

Suspended UMC bishop moves toward church trial

by [Heather Hahn](#)

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UMC Bishop Minerva Carcaño speaks during the 2020 pre-general conference briefing in Nashville. (File photo by Kathleen Barry, United Methodist News)

United Methodist Bishop Minerva Carcaño, suspended from her duties for more than a year, appears heading toward a church trial.

The Western Jurisdiction [announced late May 4](#) that the jurisdiction's committee on investigation has found reasonable grounds to bring to trial charges that Carcaño violated church law.

"We regret that a just resolution has not been attained," said Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank, president of the Western Jurisdiction College of Bishops, in a

statement.

She went on to say that the committee on investigation has identified five charges. However, the Western Jurisdiction did not disclose the five charges.

Carcaño declined to provide a comment at this time.

The Council of Bishops has no plans to intervene in the case at this stage of the denomination's judicial process.

Western Jurisdiction leaders announced [the suspension of Carcaño on March 9 last year](#) while complaints against the bishop were under review. She has been on leave with pay and benefits ever since. The jurisdiction said her suspension will remain in effect as the process moves ahead.

In the meantime, [retired Bishop Sally Dyck](#) continues to serve as interim episcopal leader of the California-Nevada Conference, the regional body where Carcaño has been assigned since 2016.

While Carcaño's absence has been very public, no one has made public the nature of the accusations against her. That has led to both confusion and concerns about whether she is receiving due process.

Carcaño, elected by the Western Jurisdiction in 2004, is the denomination's first Latina bishop and one of its most prominent episcopal leaders. She has [championed the human rights of immigrants, and has done so both within the denomination and on the national stage](#). She recently led the denomination's Task Force on Immigration.

Throughout its meeting last week, the Council of Bishops — an international body with bishops from four continents — [has heard both from United Methodists who want the episcopal leaders to intervene and reinstate Carcaño and those who want the process to remain in the Western Jurisdiction's hands](#).

Even before the Council of Bishops meeting, Carcaño's suspension received pushback. Both [MARCHA \(Methodists Associated Representing the Cause of Hispanic/Latino Americans\)](#), the denomination's Hispanic/Latino caucus, and [ethnic leaders in the California-Nevada Conference](#) have called for Carcaño's immediate reinstatement.

Meanwhile, [a group of California-Nevada Conference clergy said](#) that returning Carcaño to active service without a just resolution or the findings of a church trial “would create a depth of conflict and division that could undermine the mission and ministry” of the conference.

The denomination’s Book of Discipline calls church trials “an expedient of last resort” and urges a just resolution of complaints before it ever gets to that point.

The Discipline defines a just resolution as an agreement “that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right in so far as possible.”

“We continue to hope and seek for a just resolution while preparing for trial,” said Escobedo-Frank, who like Carcaño is Latina and an advocate for immigrants.

“We ask all to join us in prayers for all the complainants, Bishop Carcaño, the California-Nevada Annual Conference and the Western Jurisdiction.” —United Methodist News Service