

Ojai company, Ninakuru, increases investment in Ecuadorian artisans

Ninakuru, an accessories brand in Ojai, is increasing its business with Ecuadorian artists during Ecuador's economic unrest.

Founded in 2014, Ninakuru designs and distributes handmade collections of Ecuadorian Panama hats, wool hats, leather and straw bags, and other accessories. All Ninakuru products are made from 100 percent ethically sourced and sustainably harvested materials.

Ecuadorian President Lenín Moreno ordered a 60-day state of emergency this month when fuel subsidies, in effect for decades, were repealed as part of an austerity plan required under an agreement with the International Monetary Fund to help Ecuador stabilize its finances.

Angered by the repeal of the subsidies, strikes and violent protests by transport workers, textile workers, farmers and others forced many regions of Ecuador to come to a standstill.

Rather than halting purchase orders, as many companies doing business with Ecuador have done, Ninakuru is continuing to keep its workers and artisans fully employed. By increasing order requests for Ninakuru's handmade Ecuadorian Pana-



Submitted photo

Artisans in Ecuador

ma hats, wool hats, and women's clothing and accessories, Ninakuru is striving to counter the economic paralysis Ecuador faces currently.

"While many companies are pulling investment and withholding new business in Ecuador during these demonstrations and unrest, Ninakuru is stepping up to the plate and supporting the workers and artisans who have lost upwards of 95 percent of their business this week," said Jennifer Moray of Ojai, Ninakuru's founder.

"By increasing demand from these very talented workers and artisans, we continue to provide purpose and a steady income for them

during these vulnerable economic times.

"We don't have the power to reverse the decision to repeal fuel subsidies made by President Moreno, but we certainly have control over ensuring our artisans continue working on their masterful trades handed down over generations, and they continue to receive reliable income," Moray added.

"It's times like these where the skills of the workers need to be especially valued, and we all support the art of handmade."

For more information, visit ninakuru.com; email cservice@ninakuru.com.