

# Senate Republicans Block Vote on El Salvador Deportations

Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) accused Democratic lawmakers of trying to 'defend illegal immigrant criminals.'

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Inmates stand inside a jail during a media tour at the Terrorism Confinement Center (CECOT) prison, in Tecoluca, El Salvador April 4, 2025. Jose Cabezas/Reuters



By Aldgra Fredly

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Senate Republicans on May 15 blocked a resolution by Democratic lawmakers seeking information on the deportation of illegal

immigrants to El Salvador and a review of the country's human rights abuses.

A motion to discharge the resolution and bring it before the Senate failed by a 45-50 [vote](#). The resolution was co-sponsored by Sens. Tim Kaine (D-Va.), Alex Padilla (D-Calif.), and several other Democratic lawmakers.

“Republicans blocked my legislation to demand answers from the Trump Administration about whether or not it is complying with U.S. court orders about the forced disappearances of people to megaprisons in El Salvador,” Kaine [stated](#) on social media following the vote.

The [resolution](#) would have required the Trump administration to produce a report detailing the steps it has taken to comply with court orders related to the deportations and to assess the human rights situation in El Salvador's maximum-security prison, known as CECOT.

Failure to provide the report, as required by the resolution, would have resulted in the suspension of U.S. security assistance to El Salvador, according to Padilla's [statement](#).

“This is about more than immigrants or immigration. This is about due process,” Padilla said in a speech before the vote, adding that the “majority of those deported had no criminal records.”

The resolution referred to the case of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a Salvadoran illegal immigrant and suspected member of MS-13 criminal gang—a U.S.-designated terrorist organization—who was deported to his home country of El Salvador in March.

Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) accused Democratic lawmakers who voted in support of the resolution of trying to “defend illegal immigrant criminals” despite the potential threat they pose to Americans.

“No Democrats are going to be able to answer this simple question though: how does allowing MS-13 gang members to roam free in our communities make our community or make our country safer?” Barrasso [said](#) in his speech. “I’ll tell you the answer—it doesn’t.”

## Top Court: Abrego Garcia Must Be Returned

Abrego Garcia was deported to El Salvador despite an immigration judge issuing a withholding of removal order in 2019. The Supreme

Court has ordered the Trump administration to facilitate his return to the United States, but the administration argued that it lacks the authority to return him because he is now in the custody of Salvadoran authorities.

Earlier this month, a federal judge [requested](#) a formal briefing from the administration after it invoked the state secrets privilege in Abrego Garcia's case.

The [state secrets privilege](#) generally allows the executive branch to protect sensitive national security information from being disclosed in civil suits. The Justice Department [invoked](#) it in March in a similar case that more broadly challenged the administration's use of the Alien Enemies Act to deport individuals to El Salvador.

The administration has provided some information through updates to judges, including declarations from government officials.

On April 21, State Department official Michael Kozak [told](#) the judge that the Salvadoran government had informed that Abrego Garcia has been transferred from El Salvador's Terrorism Confinement Center to a penitentiary facility in Santa Ana, the second-largest city in the Central American country.

*Sam Dorman contributed to this report.*

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