should be emphasized over the particular or ideological interests. With the French Revolution and the consolidation of the Nation-State, the national interest becomes part of popular sovereignty and active welfare, displacing the personal interests of the monarchs. The national interest is not static, as it is affected by changes in the historical, political and social context according to the point of view of the decision-makers. Globalization and its attendant challenges have forced states to redefine and adapt to their national interests, sometimes opting for multilateral cooperation rather than unilateral action (Herrero de Castro, n.d.).

The perception of leaders and the image they maintain of the international environment directly influences the definition and defense of the national interest. Global economic and political integration has forced states to share decisions with international organizations. National interest is no longer focused only on territorial security, but on issues such as terrorism, climate change and cybersecurity. While realism continues to influence foreign policy, economic interdependence has led states to seek a balance between cooperation and competition (Herrero de Castro, n.d.).

1.2.5 Foreign policy

Foreign policy is a part of the general policy of a State, which is made up of a set of decisions and actions by which different objectives can be defined and at the same time be able to generate, modify or suspend relations with other actors in international society. This is not limited only to the actions of a government, but also includes other state organs and other factors that play a role in international relations. In turn, it includes not only state activities in an international context, but also decision-making and control of the results achieved. Foreign policy involves economic, informational, technological and humanitarian aspects; although diplomacy and warfare are key tools in international relations (Calduch, 1993).

Foreign policy is composed of various factors that directly influence the formulation and execution of international plans. Decision-making involves the implementation of concrete actions in the international arena. The political, economic and social structure of countries, ideologies, governmental entities and national actors, which are the internal factors, play a fundamental role in foreign policy. The relationship with other states, international organizations and the structure of the global system are external factors that also play a crucial role. The different States are the main protagonists of foreign policy, represented by the Executive Branch, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other governmental entities. Some interest groups and civil society, such as companies, governmental organizations, among others, influence the formulation of foreign policy. Organizations such as the United Nations, regional organizations and multilateral agreements also influence the decisions of the different States (Hazleton, 1988).

Foreign policy is not limited to the pursuit of power or international cooperation, but goes beyond that, reflecting deeper processes that go hand in hand with national identity, the values of the States and the way in which they act in the face of global scenarios. National security is the highest priority objective of foreign policy, but it does not speak of a deep approach, it does not only mean defense against military threats, on the contrary, it speaks of economic security, energy securities, food security and cybersecurity. States build their security not only through military force, but by creating strategic alliances, international agreements and promoting a stable global environment. On the other hand, this not only seeks material objectives, but a means

to define and project the identity of the state, the identity of a country. States seek not only internal stability, but also stability in their geopolitical environment (Pérez Gil, 2009).

1.2.6 Foreign policy of Ecuador

Ecuador became independent in 1830 after the dissolution of Gran Colombia. Its foreign policy was based on international recognition of the new state and territorial defense to establish clear borders with Peru and Colombia. It was a stage in which it was severely marked by its institutional weakness, economic dependence and border conflicts, since its presence in the international system was weak and it was dependent on powers such as Great Britain and France. Ecuador's foreign policy was marked by the border conflict with Peru, which was resolved in 1998 with the signing of the Peace of Itamaraty, where international protection was also sought. After several years, Ecuador promotes regional integration and adopts a more multilateralist and open trade vision, but also based on environmental issues, human rights and international cooperation (Serbin, 1996).

Ecuador's foreign policy in the National Plan for Good Living (PNBV), introduces an innovative and structural vision, based on sovereignty, regional integration and productive transformation and social justice. The foreign policy of Ecuador's PNBV seeks an approach of national sovereignty, preventing international agreements from limiting its internal decision-making capacity, a great example is Ecuador's exit from ICSID, to prevent foreign corporations from litigating against the state. This plan has broken the traditional paradigms of international relations, prioritizing the diversification of trade partners, the protection of migrants' rights, environmental defense, among others (Ordóñez Iturralde & Hinojosa Dazza, 2014).

According to Ecuador's National Foreign Policy Plan (PLANEX 2020), Ecuador's foreign policy has been designed with a deep, structured approach and based on certain national consensus. Since 1998, with the signing of peace agreements, Ecuador has been able to redefine its priorities in the international arena. With the end of the territorial dispute with Peru, Ecuador was able to diversify its foreign policy, prioritizing economic relations, multilateral cooperation, and strengthening its institutions. The creation of PLANEX 2020 was promoted, seeking a participatory process that would establish a foreign policy of the State rather than of the government. Seminars, workshops, and debates were held throughout the country with the aim of gathering information on the different interests of the various sectors. This plan seeks to ensure that Ecuador's foreign policy transcends political cycles and guarantees long-term stability and coherence. The plan has 10 central objectives: sovereignty and autonomy, protection of emigrants, human rights, integration into the global economy, national security, promotion of Ecuadorian culture, strengthening of cooperation for development, and active participation in multilateral organizations (Cultura, Emigración y Política Exterior, 2006).

