

PUBLIC

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***MEDICAL CONCERN***

**Political prisoners in need of medical attention**

**CUBA**

To: Heath professional network [for action]  
All Cuba, Caribbean and CARRAN coordinators [for information]  
All groups with Cuban Action Files [for information and possible action]

From: Americas Regional Program and Medical Office

Date: 12 October 1999

**Keywords**

Theme: POCs / political prisoners / ill-health / medical care / ill-treatment

**Summary**

Amnesty International (AI) is concerned at continuing reports that some political prisoners in Cuba, including prisoners of conscience, are not receiving the medical attention they require nor, in common with the prison population generally, an adequate diet.

AI recognizes that economic factors, including the US trade embargo, may affect standards of nutrition and medical care in prisons. However, the organization is concerned that in some cases medical attention and food may in fact be deliberately withheld from certain prisoners as a punishment. The poor sanitary conditions and lack of food reported from many prisons may in some cases amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

AI is requesting the Cuban authorities to provide information on prison conditions in the country, and is calling on them to take action to ensure that detainees in Cuban prisons have access to levels of nutrition, medical care and hygiene which are comparable to the standards available to the general population. AI is also making specific recommendations concerning eight prisoners of conscience and eight other political prisoners whose situation is described below.

**Political imprisonment in Cuba**

AI is currently working for the unconditional release of 17 prisoners of conscience. The organization believes the real number to be higher than this and is currently investigating further cases. However, detailed information about individual cases is difficult to obtain as the Cuban authorities do not publicise information on the prison population and restrictions on human rights monitoring in Cuba are very severe.

Most prisoners of conscience in Cuba are imprisoned because of their attempts to exercise their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. Some have been convicted of overtly political offences and in other cases, instead of bringing overtly political charges against them, the authorities choose to imprison them on minor criminal charges, sometimes trumped up, in order to disguise the political motivation for their arrest. There are also believed to be many other political prisoners who have been convicted of more serious offences (sometimes involving violence).

Trial procedures in political cases in Cuba, as well as in capital cases, usually fall far short of international standards for a fair trial, particularly with regard to the right to defence counsel. Convictions are often based on “confessions” obtained under duress while the detainee is held, sometimes for several months, in pre-trial detention without access to a lawyer.

### **Prison Conditions**

Current economic pressures on Cuba have inevitably affected prisons and the conditions in which prisoners are held. Although recent reports indicate that in some prisons more food is now available than in the recent past, its amount and quality is still said to be extremely poor in many prisons, sometimes consisting only of a little rice with some watery soup or sugared water once or twice a day. Relatives are normally permitted to bring prisoners certain additional food supplies, known as *la jaba* [literally: “basket”], every two months or so but these are sometimes reportedly not handed over to the prisoner. Due to the lack of adequate food, prisoners are also frequently said to steal such supplies from each other. Many prisoners suffer complications due to poor nutrition and poor hygiene, such as anaemia, skin problems, diarrhoea, parasitic infections and severe weight loss. The more serious problems most commonly reported are optic neuropathy [*neuropatía óptica*] and beri-beri (both stemming from vitamin deficiency), and pulmonary tuberculosis and leptospirosis (a disease transmitted through water or food that has become contaminated with the urine of animals, such as rats). Many reports indicate a chronic shortage of water both for drinking and washing, and a lack of basic items such as soap. There is a general shortage of medical supplies in the country as a whole which, again, inevitably affects the medical care provided in the prisons. Basic medicines such as analgesics, antibiotics and anaesthetics are reportedly in short supply as is equipment such as parts for X-ray machines, dialysis units, respirators and other essential equipment.

