

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVISTS RECEIVE DEATH THREATS IN CUBA

The head of a Cuban human rights organization and his wife, also an activist, have received death threats from government supporters.

Juan Carlos González Leiva, the President of the Cuban Council of Human Rights Rapporteurs (Consejo de Relatores de Derechos Humanos de Cuba, CRDHC) and his wife **Tania Maceda Guerra**, received death threats during and after a government-sanctioned demonstration. Their house, which doubles as the headquarters of the CRDHC was the site of a demonstration known as an “act of repudiation” for more than 48 hours. This was done to prevent them from travelling from their home city of Ciego de Ávila in central Cuba to the capital, Havana, for events to commemorate the death of Laura Pollán, the former head of the Ladies in White.

At 4 am on 12 October Juan Carlos González Leiva headed to the bus station to travel to Havana, but was turned back by a police officer who said his name was on a list of people who were not allowed to leave Ciego de Ávila. Juan Carlos González Leiva, who is blind, informed Amnesty International that at 8:30 am government supporters accompanied by officers from the Cuban Revolutionary Police and Department of State Security Officials began to gather in front of his house. Three other members of the CRDHC who live in the neighbourhood managed to get into the house, but all five of them were forced to stay there until midday on 14 October.

Music was played at extreme volume for eight hours on 12 October, and the crowd shouted insults calling CRDHC members “rats” and “worms” and one security official threatened to use tear gas against them. A group of government supporters shouted “we’re going to kill you, worms” (“les vamos a matar gusanos”) and one of them entered the house and assaulted Tania Maceda Guerra. Around an hour after the act of repudiation ended, Juan Carlos left his house with two other members of the CRDHC and was accosted by two of the government supporters. They repeated the death threats against Juan Carlos González Leiva and Tania Maceda Guerra.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to take immediate action to guarantee Juan Carlos González Leiva and Tania Maceda Guerra’s safety, in accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on the authorities to cease the harassment, intimidation and persecution of human rights activists and political dissidents while exercising their right to freedom of expression, assembly and association;
- Reminding the authorities to guarantee that human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear of reprisals, as established in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 NOVEMBER 2013 TO:

Head of State and Government

Raúl Castro Ruz
 Presidente de la República de Cuba
 La Habana, Cuba
 Fax: +41 22 758 9431 (Cuba office in Geneva); +1 212 779 1697 (via Cuban Mission to UN)
 Email:
cuba@un.int <mailto:cuba@un.int>
 (c/o Cuban Mission to UN)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Attorney General

Dr. Darío Delgado Cura
 Fiscal General de la República
 Fiscalía General de la República
 Amistad 552, e/Monte y Estrella
 Centro Habana
 La Habana, Cuba
Salutation: Dear Attorney General

Interior Minister

General Abelardo Colomé Ibarra
 Ministro del Interior y Prisiones
 Ministerio del Interior,
 Plaza de la Revolución
 La Habana, Cuba
 Fax: +1 212 779 1697 (via Cuban Mission to UN)
 Email: correominint@mn.mn.co.cu
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Many members of Ladies in White and a number of other government critics across Cuba were prevented from traveling to Havana to attend events to mark the second anniversary of Laura Pollán's death. The Ladies in White campaign for the release of political prisoners and for the lifting of restrictions on fundamental civil and political freedoms in Cuba.

The Cuban Council of Human Rights Rapporteurs was established in 2007. The authorities have denied it legal status, as they do to all organizations deemed to be critical of the government. It has several hundred rapporteurs based in every province of the island who monitor violations of freedoms of expression, assembly and association of human rights activists, political dissidents and independent journalists. The organization produces monthly reports which document cases of acts of repudiation, arbitrary short term detentions and sentencing following unfair trials.

Tania Maceda Guerra is an independent journalist and a member of the Ladies in White.

Acts of repudiation (actos de repudio) are government-coordinated demonstrations, usually carried out in front of the homes of government critics. They are attended by government supporters, state officials and law enforcement agencies, aimed at harassing and intimidating opponents of the government, and are often used to prevent them from travelling to take part in activities. During an act of repudiation, political opponents and human rights activists are subjected to verbal and physical abuse by groups of people chanting pro-government slogans. Police are usually present but do not intervene to stop the assaults. Such incidents frequently involve the Rapid Response Brigades (Brigadas de Respuesta Rápida), a structure set up in 1991 and composed of Communist Party volunteers whose task is to deal with any sign of "counter-revolution". Local human rights activists and others believe these incidents are orchestrated by Cuba's security services to intimidate any opposition.

Name: Juan Carlos González Leiva (m), Tania Maceda Guerra (f)
Gender m/f: both

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