Ecuadorian foreign policy has been marked by the interaction between globalization and the need for national autonomy. Ecuador has attempted to balance its integration into the global market with the defense of its economic and political sovereignty, but at the same time, a phenomenon of structural dependence has been identified, in which Ecuador has been dominated by major economic powers. Another key factor that Ecuador has faced is border security, drug trafficking, and migration, which directly influence its relations with neighboring countries such as Peru and Colombia. Ecuador's domestic and foreign policies must be analyzed together, as foreign policy decisions are directly influenced by internal political and economic dynamics. Finally, migration is another crucial factor in foreign policy. Ecuador has promoted policies to protect the rights of migrants, implementing migration diplomacy strategies that seek bilateral agreements to guarantee conditions for Ecuadorians abroad (Juan Muyulema-Allaica et al., n.d.).

2. State of the art

2.1 History of Israel and Palestina

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is one of the most complex and longest-lasting conflicts in the world. It involves territorial, religious, political, and social issues with roots dating back centuries. Palestine was inhabited for several centuries by various civilizations and was part of the Ottoman Empire until its dissolution after World War I.

1. **First Aliyah (1881-1903):** This was the first major wave of modern Jewish immigration to Palestine, which was then under Ottoman rule. The word Aliyah means "ascent" and refers to the act of emigrating to the land of Israel. One of the main causes of this first wave was anti-Semitic persecution in Russia and Eastern Europe. The main members of these movements were Jews from Russia, Romania, and Eastern Europe. It is estimated that between 25,000 and 35,000 Jews immigrated during this period. It should be noted that these people faced diseases such as malaria,

constantly changing climates, very high Ottoman taxes, and opposition from the local Arab population. This marked the beginning of the “New Yishuv,” or a new Jewish community. In the 19th century, a movement called Zionism emerged that sought to promote the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, while Palestinian Arabs created their national identity (Jewish Virtual Library, n.d.).

