

El Salvador woman freed after six years in jail following stillbirth

Cindy Erazo was accused of aggravated homicide after an obstetric emergency



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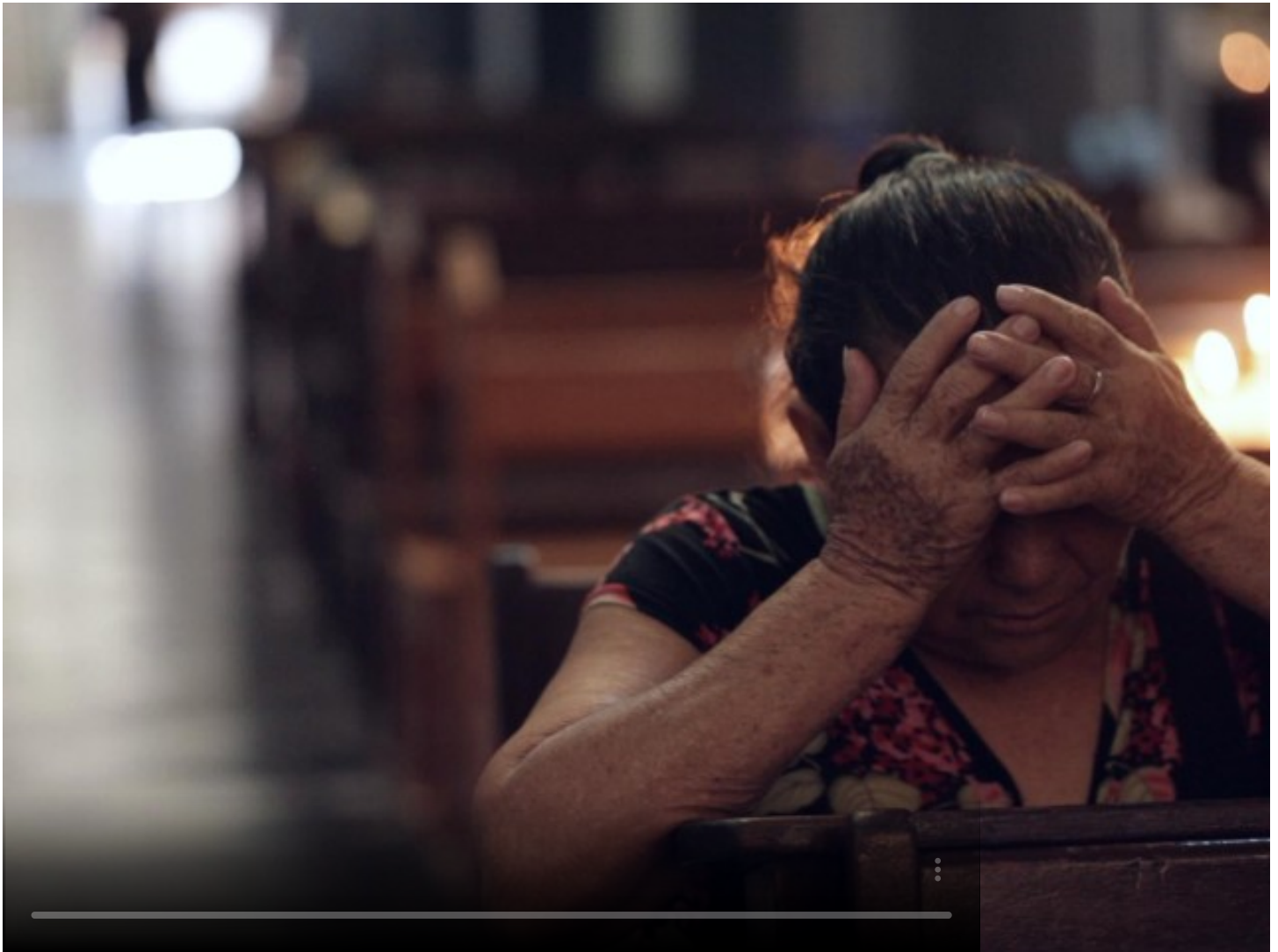
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A woman sentenced to 30 years in jail after a stillbirth that was judged to be her fault has been released from jail in [El Salvador](#).

Cindy Erazo, 29, from San Salvador, was granted conditional freedom on Wednesday after six years in jail.

Morena Herrera, head of the Citizen's Group for the Decriminalisation of [Abortion](#), said that Erazo, who has a son aged 10, had an obstetric emergency when she was eight months pregnant. She was accused of attempting to end the pregnancy and charged with aggravated homicide. A year after her conviction, her sentenced was reduced to 10 years.

Dozens of women have been convicted for manslaughter, homicide and aggravated homicide after having miscarriages, stillbirths and other obstetric emergencies since El Salvador introduced a total ban on abortion in 1998.



[El Salvador: 'I had a miscarriage. The judge accused me of murder'](#) Guardian


[Some women have been released](#) from jail after having their convictions overturned or sentences reduced, following staunch campaigning from women's rights groups.

But one of the women released last year, Evelyn Hernández, then 21, who had her 30-year sentence overturned at a retrial, could face a third trial as prosecutors [seek to overturn](#) her acquittal. She was accused of killing her stillborn son.

More than 18 women are understood to still be in prison for abortion-related crimes.

The country's president, Nayib Bukele, who took office in June last year, has pledged to legalise abortion when a woman's life is at risk, and has stated that no woman should be jailed following obstetric emergencies.



 Cindy Erazo, 29, was granted conditional freedom on Wednesday. Photograph: Courtesy of Centor de Derechos Reproductivos

“Today we celebrate Cindy’s freedom, who was sentenced to 30 years in prison under the basis of false accusations,” said Herrera. “Her freedom confirms that justice is possible if we unite our forces, and gives us hope for the freedom of other women.”

Paula Avila-Guillén, executive director of the Women’s Equality Center, said: “Cindy’s case casts an international spotlight on the horrific reality of El Salvador’s extreme abortion ban, and the insidious culture of persecuting innocent women that it perpetuates.

“While Cindy is finally free, more than 18 innocent women are currently in prison who should immediately be released. Many of these women have families waiting for them, and children being forced to survive without their mothers. Now more than ever – in the context of a deadly global pandemic – it is imperative that President Bukele and the courts liberate the women incarcerated under this cruel law.”

