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**Ecuadorian Minister Warns of Opposition Destabilization Tactics**

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?Ecuador's Secretary of Policy Management, Viviana Bonilla, has warned that the aim of the violence on an opposition march last week was to destabilize the government.

The march, organized by leaders of the United Workers' Front (FUT) and their allies who are predominantly interested in maintaining their positions of power, said Bonilla to the El Telegrafo newspaper.

She added that they apparently see their interests threatened by the advances made in the country, such as the expansion of the country's public services.

Bonilla explained that, in contrast, the pro-government march on the same day was a celebration of the huge social advances underway. She said it was attended by workers, farmers, and indigenous people from across the country who had important interests to defend. Bonilla cited the minimum wage, as one example, which under Correa has risen from US\$80 to US\$340.

Bonilla also explained that certain opposition leaders are opposed to education reforms designed to improve the quality of education. "We don't want to go back to the past," she said, "when there were no education or health programs, when we were the most backward country in the region in the field of education," she explained.

Previously, Ecuador suffered from low quality, often private, education system that included, for

example, so called garage universities where people would get qualifications, without any scrutiny of their quality, as long as they could pay. The Correa government has shut many of these

The politician also rejected false claims that the government was siding with business over ordinary Ecuadorians. "Let's not forget the shape the country was in regarding oil contracts. Let's not forget that it was the government who renegotiated these contracts and completely changed the policies and power relations. In the past, the transnationals took 80 percent of the oil income out of the country and only 20 percent remained," she explained adding that "Now it's just the opposite. We have a sovereign country that demands respect for our sovereignty and respect for Ecuador's people. Now 80 percent of the oil income stays in the country and only 20 percent goes to the transnationals."

Despite differences, Bonilla said the government is always willing to enter into dialogue with the opposition as long as avoids the kind of behaviour witnessed recently.

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