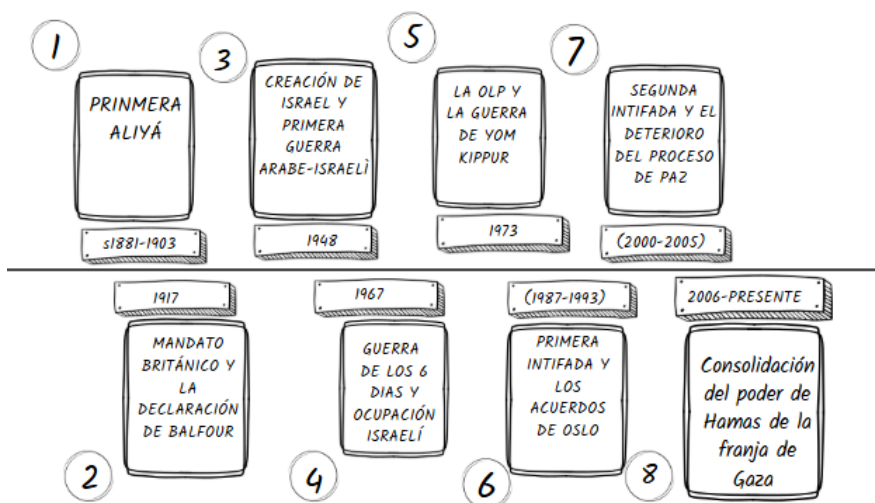
2. **British Mandate and the Balfour Declaration:** In 1917, the United Kingdom issued the Balfour Declaration, which supported the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine, triggering great tension with the local Arabs. After World War I, the League of Nations gave the United Kingdom control of Palestine as a colonial mandate. In the 1920s and 1930s, Jewish immigration increased, leading to conflict with the local Arab population. In 1947, the UN proposed a partition plan that would divide Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state, with Jerusalem under international administration. After World War I, the Ottoman Empire was defeated, and the United Kingdom took control of Palestine under a League of Nations mandate. The goal was to administer the territory until it was ready for independence, but they also committed to establishing a “Jewish national home” in the region. During the mandate, the British implemented policies that favored Jewish immigration and the purchase of land by Jews. This led to a significant increase in the Jewish population in the region, which created tensions with the local Arab population (Priego Moreno, 2017).
3. **Creation of Israel and the first Arab-Israeli war:** In 1948, Israel declared its independence, leading to the invasion of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. Israel won the war and managed to expand its territory beyond the UN partition plan. As a result, more than 750,000 Palestinians were expelled or fled, an event known as the Nakba (“catastrophe”). On May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the creation of the State of Israel in Tel Aviv, just before the British Mandate of Palestine expired. This declaration was based on the UN Partition Plan, approved on November 29, 1947, which divided Palestine into two states: one Jewish and one Arab. The United States recognized Israel de facto eleven minutes after the declaration, followed by the Soviet Union three days later. Other countries also extended their recognition in the following months. On the same day as the declaration of independence, five Arab armies (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq) invaded the new State of Israel to prevent the implementation of the Partition Plan. The Arab community had rejected the plan since its approval (Priego Moreno, 2017).
4. **Six-Days War and Israeli occupation:** In 1967, Israel launched a war against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, better known as the Six-Day War. Day 1 = June 5 Israel launched Operation Focus, a surprise attack that destroyed 90% of Egypt's air force in a few hours. Day 2-3: Jordan bombed Israeli Jerusalem but lost much of its territory. Day 4: Egypt suffered defeat and signed a ceasefire. Day 5-6: Israel attacks the Golan Heights in Syria, consolidating its victory. In this war, Israel occupies territories in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula. At that time, the UN demanded Israel's withdrawal with RESOLUTION 242. Main points: Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces; recognition of the sovereignty and independence of all states in the region; guarantee of free navigation through international waterways; a just solution to the problem of Palestinian refugees; creation of demilitarized zones; appointment of a UN representative. However, Israel maintained its occupation of the territories. (Resolución 242 (1967), 1967).
5. **The PLO and the YOM KIPPUR WAR (1973):** In 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was founded with the sole aim of fighting against Israeli occupation and invasion. In 1973, Egypt and Syria attacked Israel in the Yom Kippur War, also known as the October War, following the Six-Day War. Egypt and Syria launched an attack on October 6, the holiest day in Judaism. Egypt crossed the Suez Canal, while Syria attacked in the Golan Heights. After initial defeats, Israel received help from the US, but the USSR supported Egypt and Syria with weapons. On October 10, Israel counterattacked and managed to regain ground in the Golan Heights. In the Sinai, Israel crossed the Suez Canal and surrounded the Third Egyptian Army, but Israel managed to hold its ground. Egypt signed a peace agreement in 1979, regaining the Sinai. The PLO intensified its armed struggle against Israel, including attacks from Lebanon and Jordan (Maffeo, 2003).
6. **First Intifada and the Oslo Accords (1987-1993):** In 1987, the first Intifada broke out, a Palestinian popular uprising against Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. This resulted in peace negotiations, leading to the creation of the Oslo Accords in 1993. Israel and the PLO recognized each other, and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was created. After World War I, the Ottoman Empire was defeated, and the United Kingdom took control of Palestine under a mandate from the League of Nations. The goal was to administer the territory until it was ready for independence, but they also committed to establishing a “Jewish national home” in the region, according to the Balfour Declaration. During the mandate, the British implemented policies that

avored Jewish immigration and the purchase of land by Jews. This led to a significant increase in the Jewish population in the region, which created tensions with the local Arab population. In 1922, the United Kingdom separated the eastern part of the mandate, creating the Emirate of Transjordan, which later became Jordan. This decision excluded Transjordan from plans for a Jewish national home. The Balfour Declaration was a letter sent by British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to the leader of the British Jewish community, Lord Rothschild. In it, the British government expressed its support for the establishment of a “Jewish national home” in Palestine, provided that the rights of existing non-Jewish communities in the region were not prejudiced. The Balfour Declaration was seen as a crucial step towards the creation of the State of Israel. However, it also raised concerns among Palestinian Arabs, who feared losing their land and rights in the region. The declaration intensified tensions between Arabs and Jews in Palestine, contributing to the Arab revolts of 1929 and the Great Arab Revolt of 1936-1939. These events marked the beginning of a long conflict that continues to this day (Peco Yeste & Fernández Gómez, 2005).

