

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

By Ariela Ruiz Caro

20.02.2024

Russia twisted the arm of the U.S. and thwarted Ecuador's arms delivery to Ukraine



Sources: The Rocket to the Moon

Russia buys one-fifth of Ecuador's banana production.

On January 10, the President of Ecuador, Daniel Noboa, announced that his country would hand over disused Russian military machinery to the United States in exchange for \$200 million in modern equipment from that country. Such weaponry would then be sent to Ukraine for defense, according to U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs Kevin Sullivan.

Russian authorities immediately denounced the president's announcement as violating the military treaty signed in 2008 that prevents buyers of weapons from Russia from selling or donating them to other countries without Moscow's authorization. The economic retaliation adopted by Russia was not long in coming: banana imports from five major

companies were suspended, resulting in Noboa retracting Russian arms sales on Friday and resuming trade in that fruit.

Ecuador's Russian weapons for Ukraine

Although President Noboa and Foreign Minister Gabriela Sommerfeld considered the sale of the weapons – which they called scrap metal – to be legal, from the point of view of international law it was a violation of the bilateral military-technical cooperation agreement signed in 2008 between the two countries. Article four states that the transfer of military equipment to a third party, obtained as a result of the cooperation agreement, is inadmissible without the prior written consent of Russia.

Noboa had been announcing since the end of 2023 the decision to carry out an unusual exchange of military equipment with the United States. The Ecuadorian President met with his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodimir Zelenski, during the presidential inauguration of Javier Milei on December 10, where they discussed the possibility of expanding bilateral cooperation, particularly in the field of security.

With the sale of Ecuadorian military equipment to the United States officially announced, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova warned Ecuador that it would violate its international obligations, which could have negative consequences for future bilateral interaction. Zakharova reiterated that the provisions of the contracts specify that the equipment should not be transferred to third parties without the consent of the Russian side.

That is why Undersecretary Sullivan had to say in an interview on the Teleamazonas channel, in the framework of a visit to Ecuador to expand bilateral relations, that the sale was being considered by the Ecuadorian government. But he added: "We are very happy that Ecuador is supporting the Ukrainian government in its effort to defend its territory."

The background to the sale of Russian weapons to Ukraine, via the United States, dates back to January of last year when Laura Richardson, the head of the U.S. Southern Command, suggested that Latin American countries donate Russian equipment to Ukraine (because it is the one that Ukrainian soldiers know best) and thus replace it with American material. But none of the nine countries (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela) that have Russian weapons sold or donated them to Ukraine, despite pressure from the United States and Germany.

Despite the diplomatic tension generated, the Ecuadorian head of state confirmed that the sale of the weapons would be carried out "in any case" and Foreign Minister Sommerfeld affirmed that it was not an illegal process, since it was non-operational military equipment.

Russia then suspended imports of Ecuadorian bananas and carnations, a few days before the celebration of Valentine's Day.

The Humpback Fly

In these circumstances, the Russian phytosanitary inspection (*Rosselkhoznadzor*) requested the suspension of exports from five Ecuadorian banana companies as of February 5: Agzulasa, Don Carlos Fruit, Agroaereo Fruit Export, the Gold Agricultural Production Association and the Southern Banana Marketer, due to the alleged presence of the humpback fly (*Megaselia scalaris*) in several shipments. which was considered a warning to Quito.

The Phytosanitary and Zoosanitary Regulation and Control Agency (Agrocalidad) pointed out that the humpback fly is not an agricultural pest of bananas and does not attack or affect crops, but announced that they would strengthen controls in the production and export chain. Ecuador allocates almost 23% of its exports to Russia.

A few days later, the total restriction of the import of Ecuadorian carnations was also ordered, because according to the Russian phytosanitary agency, pests had been detected in the flowers. In addition, the Netherlands, Germany, Latvia and Lithuania were also asked to prevent the entry of carnations from Ecuador from 9 February, precisely when exports are increasing. The Russian authorities warned these countries that if they did not restrict the entry of carnations, restrictive measures would be applied against other types of flowers from those territories.

Both measures came just days after Ecuador's President Daniel Noboa described Russian military equipment that he pledged to deliver to the United States to receive new equipment as "scrap metal." It should be noted that the Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment and Fisheries reported that meetings were taking place at the highest level, which would allow the country to take a position on the significant economic impact.

The Ecuadorian Federation of Exporters (Fedexpor) said in a statement that the products in the exportable offer did meet the sanitary and phytosanitary quality standards required in their destination markets and that they were in direct contact with the national authorities to overcome the impasse. Farmers in Ecuador, the world's fifth-largest banana producer, were confident that the Russian ban would not last. The country earns about 3,500 million dollars with the sale of this product. Russia buys more than one-fifth of all annual production.

For a few days, President Noboa defended his country's right to transfer these weapons to Ukraine via the United States. But he couldn't do it. Not only were the terms of the 2008 military cooperation agreement being violated, but domestic pressure from exporters was very strong to unblock the Russian banana and carnation market.

Surrender

On Friday, February 16, the Ecuadorian government abandoned its intention to carry out the operation of delivering disused Russian war material in exchange for more modern equipment from the United States. The news was confirmed by the Russian ambassador to Ecuador, Vladimir Sprinchán. The Russian diplomat said that "given its neutral status and permanent membership in the UN, Ecuador should not allow itself to be dragged into a conflict by any of the parties involved." According to Sprinchán, Ecuador should not send weapons and ammunition to conflict zones, and contribute to the peaceful resolution of disputes through diplomatic measures.

The ban on the entry of the five banana exporters due to the alleged presence of the humpback fly in some shipments had been lifted shortly before the announcement by the Russian ambassador in Quito, who had previously met with President Noboa and Foreign Minister Sommerfeld.

As reported by various news agencies, both the Russian ambassador in Quito and the Ecuadorian foreign minister pointed out that both issues – the lifting of the ban on the entry of bananas and carnations and the suspension of the sale of Russian military weapons to the United States to be delivered to Ukraine – are not related and that the banana issue comes from alerts and concerns of the Russian phytosanitary agency that for months and years has not been in the hands of the Russian plantation agency. had been duly dealt with by the Ecuadorian authorities.

Thus, the National Federation of Banana Growers (Fenabe) breathed a sigh of relief and welcomed Russia's decision to lift the ban on banana imports. The president of Fenabe, Franklin Torres, pointed out that exports generate about 757 million dollars a year and that trying to locate that amount in other markets in the medium or short term was impossible, so he considered the need for the country to settle the situation so as not to damage bilateral trade relations. For its part, the Agency for the Regulation and Control of Phytosanitary and Animal Health (Agrocalidad), reiterated that the humpback fly is not an agricultural pest, but decided to strengthen the surveillance and control of shipments to that country. Undoubtedly, a tug-of-war in which Russia twisted the arm of the United States.

Source: <https://www.elcohetealaluna.com/el-poder-de-las-bananas/>

Rebellion 19.02.2024