

**The International Academy of Trial Lawyers Condemns the Unlawful Detention
of Ruth Eleonora López**

Calls on El Salvador to Uphold the Rule of Law

May 22, 2025. [The International Academy of Trial Lawyers](#) has consistently condemned efforts by governments to undermine the independence of the judiciary and legal profession and restrict individuals' right to counsel of their choosing.

The recent arrest and incommunicado detention of Ruth Eleonora López, a senior official at the Salvadoran human rights organization Cristosal, is deeply troubling. Though ostensibly tied to a decade-old allegation of embezzlement, the timing of her detention — following Cristosal's public advocacy on behalf of Venezuelan deportees sent to El Salvador's CECOT prison — raises serious concerns about political retaliation and the suppression of dissent.

Equally alarming are reports that Ms. López is being held without access to her family, to legal counsel, or to the procedural protections necessary to challenge the charges against her. These actions violate international legal norms and El Salvador's Constitution, which guarantees the presumption of innocence, access to legal representation, and judicial review of detention within 72 hours.

The Academy calls on the Government of El Salvador to:

- Immediately disclose Ms. López's whereabouts;
- Guarantee her access to legal counsel; and
- Ensure her right to contest any charges in a court of law, consistent with both international standards and the due process protections enshrined in El Salvador's Constitution.

The Academy stands firmly with lawyers across the globe who defend justice in the face of repression.

We will not remain silent as the Rule of Law is undermined — in El Salvador or anywhere.

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