7. **Second Intifada and the deterioration of the peace process (2000-2005):** On September 28, 2000, Ariel Sharon, then leader of the Israeli opposition, visited the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. This action was seen as a provocation by the Palestinian community, as it was interpreted as a challenge to their territorial sovereignty over this sacred site. The Camp David summit in July 2000, led by US President Bill Clinton, failed to resolve key issues such as the status of Jerusalem and the right of return for Palestinian refugees. This failure contributed to unrest and mistrust between the parties. The intifada began with violent protests and clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces. Israeli police responded with live fire, killing and wounding Palestinian protesters. The violence escalated with Palestinian suicide attacks and Israeli military operations. In 2000, peace negotiations in Camp David failed and the Second Intifada broke out, characterized by Palestinian attacks and Israeli reprisals. Israel built a wall marking the separation in the West Bank, which was a cause for heightened tensions. In 2005, Israel unilaterally withdrew from Gaza but maintained border, air, and sea control. (War in Gaza and current situation (2006-present)) In 2006, Hamas won the elections in Palestine, leading to an internal conflict with the PNA. Since then, Israel and Hamas have fought multiple wars in Gaza. The occupation of the West Bank, Israeli settlements, and the lack of a peace agreement continue to fuel the conflict (Peco Yeste & Fernández Gómez, 2005).
8. **Consolidación del poder de Hamas de la franja de Gaza (2006):** Las segundas elecciones legislativas en los territorios palestinos se celebraron el 25 de enero del 2006, las primeras que participaba Hamas desde 1996. Después de las elecciones, la tensión entre Hamas y Fatah aumentó viéndose reflejada en momentos de violencia y asesinatos entre ambos bandos. La administración pública de palestina tuvo un golpe grave de crisis financiera. A finales de este mismo año, la confrontación se volvió a intensificar, en donde se sentó las bases para el enfrentamiento del 2007, cuando Hamas tomó el control de la Franja de Gaza. Durante este año, se llevó a cabo varios ataques, bombardeos y enfrentamientos. La victoria electoral de Hamas alteró el equilibrio político interno palestino y provocó una crisis institucional y de seguridad.

Figure 1

Timeline of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict



2.1.1 Ecuador's foreign policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

2.1.1.1 Rafael Correa (2007-2017)

Ecuador's foreign policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during Rafael Correa's administration was characterized by strong support for the Palestinian cause. His stance was highly critical of Israel's military actions and defended international principles such as self-determination and respect for international law. In 2010, Ecuador recognized Palestine as a free and independent state, with the 1967 borders, thus joining other Latin American countries that took this decision during that period. This act was recognized historically and in turn as a gift to the Palestinian people, as it signified support for peace and international justice (Herrera-Vinelli, 2024).

During this period, Ecuador established diplomatic relations with Palestine and announced the opening of an embassy in Ramallah, the administrative capital of the Palestinian National Authority. The aim was to deepen bilateral ties and reaffirm Ecuador's commitment to the Palestinian cause. In 2014, with the Israeli military offensive in the Gaza Strip, the Ecuadorian government decided to strongly condemn Israel's actions, which were described as disproportionate, and demanded an immediate end to the aggression against the Palestinian people. On July 17 of the same year, Ecuador took a key action, recalling its ambassador to Israel in protest against the military attacks in Gaza, becoming the first country to take this measure. Rafael Correa suspended an official visit to Israel and Palestine, thus demonstrating his protest and solidarity with Palestine and the great need to denounce "the genocide that is being committed." (BBC News Mundo, 2014).

Ecuador aligned itself with other Latin American countries in condemning Israel at the UN and other multilateral forums. In 2015, Correa reaffirmed his commitment to the Palestinian cause, denouncing the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and illegal settlements. The relationship between Ecuador and Israel became severely strained following Ecuador's constant statements against the occupation. In 2017, Ecuador continued to support UN resolutions condemning Israeli settlements and promoting the Palestinian right to self-determination (Herrera-Vinelli, 2024).

Ecuador supported the two-state solution as a viable means of resolving the conflict and, in turn, backed the inclusion of Palestine as a non-member observer state in the UN (resolución A/RES/67/19 en 2012) (Herrera-Vinelli, 2024).

Ecuadorian politics took a turn during Correa's term, as it was framed by a much more autonomous and critical strategy toward the United States and the search for diversification of international alliances. At the same time, Correa sought to strengthen Ecuador's voice in multilateral forums and position himself alongside other progressive Latin American countries in defense of causes considered just. Humanitarian initiatives were also promoted to support the Palestinian people, and bilateral cooperation was fostered in various areas. Ecuador always maintained a very active agenda in international forums, where it denounced human rights violations in Palestine and demanded respect for international humanitarian law (Herrera-Vinelli, 2024).

2.1.1.2 Lenin Moreno 2017-2021

Under this administration, Ecuador strengthened its commercial, technological, and security ties with Israel. In 2018, diplomatic and commercial channels were reopened with the aim of seeking cooperation in innovation, security, and agriculture. Ecuador continued to vote in favor of Palestinian self-determination at the UN, but changed the radical tone of the previous government. A more neutral position was adopted in multilateral forums (Herrera-Vinelli, 2024).

Some of the points of Ecuador's position were: commitment to multilateralism, recognition of Palestine as an independent state, balance in international relations, and a humanitarian approach. It is therefore said that during this period, Ecuador maintained a balanced diplomatic stance, without resorting to drastic measures that could affect any of the parties involved. Its foreign policy reflected its support for international law and the peaceful resolution of conflicts (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2017–2021: Toda Una Vida, 2017).