While the authorities may well have genuine problems in providing basic necessities for prisoners, AI has received reports that food or medical attention are sometimes deliberately withheld from certain prisoners for punitive reasons, particularly those who have protested in some way about their conditions of detention. Some prisoners have also reported being beaten for daring to complain, either formally or informally, about their conditions. Although, in theory, channels exist for prisoners to present complaints about their conditions and treatment to the prison authorities at local, provincial and national level (all of whom come under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior), these authorities in practice frequently fail to respond to these complaints. With the exception of some religious groups which have limited access to certain prisoners, there are no independent organizations within Cuba to which prisoners can appeal for assistance in pursuing their claims, and the official media, which is entirely state-controlled, does not normally cover such issues. Virtually the only recourse for such prisoners, if their complaints are not treated seriously, is to try to smuggle reports of their conditions out of prison in the hope that they will reach international human rights bodies or the foreign media.

Political prisoners sometimes undertake protests against their imprisonment or in support of special recognition for political prisoners. Forms of protest have included prolonged hunger strikes, or prisoners declaring themselves to be “*plantado*” [literally: “one who stands firm”] which usually consists of them refusing to wear prison uniform and refusing to participate in so-called “re-education” programs or other types of activity requiring them to demonstrate their support for the government. While AI recognizes the right of the prison authorities to take appropriate disciplinary measures against prisoners who do not abide by prison regulations consistent with international standards, it is concerned at reports that in some instances “*plantados*” and others are held in punishment cells for months at a time and deprived of medical attention, food and water in an apparent effort to make them desist from their protest. Such

conditions would constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment under the terms of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which was ratified by Cuba in 1995.

For information on the economic embargo on Cuba please see Medical Action AMR 25/07/97 [28 May 1997].

## **PRISONERS IN ILL HEALTH: CASE EXAMPLES**

No international humanitarian organizations have access to Cuban prisons. Human rights monitoring within the country is severely restricted and it is very difficult to verify reports which, despite the obstacles, do sometimes emerge from the prisons. However, AI has concluded that there is sufficient evidence to be seriously concerned about the current state of health of the following political prisoners, of whom eight are considered by the organization to be prisoners of conscience. Reports indicate that they may not have been receiving adequate medical treatment or not enough food, which also tends to be of poor nutritional value.

### ***PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE***

AI is calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the following eight prisoners of conscience on the grounds that they are imprisoned solely for the peaceful expression of their political beliefs.

#### **Marcelo Amelo Rodríguez (aged 50)**

- < Place of detention: *Prisión de Boniato*, Boniato Prison, Santiago de Cuba province
- < Date of detention: 19 February 1993
- < Charge: “*rebelión*”, “rebellion”.
- < Sentence: eight years’ imprisonment
- < State of health: sources have expressed concern to AI that Marcelo Amelo is suffering from kidney problems, hypertension and loss of vision. He is reportedly not receiving appropriate medication.

Marcelo Amelo Rodríguez was charged with “rebellion”, reportedly because he printed material stating that the 1993 elections were fraudulent. He was released on 13 April 1996 on condition that he left the country; however he reportedly could not find the money needed to do so. The same year, he formed a human rights group of political prisoners and ex-prisoners *Geraldo Gonzalez “El Hermano de la Fé”*, Geraldo Gonzalez “The Brother of Faith”. On 3 June 1997 Marcelo Amelo Rodríguez was re-arrested and his conditional freedom was revoked.

#### **Bernardo Arévalo Padrón (aged 34)**

- < Place of Detention: *Prisión de Ariza*, Ariza Prison, Cienfuegos province.
- < Date of detention: 14 August 1997 (tried November 1997).
- < Charge: “*desacato*”, “disrespect”
- < Sentence: six years’ imprisonment
- < State of health: Bernardo Arévalo Padrón has reportedly lost a lot of weight and is very weak. According to reports, he was beaten by prison officials on 11 April 1998 which, as the prison doctor confirmed, reportedly left him covered in bruises. He was said to have suffered from loss of memory throughout the remainder of 1998 as a result of the beating.

