

Dozens of organizations demand release of journalist Mario Guevara

In a healthy democracy, a free press is essential. That freedom is under threat in the United States today.

An Emmy award-winning journalist has been detained for over 100 days – all because the government considers his livestream reporting a threat. Mario Guevara was arrested June 14 in metro Atlanta while covering a protest, then transferred to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody, where he remains.

This is one of the longest periods a journalist has ever been detained in the United States. Guevara is the only known journalist currently behind bars in the U.S. for his reporting.

The government's prolonged detention of Guevara sends a chilling message to all journalists, citizens, and residents who record law enforcement, report on government activities, and seek to report the truth. This concerns all of us as a blatant attack on the First Amendment and press freedom. Livestreaming and filming police is not a crime.

We – the undersigned coalition of press freedom, civil and human rights, First Amendment, and other advocacy groups – call for the immediate release of journalist Mario Guevara from ICE custody.

Signed,

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
Free Press

Amnesty International USA
Asian American Journalists Association
Association of Foreign Press Correspondents
Atlanta Press Club
CASA
Campaign Legal Center
Cicero Independiente
Common Cause Georgia
Dallas Free Press
Defending Rights & Dissent
Enlace Latino NC
First Amendment Coalition
Freedom of the Press Foundation
GALEO & GALEO Impact Fund
Georgia First Amendment Foundation
Global Project Against Hate and Extremism
Institute for Nonprofit News
Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE)
Latino Community Fund Georgia (LCF Georgia)

Los Angeles Press Club
Mainline
Media Alliance
Muslim Legal Fund of America (MLFA)
National Association of Hispanic Journalists
National Press Photographers Association
National Writers Union
Online News Association
PEN America
Radio Television Digital News Association
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
Society of Professional Journalists
Society of Professional Journalists,
Georgia Pro Chapter
Southern Center for Human Rights
The New Bedford Light
The Xylom
Tully Center for Free Speech

For more information about Guevara's case, [learn more here](#).



Additional Information

The federal government has [argued](#) that Guevara must remain in custody because his regular livestreaming and reporting on law enforcement pose a danger to public safety. In fact, a free press keeps us safe. The First Amendment holds the government accountable to the people, and that includes immigrants. Under federal, state, and local laws, Guevara has a right to film the police doing their jobs.

As of September 19, Mario Guevara faces [imminent deportation](#) back to his native El Salvador. The Board of Immigration Appeals has re-opened his 13-year-old immigration case, declining to release him on bond. Guevara's lawyers in his habeas petition have argued that the immigration judge in the 2012 case granted him voluntary departure rather than a deportation order. While an appeal on that ruling was pending, the government administratively closed the case. Guevara has had authorization to live and work in the United States since then.

There are no open charges against Guevara, and an immigration judge granted him bond on July 1, yet he has spent months in detention. Guevara was first detained on June 14, 2025, while livestreaming a local protest in the metro Atlanta area. While he was held by local authorities, ICE issued a detainer against him and transferred him into their custody. The federal government's arguments rely heavily on [coordination](#) from local police. He has been shuffled between five local and federal detention centers, and spent over two months in isolation. He is now at the Folkston ICE Processing Center in southeastern Georgia.

For over 20 years, Guevara has resided in metro Atlanta with his family. Originally from El Salvador, he entered the country legally and continues to have work authorization and a path to a green card through his son, a U.S. citizen. Like the majority of broadcast and digital journalists, Guevara frequently publishes livestream video. Much of his original reporting has focused on immigrant experiences, including law enforcement operations around immigration. His digital news organization MG Noticias has hundreds of thousands of subscribers covering local, national, and international news.