

Press freedom coalition sounds alarm on ICE detention of Nashville journalist Estefany Rodriguez, calling for her immediate release

March 10, 2026

We, a coalition of 41 civil-society and press-freedom organizations condemn the arrest and detention of Nashville journalist Estefany Rodriguez by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). We urge ICE to release her immediately.

The First Amendment was created to protect against government targeting of reporters and speech more broadly. Rodriguez's lawyers have argued that her arrest and ongoing detention are in retaliation for her speech and work as a reporter.

Rodriguez was detained on March 4, 2026. ICE produced no warrant during her arrest; it was produced only after she was in custody. Rodriguez fled to the United States from her native Colombia in 2021 after facing threats for her coverage of armed militia groups. She arrived on a tourist visa and applied for political asylum in the United States. Rodriguez was on a path to citizenship, and had a pending green card application through her husband, who is a U.S. citizen, as well as a pending asylum application. Her attorneys have filed an emergency petition in federal court seeking a writ of *habeas corpus* – an immediate review of whether her detention is legal.

Rodriguez has covered immigration, including ICE actions, for the local Spanish-language news site Nashville Noticias, and has also made critical comments online about the Trump administration. With her arrest, federal authorities have both silenced an important on-the-ground perspective and have sent a chilling message that reporting critical of the administration may face retaliation.

Rodriguez's detention is part of a broader erosion of democratic norms and human rights in the United States in which immigration authorities are increasingly being used to chill free expression and First Amendment rights. This practice must stop.

We call for the immediate release of Estefany Rodriguez.

American Society of Journalists and Authors
Amnesty International USA
Arab and Middle Eastern Journalist Association
Association of American Editorial Cartoonists
Association of Foreign Press Correspondents

Coalition For Women In Journalism (CFWIJ)
Committee for the First Amendment
Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
Common Cause Georgia
Dallas Free Press
Defending Rights & Dissent
Georgia First Amendment Foundation
First Amendment Coalition
First Amendment Foundation
Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP)
Free Press
Freedom of the Press Foundation
GALEO Impact Fund, Inc.
Institute for Nonprofit News
Inter American Press Association
International Women's Media Foundation
Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE)
Journalism and Women Symposium (JAWS)
Mainline
Media Alliance
Media and Democracy Project (MAD)
National Association of Hispanic Journalists
National Press Club
National Press Club Journalism Institute
National Press Photographers Association (NPPA)
National Writers Union (NWU)
Online News Association
PEN America
Radio Television Digital News Association
Reporters without Borders (RSF)
Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing (SABEW)
Society of Environmental Journalists
Society of Professional Journalists
Student Press Law Center
The NewsGuild-CWA
Whistleblower & Source Protection Program (WHISPeR) at ExposeFacts