

## One year since the arbitrary detention of Enrique Anaya in El Salvador

**One year after the arbitrary detention of lawyer Enrique Anaya, Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L) and the International Observatory for Lawyers at Risk (OIAD) remain deeply concerned about his ongoing deprivation of liberty and the continuing violations of his fundamental rights.**

Enrique Anaya, a constitutional lawyer, was arrested on 7 June 2025 on money laundering charges. His detention took place shortly after he publicly criticized a number of government measures, including the concentration of state powers in the Executive Branch, the weakening of the separation of powers, the shrinking of democratic participation spaces, and the [detention of lawyer Ruth Eleonora López](#).

Since the outset of his detention, Anaya has been held in conditions incompatible both with due process guarantees and the right to a fair trial, as well as with international standards governing the humane treatment of persons deprived of their liberty. His detention has been characterized by prolonged isolation, restrictions on contact with his lawyers and family members, obstacles to accessing his case file and the evidence against him, and limitations on his ability to fully understand the charges against him and adequately prepare his defense. In addition, his right to health remains at risk, as he suffers from a medical condition requiring specialized treatment, and there is insufficient public information regarding the medical care he is receiving while in detention.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) granted precautionary measures in favor of Enrique Anaya through [Resolution 67/2025](#), ordering the Salvadoran State to take the necessary measures to protect his life, personal integrity, and health; guarantee regular contact with his family and legal counsel; and review the continuation of his pretrial detention in accordance with applicable international standards, including the possibility of alternative measures. In its resolution, the IACHR took into account both the risks faced by human rights defenders in El Salvador and Enrique Anaya's public profile as a constitutional lawyer who has participated in debates on democratic institutions and human rights and who has been labelled by a presidential adviser as “the opposition’s leading lawyer.”

However, the precautionary measures granted by the IACHR have not been satisfactorily implemented. As the criminal proceedings approach the end of the investigative phase and one year has passed since his arrest, serious concerns remain regarding the protection of his fundamental rights. In particular, he has effectively been denied a meaningful review of his pretrial detention to assess whether it could be replaced by less restrictive measures.

The detention of Enrique Anaya is particularly alarming because it appears to constitute retaliation for the legitimate exercise of the legal profession and for the exercise of his right to freedom of expression. His case unfolds within a broader context of deterioration of the rule of law and [increasing restrictions on lawyers' ability to carry out their professional duties](#) safely and independently, particularly those working on human rights, anti-corruption efforts, and public interest litigation. This hostile environment directly undermines the independence of the legal profession and the public's right of access to justice, while creating a chilling effect on lawyers working in these areas.

El Salvador is a State Party to the American Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and is therefore obligated to guarantee the rights to liberty, personal security, access to justice, and due process. Furthermore, the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, in particular Principles 16, 18, and 23, require governments to ensure that lawyers are able to perform their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment, or improper interference; that they are not identified with their clients or their clients' causes; and that they are able to freely exercise their rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly, including the right to take part in public discussions concerning the law, the administration of justice, and the promotion and protection of human rights.

The undersigned organizations urgently call on the Government of El Salvador to:

1. Immediately and effectively implement the precautionary measures granted by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in Resolution 67/2025, ensuring the protection of Enrique Anaya's life, personal integrity, and health.
2. Promptly review the necessity, legality, and proportionality of the pretrial detention imposed on Enrique Anaya, in accordance with international human rights standards and the recommendations of the IACHR, including consideration of less restrictive alternatives to detention.
3. Guarantee a fair trial that fully respects judicial guarantees, due process rights, and the right to be tried without undue delay.
4. Cease all acts of harassment, intimidation, and criminalization against lawyers for the legitimate exercise of their profession or for exercising their right to freedom of expression.
5. Respect and ensure compliance with the American Convention on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, so that all lawyers in El Salvador can carry out their professional activities independently and without fear of reprisals.

Our organizations will continue to closely monitor the situation of lawyers in El Salvador. We urge the international community, including bar associations, civil society organizations, and human rights organizations, to remain vigilant regarding the situation in El Salvador and to take all appropriate measures to ensure the protection of legal professionals in the country.