After the distancing and criticism of Israel that occurred during Rafael Correa's administration, Moreno achieved a restoration and strengthened diplomatic and cooperative relations with Israel. Ecuador resumed the purchase of Israeli military equipment and also sent Ecuadorian soldiers to Israel for training in counterterrorism and cybersecurity. Cooperation was expanded in sectors such as technology, agriculture, and defense, where a much more active and diversified bilateral agenda was consolidated. Oswaldo Jarrín, who was Minister of Defense, played a key role in this rapprochement by facilitating agreements and joint training (Andrés Bermúdez Lievano, 2023).

2.1.1.3 Guillermo Lasso (2021-2023)

During his presidential term, Guillermo Lasso promoted pragmatic, democratic, and results-oriented diplomacy. His foreign policy prioritized balanced multilateral relations, strengthening strategic alliances, and greater trade openness that was not based on any ideology. This period saw several critical moments due to COVID-19, which led to the implementation of “vaccine diplomacy,” consisting of direct negotiations with various countries and laboratories. The most ambitious agenda in the country's history was also carried out during this period. Ecuador returned to the UN Security Council to demonstrate its commitment to peace and democratic principles. In the face of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it maintained a clear position in defense of democracy, peace, and the rejection of terrorism, with a focus on respect for international law and human rights (Lasso Mendoza, 2023).

On May 11, 2022, Guillermo Lasso will be commemorated as the first Ecuadorian president to make an official visit to Israel, an event that has been described as historic. During this visit, President Lasso and Israeli President Isaac Herzog deepened bilateral cooperation in highly strategic areas such as security, innovation, technology, agriculture, and trade. A Memorandum of Understanding for Economic and Commercial Cooperation was signed, paving the way for future negotiations on a free trade agreement (Herrera-Vinelli, 2024).

After the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, the government issued a statement condemning the terrorist attacks, expressing solidarity with the Israeli civilian population, and demanding the release of hostages. Lasso arranged a humanitarian flight that helped more than 100 Ecuadorians leave Israel amid the conflict. On October 31, 2023, Israel bombed the Jabalia refugee camp in Gaza. Ecuador expressed “deep concern” and condolences to all civilian victims and recalled that the right to self-defense must be exercised in accordance with international law. This government considered an “immediate, lasting, and fully respected humanitarian ceasefire” in Gaza to be essential and reaffirmed its commitment to a two-state solution within the 1967 borders, supporting UN efforts to achieve a just and lasting solution. Lasso did not break recognition of Palestine as a free and independent state, nor did he break with the policy of supporting the two-state solution. However, he took a more pragmatic and strategic approach toward Israel, especially in the areas of security and technology (Herrera-Vinelli, 2024).

2.1.1.4 Daniel Noboa (2023-2024)

Daniel Noboa assumed the presidency following the intensification of the conflict with Hamas attacks on Israel. He inherited some policies and ongoing actions initiated by Guillermo Lasso, such as the negotiation of a bilateral agreement with Israel. His government, like the previous one, is characterized by pragmatism, continuity with the previous government, and an emphasis on bilateral strategic relations, particularly with Israel. During this period, Ecuador has maintained an institutional stance that respects international law and the defense of human rights, mainly through its participation in the UN (Woolfson Rodriguez, 2018).

During this administration, one of the first and most notable acts was the appointment of Vice President Verónica Abad as ambassador to Israel and “collaborator for peace” with permanent residence in Tel Aviv. This presidential decree underscored Ecuador's commitment to international peace and stability in the region, although this decision was interpreted as an internal political strategy to distance the vice president from the national stage (Swissinfo, 2023).

The Noboa administration is continuing and prioritizing the negotiation of a bilateral circular migration agreement with Israel that was initiated by Guillermo Lasso, which allows up to 25,000 Ecuadorians to work temporarily in the Israeli agricultural sector and was defined as one of the strategic projects for 2024. The great importance of this agreement led the Ecuadorian Foreign Ministry to instruct Ambassador Abad to avoid public statements that could affect the negotiations, which have demonstrated the government's keen interest in finalizing this cooperation instrument. Since the beginning of this term, the Ecuadorian Foreign Ministry has shown great caution and refrained from making official statements on the intensification of the conflict in Gaza and Israeli military actions. However, Ecuador maintained its traditional principles. In April 2024, in response to Iran's attack on Israel, the president publicly expressed his support for Israel and, in turn, expressed great concern about the serious situation in the Middle East, reiterating his commitment to peace and the protection of Ecuadorian citizens residing in the region (Swissinfo, 2024).