Bernardo Arévalo is the founder and director of *Linea Sur Press*, an independent press agency based in Cienfuegos province. In December 1998 he wrote a letter to Fidel Castro which stated: “... *in the penitentiary of Ariza, the most elementary human rights are constantly violated. There are bedbugs in abundance which feed on our blood, many prisoners sleep on the floor without a mattress or even a*

board and there is a plague of rodents which infest us with diseases. Meanwhile, the physical abuse by the military officials continue undeterred, and to top it all the military steal the food from the packages our families bring on visitation days.”[“En la prisión de Ariza se violan los más elementales derechos humanos, hay chinches en abundancias que chupan nuestra sangre, muchos presos duermen en el piso sin colchonetas ni tablero, hay tremenda plaga de ratones que aquí campean por su respeto, infestándonos con sus epidemias, las golpizas continúan por parte de los militares y, para colmo, los militares le hurtan víveres de la jaba a los reclusos en sus días de visita, cuando nuestros familiares nos la traen.”]

#### **Francisco Chaviano González (aged 46)**

- < Place of Detention: *Prisión Combinado del Este*, Combinado del Este Prison, La Habana province.
- < Date of detention: 7 May 1994
- < Charge: "*revelación de secretos concernientes a la seguridad del Estado*", "revealing state security secrets", "*revelación de secretos administrativos*", "revealing administrative secrets", and "*falsificación de documentos públicos*", "falsifying public documents".
- < Sentence: 15 years' imprisonment
- < State of health: Francisco Chaviano González is reportedly suffering from a duodenal ulcer, arthritis and breathing problems. He has reportedly been beaten on several occasions in detention. On 17 June 1999 he reportedly suffered injuries to the face and head and a fractured tibia as a result of being beaten by prison guards. He has also undertaken several hunger strikes. Francisco Chaviano González has allegedly been held in a punishment cell for the last three months.

#### **Jesús Joel Díaz Hernández (aged 25)**

- < Place of Detention: *Prisión Provincial de Ciego de Avila*, Ciego de Avila Provincial Prison (nicknamed "Canaleta"), Ciego de Avila province.
- < Date of detention: 18 January 1999
- < Charge: "*peligrosidad*", "dangerousness"
- < Sentence: four years' imprisonment
- < State of health: Jesús Joel Díaz Hernández is reported to from serious diarrhoea and weight loss.

Jesús Díaz is executive director of the independent press agency *Cooperativa Avileña de Periodistas Independientes*, Cooperative of Independent Journalists of Ciego de Avila, and a member of the *Comité Cubano Pro Derechos Humanos* (CCPDH), Cuban Committee for Human Rights).

During the first 11 days of his detention Jesús Díaz carried out a hunger strike in protest at his arrest. On 20 May 1999, a State Security Department officer reported to Jesús Díaz's father that his son was being held in solitary confinement because the political police found in his possession newspaper articles and denunciations written by him. It has also been reported that the prison authorities are refusing to give Jesús Díaz the medicine that his family has bought for him, and that he has not received any medical assistance since March 1999.

From 12-29 July 1999 Jesús Díaz went on a second hunger strike in protest at his imprisonment, for which he was reportedly put in a punishment cell.

#### **Manuel Antonio González Castellanos (aged 41)**

- < Place of detention: *Prisión Cuba Sí*, Cuba Yes Prison, Holguín province.
- < Date of detention: 1 October 1998
- < Charge: "*desacato*", "disrespect".
- < Sentence: two years and seven months' imprisonment

- < State of health: Manuel Antonio González Castellanos is reportedly not allowed any exercise in the open air and is suffering from a respiratory virus and dental problems. He is reportedly not receiving adequate medical care.

Manuel González is a reporter for the independent press agency *Cuba Press*.

#### **Orestes Rodríguez Horruitiner (aged 47)**

- < Place of detention: *Prisión del Manguito*, El Manguito Prison, Santiago de Cuba Province.
- < Date of detention: 23 July 1997
- < Charge: "*propaganda enemiga*", "enemy propaganda".
- < Sentence: four years' imprisonment
- < State of health: Orestes Rodríguez Horruitiner is said to be suffering from high blood pressure and arthritis. He is reportedly not receiving adequate medical care.

Orestes Rodríguez reportedly applied for "*licencia penal*", early release on health grounds, but this was turned down. In May 1998 he was reportedly for several days denied medical attention for severe shoulder pains that left him unable to sleep. When he was finally taken to a clinic, doctors reportedly diagnosed him as suffering from hypertension, glaucoma and bursitis.

