



Communique Committee of Experts

Committee of Experts of the MESECVI expresses concern to Salvadoran authorities over the situation of lawyer and human rights defender Ruth Eleonora López Alfaro and urges full respect of her human rights

Washington, DC, October 8, 2025. The Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women "Belém do Pará Convention" (MESECVI) expresses its deep concern regarding the situation of Salvadoran lawyer and human rights defender Ruth Eleonora López Alfaro after more than 100 days in detention, following her arrest by National Civil Police officers on May 18 in conditions that violated due process and without full guarantees, according to reports from civil society organizations.

According to information received by the Committee of Experts (CEVI), lawyer Ruth López was charged by the Attorney General's Office of El Salvador with the crime of embezzlement in connection with her work as an advisor to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal between 2014 and 2019. After her arrest, López was held incommunicado for more than 40 hours, without her family or legal team knowing her whereabouts, an act that could constitute enforced disappearance according to international and inter-American standards, as established in General Recommendation No. 2 issued by this Committee¹.

In June 2025, the First Criminal Chamber confirmed López's pretrial detention, rejecting the request for alternative measures. The lawyer, recognized for her work as a human rights defender and for her investigations into alleged corruption by public authorities, has spent more than 100 days in detention without trial, which constitutes a violation of her right to a fair trial and due process. For this reason, on September 22, 2025, the IACHR granted precautionary measures in her favor, considering her life and personal integrity at risk.

In this regard, the Committee of Experts recalls that Article 4 of the Belém do Pará Convention enshrines the right of every woman to have her physical, mental, and moral integrity respected; her personal liberty and security; and her right to equal protection before

¹ General Recommendation No. 2 of the Committee of Experts of MESECVI establishes the obligation of States to guarantee women's right to personal integrity and security, including protection against arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance, as well as effective access to legal remedies and protective measures that prevent institutional violence.

the law and of the law. Similarly, Article 5 establishes that every woman is entitled to the free and full exercise her civil and political rights.

In view of this situation, the Committee reminds the Salvadoran authorities of their obligations as a State Party to the Convention and makes an emphatic call for the immediate adoption of all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of Ruth López and full respect for her rights.

Furthermore, the Committee recalls that, under Article 7(a), States Parties undertake to “refrain from engaging in any act or practice of violence against women and to ensure that their authorities, officials, personnel, agents, and institutions act in conformity with this obligation.”

Furthermore, CEVI expresses its concern regarding the complaints presented by Salvadoran civil society organizations and the concerns expressed by international organizations about the growing obstacles faced by human rights defenders in carrying out their work. In this context, the Committee expresses concern over the recent decision of Cristosal, the human rights organization where Ruth López served as Director of Anti-Corruption and Justice, to suspend its operations in El Salvador.

The Committee of Experts emphasizes that, in accordance with inter-American standards, women human rights defenders have the right to carry out their work free from harassment, persecution, or arbitrary detention. The criminalization of their work constitutes a form of institutional violence that violates fundamental rights.

In this regard, [the Model Law to Prevent, Punish, and Eradicate Violence against Women in Political Life](#), developed by CEVI, establishes in Article 6, paragraphs i and j, that violence against women in political life constitutes any action that threatens, attacks, or incites violence against women human rights defenders on the basis of gender, including those who defend women's rights, as well as the misuse of criminal law without foundation to criminalize their work or delegitimize their causes.

For all these reasons, the Committee of Experts urges the authorities of El Salvador to fully guarantee access to justice and respect for judicial guarantees for defender Ruth López, including a trial within a reasonable time and the protection of her physical and psychological integrity, refraining from torture, ill-treatment, or prolonged isolation. It also emphasizes the State's obligation to act with due diligence to investigate the irregularities reported in this case. Similarly, it makes an emphatic call to guarantee and recognize the work of women human rights defenders, protecting freedom of expression, association, and civic participation, as well as the right to defend rights, which is fundamental to democratic life.

The Follow-up Mechanism of the Belém do Pará Convention, through its Committee of Experts, is at the disposal of the authorities of El Salvador for any technical support they may require in this area.

The Committee of Experts is the technical body of the MESECVI, responsible for the analysis and evaluation of the implementation process of the Convention of Belém do Pará. It is made up of independent Experts, appointed by each of the States Parties from among their nationals, who perform their duties in a personal capacity.