3. Methods

3.1 Triangulation

This research adopts a methodological triangulation approach. This strategy involves using multiple sources to ensure the rigor of the research. Triangulation will be used for data collection and analysis. It also helps to improve understanding of the topic and facilitates comprehension. To better understand what triangulation is, the following chart details the methodologies used: literature review, case studies, and semi-structured interviews (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Figure 2

Triangulation



3.1.1 Literary review

A literature review is a process of gathering and summarizing materials that have been recently published on a specific topic. The level of detail and systematization can vary. A good literature review should explicitly detail how the materials were chosen and include an analysis of them. In addition, it evaluates the quality and levels of the studies reviewed and allows for the creation or proposal of new models or interpretations (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

3.1.2 Case study

The case study is a very different process from the experimental one. It is based on in-depth and very detailed research of a “case” which may be a person, an event, a group, an institution, processes, among others. The aim is not to generalize statistically, but to gain an understanding of what is being investigated, within the context. The design of the case study can vary, being either more flexible or more structured, always depending on the purpose (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This research presents a case study of Ecuador's foreign policy in the face of complex conflicts, focusing on the ideologies and behaviors of different governments.

3.1.3 Interview

An interview is a planned conversation in which the interviewer's objective is to obtain information from the interviewee. There are different types: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and finally unstructured interviews. The first type contains predefined questions that follow the same order and are written in a fixed format. The second type follows a guide of topics with flexibility in the order and wording of the questions. Finally, the unstructured interview is a broad, free-flowing conversation within the topic area. This type is used more in qualitative approaches due to its flexibility in investigating beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, or facts (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This research used semi-structured interviews with two individuals who are familiar with the subject of conflict.

4. Results

4.1 Comparative matrix of the different governments of Ecuador between 2014-2024

Table 1
Comparison of different governments' responses to the conflict.

President	Stance on the conflict	Relevant cooperation	Ideology and diplomatic orientation
Rafael Correa	Criticism of Israel. Officially recognized the Palestinian State in 2010. Publicly denounced the "genocide" in Gaza. Condemned Israeli military incursions and supported the Palestinian cause in international forums.	The embassy in Ramallah is opened. It provided diplomatic support to Palestine. The ambassador to Israel is withdrawn while offensives are taking place in Gaza. It promotes pro-Palestinian resolutions at the UN.	A left-wing policy. Progressive ideology. Based on multilateralism, with a focus on human rights. Maintains pro-Palestinian activism. Defends the self-determination of peoples.
Lenín Moreno	A very pragmatic stance is adopted, and a rapprochement with Israel is established. There are no public confrontations over the conflict. Bilateral cooperation and security are prioritized.	Accepts assistance in the area of security and technology provided by Israel. Preparation and training of Ecuadorian forces in Israel. Strengthening of commercial and technological ties.	With a liberal right-wing policy. A major shift towards a policy of international cooperation and pragmatism. Ideological activism is ruled out and the focus is on concrete results.
Guillermo Lasso	His stance and approach are much more balanced. He condemns Hamas' attacks. He supports the two-state solution. He remains concerned about civilians and calls for a humanitarian ceasefire. He is working to strengthen bilateral relations with Israel.	Creation of a memorandum of understanding for economic and commercial cooperation. Humanitarian flight for Ecuadorians residing in Israel. First official visit of the President of Ecuador to Israel. Opening of a trade office in Jerusalem.	It maintains multilateralism and diplomatic traditionalism. It respects human rights and seeks balance in foreign policy and strategic cooperation.
Daniel Noboa	It maintains its support for Israel's right to defend itself and therefore does not condemn Israeli actions in Gaza. It prioritizes security cooperation and has appointed an ambassador to Israel to promote peace, but without making any critical statements about Israel.	Negotiations are underway for a bilateral agreement on circular migration. Cooperation on security and intelligence is being provided. The vice president has been appointed ambassador to Israel to fulfill her role as a "partner for peace."	A right-wing liberal policy. It maintains a focus on security and strategic cooperation with Israel, while also taking a pragmatic approach. It is less active publicly on the Palestinian issue and continues bilateral relations.

4.2 Additional description of the data in the matrix

During Rafael Correa's administration, Ecuador took a clearly pro-Palestinian stance and confronted Israel, making this the period with the most activism in defense of Palestine. Correa officially recognized Palestine as an Observer State in the United Nations General Assembly and condemned Israeli military operations, calling them "genocide" during the 2014 offensive in Gaza. The stance taken during this administration demonstrated ideological alignment with progressive Latin American governments and a firm defense of self-determination and human rights, thus positioning Ecuador as a highly critical actor vis-à-vis Israeli policies in the Palestinian territories.

