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## Grupo de Puebla rejects sentencing of former Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa

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Buenos Aires, April 9 (RHC)-- The Grupo de Puebla demanded an end to the judicial persecution of political leaders in Latin America after Ecuadorian courts imposed a prison sentence on former President Rafael Correa.

The Latin American leader was sentenced to eight years in prison on alleged corruption charges. The decision includes the withdrawal of his political rights for 25 years.

"Ecuador's reactionary political sectors have increased their attacks on Correa under the protection of the judicial system," the organization, which is made up of political representatives from around the world, said in a statement.

The former president is a victim of "lawfare," an illegal mechanism used by right-wing politicians to disqualify new candidacies of leftist leaders, according to the Puebla Group.

The statement by the Grupo de Puebla -- a coalition of progressive countries in Latin America -- stressed that "the unjust decision has not prevented the former president from continuing to lead the polls with a view to next year's elections.

The group pointed out that the Rafael Correa trial is not isolated. It happened previously with former Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil, and with the current Vice President of Argentina, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner.