

PRESS KIT

Ivonne A. Baki

*Candidate for Secretary-General
of the United Nations*

*“A promise made in a basement in Beirut.
A life spent keeping it.”*

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Foundations document – **For team review**

Contents

1. Fact sheet	3
2. Boilerplate	3
3. Short biography (100 words)	4
4. Long biography (500 words)	4
5. The story	5
6. Career milestones	6
7. Signature quotes & pull lines	7
8. Key talking points (Q&A)	7
9. Documentary – about the film	9
10. Media assets – what will be available	9
11. Media contact	9

1. Fact sheet

Full name	Ivonne A. Baki (Ivonne Leila Juez Abuchacra de Baki)
Born	Beirut, Lebanon – raised between Lebanon and Ecuador
Nationality	Ecuadorian (Lebanese heritage; naturalized citizen since childhood)
Languages	Spanish, Arabic, English, French, German
Family	Mother of three
Historic first	First woman ever put forward for the office of UN Secretary-General
Public Service	Served six Ecuadorian presidents (Mahuad, Noboa, Gutiérrez, Correa, Moreno, Lasso) across every major political tradition
Nomination	TBC
Current role	Global diplomat and advisor; Ambassador of Ecuador to the United States (twice); to France; resident Ambassador to Qatar with non-resident accreditation to Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Jordan, Oman, and Syria; Minister of Foreign Trade; President of the Andean Parliament
Known for	Cenepa War peace process (1998), Yasuní-ITT climate initiative, Galapagos Conservancy Foundation, Arab-South American Summit (ASPA)
Education	Université Paris-Sorbonne, Harvard Kennedy School, honorary doctorates from universities in three continents
Art & culture	Exhibited painter; convener of diplomacy through art and the dinner table – a method honed over four decades

2. Boilerplate

Approved paragraph. Copy into all press releases, op-eds, and media outreach without alteration.

Ivonne A. Baki is an Ecuadorian-Lebanese diplomat, peace negotiator, and candidate for the Secretary-Generalship of the United Nations – the first woman ever put forward for the office. She has served six Ecuadorian presidents across every political tradition of her country – twice as Ambassador to the United States, once to France, and as resident Ambassador to Qatar with concurrent accreditation to Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Jordan, Oman, and Syria. She has led her country's Ministry of Foreign Trade, served as President of the Andean Parliament and as Ecuador's Representative to UNASUR. She was a lead negotiator of the 1998 peace agreement that ended the Cenepa War between Ecuador and Peru – the last armed conflict between two South American states. Her training as a peace-maker was forged at Harvard under Roger Fisher, whose Conflict Management Group she served from 1994 to 1997 and who personally brought her into the Cenepa peace process in 1995. She was also the architect of the Yasuní-ITT Initiative, the world's first proposal to leave oil in the ground in exchange for international

climate compensation. Born in Beirut, she lived through the Lebanese civil war as a young mother of three, and made a promise – one night in a basement passageway during the bombings, after her eldest daughter asked whether they were going to die – that if her children were spared, she would spend her life making sure no mother had to answer that question. She has spent the forty years since keeping it. She is the nominee of the Republic of Lebanon for Secretary-General of the United Nations.

3. Short biography (100 words)

Use for panel programs, event bios, and short-form media introductions.

Ivonne Baki is an Ecuadorian-Lebanese diplomat and the Republic of Lebanon's candidate for United Nations Secretary-General – the first woman ever put forward for the office. She served six Ecuadorian presidents across the political spectrum – twice as Ambassador to the United States, once to France, and as Ambassador to Qatar with non-resident accreditation to six additional states in the Middle East. She was trained as a peace negotiator at Harvard under Roger Fisher and led the negotiations that ended the Cenepa War between Ecuador and Peru in 1998. She also designed the Yasuní-ITT Initiative, the world's first climate-debt proposal. Born in Beirut, she lived through the Lebanese civil war as a young mother of three and made a promise, during a night of bombings, that she has spent forty years keeping. She holds degrees from the Sorbonne and Harvard and speaks four languages.

4. Long biography (500 words)

Use for long-form profiles, conference programs, and editorial board packets.

Ivonne A. Baki was born in Beirut and raised between Lebanon and Ecuador, the child of a diaspora that built a new home in the Andes without ever letting go of the old one. Before she was a diplomat, she was an artist, trained in Paris. She has often said that painting taught her to listen to what a room is saying before it speaks – a skill that would eventually shape every negotiating table she sat at.

Her life changed in a basement in Beirut. At the height of the Lebanese civil war, as bombs fell on the apartment building above them, she huddled with her three children in a basement passageway. Her eldest daughter, clutching her, asked the question no mother is prepared for: "Mommy, are we going to die?" Baki told her that God would watch over them, and in that same breath made a promise: if her children were spared, she would spend her life making sure no mother had to answer that question. Her children survived. Many others did not. The woman who arrived in Quito after that night was no longer only a mother or an artist. She was someone carrying a vow.

She has spent the forty years since keeping it. She studied at the Sorbonne and at the Harvard Kennedy School, and entered Ecuador's diplomatic service as her adopted country's representative abroad. Her first major act of statesmanship was the Cenepa War. In 1998, as Ecuador and Peru emerged from a 57-year border dispute that had erupted repeatedly into open warfare, Baki played a leading role in the negotiations that produced the Brasilia Presidential Act – the agreement that settled the frontier and ended the last armed conflict between two South American states. Her training came from the best. From 1994 to 1997, she served on the Board of Directors of the Conflict Management Group at Harvard, led by Professor Roger Fisher – the co-author of *Getting to Yes* and the man who,

more than any other figure of the twentieth century, taught the world how to negotiate across deadlock. In 1995, as Ecuador and Peru slid back into open conflict over the Cenepa border, President Sixto Durán Ballén asked Fisher and Baki, together, to come home and help. They did. What followed was three years of painstaking diplomacy, and one of Fisher's signature touches: when the two presidents finally met, they were photographed not shaking hands but sitting side by side, working from a single document. That is the discipline Baki still carries into every room.

She served as resident Ambassador to the State of Qatar with concurrent non-resident accreditation to Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Jordan, Oman, and Syria – making her, in practice, Ecuador's ambassador to most of the Arab world. She later served as Ambassador to France. Across every posting, she served six Ecuadorian presidents of every political stripe, from Mahuad to Lasso – a record of nonpartisan service unmatched in the modern history of Ecuadorian diplomacy. Additionally, Baki served as Minister of Foreign Trade, Industrialization, Fisheries and Competitiveness; President of the Andean Parliament; and Ecuador's Representative to UNASUR. In 2007 she was tasked with leading the Yasuní-ITT Initiative, a proposal to leave nearly a billion barrels of oil underground in the Ecuadorian Amazon in exchange for international climate compensation. The initiative was, and remains, the intellectual precursor of today's loss-and-damage and debt-for-nature frameworks.

She has been a bridge-builder between regions the world rarely thinks about together. As a founder and driving force of the Arab-South American Summit (ASPA), she helped create the only standing platform linking twenty-two Arab states to twelve South American ones. Her second posting as Ambassador to Washington, from 2020 to 2024, came at one of the most difficult moments in US-Latin American relations; she is widely credited with stabilising the bilateral agenda on trade, security, and migration.

Across every posting, the method has been the same. She convenes. She sets tables – literal ones – where adversaries can meet as people before they meet as opposition. Her dinner table has hosted diplomats from governments that were not speaking to one another, and by the end of dessert, the saying in her household goes: the conversation hasn't always produced consensus, but it has always produced understanding.

Ivonne Baki is an exhibited painter whose work has been shown in galleries in New York, Paris, and Quito. She is the mother of three and the widow of Sami A-Baki, a lifelong partner in her cultural and diplomatic work. She speaks Spanish, Arabic, English, French, and German and is, at the moment of her nomination, likely to be the first woman ever to become the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

5. The story

This is the spine of the documentary and the narrative that every profile piece should recognise. Three acts.

Act I – The promise

Beirut, at the height of the civil war. A young mother of three, an art student trained in Paris, watched her country come apart under shelling. One night, during the peak of the bombings, the building above her apartment was hit. She carried her children to a basement passageway and held them there while the walls shook.

Her eldest daughter, clutching her, asked the question no mother is prepared for. "Mommy, are we going to die?"

Ivonne Baki told her daughter that God would watch over them. And in that same breath, she made God a promise. If her children were spared that night, she would spend the rest of her life making sure no other mother had to answer that question.

Her children were spared. The woman who eventually arrived in Quito carrying the survivors of her own story was no longer only a mother, an artist, or a young wife. She was someone holding a vow. The campaign she is running now – four decades later, for the highest convening office in the world – is the keeping of that promise.

Act II – The vow, kept

Two decades after that night in Beirut, Ecuador and Peru stood on the edge of a war they had already fought three times. The Cenepa conflict of 1995 had reopened a border dispute stretching back to the nineteenth century; by 1998 the two governments were negotiating under the watch of four guarantor states. Baki, by then Ecuador’s Ambassador in Washington, was a leading voice in the negotiations that brought the Brasilia Presidential Act to signature – the agreement that ended the last armed conflict between two South American states. It was the first time in her public life that she made, in her words, “the peace I did not have.”

She spent the following years doing it at scale. She designed the Yasuní-ITT Initiative – the world’s first climate-debt instrument – before the vocabulary existed for what it was. She built the Arab-South American Summit. She shepherded Ecuador’s trade and security relationship with the United States through successive administrations. She led the Andean Parliament. She served as Ambassador to France and to Qatar. She was the diplomat that presidents called when the room needed to be convened – and when the room needed to be set, it was often at her table, where art and food did the work that bilateral communiqués could not.

Act III – The Secretary-General the moment needs

The United Nations in 2026 is presiding over more active conflicts than at any point since its founding. Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, the Sahel, Yemen, Myanmar, Haiti. Somewhere tonight, another child is asking her mother the same question Ivonne Baki’s daughter asked her in Beirut. The institution needs a Secretary-General who has actually ended a war, not only attended one. It needs a convener who speaks the language of the Arab League and the Latin American caucus in the same breath, who can sit across from Washington and Beijing with equal fluency, and whose authority is not borrowed from her office but carried in her story.

It needs, at this hour, a mother keeping a forty-year-old promise – and it has one ready. She would be the first woman to hold the office. That is a long-overdue fact. It is not the reason to elect her. The reason is what she swore to God she would do.

That is the candidacy. That is the story. Everything else (the biography, the record, the endorsements) is evidence.

6. Career milestones

1998	Lead negotiator on the Ecuador-Peru peace process; Brasilia Presidential Act ends the Cenepa War.
1998-2002	Ambassador of Ecuador to the United States (first posting).

2003-2005	Minister of Foreign Trade, Industrialization, Fisheries and Competitiveness.
2005-2007	President of the Andean Parliament.
2005-	Co-founder and driving force of the Arab-South American Summit (ASPA).
2007-2013	Plenipotentiary Representative of Ecuador for the Yasuni-ITT Initiative.
2010-2013	Representative of Ecuador to UNASUR.
2017-2020	Ambassador of Ecuador to the State of Qatar; concurrently non-resident Ambassador to Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Jordan, Oman, and Syria.
2020-2024	Ambassador of Ecuador to the United States (second posting).
2024	Ambassador of Ecuador to France and UNESCO.
2026	Endorsed by [TBD] as candidate for UN Secretary-General – to become the first woman UNSG in history.

7. Signature quotes & pull lines

Pre-cleared for use in press materials, op-eds, and social media. Attribute to Ivonne Baki.

“Mommy, are we going to die?’ My daughter asked me that in a basement in Beirut. I made God a promise that night. This campaign is how I keep it.”

“I am not running for an office. I am running for the mothers who are, right now, holding their children in basements, hearing the same question I heard.”

“I have not read about peace. I have made it – and I have lived without it.”

“The United Nations does not need another manager. It needs a convener who has already built bridges the world said could not be built.”

“I have set dinner tables that did not start with consensus, but always ended in understanding. That is the work of the Secretary-Generalship.”

“I carry two homelands inside me – Lebanon and Ecuador. That is not a biography. It is a qualification for this moment.”

“Peace is not a theory. It is the permission to put your children to bed and know they will wake up.”

“I would be the first woman to hold this office. That is a long-overdue fact. It is not the reason to elect me. The reason is the promise I am keeping.”

8. Key talking points (Q&A)

Anticipated questions and pre-cleared responses for interviews, editorial boards, and off-camera conversations.

Q. Why are you running?

A. Because of a promise I made forty years ago. During the Lebanese civil war, I was a young mother of three. One night, as our apartment building was being bombed, I held my children in a basement passageway, and my eldest daughter asked me whether we were going to die. I told her God would watch over us – and in that same moment, I promised Him that if my children were spared, I would spend my life making sure no mother had to answer that question. My children survived. Many others did not. I have kept that promise at every scale available to me since. The Secretary-Generalship is the scale the world now requires.