During Moreno's administration, there was a very pragmatic shift in Ecuadorian foreign policy, while maintaining recognition of Palestine and support for a two-state solution. This government also promoted a significant rapprochement with Israel, establishing bilateral relations in strategic areas such as security, technology, and military cooperation. These policies marked a transition toward greater balance and less ideology, seeking to diversify alliances and respond to economic and strategic interests in a regional and global context of political reconfiguration.

On the other hand, under the Lasso and Noboa administrations, bilateral cooperation with Israel deepened, especially in the areas of defense, security, technology, and labor migration, while maintaining recognition of Palestine and support for the two-state solution. However, Noboa was characterized by his explicit support for Israel and his resistance to publicly condemning Israeli military actions in Gaza, where he showed a deeper alignment with the United States and Israel. Ecuador continued to adhere to United Nations resolutions, combining economic pragmatism with a diplomatic discourse of balance.

5. Discussion

Applied realism

Identity within realism considers the pursuit of power to be secondary, as we can see in the governments of Lasso and Noboa, which prioritized the national interest under economic agreements, for example, the circular migration agreement with Israel, which was based on ideological principles, thus demonstrating a pragmatism aligned with realist theories of power and security. A very important piece of information is the memorandum of cooperation with Israel that was signed in 2022, which sought access to agricultural technological development and markets, maintaining a focus on tangible benefits. Lasso did not revoke the recognition, but prioritized relations with Israel, which diminished its symbolic impact. He made a historic visit to Israel, creating the memorandum for free trade and opening the innovation office in Jerusalem. Lasso condemned Hamas in 2023, but kept his criticism of the Israeli bombings in Jabalia limited. Circular migration began. He subordinated self-determination to commercial interests and alignment with the West. His ideological base was neoliberalism and trade liberalization as the main axis of foreign policy, therefore prioritizing alliances with the West and the US. Lasso made the first presidential visit to Israel and agreements were reached on agriculture, security, and technology. The Innovation Office was opened in Jerusalem, which was interpreted as tacit recognition of the city as the Israeli capital. His paradigm was the subordination of historical principles to economic interests, with a strategy called “More Ecuador in the world,” which also attracted Israeli investment.

The national interest in realism defines it as the survival and maximization of power, with the Lasso and Noboa administrations being clear examples. Like the Lasso administration, Noboa did not revoke recognition, but he intensified relations with Israel. He appointed the vice president as ambassador to Israel, which was interpreted as a political gesture and a sign of internal distancing. He avoided bilateral statements but had votes in favor of UN humanitarian corridors. He continued with the circular migration agreement, which was based on reducing unemployment. He also prioritized commercial interests and alignment with the West. He maintained a strategic silence in the face of violations of international law in Gaza. His paradigm was “pragmatism without principles,” which prioritized immediate economic benefits..

Applied liberalism

Identity within realism tells us that it is important to understand the framework of shared values and international cooperation. Ecuador has always maintained its full support for UN resolutions, even under some pro-Israeli governments, where its commitment to international norms is clearly evident, demonstrating a key liberal principle. A clear example is the government of Lenín Moreno, which maintained diplomatic relations, but did not make any symbolic or large-scale gestures. During this period, military and technological cooperation was reactivated, thus avoiding confrontation. This president remained neutral in votes, without aligning himself with critical blocs, thus avoiding explicit condemnations of Israel, but maintaining Palestinian recognition. Agreements on agriculture and security were signed with Israel. This was a major shift towards pragmatism, promoting the diversification of partners. This marked a distancing from Correísmo and a rapprochement with global actors such as the United States and the European Union, seeking a geopolitical balance to diversify alliances. Moreno made a diplomatic visit to the West Bank, where he signed five cooperation agreements with Palestine. His diplomatic paradigm was technical cooperation over any ideological stance, thus prioritizing investment in technology and security.

Applied constructivism

Identity in constructivism tells us that it is a social construct that guides foreign policy, which we can see in Correa's progressive defense of Palestine. He was also a pioneer in Latin America in recognizing Palestine. This caused a temporary rupture and the suspension of official visits and arms purchases. He explicitly condemns Israel at the UN. There was a focus on humanitarian aid to Palestine, but without agreements with Israel. This government maintained its progressive principles and alignment with an ideological context based on anti-imperialism and, above all, the defense of national sovereignty, as well as integration into progressive regional blocs such as ALBA and UNASUR. It prioritized human rights and critical multilateralism. Its foreign policy paradigm was “principled,” aligned with progressive Latin American governments such as Venezuela and Bolivia. Tensions with pro-Israeli business sectors were notorious, as was the limited impact on trade agreements with the Middle East. Ecuador's national identity, based on the principles of sovereignty and multilateralism, influenced Correa's stance. A clear example of this is the recognition of Palestine in 2010, which reflected an anti-imperialist narrative that was clearly aligned with the

rhetoric of the Citizen Revolution. Another clear example is the condemnation of the “genocide” that took place in Gaza in 2014, which was linked to a historical identity of defending oppressed peoples, where progressive Latin American discourses were expressed. National interest within constructivism tells us about the interpretation of the results of ideas and social norms, visible in Correa's alignment.

