

Salvadoran Court Delays Decision on Prosecution's Appeal in Suchitoto 13 Case

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More than a week after the legal deadline for a decision, a Cojutepeque appeals court continues to delay its decision on an appeal by the Salvadoran government prosecution to reopen the Suchitoto 13 case. According to the Suchitoto 13 defense lawyers, the two Judges reviewing the appeal had by law until April 3rd to file their decision on the appeal, although delays on appeals decisions are not uncommon in the Salvadoran Court System.

On Tuesday, February 27th the prosecution presented an appeal to a Suchitoto court, asking to re-open the trial for public disorder and aggravated damages against the Suchitoto 13. The appeal was then passed to a Cojutepeque appeals court, for review within fourteen days.

The appeal was presented after a Suchitoto Court threw out all charges against 13 people captured in Suchitoto on July 2nd, amidst protests and public events surrounding the central government's unveiling of a national water decentralization policy, which many fear is synonymous with privatization. The Suchitoto 13 were first charged with terrorism by a special anti-terrorism tribunal, and later charged with public disorder in a civilian court.

The Suchitoto 13 defense lawyers expect a decision on the prosecution's appeal sometime next week. Leaders from the Association for the Development of El Salvador, CRIPDES, say that if no decision is made by next week, it is possible that action from the national and international community may be warranted, to ask for due process and respect of the Salvadoran Constitution.

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