

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: AMR 25/004/2004 (Public)
News Service No: 017
29 January 2004

Embargo Date: 29 January 2004 00:01 GMT

Cuba: Four new prisoners of conscience

Amnesty International recognizes four new prisoners of conscience in Cuba.

"Harassment, intimidation and bans on freedom of expression against dissidents must end in Cuba," Amnesty International said in a new report with details of cases of four new prisoners of conscience.

Rolando Jiménez Posada, Rafael Millet Leyva, Miguel Sigler Amaya and Orlando Zapata Tamayo are four of the over 80 dissidents imprisoned after a massive government crackdown on 18 March 2003.

"The four dissidents were arrested and two of them have been formally charged only for participating in peaceful activities," said Amnesty International. "Moreover, it is especially worrying that in some cases, people remain imprisoned, nearly one year on, without any formal charge at all."

The Cuban authorities have justified their actions against the 75 dissidents tried in April of last year as a need to defend themselves against provocations and threats posed to its national security by the United States. While Amnesty International believes that nothing can justify the imprisonment of prisoners of conscience or other violations of fundamental rights and continues to condemn Cuba for these violations, it also recognizes the negative effect of the US embargo on the full range of human rights in Cuba, and therefore calls on the US to review its policy.

"The embargo provides the Cuban government with an excuse for its repressive policies, and has had a detrimental influence on nutrition, health, education and many other spheres of life, disproportionately harming the weakest and most vulnerable members of society", Amnesty International said.

Amnesty International is once again urging the Cuban authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all prisoners of conscience, and to end all forms of harassment and intimidation directed against dissidents.

For a full copy of "Cuba: New declared prisoners of conscience", please see:
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGAMR250022004>

Public Document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

For latest human rights news view <http://news.amnesty.org>