

Guatemala Election Watch #29

**Lawyer Claudia Gonzalez illegally imprisoned  
Corruption of entire Guatemalan legal & political system in plain sight**

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/lawyer-claudia-gonzalez-illegally-imprisoned>

Three months, 19 days until January 14, 2024 transfer of power

As the corrupt, military-backed government of Guatemala - long-time U.S. and Canadian-backed “democratic allie” - continues to carry out a ‘technical coup d’etat’ against the recent Presidential elections (criminalizing President-elect Bernardo Arevalo, VP-elect Karin Herrera, the Semilla Party and the electoral process), the government continues to criminalize and illegally jail (or force into exile) judges, prosecutors, lawyers, journalists, etc.

- Below: Prensa Comunitaria article about criminalization and jailing of lawyer Claudia Gonzalez

**U.S. and Canadian-fomented problem**

For seven, mostly uninterrupted decades since 1954, the U.S. and Canada have maintained full economic, military and political relations with corrupt, repressive Guatemalan governments including that of President Giammattei today. Recently, the Canadian government included Guatemala as a “democratic allie” member of the Lima Group spearheaded by Canada in support of U.S.-led efforts to demonize, isolate and weaken the government of Venezuela.

“TESTIMONIO-Canadian Mining in the Aftermath of Genocides in Guatemala”, co-edited by Catherine Nolin and myself, sets out how corruption and impunity (let alone violence, evictions and widespread harms) characterize just about every aspect of the Canadian-led, global mining industry operating in Guatemala.

There is no end in sight to this.

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**Judge orders remand of attorney Claudia Gonzalez to jail**

September 22, 2023, by Alexander Valdez

<https://prensacomunitaria.org/2023/09/juez-liga-a-proceso-y-ordena-prision-preventiva-contra-la-abogada-claudia-gonzalez/>

Judge Jimi Bremer decided to send to preventive detention the lawyer and former prosecutor with the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), Claudia Gonzalez, for the crime of abuse of authority. González will face a criminal investigation and will continue to be imprisoned for having been in charge of the case against former Judge Blanca Stalling



The anti-corruption lawyer was accompanied by family members, who also could not enter the hearing. Photo: Prensa Comunitaria

Judge Bremer's arguments for ordering the Gonzalez to trial are unknown. Prior to the beginning of the hearing, the judge denied public access to the hearing in the Tenth Criminal Court.

González was detained and jailed more than a month ago in an operation by the Internal Affairs Prosecutor's Office of the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP), after former Judge Stalling denounced her for abuse of authority. When working for CICIG, Claudia Hernandez was in charge of an investigation against then Judge Stalling who had been denounced by Judge Carlos Ruano, for trying to influence him to grant parole to her son Otto Molina Stalling, who was accused of corruption in the IGSS-Pisa criminal investigation.

Despite the risks of persecution of judges, prosecutors and lawyers, Gonzalez was also in charge of the defense of several justice operators, such as the cases against Juan Francisco Sandoval, Virginia Laparra and the Leily Santizo.

The Internal Affairs Prosecutor's Office will have three months to develop the investigation against Gonzalez. That is to say, Gonzalez will have to remain in prison.

Bremer did not arrive at the same conclusion in the case of drug traffickers. He recently granted parole to Maybellinne Herrera alias "La Patrona", accused of murder and drug trafficking.

### **International recognition**

In April of this year she was recognized in Holland by the organization "Lawyers for Lawyers" with an award given to legal professionals who face a high risk due to the work they do.

The former head of the now defunct CICIG is in charge of the criminal defense of at least nine lawyers who worked on high-profile corruption cases, six of them are former prosecutors of the Public Prosecutor's Office and three of them are former judicial officers of the CICIG.

As a result of these legal cases and her legal defense work, Gonzalez denounced harassment and intimidation in social networks by anonymous accounts and directed by the same people accused of corruption.

In an interview with Prensa Comunitaria in April, the lawyer assured that the danger of her capture was latent. "There is a case in the Special Prosecutor's Office Against Impunity (FECI) in which I was denounced and they have not allowed me to have access to that investigation, because of the work I do," she said.

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### **“Coup plotters must resign”. US and Canadian governments must support calls by President-elect Bernardo Arevalo for coup plotters to resign**

It is impossible to keep up with the breadth of attacks being carried out, daily, by the Guatemalan Covenant of the Corrupt regime, and their allies, on the electoral process and against the Semilla Party – a ‘death by a 100 cuts’ strategy – let alone their on-going persecution of judges, lawyers and prosecutors.

The US and Canadian governments, our companies and investors, have a significant measure of responsibility for what is occurring in Guatemala, given the past 69 years of full economic, political and military relations with corrupt, repressive regimes.

Rights Action calls for Americans and Canadians to share this information widely (including media outlets), and to contact your Senators, Members of Congress and Parliamentarian and urge them to publicly support calls by President-elect Bernardo Arevalo for coup plotters to resign: Attorney General Consuelo Porras, special prosecutor Rafael Curruchiche, Judge Fredy Orellana.

- U.S. Senate: <https://www.senate.gov/senators/contact>
- U.S. House: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>
- Canadian Parliament: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members>

### **More information**

- Rights Action's "Guatemala Election Watch" alerts ([www.rightsaction.org/emails](http://www.rightsaction.org/emails))
- Twitter feeds of Festivales Solidarios (@festivalesgt) & Prensa Comunitaria (@PrensaComunitaria)
- Prensa Comunitaria's daily news (<https://prensacomunitaria.org/>)

### **Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & U.S.)**

To support land and environmental defenders, and democracy, human rights and justice struggles in Honduras and Guatemala, make check to "Rights Action" and mail to:

- US: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887
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