#### **Marta Beatriz Roque Cabello (aged 53)**

- < Place of Detention: *Hospital Militar Carlos J. Finlay*, Havana, until mid-September 1999 when she was reportedly transferred to a State Security "house of rest and recuperation" [*"una casa de descanso y recuperación"*].
- < Date of detention: 16 July 1997
- < Charge: "*otros actos contra la seguridad del estado*", "other acts against state security", relating to a crime of "*sedición*", "sedition".
- < Sentence: three and a half years' imprisonment
- < State of health: during her imprisonment Marta Beatriz Roque Cabello has suffered from a stomach ulcer, kidney problems, diarrhea, migraine, high blood pressure, weight loss, and an eye infection, and was diagnosed as having benign mammary dysplasia.

On 16 July 1999 Marta Beatriz Roque Cabello began a hunger strike in protest at not receiving a response to her appeal of her sentence, and was transferred the following day from the *Centro de Reeducación de Mujeres de Occidente*, Women's Re-education Centre, known as "Manto Negro", to the prison wing of the Carlos J. Finlay Military Hospital. On 2 September 1999 she also began a thirst strike, but ended her protest two days later after discussions with the authorities, pledging to resume the fast if she does not receive any response regarding her appeal. Whilst in the military hospital Marta Beatriz Roque reportedly refused medical treatment because she did not trust its staff. According to the UN 'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons Under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment' (UN 'Body of Principles), "a detained or imprisoned person ... shall ... have the right to request or petition a judicial or other authority for a second medical examination or opinion" (Principle 25).

#### **Leonardo Varona González (aged 24)**

- < Place of detention: *Prisión Cuba Sí*, Cuba Yes Prison, Holguín province.
- < Date of detention: 1 October 1998
- < Charge: "*desacato*", "disrespect".
- < Sentence: one year and four months' imprisonment
- < State of health: Leonardo Varona González is reportedly not allowed to exercise in the open air and is suffering from a chest complaint and joint pain. He is reportedly not receiving adequate medical care.

Leonardo Varona is an affiliate of *Santiago Press*, an independent news agency in the province of Santiago de Cuba. He is the grandson of Lydia Doce, a martyr of the Cuban revolution that brought Fidel Castro to power in 1959.

### **OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS**

The following eight prisoners are serving sentences for offences against state security, some or all of which appear to have been politically motivated. It is likely that they have not received a fair trial and it is therefore not clear whether such charges were adequately substantiated. AI is concerned about their conditions of detention and is also continuing to seek further information regarding their trials and the circumstances of their arrest. The organization is also investigating the possibility that some of them may be prisoners of conscience.

#### **Ernestino Abreu Horta (aged 74)**

- < Place of Detention: *Prisión Combinado del Este*, Combinado del Este Prison, La Habana province, but temporarily held in Carlos J. Finlay Military Hospital.
- < Date of detention: 28 May 1998
- < Charge: “*rebelión*”, “rebellion”, and “*otros actos contra la seguridad del estado*”, “other acts against state security”.
- < Sentence: Awaiting trial
- < State of health: Because of his age, Ernestino Abreu Horta is particularly at risk of illness in the poor conditions in which he is held. He has reportedly lost at least 20kg in weight and is suffering from diarrhoea, ankle oedema [*“edema de las extremidades”*] and a broken rib. Due to previous operations for a stomach ulcer and prostate cancer he has strict diet and hygiene requirements. He is apparently not allowed to receive medication brought by his relatives.

