

## 168 pre-Columbian pieces seized in Miami will return to the country

Written by Catherine Lara

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The pieces, associated with the Valdivia culture, come from a trafficking network of archaeological objects discovered two years ago by the FBI.

Doris Solís, Coordinating Minister of Natural and Cultural Heritage, commented that support to seizure operations is part of the budget and the organization`s agenda, under the Cultural Emergency Decree. In fact, as noted by the archaeologist Alexandra Yepez, this type of traffic is very common, especially to and from countries like France, Spain, Germany and Norway.

Solis also announced the return of 336 pieces located in Argentina, while the forum on antiquities smuggling organized by the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar will continue today and tomorrow.

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Ecuador recovers 168 archeological pieces

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The Ecuadorian Institute of Cultural Heritage (INPC) and the Interpol managed to recover 168 archaeological pieces that correspond to the rich heritage of Ecuador. The objects were due to arrive last night in Guayaquil.

The shipment that comes from Miami (USA) consists of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic ceramic figurines, shell beads and stone spondylus necklaces. There are also bowls, pots, stamps or pintaderas, and ceramic bottles. In addition, whistles, flutes and containers of lime.

This is according to a report by archaeologist José Chancay, INPC technician, sent to perform the task. The pieces come from nine pre-Columbian cultural societies settled in Ecuador. Among them are Valdivia, Chorrera, Guangala and La Tolita, Jama Coaque and Bahia.

The recovery of archeology is managed since 2005. The office of the International Council of Museums (ICOM, for its acronym in English) gave the alert to Interpol headquarters in Lyon, France, on the winning bid for a batch of over 600 pre-Columbian Ecuadorian pieces. In that year, after investigations, it was determined the existence of 168 of them in the United States.

Interpol and the INPC will handled the repatriation of archaeological this set. This version was released through a statement made by the Ecuadorian entity.

The pieces were due to arrive, according to Fernando Salme, from the Department of the Coordinating Ministry of Cultural and Natural Heritage, last night at 22:30, in a flight from Miami. There was a delay, as these were supposed to arrive at 13:10 yesterday. The recovered objects would be available to the INPC.