Q. What makes you different from the other candidates?

A. I am the only candidate who has actually ended a war – the Brasilia Presidential Act of 1998, which ended the Cenepa conflict between Ecuador and Peru, was signed in part because of work I did in Washington, Lima, and Quito. And I am the only candidate who has lived inside a warzone as a mother. That is a perspective you cannot learn in a foreign ministry. I would also be the first woman to hold this office in eighty years of the United Nations.

Q. [TBC] is your nominating state. Doesn't that tie you to one region?

A. Lebanon is the country of my birth. Ecuador is the country of my life. I am the first Arab-Latin American woman to be considered for this office, and that dual belonging is precisely what the UN needs right now. I am tied not to one region but to two – and I speak the language of both.

Q. The Yasuní-ITT Initiative did not ultimately succeed. How do you respond to that?

A. Yasuní-ITT was ahead of its time. The international community in 2007 was not ready for the idea that forests and oil belonged to a shared global accounting. Today, loss-and-damage funds, debt-for-nature swaps, and carbon-retention payments are mainstream instruments – and every one of them descends from the Yasuní proposal. History has confirmed the idea.

Q. What would your first 100 days as Secretary-General look like?

A. A listening tour of the five Permanent Members, the Arab League, GRULAC, the African Group, and ASEAN; a quiet convening on Ukraine; a rapid reassessment of the UN's humanitarian posture in Gaza, Sudan, and Haiti; and a public commitment to reform the Security Council's working methods so that convening becomes possible again. The UN's convening power is its most underused asset. I intend to use it.

Q. How do you respond to questions about your career in business and private finance?

A. I have spent most of my life in public service, and when I have worked in the private sector I have done so transparently and in areas – trade, infrastructure, cultural diplomacy – that complement rather than compromise public work. I welcome any scrutiny of my record. I have never had anything to hide.

Q. What is the story behind your personal journey from Beirut to Quito?

A. That is a story I will tell in my own voice, and largely through the documentary my team is producing. The short version is that I lived through the Lebanese civil war with my three children, we survived a night of bombings in a basement passageway that I will carry with me for the rest of my life, and I eventually rebuilt a life in Ecuador – a country that welcomed me and that I have been privileged to serve for forty years. I believe in refuge. I believe in borders that can be crossed. And I believe that a mother’s duty does not stop at her own doorstep.

Q. Ambassador Baki, you would be the first woman Secretary-General. How important is that fact to your candidacy?

A. It is an overdue fact, and I am proud of it. But I will not campaign on it, and I would ask no member state to vote for me because of it. The reason to elect me is the promise I made in a basement in Beirut and the forty years of work that have gone into keeping it. If being the first woman Secretary-General is also a consequence – good. The world has waited long enough.

9. Documentary – about the film

[Placeholder — working copy below. To be revised once production details are confirmed.]

A short documentary on Ivonne Baki is currently in production. Centred on her journey from Beirut to Quito and the thirty years of peace, climate, and bridge-building work that followed, the film is intended as the narrative spine for international press engagement. **Working title, running time, director, and distribution partners are to be confirmed; final details will be added to this press kit on completion.**

Once released, the film will be available in full and in short-form cutdowns for broadcast, digital, and editorial use. Campaign partners will receive a password-protected preview link in advance of publication; press outlets will receive a B-roll and stills package under embargo.

10. Media assets – what will be available

[Placeholder — to be updated with download links as assets are cleared.]

- Official portrait – high-resolution, cleared for editorial use worldwide.
- Secondary portrait set – candid and working-context images (office, multilateral settings, mother-and-family).
- Documentary trailer – cleared for broadcast and digital embed.
- Documentary B-roll package – archival footage, Cenepa-era material, Yasuní-ITT material, Beirut imagery.
- Speech archive – selected public addresses, 2005-2026.
- Op-ed bank – three pre-cleared op-eds (on peace-making, climate finance, and the Arab-Latin relationship) available for placement in each target market.

- Fact sheets – one-page fact sheets in English, Spanish, Arabic, French, German (+ Russian and Mandarin).
- Biographical booklet – 16-page printed version of this press kit, shippable to mission press offices.

11. Media contact

[Placeholder — to be confirmed with Vijay and Barry before external release.]

PRESS INQUIRIES

Name: [to be confirmed]

Role: Director of Communications, Baki 2026

Email: [to be confirmed]

Phone: [to be confirmed]