



## **ICE Arrests Leader Who Advocated for Dying Detainee Trans Afro-Venezuelan detained after she exposed Eloy's medical abuse**

Phoenix, AZ — For the past year, Karla Saenz has been a prominent voice speaking out against the abuse of LGBTQ+ migrants inside Eloy Detention Center. Her testimony about the harassment, isolation, and the treatment she endured as a trans woman in detention has been heard in [news stations](#), [social media](#), and [community protests](#) across Phoenix.

Karla was among the first to publicly expose the medical neglect faced by [Yari Rodriguez Marquez](#), a lesbian woman whose health is deteriorating from cancer while in ICE custody.

On March 9, 2026, ICE detained Karla during a routine immigration appointment while she was with Trans Queer Pueblo volunteer Cristen Pointer.

“They took us to a back room and said Karla had an arrest warrant but they did not provide one. They handcuffed Karla and took her away,” Pointer recounts.

Her detention comes after months of publicly denouncing abuse inside immigration prisons and raises urgent concerns about retaliation against trans migrants who speak out.

“These attacks disproportionately impact already marginalized communities and undermine community engagement and silence dissent,” remarks Luz Canela, the Communication Director for Familia Trans Queer Liberation a national trans rights organization.

Karla is now being held at Eloy Detention Center, the same detention center as Yari Rodriguez Marques and [the deadliest ICE center in the United States](#). LGBTQ+ migrants like Arbella and Saenz face some of the worst abuse:

- [Trans people are denied hormones and critical medical care.](#)
- [LGBTQ+ people are harassed daily by guards and other detainees.](#)
- [People with chronic illnesses are left untreated.](#)