



Washington DC, May 19, 2025

El Salvador: International Organizations Condemn the Detention of Human Rights Defender Ruth López

The undersigned international organizations condemn the detention of human rights defender Ruth López. The National Police arrested her on May 18, 2025 at 11 pm. Alarming, Ms. López's whereabouts are unknown. Authorities have denied her access to legal counsel and family, raising serious concerns about her safety and due process.

Ruth López is a prominent lawyer who has exposed human rights violations and corruption under the Bukele government. She currently serves as the head of Anti-Corruption at Cristosal, one of the most respected human rights groups in El Salvador. In 2024, Ruth was recognized by the BBC on their list of 100 influential and inspiring women.

El Salvador's state of exception has not only been used to address gang-related violence but also as a tool to silence critical voices.

Authoritarianism has increased in recent years as President Nayib Bukele has undermined institutions and the rule of law, and persecuted civil society organizations and independent journalists. Our organizations have been closely monitoring the closing of civic space and attacks on independent press in El Salvador and are deeply concerned at the increasingly pervasive environment of fear that threatens freedoms in the country.

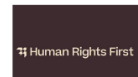
We call on Salvadoran authorities to immediately release Ruth López and urge the Salvadoran government to guarantee her physical safety and due process rights. We also urge U.S. policymakers and the diplomatic community at large to urge President Bukele to cease all attacks against human rights defenders.

Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)

Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights

Latin America Working Group (LAWG)

Human Rights Watch (HRW)



Seattle International Foundation (SIF)

Center For Justice & International Law (CEJIL)

Amnesty International

Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF)

CIVICUS Global Alliance

ARTICLE 19 México and Central America

ACTing Together Jotay Program

International Platform Against Impunity

Peace Action

American Jewish World Service (AJWS)

Human Rights First