According to reports, Ernestino Abreu has repeatedly been held in solitary confinement and interrogated. On two occasions, in November 1998 and August 1999, he had to be hospitalised. After starting a hunger strike in protest at his conditions of detention, he was reportedly put in a punishment cell with no light or toilet facilities and which was full of drain water and infested with rats. According to reports, Ernestino Abreu was arrested in Pinar del Río province with Vicente Marcelino Martínez Rodríguez (see below), both of whom had become US citizens, when they returned to Cuba in May 1998. The men reportedly claimed to have gone back to Cuba “to unite the internal resistance movement and strengthen it” [*“unirse a la resistencia interna y ayudar a fortalecerla”*] by peaceful means. According to the official charge document, an arsenal of arms was found in the province in which the two men were detained, but it was not found in their possession. Ernestino Abreu was international President of the Miami-based exile group, the *Junta Patriótica Cubana*, Cuban Patriotic Council, and Secretary General of the Miami-based anti-Castro group, the *Movimiento de Recuperación Revolucionaria (MRR)*, Revolutionary Recovery Movement.

#### **Jorge Luis García Pérez (nicknamed "Antúnez") (aged 32)**

- < Place of Detention: *Prisión Provincial de Sancti Spiritus (Nieves Morejón)*, Sancti Spiritus Provincial Prison, Sancti Spiritus province.
- < Date of detention: 15 March 1990
- < Charges: “*propaganda enemiga*”, “enemy propaganda”; and later “*tentativa de sabotaje*”, “attempted sabotage”; “*tenencia ilegal de armas*”, “illegal possession of a weapon”; and “*evasión*” for attempting to escape.
- < Sentence: Combined total of 18 years’ imprisonment

- < State of health: Jorge Luis García Pérez is said to be suffering from kidney disease, weight loss and an inflamed knee joint . The prison authorities allegedly refuse to provide him with medicines brought by his family.

Jorge Luis García has repeatedly been on hunger strike in prison and is said to have been beaten on several occasions. In February 1999, he was reportedly severely beaten all over his body and on his head by prison guards after an incident involving some common prisoners. After a brief spell in the prison infirmary, he was temporarily held in a punishment cell following the incident.

For more information on the case of Jorge Luis García Pérez see the earlier medical actions AI Index: AMR 25/21/99 (15 April 1999) and AMR 25/04/99 (8 February 1999).

### **Bulmaro Víctor Gómez Díaz (aged 29)**

- < Place of Detention: *Prisión Provincial de Ciego de Avila* (known as *Canaleta*), Ciego de Avila Provincial Prison, Ciego de Avila province.
- < Date of detention: 22 September 1993
- < Charge: "*piratería*", "piratery", "*dísparo de arma de fuego*", "firing of an arm", "*tenencia ilegal de armas*", "illegal possession of arms", "*lesiones*", "injury"
- < Sentence: 13 years' imprisonment
- < State of health: Bulmaro Víctor Gómez Díaz is said to be in a poor state of health, suffering from epilepsy [*"un foco epiléptico"*], anaemia, weight loss and dizziness caused by a head injury that he sustained in an accident prior to his imprisonment. He has reportedly been beaten and held in a

punishment cell with no light on several occasions. According to reports, in May 1997 he was handcuffed to the railings of a punishment cell for over a month as a punishment for not wearing the prison uniform during family visits.

### **Juan Carlos Herrera Acosta (aged 32)**

- < Place of Detention: *Prisión Combinado de Guantánamo*, Combinado de Guantánamo Prison, Guantánamo province.
- < Date of detention: 26 September 1997
- < Charge: "*salida ilegal*", "illegal exit"
- < Sentence: 5 years' imprisonment
- < State of health: Juan Carlos Herrera Acosta is said to be in a poor state of health, suffering from high blood pressure [*hipertensión arterial*] and a heart disorder [*cardiopatía*]. He is reportedly being held in a punishment cell with no light because of his efforts on behalf of prisoners' rights and his refusal to cooperate with the prison re-education program. He is a member of the *Presidio Político Pedro Luis Boitel*, Pedro Luis Boitel Political Prisoners Group.

### **Vicente Marcelino Martínez Rodríguez (aged 66)**

- < Place of Detention: *Prisión Combinado del Este*, Combinado del Este Prison, La Habana province; temporarily held in Carlos J. Finlay Military Hospital.
- < Date of detention: 28 May 1998
- < Charge: "*rebelión*", "rebellion", and "*otros actos contra la seguridad del estado*", "other acts against state security".
- < Sentence: Awaiting trial
- < State of health: Vicente Marcelino Martínez Rodríguez is reportedly suffering from a duodenal ulcer, marked weight loss (over 20kg), a back problem and a skin disease.

