



Ruth López: A life committed to transparency and the defense of human rights

San Salvador, May 19, 2025. Ruth López is a tireless Salvadoran leader in the struggle against corruption and for transparency and rights. She is a lawyer, human rights defender, educator, and mother. She has a broad background in constitutional, electoral, and administrative law, as well as transparency. Her rigorous technical work at the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) left a lasting mark, advancing transparency, professionalism, and public access to information. To this day, she remains a respected expert consulted by a wide range of sectors.

In December 2024, the **BBC recognized Ruth as one of the 100 most influential women in the world**, highlighting her work to promote political transparency and public accountability in El Salvador.

Ruth currently leads **Cristosal's Anti-Corruption and Justice Unit**, from which she has championed key actions to demand accountability and protect the public interest. Her most prominent efforts include:

- Filing a complaint with the **Treasury Court** over the **misuse of public funds** to provide state security (PPI agents) to individuals **not legally entitled** to such protection.
- Challenging the **"Special Transitional Regime"**, which **removes public bidding requirements** for government contracts, evades constitutional checks, and opens the door to serious corruption risks.
- Filing a **claim of unconstitutionality** against reforms to the **Bandesal Law**, which **classified public spending data**, shielding it from scrutiny.
- Submitting legal filings and public complaints regarding **the use of public funds for the implementation of Bitcoin**, including a **criminal complaint to the Attorney General** related to possible fraud involving the **Chivo Wallet**.
- Filings before the **Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE)** pointing out violations by political parties of fiscal transparency regulations, and demanding changes to TSE decisions restricting citizen access to information.
- Submitting reports on alleged **illicit enrichment, irregular real estate transfers**, and the creation of **"ghost positions"** in state institutions.
- Denouncing corruption during the pandemic, including denunciations before the Attorney General and the Treasury Court of presumed acts of corruption in the **misappropriation**

and sale of emergency food aid during COVID-19, and calling for an investigation of public prosecutors for possible failure to investigate these cases.

- Through a claim on unconstitutionality before the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court, challenging the reform to the Penal Process Code that permitted undercover agents to intercept private communications without a warrant. The claim pointed out that the reform undermined fundamental rights to privacy. citing violations of **privacy and due process**.
- Publicly exposing the government's possible **use of Pegasus spyware** to surveil communication among journalists and human rights defenders, and calling for an investigation into **the origin of the public funds that might have been used** to acquire such technology.
- Being one of the **strongest voices opposing the State of Exception implemented by the regime of Nayib Bukele**, denouncing **arbitrary detentions**, human rights violations, and how these measures have fueled migration by people **not connected to gangs**.
- Representing Salvadoran organizations before the **Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)**, where she requested the rejection of a **constitutional reform** that would allow the legislature to **amend and ratify constitutional changes during a single period**, paving the way for **a president to be immediately re-elected**.
- Filing the **"Case 300"** complaint, documenting how **public funds could have been funneled to gang structures** without institutional oversight.
- Filing a complaint with the **Government Ethics Tribunal (TEG)** against **Health Minister Francisco Alabí** for **irregular pandemic-era contracts**, in addition to the inappropriate use of emergency funds of **FOPROMID**.

Due to her high-profile presence and her recognition, nationally and internationally, Ruth has been the target of **constant smear campaigns**. So far this year alone, she has been targeted in **over 150 social media attacks** driven by propaganda structures connected to the government of Nayib Bukele. These attacks originate from **anonymous accounts, government media outlets**, and content creators aligned with the government, all forming part of a sustained strategy to discredit her work as a human rights defender and promoter of transparency in government.

In **November 2024**, her name appeared in a **leaked list of "persons of interest"** compiled by the National Civil Police (PNC). The list, revealed by Salvadoran media, included dossiers elaborated by police intelligence on **journalists, union leaders, and civil society figures**. The inclusion of Ruth in this list was a clear sign of police intent to **criminalize and surveil those who struggle for transparency and to defend human rights**.

Ruth's **arrest on May 18, 2025**, sparked **immediate outcry** from dozens of national and international figures, including major human rights organizations such as **Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights**, and **Front Line Defenders**. These groups condemned her detention as an act of **retaliation and criminalization** of her work.

Their response reaffirms what we know to be true: **Ruth López is a key figure in the fight for dignity, legality, and human rights in El Salvador.**