

STATEMENT

Paris, 23 June 2025

UIA-IROL expresses its concern over the recent arrest of constitutional Salvadoran lawyer Salvador Enrique Anaya Barraza and demands strict compliance with due process and the protection of his health and physical integrity

The Institute for the Rule of Law of the *Union Internationale des Avocats* (UIA-IROL) has learned with utmost concern of the arrest of attorney Salvador Enrique Anaya Barraza, a prestigious constitutional lawyer and academic. Dr. Anaya Barraza recently spoke on national television, expressing his opinion on the unconstitutionality of the re-election process in El Salvador in February 2024, as well as on the risks arising from the prolonged state of emergency that had prevailed in that country since 2022.

According to the information received, Dr. Anaya Barraza was arrested on 7 June 2025 by more than a dozen of uniformed and plainclothes police officers. The same day, several properties related to Dr. Anaya Barraza were raided, including his home and his professional office.

According to the Attorney General's Office of the Republic of El Salvador's communication [via X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), the reasons for Dr. Anaya Barraza's arrest are related to alleged "money and asset laundering". However, the lawyer's defense has indicated that, to date, due to the untimely manner in which the request has been presented, the facts on which the accusation is based remain still partially unknown.

From 7 to 9 June, neither Dr. Anaya's Barraza lawyers nor his family were aware of the precise place of his detention. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) [urged](#) the Salvadoran authorities to inform the whereabouts of Dr. Anaya Barraza and to guarantee his access to his lawyers and family members.

Dr. Anaya Barraza is still detained in the Transit Division of the National Civil Police in poor detention conditions. Although he has been able to receive short visits from family members and his lawyers, the latter could still not meet with him in conditions that guarantee the confidentiality of their communications. Moreover, the lawyers have reported restrictive access to the relevant files and documents, limiting their ability to provide Dr. Anaya Barraza with an effective defense.

In addition, Dr. Anaya Barraza's precarious health condition is of particular concern, putting his life in danger in this context.

This situation adds to that of human rights lawyer and defender Ruth Eleonora López Alfaro, who was arrested at her home on 18 May, accused of embezzlement and misappropriation of funds. However, at the time of her arrest authorities did not provide any details about the specific allegations against her. Ms López Alfaro serves as head of the Anti-corruption and Justice Team of the NGO Cristosal. During the first few weeks, Ms López Alfaro had no access to legal counsel and was detained without formal charges being filed. [Human rights and social organizations](#) believe that her arrest was motivated by her opposition to the current regime. The [IACHR](#) as well as [UN experts](#) have also expressed its concern over her detention. Prior to his arrest, Dr. Salvador Enrique Anaya Barraza had strongly criticized the arrest of his colleague Ruth López Alfaro and denounced the irregularities in her detention as well.

UIA-IROL, reaffirming its mandate to defend lawyers' right to the free exercise of their profession and freedom of expression recalls that the latter is protected by international instruments ratified by the Republic of El Salvador such as Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights. UIA-IROL also recalls that Principle 23 of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers recognizes that the exercise of this right is part of the international standards relating to the free and independent exercise of the profession and therefore crucial for lawyers to fulfil their role in the defense and promotion of human rights and the Rule of Law.

In light of these developments, UIA-IROL expresses its utmost concern about the events described here above and calls on the relevant authorities of the Republic of El Salvador to take all necessary measures to immediately release Dr. Salvador Enrique Anaya Barraza and Ms. Ruth Eleonora López Alfaro and to act with full respect for due process guarantees and the human rights of both lawyers.

We particularly call for Dr. Anaya Barraza's health condition to be taken into account, guaranteeing access to appropriate medical care and medication, so that his life is not put in danger.

UIA-IROL expresses its support to the lawyers' families and the organizations working in El Salvador in their demand for the release of these two lawyers and will monitor the developments as they unfold.

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The Institute for the Rule of Law of the Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA-IROL) promotes the Rule of Law and supports and defends, in particular, (1) lawyers, judges and human rights defenders who are harassed, threatened and/or persecuted in the exercise of their professions, (2) the independence of the legal and judicial professions, and (3) the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, especially in defense of human rights.

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