According to reports, Vicente Martínez has repeatedly been held in solitary confinement and interrogated. On two occasions, in November 1998 and August 1999, he had to be hospitalised. After starting a hunger strike in protest at the conditions of detention he was reportedly put in a punishment cell with no light or toilet facilities and which was full of drain water and infested with rats. According to reports, Vicente Martínez was arrested in Pinar del Río province with Ernestino Abreu Horta (see above). Vicente Martínez fought as a captain with Castro and the rebel forces that overthrew Fulgencio Batista. He later became a member of the Miami-based anti-Castro group, the *Movimiento de Recuperación Revolucionaria (MRR)*, Revolutionary Recovery Movement.

### **Jorge Luis Ortega Palacios (aged 26)**

- < Place of Detention: *Prisión Especial de Máxima Severidad*, Special Maximum Severity Prison, known as Kilo 8, Camagüey province
- < Date of detention: 13 April 1996
- < Charge: “*desacato*”, “disrespect”, “*resistencia*”, “resistance”
- < Sentence: 4 years’ imprisonment
- < State of health: Jorge Luis Ortega Palacios is said to be suffering from weight loss and spinal problems. Whilst held in Kilo 5½ Prison he was put in a punishment cell and had personal possessions confiscated, reportedly for protesting about the lack of medical assistance and inadequate nutrition. He was then transferred to the maximum security prison, known as Kilo 8, where he has been held in a punishment cell for over 60 days, allegedly as a result of having stood up for prisoners’ rights.

### **José Manuel Rodríguez Santana (aged 38)**

- < Place of Detention: *Prisión Provincial de Las Mangas*, Las Mangas Provincial Prison, Bayamo, Granma province
- < Date of detention: 14 October 1992
- < Charge: “*rebelión*”, “rebellion”
- < Sentence: 10 years’ imprisonment
- < State of health: José Manuel Rodríguez Santana is said to be suffering from chronic asthma and a neurological disease [*neuropatía*] affecting his limbs.

José Manuel Rodríguez’s brother, José Antonio Rodríguez Santana, who was given the same charge and sentence, was conditionally released in April 1998 following the Pope’s visit to Cuba. He now lives in exile in Canada.

8

### **Miguel Eumelio Sánchez Valiente (aged 62)**

- < Place of Detention: *Prisión Combinado del Este*, Combinado del Este Prison, La Habana province.
- < Date of detention: 31 August 1992
- < Charge: “*espionaje*”, “espionage”, “*salida ilegal*”, “illegal exit”
- < Sentence: 10 years’ imprisonment
- < State of health: Miguel Eumelio Sánchez Valiente is reportedly suffering from lower back pain [*sacrolumbagia*].

Miguel Eumelio Sánchez Valiente is an ex-lieutenant colonel who retired from the armed forces in 1986 and began to work as an engineer. In 1989 after writing an open letter to the government of Fidel Castro disagreeing with its policies and resigning from the Communist Party, he reportedly began to be harassed. He began to make denunciations about human rights violations and founded a clandestine organization in 1990 called “*Libertad y Democracia*”, “Liberty and Freedom”. AI is particularly concerned that Miguel Eumelio Sánchez Valiente may not have had a fair trial. He has

reportedly been on several hunger strikes since his imprisonment and consequently put in punishment cells on various occasions.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommended Actions**

Although factors over which the Cuban authorities may have little or no control may contribute to the situation faced by Cuban prisoners, AI urges the Cuban Government to take all necessary steps to ensure the well-being of prisoners at all times. It is particularly concerned at reports that in some cases medical care and adequate food may have been deliberately withheld from prisoners for apparently punitive reasons, and that punitive measures may have been taken against prisoners for complaining about their conditions including the denial of adequate medical care.

Letters are therefore requested from medical professionals, preferably written in Spanish or your own language, to the addresses listed at the end of this document. Please base your appeals on the recommendations listed below.

