

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Eric Friedman
efriedman@nycbar.org

Eli Cohen
ecohen@nycbar.org

AWARD-WINNING ANTI-CORRUPTION JOURNALIST ASKS INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO FREE HIM FROM ILLEGAL IMPRISONMENT IN GUATEMALA

New York, September 28, 2022 - Guatemalan publisher José Rubén Zamora Marroquín must be released immediately from illegal detention, according to a petition to the [Inter-American Commission on Human Rights](#) (IACHR), filed by a team of international pro bono lawyers organized by the [Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice](#).

The arrest of Zamora followed El Periodico's publication of several allegations of corruption by Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei. Zamora has received many international awards and other recognition for his journalistic fight against official corruption in Guatemala.

The petition calls the arrest a political persecution and an attack on the freedom of the press of the journalists of El Periódico and Guatemala's entire national and international press corps. It requests Zamora's immediate release from detention.

Guatemalan authorities arrested Zamora on July 29, 2022, and on August 9, Judge Fredy Raúl Orellana Letona ordered him to remain in custody until at least December 8, 2022. The Third Chamber of the Court of Appeals on August 25 ruled an appeal inadmissible and upheld the judge's decision.

According to the petition, the judicial decisions lacked any analysis of the possibility of alternative measures such as house arrest or the prohibition to communicate with his employees or to visit the facilities of El Periódico. Guatemalan law provides for such alternative measures and Zamora's lawyers sought them.

The petition highlights that Mr. Zamora's case exemplifies Guatemala's use of punitive measures to intimidate journalistic work, as recognized by the IACHR and the Inter-American Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression.

The Vance Center has [engaged](#) in supporting the rule of law in Guatemala since 2013. The Vance Center's [Good Governance Program](#) pursues openness and honesty in government, supporting civil society, judicial integrity, and independent journalism to hold officials and

institutions accountable. It advises investigative journalism organizations around the world on avoiding and defending against defamation claims, establishing joint investigations through data sharing and co-publication, and setting codes of conduct to promote equal opportunity and safety.

About the Vance Center

The Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice of the New York City Bar Association advances global justice by engaging lawyers across borders to support civil society and an ethically active legal profession. The Vance Center is a unique collaboration of international lawyers catalyzing public interest innovation that brings together leading law firms and other partners worldwide to pioneer international justice initiatives and provide pro bono legal representation to social justice NGOs. www.vancecenter.org

About the Association

The mission of the New York City Bar Association, which was founded in 1870 and has over 23,000 members, is to equip and mobilize a diverse legal profession to practice with excellence, promote reform of the law, and uphold the rule of law and access to justice in support of a fair society and the public interest in our community, our nation, and throughout the world. www.nycbar.org