

**PUBLIC**

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To: Health professionals  
From: Medical office / Americas Program  
Date: 31 July 2002

## **MEDICAL ACTION**

### **Ill-health of Juan Carlos González Leiva Cuba**

**Key words** ill-health / ill-treatment

#### **Amnesty International's concerns**

Amnesty International is concerned for the health of Juan Carlos González Leiva, a 37-year-old blind lawyer, held in Holguín prison in Holguín Province, Cuba. He reportedly suffers from chest pain, high blood pressure and a 'nervous condition' (of which Amnesty International has no further details). The prison doctor reportedly told him that there is nothing wrong with him. In addition, he claims to have received threats from his cell mate, who has said that he will beat him.

Juan Carlos González Leiva reportedly had to have four stitches in his head as a result of the police aggression on his arrest on 4 March 2002. Amnesty International received reports that initially medical attention was denied to him although he was in severe pain.

#### **Background information**

Juan Carlos González Leiva was part of a group of human rights activists who were arrested in Antonio Luaces Iraola Provincial Hospital in Ciego de Ávila on 4 March 2002. Juan Carlos González Leiva, Delio Laureano Resquejo, Lázaro Iglesias Estrada, Virgilio Mantilla Aragondo, Carlos Brizuela Yera, Léxter Téllez Castro, Enrique García Morejón and his brother Antonio García Morejón had visited the hospital in support of Jesús Álvarez Castillo, a hospitalised journalist. Earlier that day the journalist Jesús Álvarez Castillo had been on his way to cover a meeting of the Cuban Foundation for Human Rights, but when he was reportedly stopped and attacked by the police. At the hospital the group of men protested against this attack and shouted statements such as "Long live human rights". They were later beaten and arrested by state security officials.

It is not clear what charges the detainees may be facing and they are currently awaiting trial. Amnesty International is trying to clarify the circumstances of their arrest to determine their status. The organization raised concerns for them in an open letter to the Cuban government on 3 May (TG AMR 25/02.04) and inquired for details of any investigation into the ill-treatment reportedly inflicted by state security officials on them, but so far, no information has been received.

Juan Carlos González Leiva is the president of the Cuban Foundation for Human Rights [Fundación Cubana de Derechos Humanos], an unofficial human rights group.

### **Recommended actions**

Please write letters to the Cuban authorities in Spanish or English:

- introducing yourself as a member of Amnesty International's health professional network;
- expressing disappointment that as yet the Cuban authorities have not responded to the concerns raised by Amnesty International in appeals on behalf of Juan Carlos González Leiva and the rest of detainees on 4 March 2002 (letter reference TG AMR 25/02.04);
- seeking information on his current state of health and asking for details of what medical treatment he is receiving;
- urging that Juan Carlos González Leiva receive all necessary medical care in accordance with provisions set out in international human rights standards, including being transferred to hospital if his condition requires medical treatment that he cannot get inside the prison;
- urging that he is released unless charged with a recognisable criminal offence;
- asking for an investigation into the allegations of threats by his cell mate and asking for guarantees for his security.

### **Addresses**

#### *Head of State and Government*

Dr Fidel Castro Ruz  
Presidente de los Consejos de Estados y de Ministros  
La Habana, Cuba  
Fax: via Ministry of Foreign Affairs: + 53 7 333 460  
Salutation: Su Excelencia/ Your Excellency

#### *Attorney-General*

Dr Juan Escalona Reguera  
Fiscal General de la República,  
Fiscalía General de la República  
San Rafael 3  
La Habana, Cuba  
Fax: + 53 7 669 485  
Salutation: Señor Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General

#### *Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Sr Felipe Pérez Roque  
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores  
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores  
Calzada No. 360  
Vedado, La Habana, Cuba  
Fax: + 53 7 333 460  
Salutation: Señor Ministro / Dear Minister

#### *Interior Secretary*

General Abelard Coloma Ibarra  
Ministerial del Interior y Prisons  
Ministerial del Interior  
Plaza de la Revolución  
La Habana, Cuba  
Fax: + 53 7 8301 566  
Salutation: Señor Ministro, Dear Minister

Please also send copies of your letter to diplomatic representatives of Cuba accredited to your country.

If you receive no reply from the government or other recipients within two months of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow up letter seeking a response, referring to your previous letter(s). Please check with the medical team if you are sending appeals after 25 September 2002, and send copies of any replies you do receive to the International Secretariat (att: medical team).

### **Monitoring of action**

If you have access to e-mail you can help our attempt to monitor letter-writing actions. If you write one, two, three or more letters, please send us an e-mail and let us know. Please write in the subject line of your e-mail the index number of the action and the number of letters you write

e.g. ASA 25/007/2002 - 3

Please send your message to [medical@amnesty.org](mailto:medical@amnesty.org) Thank you.