AI groups working on Action Files relating to the prisoners mentioned may also like to ask medical professionals they are in contact with to send appeals on behalf of their prisoner.

### ***Recommendations relating to all Cuban prisoners including the sixteen cases cited in this document:***

- < Request information regarding the conditions in which prisoners are held in Cuba, and what level of nutrition and medical care they are receiving.
- < State that you recognize that economic factors, including the US trade embargo, may affect standards of nutrition and medical care in prisons, but urge that prisoners be given access to levels of nutrition, medical care and hygiene in keeping with the standards available to the general population.
- < State that at all times, conditions of detention should conform to internationally recognized minimum standards, such as outlined in the UN 'Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners' and the UN 'Body of Principles'.
- < Express concern about reports that in some cases medical attention and food may be deliberately withheld as a punishment to certain prisoners.
- < Call on the authorities to guarantee that sick prisoners are given access to adequate medical care, including transfer to a hospital if specialist treatment is not available inside the prison.
- < Ask what regulations exist regarding the right of relatives of detainees to bring medicines into the prisons.
- < State that no prisoner should be punished, ill-treated or prejudiced in any way for having requested adequate medical care or food, or for complaining about their conditions.
- < Urge that independent and impartial investigations be carried out into allegations of ill-treatment in order that anyone found to be responsible for such treatment may be brought to justice, in accordance with Cuba's obligations under the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

- < Ask that prisoners be held within reasonable travelling distance of their homes so that their relatives are able to regularly bring them necessary medicines and additional food.

***Additional recommendation relating to the cases of prisoners of conscience Marcelo Amelo Rodríguez, Bernardo Arévalo Padrón, Francisco Chaviano González, Jesús Joel Díaz Hernández, Manuel Antonio González Castellanos, Orestes Rodríguez Horruitiner, Marta Beatriz Roque Cabello and Leonardo Varona González***

- < Urge that they be immediately and unconditionally released on the grounds that they are imprisoned solely for the non-violent expression of their right to freedom of expression and association.

***Additional recommendation relating to the case of prisoner of conscience Marta Beatriz Roque Cabello***

- < Note that the UN 'Body of Principles' provides, in Principle 25, for the right of detainees to "request or petition a judicial or other authority for a second medical examination or opinion".

**ADDRESSES**

*Minister of the Interior*  
 General Abelardo Colomé Ibarra  
 Ministro del Interior  
 Ministerio del Interior  
 Plaza de la Revolución  
 La Habana, Cuba  
*Salutation:* Señor Ministro  
*Tel:* +53 7 301566

*Director of Prisons, Ministry of the Interior*  
 Señor Director  
 Dirección de Cárceles y Prisiones Ministerio del Interior  
 Plaza de la Revolución  
 La Habana, Cuba  
*Salutation:* Señor Director  
*Tel:* +53 7 301566

**Copies to:**

*Minister of Foreign Affairs*  
 Sr. Felipe Pérez Roque  
 Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores  
 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores  
 Calzada No. 360  
 Vedado  
 La Habana, Cuba  
*Salutation:* Señor Ministro  
*Fax:* +53 7 33 3085 / 33 5261 / 33 3460  
*Telex:* 511122/511464/512950

*Inspector of Prisons of the Attorney-General's Office*  
 Sr Eliecer Pérez  
 Fiscal, Jefe de la Dirección de Control de Centros Penitenciarios  
 Fiscalía General de la República  
 San Rafael 3  
 La Habana, Cuba  
*Salutation:* Señor Fiscal  
*Tel:* +53 7 333164  
*Fax:* +53 7 570795 / 669485  
*Telex:* 511456 fisge

*Minister of Public Health*  
 Sr. Carlos Dotres Martínez  
 Ministro de la Salud Pública  
 Calle 23, No. 301  
 Vedado  
 La Habana  
 Cuba  
*Salutation:* Señor Ministro  
*Telex:* 511149

and to the Cuban diplomatic representative in your country or the closest Cuban diplomatic representation.