Table 2
Comparison table according to theories

Teoría	Rafael Correa	Lenín Moreno	Guillermo Lasso	Daniel Noboa
Realismo	Defense of sovereignty, break with Israel.	Geopolitical balance, diversification of alliances.	Profit maximization, strategic alliance.	Priority of economic interests and military cooperation.
Liberalismo	Support for the UN, critical multilateralism.	Technical cooperation, neutrality.	Formal support for the UN, economic and technological cooperation.	Respect for UN norms, diplomatic silence in conflicts.
Constructivismo	Progressive identity, sovereignty, anti-imperialism.	Pragmatic identity.	Neoliberal identity, trade liberalization.	Pragmatic identity.

6. Conclusion

An analysis of Ecuador's involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (2014-2024) reveals a marked evolution marked by tensions between historical diplomatic principles and economic and geopolitical pragmatism. During this decade, Ecuador moved from an ideological stance under the Correa administration to a more pragmatic position under the Lasso and Noboa administrations, which focused on trade and migration issues. However, Ecuador continued to express its support for Palestine in multilateral forums. The international implications included the strengthening of alliances with progressive Latin American actors between 2014 and 2017 against strategic rapprochement with the West and Israel between 2021 and 2024. The duality was maintained in multilateral forums with pro-Palestinian votes in the UN versus bilateral actions favoring Israel.

During Rafael Correa's term, an ideology of critical multilateralism was maintained. With Lenín Moreno, there was pragmatic neutrality and geopolitical balance. During Guillermo Lasso's presidency, there has been a pro-Israel alignment while maintaining economic priorities. Finally, with Daniel Noboa, we are faced with extreme pragmatism. In terms of internal factors, we have the government ideology, which is the transition from left-wing to neoliberal governments. We also have economic interests that created agreements with Israel in areas such as agriculture, migration, and security. Finally, there is pressure from powerful groups such as pro-Israel business and military lobbies on strategic decisions. External factors include the pressure exerted by the United States, especially on the Lasso government, due to its alignment with its geopolitical agenda in the Middle East.

Regional circumstances are causing the collapse of 21st-century socialism in Latin America, with the fall of governments that were aligned with progressive ideology, which had a notable effect on Ecuadorian foreign policy. During Correa's administration, Ecuador aligned itself with this progressive bloc, adopting a critical stance toward Israel and recognizing Palestine as a state. However, with the arrival of Moreno and then Lasso, a clear shift toward pragmatism became evident, prioritizing strategic relations with Israel and eliminating the principled approach to human rights and self-determination. This reflects a regional trend: the loss of ideological cohesion in Latin America, which weakened the creation of a single united bloc on international issues. Under the Lasso and Noboa administrations, a more fragmented policy was pursued, maintaining pro-Palestinian support while deepening bilateral agreements with Israel. This dualism clearly shows that there is no strong progressive bloc, and therefore domestic economic and geopolitical interests take precedence over historical principles.

The intensification of the conflict in Gaza created an ethical and political dilemma for Ecuador. A rift emerged between the government's official position and the demands of the public, as social media amplified the visibility of the humanitarian crisis, leading to calls for an end to the aggression and greater solidarity with Palestine. The Noboa administration prioritized the migration agreement with Israel and avoided explicitly condemning Israeli military actions, despite voting in favor of humanitarian resolutions in the UN Security Council.

This study demonstrates that foreign policy is not static, but rather maintains different internal and external circumstances. The transition from Correa to Noboa shows how changes in government redefine priorities, from anti-imperialism to economic pragmatism. However, there are three constants: formal

recognition of Palestine, support for a two-state solution, and the influence of external factors on decision-making. This analysis can serve as a basis for future research on aspects such as the impact of the migration agreement in the context of the country's future critical capacity, studying the role of new generations and governments in redefining foreign policy, or exploring how technological and military dependence on Israel could limit the autonomy of Ecuadorian diplomacy. This paper lays the groundwork for understanding how countries such as Ecuador navigate complex international conflicts, balancing ethical principles and teaching us a key lesson: politics is a mirror of national identities in constant transformation, where ideology and pragmatism are in constant battle.

7. References

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